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## TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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**UNIVERSIDAD BOLIVARIANA DEL ECUADOR**

**MASTER'S DEGREE IN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY**

**DEGREE WORK**

**PRIOR TO OBTAINING THE DEGREE OF: MASTER'S DEGREE IN PEDAGOGY OF ENGLISH  
AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

**SUBJECT**

**METHODOLOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING WRITING SKILLS USING  
DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPHS WITH 10<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS A1 LEVEL AT LA INMACULADA PUBLIC  
SCHOOL**

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## **RESUMEN**

Las habilidades de escritura son esenciales para desarrollar competencias de pensamiento más complejas y cruciales para el éxito en los campos académico y profesional. En este trabajo se describieron las capacidades de escritura percibidas adquiridas por diez estudiantes de secundaria utilizando métodos mixtos y análisis temático que incluye un pre- y post-test con una rúbrica, un diario del investigador y un cuestionario de finalidad abierta.

Este estudio ha observado, comparado y analizado los resultados entre la pre- y post-test para identificar las ventajas de las estrategias, actividades y materiales incluidos en la intervención para mejorar las competencias de escritura. De hecho, los resultados numéricos de los grupos experimentales y de control revelan datos pertinentes que miden el impacto de las sesiones de escritura en el grupo experimental y sus actitudes hacia el enfrentamiento con nuevos conocimientos y su aplicación después de la intervención.

En este pequeño grupo, se preguntó a los estudiantes acerca de las habilidades de escritura que habían aprendido en estas sesiones de escritura, que incluían el enfoque del proceso de escritura y párrafos descriptivos. Los hallazgos basados en los resultados del grupo experimental de esta investigación, dicen que los alumnos de secundaria pueden utilizar el enfoque del proceso de escritura y sus macro etapas de exploración y desarrollo para generar y organizar ideas en un párrafo con una corta introducción y puntuación pertinente. El grupo experimental mejoró sus habilidades de escritura, demostrando que pueden comprender y utilizar el proceso de escrita para crear párrafos bien organizados para describir y narrar información que comienza



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con una frase de introducción y luego con ideas secundarias.

La mayoría de los estudiantes dijeron que la intervención les había enseñado cómo generar, organizar y dar fluidez a los párrafos descriptivos que comunican ideas e información, siguiendo una secuencia que garantiza una interacción eficaz con los lectores que reciben mensajes.

**Key words:** Writing, The Writing Process Approach, Descriptive paragraphs, Brainstorm, Topic sentence, Secondary learners.



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### ABSTRACT

Writing abilities are essential for developing more complex thinking competencies and crucial for success in the academic and professional fields. The perceived writing abilities acquired by ten secondary students were described in this work using mixed methods and thematic analysis that includes a pre-and post-test with a rubric, a journal by the researcher, and an open-ended questionnaire.

This study has observed, compared, and analyzed the results between the pre-and post-test to identify the advantages of the strategies, activities, and materials included in the intervention to improve writing competencies. Indeed, the numerical results of the experimental and control groups reveal relevant data that measures the impact of the writing sessions on the experimental group and their attitudes toward facing new knowledge and its implementation after the intervention.

In this small group, students were questioned regarding the writing skills they had learned in these writing sessions, which included the writing process approach and descriptive paragraphs. The findings, based on the results of the experimental group of this research, tell learners in secondary school can use the writing process approach and their macro stages of exploring and developing to generate and organize ideas in a paragraph with topic sentences and pertinent punctuation. The experimental group improved their writing skills showing that they can comprehend and use the writing process to create well-organized paragraphs to describe and narrate information that begins with a topic sentence and then with secondary ideas,



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Most students said the intervention had taught them how to generate, organize, and give fluency to descriptive paragraphs that communicate ideas and information, following a sequence that guarantees effective interaction with readers who get messages.

**Key words:** Writing, The Writing Process Approach, Descriptive paragraphs, Brainstorm, Topic sentence, Secondary learners.



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## INTRODUCTION





Writing is not considered an easy skill to learn in English, but using the correct strategies and methods can be a relevant language competence that contributes to good communication. In addition, writing is usually the last skill to be developed in learners because it requires a wide range of vocabulary, significant knowledge of grammar and structures, and the organization of ideas and information they want to transmit. Thus, Nunan (2009) refers to writing as "an ability to initiate and evolve ideas and then use certain revising and editing practices to develop them to maturity in a given context." Writing demands time to plan and organize information and ideas. Also, it needs time to write interesting facts in a way that makes the reader feel engaged with the topic. These characteristics begin in writers at an early age. Tenth graders, in this case, have studied basic structures and have enough vocabulary, even though there are some deficiencies with writing clear and organized paragraphs about their closer context, following the steps this skill entails.

The deficiencies in writing skills demand methodological recommendations for improving writing skills among 10th-grade learners at La Inmaculada School. This research is pertinent and timely because of the learners' developmental and language acquisition stages. Also, these students' English proficiency level is A1. It is because of the pandemic that they lost fundamental English writing skills. In this context, it is imperative to investigate the advantages of applying methodological recommendations to improve writing skills.

The writing process approach is helpful in language learning because it determines specific steps to write relevant and organized information in concrete messages. There is a lack of clear strategies and activities that conduct the writing process for the tenth grade at the basic education level. Moreover, this research proposes practical writing examples, models, and activities that can be useful in the education field to improve writing skills dynamically and contribute to the advancement of effective language teaching that is accessible to teachers and students from different backgrounds.

The "Methodological recommendations for improving writing skills align well with the research lines of the university, specifically the methodological proposal modality that focuses on integrating knowledge for solving professional problems. Thus, the research project involves designing a comprehensive plan that emphasizes identifying writing innovations that must be



organized and how to implement them effectively. It refers to the processes, activities, and procedures involved in integrating writing activities into the language learning curriculum as a group of practical and didactic solutions that can be implemented in real-world educational settings.

The object of this research is to determine learning activities for improving writing skills among tenth-grade education learners, detect their current level of writing skills, and identify areas that require improvement. Furthermore, the research seeks to explore the impact of writing activities on enhancing the written communication abilities of the students.

Consequently, the main objective of this proposal is to determine methodological recommendations that help tenth graders at La Inmaculada school to write descriptive paragraphs with organization following specific steps in the writing process through the implementation of entry and exit tests and action research.

Additionally, to reach this general objective, it is crucial to assess the current tenth-grade learners writing proficiency level. To design and implement activities to improve writing skills and to evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented writing process in its development.

This study will work with two conceptual and operational categories that facilitate the implementation of strategies and activities to improve writing deficiencies. On the one hand, the use of the writing process and its steps. On the other hand, their writing skills after following the writing process compared to their writing skills before using it.

The data for this research will be collected in two ways, quantitatively and qualitatively because both approaches are adequate for the investigation because they allow quantifying the effectiveness of the writing process and gathering rich and detailed information on the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study.

During the research, the inductive method will be significant in generating hypotheses about the effectiveness of the writing process in developing writing skills based on the data collected from the survey, pre-test, and post-test. Additionally, the deductive method can be important in this research to originate hypotheses about the effectiveness of the writing process based on the existing literature



and theories on language acquisition and teaching methods. Also, the empirical methodology is more objective for data collection since it is considered direct learners' observations and personal experiences. Finally, more facts for this study will come from the pre-test and post-test allowing us to compare the student's writing skills before and after the intervention sessions and determine whether there was a significant improvement.

The beneficiaries of the research are the tenth students parallel A morning at La Inmaculada Public School in Cuenca. These students are between the ages of 14 and 15. The students have an A1 level of English which means, they have basic proficiency in the language.

The main barrier for the students is their limited knowledge and practice of writing, which may impact their language learning. Additionally, the reduction in English language classes due to the pandemic and in the Curriculum based on competencies (2021) have also affected their proficiency in the language. Learners do not join ideas to develop a paragraph capable of describing a situation clearly. They cannot use vocabulary and basic structures properly to create some written ideas, much less organize their ideas about a topic. The research will ultimately benefit the students by providing insights into effective language teaching methods that can be learned for their specific writing deficiencies.

It is relevant to describe briefly the educational context of this research. "Inmaculada" Public School has 1,065 students and 38 teachers. The tenth grade has 37 students learning English following the curriculum by the Ministry of Education. Most of them have Internet connections at their homes and devices that will facilitate the virtual classes to apply the methodological recommendations to improve writing skills because of the few English classes we have at school and the vacation time these learners have nowadays.

According to the new Educational curriculum from 2021, the number of English hours has been diminished to 3 per week. This reduction in instructional time may have affected deeply the students' language learning progress and proficiency levels. Thus, their English instruction may not be advantageous to their specific needs or focused on developing their writing skills effectively, and the lack of a textbook for learning English more properly further limits the students' access to proper resources for language learning.

Thus, these methodological recommendations have significant practical contributions that include enhancing writing skills by providing opportunities for students to practice and gain



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confidence in expressing themselves. The thesis promotes engaging and interactive learning, shifting from traditional methods to a student-centered approach that encourages participation and realistic language application. Additionally, the thesis focuses on developing transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity through methodological recommendations for improving writing skills. Lastly, the research conducted will offer pedagogical insights, contributing to the existing knowledge in language education and providing evidence-based recommendations for improving writing skills in language teaching methodologies. Thus, the thesis aims to improve language learning outcomes, empower students with valuable skills, and advance language education practices.

This study also holds significant importance from multiple perspectives. Professionally, it addresses the need for enhanced language education practices by incorporating innovative teaching methods. By focusing on methodological recommendations for improving writing skills, the proposal offers a practical approach that benefits language educators in improving students' writing skills. Methodologically, the study expands the existing knowledge base in language education research by implementing a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test measurements, aiming to provide empirical evidence on the impact of writing activities. From a social standpoint, the proposal addresses the specific needs of students at the A1 level, bridging educational gaps and fostering confidence.



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## CHAPTER I

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **When does writing start?**

All language skills are important to be developed at the appropriate stage for learners according to their capacities. Writing is considered a complex skill, and it can be because it concerns other language abilities and competencies articulated with cultural behavior and cognitive abilities, which are encouraged during most of childhood and adolescence, such as analyzing, creativity, organization, classifying, and designing. Based on my experience, most English learners of a foreign language are skilled in writing more than short and isolated sentences after elementary school. When children are eleven years old and are in the formal operation stage (Jean Piaget, 1936) they are capable of hypothetical-deductive reasoning and conclusions using logic and creativity (Oogarah-Pratap, 2020).

According to Chomsky (1965), when learners begin secondary school, they are in the critical period, and it makes it possible to start writing paragraphs where it is not very difficult to identify word order and punctuation, for example. Spada and Lightbown (1999) indicate that at the beginning of adolescence, learners of a foreign language use it with a considerable degree of generalizations and interference from their mother tongue until learners can produce sentences built up based on some linguistic components such as syntax.

From my point of view, writing as a productive skill needs a combination of cognitive abilities, cultural knowledge, and learning context that demands good preparation of learners with concrete linguistic competencies to transmit well-organized information. These competencies can be developed through the secondary years of school when learners have some cognitive skills that let them be more autonomous and creative. In addition, they have gained vocabulary and some writing experience to express their ideas and opinions about different topics. As Hyland states, when we write, we not only communicate facts, but also “construct” our conclusions and opinions.

#### **How to write? / The writing process**

Therefore, writing can be considered a complete and complex skill whose limitations must be corrected using dynamic and systematic strategies, such as the writing process. It originated in the 1970s when researchers started examining the writing strategies of experienced writers to create a



more organized form for written texts. Thus, writing development is possible through the steps that go from the simple to the complex and the stages that determine the sequence of setting ideas in paragraphs. Aluemalai & Maniam (2020) support the importance of following a process to systematize writing. The findings of this study show that learners prefer planning strategies, then while writing, and revising strategies.

The writing process means an appropriate approach to follow and obtain clear messages and reliable information in organized paragraphs. This process must be guided and oriented because writing is “more explicit” (Richards, 1995) than spoken language because of the audience that cannot be familiar to the person who writes.

Also, when we write, it is relevant to consider the context of the topic and the language we use to communicate the ideas, information, and opinions.

Elements such as audience, context, and language must be connected through the sentences and paragraphs developed in written texts. Thus, syntax and vocabulary are significant linguistic elements to be cared for in the sense that writing demands the use of more advanced structures, tenses, and specific vocabulary. Olson states that writing is an autonomous system because of these linguistic and cultural (contextual) implications.

For young learners, writing can mean one of the most natural and simple competencies if they follow the steps in the writing process because it also motivates their critical thinking and creativity. Douglas et. al, (2016) initiated and promoted the process teaching method in Western countries and concluded that the teaching process is practical and contributes to the writing ability in English. In this sense, Warne (2008) also points out her experience with junior, senior, and middle school students and the time of school year they took to improve writing skills, developing each step of the writing process and ensuring the work and activities in every single step. Learners at these ages can comprehend the specific tasks they need to complete in each stage of the writing process until they reach a final text. Thus, 10th grade can be the starting point of future and consistent written productions longer than descriptive paragraphs.



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Again, I can state that the practicality of the writing process facilitates the organization of the information, examples, facts, and evidence in the paragraphs, showing only the relevant data about the topic learners write about. Another benefit of following the writing process is the origin of communicative features in written texts based on learners' creativity and criticality. Students can combine factual information with their points of view, feelings, and ideas about different topics with strategies that guide the organization and selection of original and dependable information. Learners and their written productions are socially responsible for communicating reliable data while caring for their linguistic skills. In 10th graders, these linguistic and social aspects can be developed through the process and models of paragraphs they will write about. Reading paragraph models results in an advantage in two planes. On the one hand, learners can draw a better idea of how is the format of a paragraph. On the other hand, their vocabulary can be expanded and become more specialized.

It is also the result of the study about the writing process approach done by Onozawa (2010) that indicates the value and benefits of incorporating language skills as the opportunity to share ideas and innovate with new and different ones that can feed what learners have written or will write. Thus, learners who integrate two or more language skills will improve all of them. Again, well-known author Olson (2021) seeks to investigate and reinforce the relationship between reading and writing to assist teachers in showing their students what skilled readers and writers do when they derive meaning from and with texts. Concluding this idea, reading can be linked to writing skills to gain motivation to complete activities on these skills.

The writing process approach is considered by Onozawa (2010), as the group of students' needs, expectations, goals, learning styles, skills, and knowledge. Then, this proposal plans to design examples and models according to the learners' needs and interests that motivate and let students feel comfortable with the topics they write about. Consequently, the vocabulary will be more familiar for learners who can generate ideas easily and quickly, showing they are developing cognitive competencies such as attention, memory, analysis, synthesis, classifying, and discriminating.



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### **The descriptive paragraph**

It is relevant to cite Wali and Mandani (2020), who consider writing paragraphs as a crucial skill that is not easy or simple to teach. Consequently, teachers must apply the most proper strategies and activities in the classroom that guarantee learners can express their feelings and ideas through written words in well-organized paragraphs.

Moreover, for this study, the elemental components of a paragraph, according to Wali and Mandani (2020), align with the language level of the 10th graders, who will identify and create a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence at the beginning with the guidance of the teacher and then by themselves. Learners will also have the opportunity to read and follow samples and models that are useful for the first paragraph.

Writing in English offers different formats, and they also serve diverse purposes. For example, Weissberg (1984) mentions scientific and technical writing. According to Montelongo, et. al (2011), children in 6th and 7th grades can learn and write expository paragraphs based on reading documentary texts. Another example of considering different kinds of written texts is the one developed by Newell, et. al (2011), who show K–12 students can write argumentative paragraphs based on cognitive and social perspectives. Gaetz (2017) indicates the best suggestions and details for writing illustration, narration, description, process, definition, classification, and argument paragraph patterns.

Pointing out the age and English level stages of the teenagers in this proposal, Wali and Mandani (2020) describes writing as the most challenging academic activity and also the point of view of Hyland (2019) about writing is the act where creativity makes it possible to express the personal ideas, experiences, and opinions of the writer, the production of descriptive paragraphs will be one of the most significant aspects to develop in this study.

According to Gaetz (2017 ) and Wali (2020), descriptive paragraphs communicate in detail the sounds, appearance, smell, and taste of the described object, animal, or person. In short, the descriptive paragraph will form a "vivid" picture in the reader's mind. Learners who write



descriptive paragraphs will use resources such as adjectives that are taught from the beginning of elementary school. Moreover, basic structures such as Simple Present and Simple Past will support concrete descriptions of topics with which 10th graders and teenagers, in general, are familiar, such as personal information, famous people, and family. Learners will always care about the specific organizational elements and sequence the writing process demands to write concrete messages or descriptions.

Wahyuni (2018) states that descriptive paragraphs have generic structures, which are identification, definition, and conclusion, whose functions are related to the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence that reinforces these meanings and how to articulate them all together in good paragraphs capable of describing people, places, and events.

### **Steps of the Writing Process**

Processing information, even if it is factual or based on experiences, has to complete steps in the correct sequence or a systemic way to produce or achieve a particular goal. The writing process demands that writers and learners follow steps to organize information, experiences, beliefs, feelings, and opinions to express through coherent paragraphs considering important linguistic components of languages (word order and punctuation) and the reader's attention.

Thus, according to different authors, there are diverse steps in the writing process. For example, for Congjun (2005), there are eight steps to complete a written text: planning, global planning, rehearsing, repeating, re-reading, questioning, revising, and editing. For Hatcher et. al (2005), the writing productions must be clear, concise, and correct through these steps: establish the purpose and identify the reader. Then get organized, write a first draft, age the draft, re-read the draft, revise, edit, and proofread (p.12). "Teaching Writing as a Process" is another point of view to organize written texts. It was developed by D'Aoust (1987), that refers to writing as a non-linear creative process capable of transforming thoughts into print. She considers a few steps for the process: pre-writing, writing, sharing/responding, revising, editing, and evaluating. Besides these models of organizing the writing process, there is a simple one by Gaetz (2017), which contains the following stages: exploring, developing, revising, and editing. These macro stages also have sub-stages:



**Table 1.**

*Steps of the Writing Process*

Macro stages	Sub-stages
Exploring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Determine the topic, audience, and purpose</li><li>- Brainstorming.</li></ul>
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Narrow your topic.</li><li>- Express the topic sentence (main idea)</li><li>- Develop supporting ideas</li><li>- Make a plan (outline)</li><li>- Write your first draft.</li></ul>
Revising and editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Revise for unity.</li><li>- Revise for adequate support.</li><li>- Revise for coherence.</li><li>- Revise for style.</li><li>- Edit for technical errors.</li></ul>

Note. Gaetz (2017)

However, this study must consider the language proficiency of the 10<sup>th</sup> graders at an A1 level and the context to propose some adaptations especially in the sub-stages.

**Table 2.**

*Adaptation of the Writing Process steps.*

Macro stages	Sub-stages
Exploring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Determine the topic, audience, and purpose</li><li>- Brainstorming (setting hierarchy among the ideas)</li></ul>
Developing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Express the topic sentence (main idea)</li><li>- Develop supporting ideas</li></ul>



- Write your first draft.

Revising and editing

- Revise for coherence and technical errors.

Note. Adaptation of Gaetz (2017)

These adaptations include three aspects. First, the periods of English classes are only three and last forty minutes each, which means a very short time to cover as many steps as there are in most of the writing process described previously. Second, some steps can be joined or integrated according to the cognitive level of the students in 10th grade. For example, in the developing stage, at the same time, learners can narrow the topic of their paragraphs. They can construct their topic sentence to focus the information, facts, and ideas to be concrete and communicate specific details for the readers. Also, in the stage of revising and editing from Gaetz's model (2017), there are five sub-stages, but, in considering the integration of them, this research wants to use the last one: revise for coherence and technical errors, which are two significant fields in writing I have observed along these years of teaching. The third aspect to consider in joining the sub-stages is the practice or training of writing that learners can do to improve this skill. It would be possible to use models and examples that they would use to analyze the format and the way they are written and then create their paragraphs. According to Jarvis and Holdford (2003), practice or training is crucial to ensure competencies and content are relevant to gain information and knowledge.

Following these steps of exploring, developing, revising, and editing can guarantee improvements in written texts for beginners who are motivated to complete each step in the writing process until they have a descriptive paragraph capable of transmitting an organized and coherent message.

### **Brainstorm: a strategy to organize descriptive paragraphs**

For Gaetz (2005), one of the most important strategies to generate ideas is brainstorming, and this study will use it because it offers learners a simple and noncomplex way to think of general ideas, examples, and facts about different topics. It also means making the most of time for writing, which is not a simple skill because of its organization. Also, Warne (2008) and her experience with young learners in middle school concluded that most of her students start their written texts thinking about



the topic they need to write about. Then, learners look for as many ideas and details as possible to make their creations more interesting.

When learners start the first macro-stage (exploring) and brainstorming, they also classify and prioritize their ideas and information. They focus on relevant and remarkable facts that will be part of the message they want to give or transmit. Hence, we must guide students to write their selected ideas in a joined manner to tell the readers or audience their thoughts in a sequence that can guarantee a comprehensible paragraph. According to Onozawa (2010), writing "is the most difficult skill for L2 learners to master" in the sense that learners do not only generate ideas, but these ideas must be readable," which is possible if the learners combine cognitive processes such as planning and organizing with language skills such as spelling, word choice, and punctuation.

In the context of this research, these cognitive competencies and linguistic skills have been encouraged during the previous grades. Thus, in 10th grade, students can use English as a foreign language to narrate their information and opinions. They need to plan and organize their ideas. Consequently, I propose brainstorming and setting a hierarchy among all the ideas students can generate. Learners will number their ideas to organize them into primary and secondary ones. Thus, learners can follow a sure sequence using the numbered ideas in their paragraphs. In short, they have the path to develop their ideas in order following the same hierarchy they decided after they brainstormed the topic.

Brainstorming can seem like a facile activity, but it involves "making choices and decisions," as Congjun (2005) mentioned. In this line, Flower and Hayes (1981) indicate that writing in English is a recursive process that could be compared with juggling. For young learners at an A1 level, brainstorming could be easy and simple, but after some practice or training, as teenagers, they need to focus on the principal goal of brainstorming a topic and the information about it being concrete and direct. I usually have difficulties in this sense, especially because students generally ramble among their ideas. They cannot get the point quickly. Thus, numbering ideas can be an appropriate strategy to organize the narrative of events and information.



Finally, and based on my teaching practice, it is transcendent to mention that grammar is not considered crucial at this stage. Most learners are usually pending about their errors when using grammar or structures. In this stage, it could be very relevant to emphasize the main task of generating ideas and not writing long sentences with no errors. Students also must organize their ideas by giving them numbers as a simple activity, putting aside the great importance students are used to giving grammar rules.

### **Expressing the topic sentence and supporting ideas**

The second macro-stage in the writing process designed by Gaetz (2005) is Developing, and it is time to express the topic sentence or main idea in the descriptive paragraph. For Nakamura (1987), the topic sentence is the one that controls the whole text.

In this research context, the topic sentence will be taught as the sentence that generally is located at the beginning of the paragraph and will tell the audience what they will read about. It will be short, concrete, and capable of involving the total information that describes the rest of the text. Learners must transmit a complete idea for the reader's vision in the following lines. It can be positive for the students to revise the hierarchy of ideas they will do after brainstorming the topic. It can also facilitate the organization and sequence of the upcoming details and information. In fact, when learners can express the topic sentence it will be easier to connect the rest of the ideas and get the reciprocal relation between the topic sentence and the supporting details (Nakamura,1987).

According to this proposal, the supporting sentences will have the principal functions of helping the topic sentence and developing the information in a well-organized way. Supporting sentences will be examples, experiences, or details that give the reader relevant evidence about the topic. Commonly, supporting sentences are written and developed in distinct paragraphs. However, based on the age and English level of the group of learners in this study, all the supporting sentences will follow the topic sentences, forming a unique descriptive paragraph.

Gaetz (2005) considers connector words or linkers helpful in ordering and organizing the supporting sentences. Learners in 10th grade will be instructed to use them depending on the communicative purpose of each one and its role in joining different ideas, examples, information,



and conclusions. In addition, students will be guided to express their ideas logically, which is, for Gaetz (2005), the "emphatic order". Using this kind of order, learners will rank the importance or relevance of their supporting ideas using their own beliefs and opinions. It is relevant to mention that in the previous grades (8th and 9th), students have been using some connector words such as first, second, third, also, in addition, and finally. Also, they have joined short sentences using the conjunctions and and but. The goal now in 10th grade is to write paragraphs to transmit well-organized information showing a proper sequence to express ideas.

### **Revising and editing**

This last stage in the Gaetz (2017) model emphasizes, in a sub-stage, revising, and it implicates two relevant aspects for consistently written texts: coherence and technical errors. Both can mean not very easy abilities to write, but as (Reid, 2001) considers, writing is a "self-discovery," or in simple terms, a process of reflection where the learner, from their first phrases and sentences, must analyze and realize their errors and mistakes to be conscious of the adjustments he can make to improve the information he wants to transmit communicatively. In addition, Treiman (1983), has pointed out that self-discovery refers to new ideas and new forms of a foreign language that can be developed and analyzed in the last stage of the writing process when students can reread their ideas and rewrite them more effectively in linguistic terms. Then, learners can have the opportunity to gain insights about their paragraphs, which must transmit descriptions efficiently.

These conceptions about writing as a process of self-discovery align with the concept of self-regulation given again by Reid (2010), which sets updated writing models to observe this integral skill where cognitive, affective, linguistic, and behavioral processes occur in a specific context. Thus, writing is a "multi-dimensional process" that must be observed as one of its main steps, where self-monitoring, self-assessing, revising, and modifying while writing is a group of actions that facilitate communicative written texts.

Moreover, when learners revise their written texts they will be clearer in relevant aspects of their paragraphs. For example, they can avoid repetition of ideas and serious deficiencies they could have, especially, in word order and punctuation (Salem 2007). Also, in this stage, students can



realize the validity of their examples and other information they have written in their descriptions. Writing is not a linear process (Barton,1998). However, it is a recursive activity (Warne, 2008) where self-criteria about different topics, creativity, and context have crucial roles when learners generate ideas to express on paper.

Based on my experience, revising and editing demand time from learners and educators. Nevertheless, if we practice the writing process, including this last stage of revising the draft, this whole process will become more familiar and less complex with time. Students can use a lot of time at the beginning, but with practice and training in the writing process approach, they can internalize almost all the knowledge and skills they develop. As Warne (2008) sustains in her studies with middle scholars, it is significant to define a cycle of repetition to practice the writing process, which can produce short sentences and paragraphs. However, in some years, the written productions can be more sophisticated based on the writing steps.

### **Feedback to revise and edit**

I think another relevant aspect of revising and editing can be feedback, and to improve writing skills, it must be personal. In other words, educators must give feedback to each learner to explain specifically each point that needs modifications. Most teachers usually revise paragraphs and essays, writing some comments that learners generally cannot comprehend easily because of the symbols we can use in abbreviations to explain the students' errors, even though it is a considerable necessity to try to change this feedback into something more personal to analyze the learner's errors and realize the correct way to organize ideas, use grammar, and use punctuation.

According to Nelson (2009), there are two steps to proper feedback. First, through specific comments, and second, using helpful comments. Teachers must avoid confusing information when the aim is to improve written texts. Thus, the limitations have to be correct specifically. Then, they should be explained clearly. Also, educators must offer advice or tips on how to improve.

In our context, I have also worked on giving feedback to the whole class when it is large and the time is against our plans. It could be more beneficial if feedback is given after each step of the



writing process, analyzing the most significant activities or tasks in each one. We are offering proofreading in the form of the process described by Nelson (2009). At the same time, we are revising and recalling the most significant features of the steps in the writing process. Also, it can be an advantage to control the time students should use for each part of their process. This kind of feedback can also denote another advantage when the suggestions and corrections can be real-time and could serve more than one student in the class. In addition, feedback can be given on the paragraph content, recognizing, for example, the vocabulary and examples learners can use depending on the topic they write about. In a class, we can review, in general terms, the correct use of word order and punctuation. Feedback for the whole class could be beneficial for teachers and students to clarify general weak aspects that can appear in descriptive paragraphs.

Peer feedback is another strategy we can use for this last step in the writing process and can contribute to the objectives of self-regulation. It can be planned for revising and editing from the point of view of a reader (peer), and the comments he can give according to some criteria the class can agree on at the beginning of the writing activity. In the context of the students in this proposal, I can recommend some criteria for assessing peer feedback that include organization and punctuation. Both are easier than other descriptors of assessment criteria such as accuracy, language, punctuation, and spelling. These last ones have to be analyzed and graded by teachers. Peer feedback can facilitate the correct use of time, the practice of criticism, and values like honesty and responsibility.

In the opinion of Fareed et.al (2016), writing deficiencies are the result of teachers and students who, on the one hand, do not use pedagogical approaches to reading and writing. On the other hand, learners are unmotivated to practice and write. It can be different if teachers assist students. This author has identified an interconnected chain formed by teachers' support, learners' performance, and motivation. I believe this chain is crucial for learning since it means being guideless during the writing process, giving learners the space to make errors and correct their mistakes in the different elements of the language and the writing skill. Consequently, self-confidence can be encouraged in learners, and at the same time, they learn to be more natural, free to make errors and to ask teachers for possible solutions to improve.



Hence, teachers and educators must consider writing development more than grammar or structure forms in perfect sentences. I am not underestimating the role of grammar and other linguistic components of languages. However, when teaching the writing process to teenagers, the most relevant skills will be to organize ideas, satisfactorily express them, and communicate concrete messages. This proposal wants to work on these writing skills for 10th graders and make them a solid basis for their future studies and the requirements they will need for writing skills.

Again, I consider the importance of teaching the writing process because it means more than a systematic way to organize ideas and transmit them in messages. From my point of view, teaching the writing process is an ideal space where learners must develop and use cognitive abilities, behavioral attitudes, and social skills. According to Carson and Longhini (2002), when learners write, they can encourage metacognition and cognitive competencies that allow writers to control the writing process consciously and to carry out writing acts related to self-regulation and the context around the topic and the writer.

### **Models and examples**

Based on my experience, models and examples are helpful for young learners in the way they can offer students a confident path to follow. They also let learners practice feeling self-confident about the new skills and knowledge they learn. Indeed, White (1988) indicates that textbook models and good examples created by teachers are crucial samples for developing writing skills. Then, the model-based approach consists of analyzing and studying the model in terms of organization, content, and form. It means a basis for a parallel activity for a more proper production. In other words, 10th graders in this research will use models of writing texts so that, after its analysis, they can replicate them and also realize the different steps of the writing process to write descriptions effectively.

Other advantages I can mention about using models and examples to write are: first, they can work grammar and punctuation by deducting more than mechanically. They can realize important rules in these two linguistic components and comprehend their factual function in language. In addition, writing fluency can be perfect if learners use the vocabulary in the model and terms they



already have in their lexicon. Using models and examples allows students to open their vocabulary rank in the specific topic they write.

## CHAPTER II METHODOLOGY AND DIAGNOSIS

### Conceptualization and operationalization of the main categories (independent and dependent variables)

#### Independent Variable:

The use of the writing process and its steps.

- Motivation to write
- Knowledge: The writing process

#### Dependent Variable:

Writing skills

- Knowledge (a descriptive paragraph)
- Text production

#### Conceptual definition:

The writing process means an appropriate approach to follow and obtain clear messages and reliable information in organized paragraphs. This process must be guided and oriented because writing is “more explicit” (Richards, 1990) than spoken language especially because of the audience that cannot be familiar to the person who writes.

#### Operational definition:

“Writing is referring to making sense of how can I express what I think until I understand what I communicate?” Aluemalai & Maniam (2020) Then writing is the space production where learners can express freely their beliefs, opinions, feelings, and ideas using written words and structures to communicate.

- Knowledge (a descriptive paragraph)
- Text production



Table 3.

*Operacionalization Matriz Of Variables*

**OPERACIONALIZATION MATRIZ OF VARIABLES**

Independent Variable	Conceptual Definition	Dimensions	Indicators	Items
The use of the writing process (brainstorm and developing)	The writing process means an appropriate approach to follow and obtain clear messages and reliable information in organized paragraphs. This process must be guided and oriented because writing is “more explicit” (Richards,1990) than spoken language especially because of the audience that cannot be familiar to the person who writes.	Motivation to write	Interest in writing	Items: 1, 2, 7, 9
		Knowledge: The writing process	Brainstorm Developing	Items: 3, 4, 5, 6 8, 10.
Dependent Variable	Conceptual Definition	Dimensions	Indicators	Items





Writing skills	<p>“Writing is referring to making sense of how can I express what I think until I understand what I communicate?” Aluemalai &amp; Maniam (2020) Then writing is the space production where learners can express freely their beliefs, opinions, feelings, and ideas using written words and structures to communicate.</p>	<p>Knowledge (a descriptive paragraph)</p> <p>Text production</p>	<p>Paragraph organization</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Word-order</p> <p>Language</p>	<p>Rubric: criteria and scales.</p>
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Note: Elaborated by: Diana Arciniegas Fárez.

### Statement and Justification of the Research Approach

Action research is considered the most appropriate approach in this proposal, recommending strategies for improving writing skills. I believe action research highly supports educational processes because it analyzes specific needs and proposes practical alternatives or solutions. In addition, this approach makes possible direct intervention by the researcher to solve, in this case, limitations and deficiencies in writing skills. It is a more practical and helpful method appropriate for researchers and demands rapid results and findings more than theoretical solutions (Asenahabi, 2019).

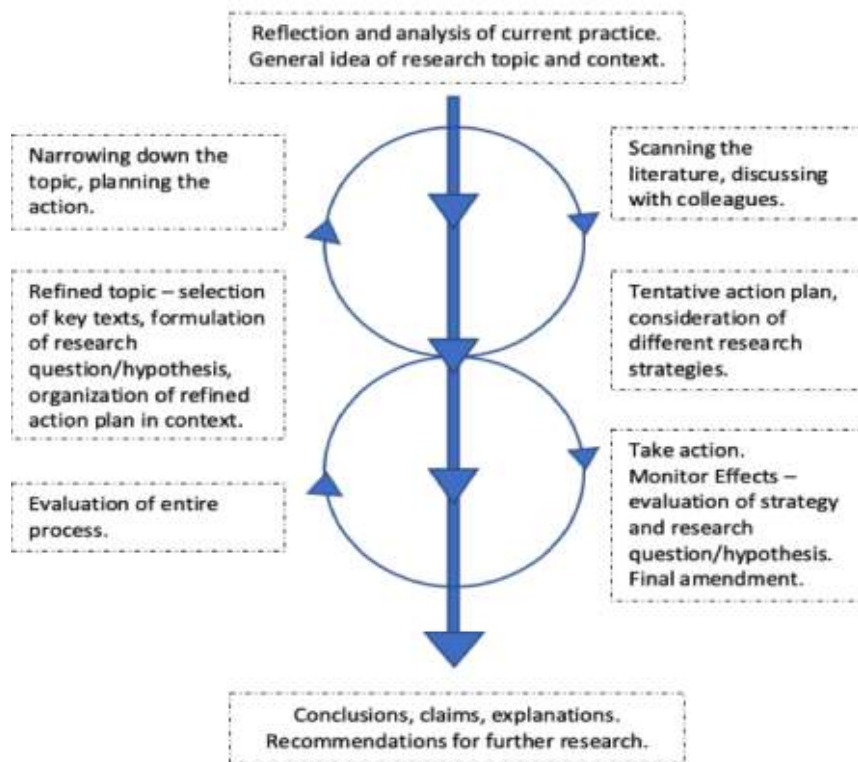
According to Clark et. al (2020), action research helps educators improve their teaching practice as an opportunity to develop reflections on strategies and didactics. In addition, about aids teachers use in their daily activities. This reflection also permits the outline of different forms of teaching and the presentation of knowledge to learners. Educators can modify and regulate their common or typical practices into more innovative ones.



For this educational proposal, action research means support in two senses. On the one hand, it will allow us to analyze the process of the research design through the planned intervention applying the writing process and improving writing skills. On the other hand, action research will guide the project's progress through its macro stages that describe a clear path for the research (Kemmis, 2004).

**Figure 1**

*The action research cycle*



Note. Interpretation of the action research cycle, Macintyre (2000, p. 1)

First, action research identifies the problem or need in a specific context and proposes a change (Clark 2020). The identified needs will be measurable and relevant in the context in which they originated. Secondly, previous research and studies will be revised to get a closer look at similar characteristics of those contexts to the one where the proposal is developing. Articles, journals, and books must be read and revised thoroughly to find relevant facts about the age of students, their level of proficiency, strategies for improvement, linguistic theories and approaches, and findings that can



be considered as supports for the new research based on current but previous educational experiences to improve writing skills. In this proposal, the writing process has been valued as the most appropriate approach because of its macro and sub-steps that let learners in secondary school plan paragraphs gradually from the simple to the complex. Hirdly, the strategy that has been selected for this study will be the answer to the research question that guides the process of the investigation itself. The research questions will be aligned to the general and specific objectives that, in simple words, will focus on improving the organization of learners' ideas through brainstorming them. Then give a hierarchy to the ideas, and finally produce a paragraph with fluency using connectors and linkers. Moreover, in the paragraphs, students will show strong topic sentences and other information capable of transmitting concrete information with sequence and order.

Next, action research demands collecting and analyzing data. In this case, 32 students will be the population, and 12 will be the sample. A survey, pre-and post-tests, an open-ended questionnaire, and a journal are the instruments in this research. They will measure numerically and qualitatively the results of the learners and the researcher. Also, these instruments are closely related to the dimensions and independent and dependent variables that, in sum, consider the language competencies focused on the writing process and the learners' attitudes towards writing productions.

Data analysis is the next stage, according to the action research approach. In this section of the research process, descriptive statistics are for the numerical results, and thematic analysis is for the insights and opinions expressed by learners. Then, interpretation of the results is crucial to form a general snapshot of the effectiveness of the strategy planned to improve writing texts in 10th graders. It will be objective, avoiding bias, and respecting the learners' performance and responses in the different instruments used for data collecting.

In this educational research, the intervention must be performed based on a plan that guarantees a proper sequence in implementing the most relevant strategy, the writing process through models and samples of each step it has, and well-organized paragraphs. The research objectives will address the activities and material used for the sessions with the sample group.



Evidencing and evaluating are important aspects of action research, and both are analyzed in a specific context with all its particular features and real-life situations. Then concluding does not mean making claims but relevant information for continuing improvement. Action research promotes a regular revision of teaching practices and deep consideration of setting the pros and cons of different teaching methods and always focusing on their advancement (Clark, 2020).

Moreover, reflecting is a prominent stage of action research that permits us to rethink the whole investigation process and the educational strategies, methods, materials, resources, and activities the research has used during the intervention. Simply put, the input and outcome are assessed constantly to improve the pedagogical practices to teach how to write, following steps that facilitate these productive skills.

Finally, the findings and conclusions must be reported objectively. It is significant to describe how the research process has been planned and organized, as well as the results after implementing the proposed alternatives to improve and gain development and advances in learners' communicative competencies when they express their ideas and information in writing.

### **Identifying a problem**

Writing demands time to plan and organize information and ideas. Timing to write interesting facts in a form, the reader feel engaged with the topic. These characteristics begin in writers at an early age. Tenth graders, in this case, have studied basic structures and have enough vocabulary. However, there are some deficiencies with writing clear and organized paragraphs about their closer context following the steps this skill involves. On the other hand, teachers must create the habits and time to follow the writing process, adding the revising and editing steps because they are relevant to learning and identifying errors and mistakes. Time is generally short to complete the writing process, but with some technology tools, the feedback can be much simpler and more pertinent. They have a lot of difficulties when writing simple sentences and paragraphs. Learners do not articulate or join ideas to develop a paragraph that describes a situation clearly. They cannot use vocabulary and basic structures effectively to create some written ideas, much less organize their ideas about a topic. Consequently, the writing process is a weak aspect to improve.



Writing is the last skill to be developed in learners because it requires a wide range of vocabulary, a strong knowledge of grammar and structures, and the organization of ideas and information they want to transmit. Nunan (2009) states writing as "an ability to initiate and evolve ideas and then use certain revising and editing practices to develop them to maturity in a given context".

### **Diagnosis / Data collection**

The target population for this research is made up of 32 students in 10th grade receiving education in a public school. They are between 14 and 15 years old and have A1 proficiency in English. This group of learners has studied basic grammar structures such as simple present and simple past that allow them to write simple and short sentences describing their routines, likes and dislikes, transcendent people in their lives, and past events. In addition, learners' vocabulary has a relationship to the mentioned topics, which lets them have enough fluency while writing sentences. The most relevant limitation in writing skills is the organization of sentences in paragraphs capable of transmitting concrete information about any topic. Also, word order and punctuation are aspects of writing that 10th graders need to improve.

From the 32 students in 10th grade, 12 learners will be chosen as the sample for this research by convenience sampling because these students were willing and available to participate in the study in virtual sessions (asynchrony sessions) after their regular class schedule and have the technological requirements (an electronic device and Internet connection). Also, the researcher can follow the sequence in which they have started to improve their writing skills, taking into account the first or original limitations learners in this study have shown. Moreover, the mixed method for this research aligns with convenience sampling in the sense that it makes it possible to apply the instruments, especially for qualitative data collection, and the tools that originate the findings and conclusions after the strategies and practices the researcher will implement in the asynchrony sessions for writing activities, and finally apply the post-test easily in terms of time and location of the students in the population and sample. Finally, convenience sampling is convenient and saves time when contacting the students in the sample.



Data collection for this research will be collected quantitatively and qualitatively since both approaches are pertinent for the investigation because they allow for quantifying the effectiveness of the writing process and gathering rich and detailed information on the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study.

The effectiveness of the writing process in developing writing skills will have its basis on the data collected from a survey, a pre-test, and a post-test. The pre-and post-tests will have the same format and assessment criteria. The pre-test is an activity that demands the 32 students in the 10th A class write a paragraph. They can select between two topics to write about: my family and my daily routine. It is necessary to mention that the pre-and post-tests will be applied to the population in this study to compare the results, especially to the 12 students in the sample group.

For the qualitative data collection aspect of the research, the empirical method will be developed because it lets us collect data more objectively in the sense that it is on direct learners' observations and experiences during the implementation of the proposal. Thus, an open-ended questionnaire will be used, to collect the learners' impressions and opinions about the sessions, any difficulties, advantages, disadvantages, and possible changes they would make to them. This tool seeks to analyze and consider learners' individual insights that have high value for relevant educational aspects such as motivation and attitudes to afford new learning strategies. Moreover, a journal written by the researcher with details from her observations will support the qualitative aspect of this study.

### **Data Analysis**

It is also the gathered information and facts that researchers can collect, process, summarize, and interpret objectively to support innovations that will contribute to better teaching practices. In other words, after collecting and analyzing data, it is possible to make decisions that can be crucial for the educational field. Also, according to Simister (2017), using data and after its analysis, researchers produce knowledge that is important for applying the strategies, resources, and techniques used in previous research in a similar context.



In my experience, data collection starts with plain but committed observations and questions the researcher needs to answer to transform the alerts into discoveries or solutions. It can produce better results when the researcher feels a high degree of interest in the identified needs. Thus, he wants to investigate more about the topic and assess the information to be positive as a basis for finding options to improve.

In this research, the data analysis has been followed in stages and steps to establish the most relevant and helpful information aligned with the objectives, context, learners' profiles, instruments, dimensions, and language theories. It has also meant several modifications to the different sections of the study, which are positive since these changes make the research more real and valid.

The entry and post-tests have been examined to be pertinent to the English-level proficiency of the learners in the study. The rubric to assess the entry and post-tests has been redesigned from a more technical and probed rubric from Cambridge guides for teachers. Besides, the survey questions and their format were planned based on the clearest and most proper ways to be faced and responded to. Thus, the survey will be online, and the answers must be comprehended deeply using software that helps organize the data; graphs and numbers will not tell the readers the whole picture of the results.

Then, the need to find more details and report thoroughly the results learners and the researcher have after the strategies used in the development of the study must originate two more instruments: an open-ended questionnaire for students and a journal to be written by the researcher.

Consequently, the instruments in this research will give concrete findings covering the numerical aspect of the study shown in statistical tables. And the qualitative (attitudes and experiences) appreciation participants will feel toward writing skills.

### **Reporting results**

According to Clark (2020), reporting results is imperative for researchers and must be done very formally because findings make the researcher consider deeply the significance of his study and its conclusions. The results obtained in this study want to go further and reach practical applications of the findings and suggestions for future researchers who could need the information to modify their



teaching practice when developing writing skills into innovations and new decisions based on previous studies that could be described in similar educational and social contexts where the writing process might be a helpful strategy to be beneficial with learners in secondary school.

### **Description of the research methods and their purposes in the context of the proposal.**

Accordingly, to respond to the research question about options to improve deficiencies in writing skills through the writing process and its macro-stages of exploring and developing, this proposal will apply a mixed method convergent approach where quantitative and qualitative approaches are the basis. Quantitative and qualitative methods have been significant in collecting the data for this study because they allowed for quantifying the beneficial effects of the writing process and gathering rich, detailed information on the experiences and perspectives of the study participants. From my point of view, using a mixed method could facilitate, improve, and promote a study's findings. Adopting mixed methodologies should help in each investigation to address the research difficulties.

Moreover, the mixed method helps the researcher to obtain numeric and qualitative data that helps to understand the results of a social and educational phenomenon that could be enhanced, after applying the data-collecting instruments. The mixed method has two relevant features in this research. On the one hand, the flexible perceptions of the results through the free opinions learners in this study will express in the open-ended questionnaire and the writing classes. On the other hand, the objectivity numbers and statistics offered through instruments such as the entry, survey, and post-test will be applied.

Hence, articulating quantitative and qualitative methods can facilitate measuring and interpreting the information that comes through the instruments objectively while quantifying and describing the modifications or variations in the independent variable that determine the effectiveness of the implementations (Mack et al.,2005).



The mixed method offers the advantage of flexibility during the data collection stage, as Mack et al. (2005) stipulates. It is an important characteristic that permits one to comprehend the results deeply after analyzing the numerical conclusions. The qualitative analysis originates from more interaction between the participants and the researcher. Consequently, the responses in this proposal could be more spontaneous and less conventional to guarantee free responses from the students that indicate their perceptions and opinions after their active participation in learning about the writing process through the sessions, examples, and models students will use (Mack et al.,2005).

Thus, this information will be crucial for the study while describing results that indicate statistics for measuring the possible alternatives to improving writing skills. Moreover, the participants and the researcher can have access to learners' experiences and insights that show the results from a different, valid point of view. Thus, the advantages of learning about the writing process must be felt by students as a significant technique for their current and future communicative skills and knowledge. When learners have the favorable occasion to express their feelings spontaneously during the intervention, it might be easier to comprehend their behavior when facing new methods and strategies. Moreover, analyzing qualitative results can measure students' motivation to receive tasks and activities planned according to their needs and interests in their particular context. Thus, the impact and relevance of this proposal could be understood much more directly from the learners' opinions and points of view.

Also, to contribute to educational improvements in writing skills and align with the objectives of this proposal, the inductive and deductive methods will guide the methodological section.

They generate hypotheses about the efficacy of the writing process in developing writing skills and hypotheses about the effectiveness of the writing process based on the existing literature and theories on language acquisition and teaching methods. These methods are feasible in this proposal as they align with the learners' cognitive and language competencies developed previously, and as Mallia 2014 indicates, the inductive method demands more independent students' work to reinforce and progress in their learning. Also, a deductive approach requires work on metalinguistic competencies.



In addition, the empirical method is pertinent for data collection from direct students' observations, opinions, and experiences after and before the intervention. This approach, according to Phillips 2005, states that avoids subjectivity and prioritizes current information originated through the instruments that draw conclusions and inform findings that are important to validate the study completely or any of its aspects to improve educational needs.

### **Description of the instruments based on the selected research approach.**

According to Clark 2020, educators are researchers who must pay attention to every detail in the study design. They must also consider the development of skills before and after applying innovative methodologies to improve language deficiencies. Thus, the reflection that action research originates in this proposal can be guided by the mentioned data collection tools, which means a proper form of inquiry about learning practice improvements.

The instruments for collecting data are four in this proposal: pre-and post-tests, a survey, an open-ended questionnaire, and a journal. From my point of view, they are helpful for this study because they provide quantitative and qualitative information that will facilitate the interpretation of the real diagnosis state of the participants in this social field of education, which involves a technical basis as well as the attitudes, experiences, and feelings of educators and learners towards learning processes.

### **A survey**

As a data collection instrument, part of the diagnosis process had been designed to be used by the population in the 10th grade. This instrument, which offers quantitative results, will measure the motivation learners have developed to write about a crucial issue to continue learning and developing skills. Materials and resources are limited in the modules learners in public schools use to teach, and it is significant to have clear information about the learners' attitudes and motivations when facing writing activities that are not the most simple tasks when acquiring a new language. Also, the observations and assumptions the researcher has made before this proposal has indicated writing as a deficiency that could have originated from a lack of motivation and pertinent strategies to write.



It is first language processing because of the English level of proficiency and its digital format in Google Forms. The survey wants to know some learners' attitudes and perceptions about writing skills through questions that focus on their writing preferences. In addition, the survey seeks to infer general information about 10th graders' knowledge of the writing process, which, based on my personal experience, has been weekly developed on the English modules created by the Educational Ministry for this grade. Hence, the material to enhance writing skills has not been deeply familiar to learners or teachers. Consequently, the skills stated by the Ministry are developed to a low degree, affecting the regular progress of learners' English proficiency.

### **Pre-test and post-test**

Designed by the researcher. It consists of a writing activity where learners must select a topic between two common ones for students: "My family" or "My activities every day" (a routine), and write a paragraph with 50 words or more. A rubric for writing tasks and assessment criteria has been adapted from *Assessing Writing for Cambridge English Qualifications: A guide for teachers A2 Key*.

The main adjustments in the rubric are in its descriptors and bands. In the original rubric, there are considered three subscales: content, organization, and language. They will be assessed through five bands. Three of these subscales described their indicators clearly. Bands 2 and 4 are not very clear for this proposal which demands very comprehensible descriptors and bands that can measure objectively the results in the pre-and post-tests according to the context and the linguistic competencies students have shown. Hence, the proposed rubric in this study has five bands to assess the paragraphs asked learners to produce more clearly.

The pre-test is an advantage in this proposal since it will measure the first assumptions about the writing deficiencies based on class tasks regularly applied before this study. The post-test will prove the advantages of teaching the writing process to improve the organization of paragraphs as their punctuation and word order.

Tenth graders have developed initial writing skills in previous years, and with the vocabulary they handle, their word productions must be longer and with concrete information and organization.





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It is the precise time to start with paragraphs that include and show these features. The rubric points out the assessment of three criteria: content, organization, and language. They have been worked on to a low degree only through the learners' production of simple and short sentences and ideas learners write to express.

Besides, the post-test was graded by a colleague. It is pertinent to avoid bias or subjectivity when assessing. She read, assessed, and graded the sample students' paragraphs following the rubric subscales, indicators, and bands. Another point of view was significant for analyzing the results because I consider it to be highly objective and honest.

### **Open-ended questionnaire**

Designed by the researcher will be applied after the intervention to collect the more spontaneous impressions and attitudes learners have felt and developed through the writing sessions. In my experience, the most confident and honest learners' opinions can be collected by answering them directly about the required information. This kind of information must be subjective but can be the most truthful and clearest to describe the findings and conclusions, not only about the writing skills but about the current process learners go through to improve their deficiencies when organizing ideas and transmitting them with a better structure and sequence.

This instrument has been designed in Spanish firstly because of the learners' proficiency level, who are not advanced, and because their mother tongue will facilitate their reading comprehension of each question. Also, their responses will be franker and more natural, with no limitations on their ideas, opinions, or feelings. The main aim of this open-ended questionnaire is to inform about the learners' attitudes toward materials, timing, methodology, strategies, and activities used during the intervention to rethink, improve, and reflect on them. Thus, the responses will be anonymous, and learners will be informed about all these details to show them the importance of their conclusions after the intervention.



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### **A journal**

Is written by the researcher to record in detail the learners' process during the virtual and face-to-face sessions and their progress through applying new writing strategies to organize and produce descriptive paragraphs. The journal will report the researcher's impressions after each writing class or session. Also, it will communicate the planning for the session, the implementations, and the reflections. This instrument will be helpful for this proposal in two ways. Firstly, it will form the impressions from the educator's point of view more realistically and naturally; that is a dynamic reality. Secondly, a journal can document more insights than numerical information. It is beneficial for comprehending more than numerical results.

The collected data will be organized and interpreted always following the action research principle of reflection, which lets the researcher analyze the results given by the instruments to improve, especially the quality of the teaching practice.

### **Description of participants and their characteristics. Population, sample and sampling.**

#### **Population**

The selected population for this research includes 32 students in 10th grade receiving basic education in a public school. They are between 14 and 15 years old and have A1 proficiency in the English language as a foreign language. This group of learners studied basic grammar structures, such as simple present and past structures. These tenses allow them to write simple and short sentences describing their routines, likes and dislikes, important people in their lives, and past events. In addition, learners' vocabulary is linked to the mentioned topics. It permits them to have enough fluency while writing sentences. The most relevant limitation in writing skills is the organization of sentences in paragraphs capable of transmitting concrete information about any topic. Also, word order and punctuation are aspects of writing that 10th graders need to improve.



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### Sample

From the 32 students in 10th grade, 12 learners have been selected as the sample for this study. They have given their voluntary consent to participate actively in the different activities planned for this research about methodologies to improve their writing abilities in English.

### Sampling Technique

This research was done by convenience sampling because these students were willing and available to participate in the study in virtual sessions after their regular class schedule and had the technological requirements (an electronic device and an Internet connection). Also, at this time, the researcher can be near the process and apply the selected strategies for improving writing skills. Then, the results collected through the instruments can be used directly and timely. The writing process can be observed in the participants' tasks and practices, where learners present organized ideas and the production of a paragraph with adequate punctuation and correct use of the language.

### Description of the needs of the participating (strengths and weaknesses of the contexts).

In general, and according to my experience, students have shown limitations in different learning abilities after the pandemic, with language skills being one of the most affected learning competencies in children and teenagers. The pandemic interrupted the regular advance of the national curricula (UNESCO, 2020). In the specific context of this research, the online classes were limited to grammar sessions, where vocabulary had been one of the most common linguistic components for practice. Even though technological tools for learning were explored and used, the language deficiencies of students in public schools were strictly considered.

Moreover, tenth grade concludes the basic education, and then learners will face the Baccalaureate and all the requirements it demands. It was the moment to intently solve the limitations that have been observed, especially in writing skills as productive competencies of English as a foreign language. The lack of material, models, and proper space in the modules given by the Ministry also contributed to a more complicated picture of the development of writing abilities.



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Even though 10th graders can identify and use the simple present and simple past tenses and structures, their word production rebelled at the need to improve their simple and short sentences into well-organized paragraphs capable of transmitting clear information. Paragraphs became important to construct proper descriptions that contained reliable information with adequate punctuation and word order.

Consequently, the writing process was thought to be the most helpful option to contribute to the progress of writing abilities. It is an appropriate approach to follow and obtain clear messages and reliable information in organized paragraphs. This process must be guided and oriented because writing is “more explicit” (Richards, 1990) than spoken language, especially because the audience is unfamiliar to the person who writes.

### **Description of the initial diagnosis for the elaboration of the methodological - technological proposal.**

The pre-test was designed considering the grammar structures and vocabulary 10th graders have learned and gained during their previous school years. Thirty-two students in this proposal its population responded to the activity planned for the pre-test. It lasted 40 minutes when learners chose between two topics that were familiar to them: my routine and my family. The number of words has not been mentioned, nor have any steps been mentioned for a concrete and concise paragraph. Nineteen learners preferred to write about their families. They used adjectives and vocabulary related to relatives and professions. Most learners who selected this topic wrote more than 30 words in their paragraphs. They maintained a sequence and order in the paragraphs by hierarchizing the descriptions of their relatives, commonly started by the father.

However, 13 students wrote about their routine. They use verbs, times, and days of the week to describe their daily activities. The sequence in these paragraphs was supported by the times they expressed, and some connector words, such as “after that,” were very used.

Learners did not consider any kind of organization of their ideas. They immediately began writing the instructions. They took their time to write all the ideas that came to their minds with any direction or orientation from the teacher, but they were worried about the number of words and sentences they could produce. Also, they called my attention when they could correctly write any



term. They pay attention to spelling but not punctuation, which is very basic in their short paragraphs.

Learners demonstrated a positive attitude for the pre-test. They have considerable errors in using language creation that involves everyday vocabulary and elemental grammar forms compared with the benchmarking described in the rubric adapted by Cambridge.

### **Description of the methodological/technological proposal.**

This methodological proposal for improving writing skills has its most relevant base in the writing process as an adequate approach to guide learners to well-organized paragraphs. After applying the pre-test, the sample group of 10 students attended 15 writing sessions in eight weeks. Eleven sessions were designed for online learning in Zoom meetings twice a week. Each session lasted 40 minutes, during which learners learned about the writing process and the advantages it can bring to their word productions. Then, they also had a space to practice through simple tasks whose aim was to reinforce and set the writing content.

Moreover, four sessions were face-to-face at the school. The practice was the focused activity in those last sessions. Learners could be guided more directly, and their errors were analyzed and checked timely. The interaction in these face-to-face classes was more dynamic than in the Zoom meetings.

The writing sessions were organized following a plan that described the objectives for each session, the materials or resources utilized, and the activities done by the participants in the intervention. The planning addressed these two aspects: content and practice, especially because of the importance of the application of new knowledge. In addition, learners usually responded to questions from the researcher that sought to build up concise knowledge about the steps and important aspects of what was and how this new form of outlining information could produce better paragraphs.

The writing process and its macro stages—exploring and developing—were adopted because of the English level of the learners in this research and their age. The modifications to the original proposal by Gaetz (2017) were to guide more directly the actions when writing for secondary learners.





Thus, after brainstorming, students had to set a hierarchy for their ideas and use this sequence in the paragraph. Using numbers for each idea and detail, learners could write them in a better order to gain coherence in their message.

The developing stage was re-organized, from its original model Getz (2017), which set five sub-stages. In this proposal these five steps have been divided into three: expressing the topic sentence, developing supporting ideas, and writing a draft. This sequence pattern has been followed in the paper-based writing practices offered to learners. In the beginning, they thought about the topic. Secondly, students generated ideas through a brainstorming strategy. Then, learners put numbers to each idea to set a more direct sequence in the paragraph development and rapidly classify the secondary or supporting ideas. These steps of the writing process had been worked on by learners in every writing session, to create a habit when they write.

Thirdly, learners could create a topic sentence capable of summarizing their most relevant ideas in the brainstorming step and then presenting them to their audience or readers as a big picture of the information that will be developed in the following sentences of the paragraph. For creating topic sentences, it was necessary to have a clear explanation and the presentation of different models that show in a didactic and pedagogical way to express ideas and information. Learners read the examples, and the researcher analyzed how the topic sentence must be written. Then, they decide what it must communicate before writing the rest of the paragraph.

During these sessions, writing elements such as the writing process for descriptive paragraphs, basic linkers, and connector words were also learned. They mean fluency while writing. Moreover, punctuation rules, their use, and linguistic functions were emphasized to avoid a linear description and produce interesting written texts.

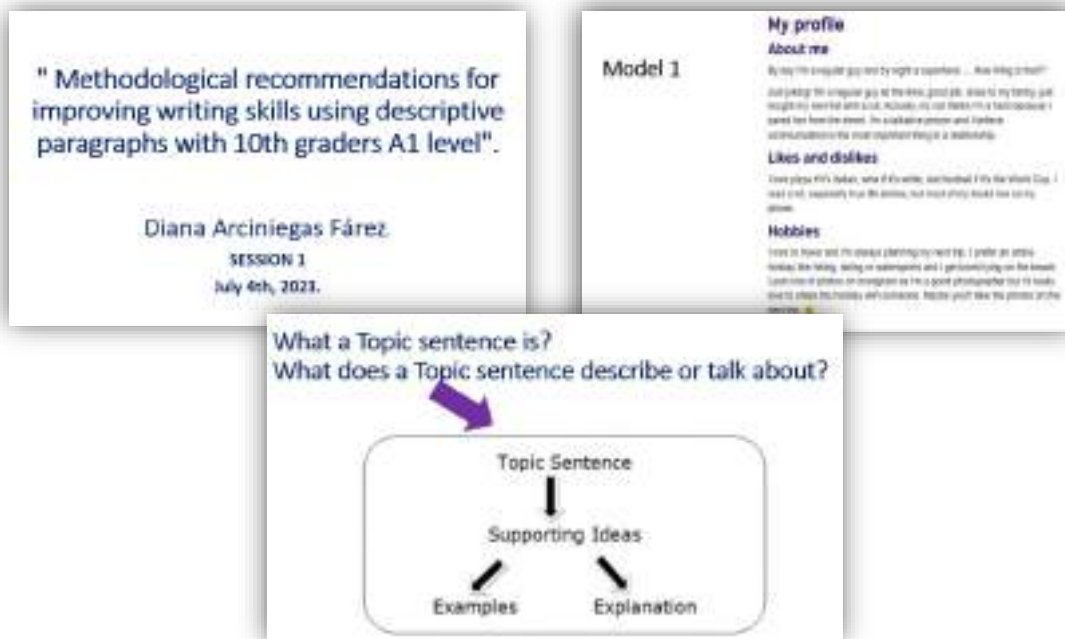
However, learners were usually asked to describe the writing process and steps to mechanize it in their writing habits. The writing steps practiced with students in the intervention were simple and specific to obtain organization and, at the same time, ensure their application in real classroom written activities.

During these sessions, writing elements such as the writing practice were planned in different tasks that, from the beginning, were simple and short according to the step of the process we were studying. Then, the practice was planned with more complete instructions supported by models taken from proven resources such as Cambridge English University Press. Models were helpful in the learning process, and in my experience, they demonstrate clearly and accurately the aims of classroom activities.

At the end of each writing practice, feedback was given to learners, pointing out common errors they had in the writing process. Thus, the participants realized the correct sequence to follow until they got a paragraph. Also, syntax deficiencies were identified and corrected, especially those related to word order, spelling, and punctuation.

## Figure 2

### *Model 1: Proposal*



Note. Elaborated by: Diana Arciniegas Fárez.

## Description of the evaluation and validation of the proposal



To evaluate and validate the methodological recommendations for improving writing skills in this research, there are three aspects to mention: first, the need for an intervention to make progress in word production. Paragraphs must be more than isolated sentences. They would have a proper way of developing according to the writing level of secondary learners. Second, the survey results showed the learners' writing skills, attitudes, and insights. Third, there is a lack of materials for developing writing skills, such as models or samples, that are crucial in the learning process.

Consequently, the writing process approach, sessions, models, and constant practice were planned to be the most helpful and adequate aspects and resources for planning an intervention. Moreover, the action research approach that conducts this study, supports highly the development and implementation of practical learning sessions to study better forms of constructing descriptive paragraphs. In addition, the reflection principle in action research is relevant in educational processes because it promotes self-assessment of the process students go through until they produce proper texts according to the evaluation indicators by the Ministry, their age, and their English level. This space of self-reflection can guarantee a deep awareness of the modifications and adjustments the researcher and learners can make promptly.

The models and examples to follow and illustrate the proper way to produce paragraphs were taken from proven and recommended Cambridge University Press manuals for teachers. They are organized with basis on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) giving ensure and diverse options to use them as resources. They can be adaptable according to the specific context and learners' needs. Models and examples created by Cambridge University Press are usually accompanied by clear explanations for educators and learners that facilitate their application in contexts where English is important to be learned.

During the intervention practical tasks are crucial to be presented and developed by learners. In the beginning, these activities will be simple and guided by the researcher but, after the conceptualization of significant aspects of the writing process by the participants, writing tasks will be with a higher degree of difficulty, especially in the sense that students will work more independently to write well-organized paragraphs whose message is concrete and clear. Feedback from the teacher will be a significant aspect of improving writing errors and deficiencies. It permits



learners' reflection in the learning process and the application of new knowledge about the writing process and encourages self-esteem and motivation. Besides, feedback is beneficial for the researcher who analyzes and usually rethinks the goals and criteria for assessment.

Figure 3.

Writing practice

**WRITING PRACTICE**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: September, 1<sup>st</sup> 2023

Describe a good place for vacations in Ecuador. Use the writing process.

1. Think about your experience on vacation in our country.
2. Brainstorm the information about the place for vacation.
3. Create a topic sentence for your paragraph.
4. Generate supporting ideas for the topic sentence.
5. Write your paragraph using connector words.

**Brainstorm**

Extensive sports: 4  
Delicious food: 4  
Waterfalls: 3  
Adventure: 1  
Cheap hotels, transportation: 5  
Nature: 2

**Topic sentences:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Paragraph**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

The intervention will be organized through lesson plans for each one where the objective, resources, and tasks to complete after analyzing models and examples for each topic of the paragraphs participants will write.

Figure 4.

Lesson Plan

LESSON PLAN SESSION 3: July 19th, 2023

Stage	Interaction (TT, TS, SS)	Procedure	Timing
Led by:	TTT	T gives feedback about the importance of following a plan or steps to write as a process.	5 minutes
Feedback about the main points reviewed last class. Brainstorm what it is, how it facilitated the writing process.	LA	T asks students to talk about these terms: paragraph, process, ideas, brainstorm, practice, draft, organization. T uses the wheel of names to select the S who contributes to describe the terms.	4 minutes
	T, SS	T shows SS the list of ideas generated in the previous class about "My Personal Information" and "My school". T mentions they can be isolated words but are very connected to the topic.	5 minutes
Pre-writing	T	T reads the definition of brainstorming and underlines cue words.	4 minutes
	T, SS	SS read with the T an example of brainstorm and analyze the associated ideas, actions	5 minutes

LESSON PLAN SESSION 5: July 19th, 2023

Stage	Interaction (TT, TS, SS)	Procedure	Timing
Led by:	T, SS	T asks: Why must we write organized ideas? What is brainstorming important at the beginning of the writing process? How can we give sequence to our ideas in the brainstorm? What are connector words or linking words?	7 minutes
		T uses the wheel of names to ask SS.	4 minutes
Dis-writing	TTT	T reads and describes what a topic sentence is. Also, T explains where it can be in the paragraph. T shows an example of a paragraph and its topic sentence.	8 minutes
		SS copy a diagram on their notebooks.	5 minutes
	T	SS read short paragraphs (3) and choose the best topic sentence for each one. SS discuss and suggest one of the 3 options.	13 minutes



Note. Lesson Plan session 3.

Figure 5.

Rubric: Writing Assessment subscales for A2 Key for Schools

**Writing Assessment subscales for A2 Key for Schools**  
 Candidates' writing for A2 Key for Schools is assessed for Content, Organisation and Language. The detailed band descriptors are as follows:

A2	Content	Organisation	Language
5	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed.	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Uses everyday vocabulary (generally appropriately) while occasionally overusing certain forms. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.
4	Performance above features of Bands 3 and 5.		
3	Minor imbalances and/or omissions may be present. Target reader is on the whole informed.	Text is connected using basic, high-frequency linking words.	Uses basic vocabulary reasonably appropriately. Uses simple grammatical forms with some degree of control. Errors may impede meaning at times.
2	Performance above features of Bands 1 and 3.		
1	Irrelevances and/or misinterpretation of task may be present. Target reader is minimally informed.	Production is likely to be connected, though punctuation and simple connectors (e.g. 'and') may on occasion be used.	Produces basic vocabulary of basic task words and phrases. Produces a few simple grammatical forms with only limited control.
0	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.	Performance below Band 1.	

Note. Original rubric by Assessing writing for Cambridge English Qualifications: A guide for teachers

Table 4.





*Adaptations in the rubric*

PROPOSED RUBRIC					
A1	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Content</b>	All content is relevant to the task. Target reader is fully informed	Irrelevances and/or omissions may be present <b>occasionally</b> . Target reader is on the whole informed.	Minor irrelevances and/or omissions may be present <b>frequently</b> . Target reader is on the whole informed.	Irrelevances and misinterpretation of task may be present <b>very frequently</b> . Target reader is minimally informed.	Content is totally irrelevant. Target reader is not informed.
<b>Organization</b>	Text is connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited number of cohesive devices.	Text is connected <b>and coherent using basic, high-frequency</b> linking words.	Text is connected using basic frequency linking words.	Production unlikely to be connected, though <b>punctuation</b> and simple connectors (i.e. 'and') may on occasion be used.	Production unlikely to be connected, though simple connectors (i.e. 'and').
<b>Language</b>	Uses everyday vocabulary generally appropriately, while occasionally overusing certain lexis. Uses simple grammatical forms with a good degree of control. While errors are noticeable, meaning can still be determined.	Uses basic vocabulary <b>reasonably appropriately</b> . Uses simple grammatical forms with some degree of control. Errors may impede meaning at times.	Uses basic vocabulary appropriately. Uses simple grammatical forms with a weak degree of control. Errors may impede meaning at times.	Produces basic vocabulary of isolated words and phrases. Produces few simple grammatical forms with only limited control	Produces <b>elementary</b> vocabulary of isolated words and simple phrases.

Note. Proposed rubric

**Description of the data processing of the diagnostic stage**

Analyzing the diagnostic results means the most factual and current state of writing skills of 10th graders. The diagnostic test was on 32 students with A1 English levels who were assessed according to a rubric taken from the Cambridge University Press manual for teachers certificated guide that tests learners' abilities to understand and use English effectively in real-life contexts. Even, some





adjustments were made to facilitate its application in the specific particular context of this proposal, its relationship to the common core and standards in the CEFR, and the coherence with the participants' cognitive complexity.

Its criteria or subscales content, organization, and language. Moreover, the bands are designed from one to five. The number five is the highest grade. This analytic rubric aligns with the principal objective of this proposal to determine methodological recommendations that help to write descriptive paragraphs with the organization following specific steps in the writing process. Moreover, this instrument for assessing reflects on the writing skills and tasks through clear indicators of students' performance which means recalling the work, the research, and what participants can do in the intervention stage.

To avoid bias from the diagnostic test it is pertinent to mention that ethical issues have been treated carefully during all the stages of the research. According to Hasan et al. (2021), ethical considerations are crucial in the topic selection, research, methodology, citation, and results. In this study, the researcher cared about bias, especially when marking the pre-and post-tests, because of the importance of the results these instruments could give. The ratings of these tests will support to a high degree, objective conclusions.

Consequently, as mentioned previously, the original rubric was adapted to be more explicit for the person who assesses the tests. The bands are more specific, and their distribution pretends to analyze the learners' writing skills deeply.

In addition, the results after analyzing the pre-and post-test can also guarantee effective results as innovations and contributions for educational gaps and deficiencies. Thus, the post-test was graded based on the analytic rubric and by a teacher different from the researcher. However, she is involved in the context of the learners in this study, avoiding deliberate assessment post-test, and legitimating criticism.

In conclusion, adaptations to the original rubric and a different teacher who assessed the post-test were the mechanisms that support avoiding bias and developing a benchmarking analysis.

### **Description and analysis of the results of the diagnostic stage**





After applying the pre-test, the results disclosed that 32 learners had limitations in the organization criterion, 2,06 points over five. It is the lowest rating assessed with the analytical rubric. The content and use of language criteria has also low averages. The content criterion is superior by 2,75 over five. The language criterion got 2,16 points. The total grade in the pre-test is 6,97.

**Table 5.**

*Pre-intervention results*

STUDENTS RESULTS PRE-TEST	CONTENT	ORGANIZATION	LANGUAGE	TOTAL /15
Participant 1	3	3	4	10
Participant 2	4	4	4	12
Participant 3	2	1	1	4
Participant 4	5	2	2	9
Participant 5	1	1	1	3
Participant 6	3	3	2	8
Participant 7	3	4	3	10
Participant 8	1	1	1	3
Participant 9	1	1	1	3
Participant 10	3	2	2	7
Participant 11	4	2	2	8
Participant 12	3	2	1	6
Participant 13	2	1	2	5
Participant 14	5	3	4	12
Participant 15	3	3	3	9
Participant 16	1	1	1	3
Participant 17	2	2	2	6
Participant 18	2	2	2	6
Participant 19	2	2	2	6
Participant 20	5	3	3	11
Participant 21	3	2	2	7
Participant 22	3	2	3	8
Participant 23	3	2	3	8
Participant 24	1	1	1	3

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Participant 25	3	2	2	7
Participant 26	3	2	2	7
Participant 27	4	2	2	8
Participant 28	3	2	2	7
Participant 29	3	2	4	9
Participant 30	2	2	1	5
Participant 31	3	2	2	7
Participant 32	2	2	2	6
Average	2,75	2,06	2,16	6,97

Note: Elaborated by Diana Arciniegas Fárez.

Thirteen students from thirty-two got upper grades to 8/15, and nineteen learners got lower ratings between 3 and 7 points over 15. It meant that writing skills presented deficiencies that must be considered and improved. In addition, during the classes and activities planned to develop and assess writing skills. It was observed that learners in 10th grade did not achieve basic requirements or tasks that demanded writing competencies.

**Table 6.**

*Pre-intervention average results table*

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	Average	CONTROL GROUP	Average
Content	3,3	Content	2,50
Organization	2,6	Organization	1,82
Language	2,9	Language	1,82
<b>TOTAL /15</b>	<b>8,8</b>	<b>TOTAL /15</b>	<b>6,14</b>

Note:

Elaborated by Diana Arciniegas Fárez.





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Based on the results in Table 2, the experimental group got better ratings in all the criteria the rubric assessed. The control group presented more serious limitations according to the average in each criterion. At a total average of over 15 points, the experimental group got an average upper of 2,66 points.

### CHAPTER III

#### PRESENTATION AND VALIDATION OF THE PROPOSAL

##### Validation of the proposal

The most important findings considered in this study involve future teaching practices where reflexing on adequate methodologies to improve writing skills is the main activity to continue enhancing the aspects and elements this research has regarded and are significant in this context of a public school where a considerable limitation was the lack of clear and specific space in the curriculum and materials for upgrading writing skills.

This proposal has been analyzed and reviewed by the tutor, who has provided a guide for the



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correct conduction of its design, implementation of strategies for the study itself, and, the theoretical and practical sections about writing skills and the writing process approach. Also, the findings and conclusions of this study have been material for reflection by the tutor and the researcher. The tutor always has focused the interest of this research on the contributions for future studies and the most objective results we gain from the literature review, data analysis of the results, and their interpretation to improve the current needs and deficiencies of writing skills. Thus, the validation of this proposal has a theoretical and practical basis that supports professional pedagogical recommendations and innovations planned for this study.

The writing process approach has been one of the bases for designing and implementing activities to improve writing skills and evaluate their effectiveness in their development during the intervention, to be used by teachers with future learners.

The data collected and analyzed in this study support previous research about the advantages learners have using the writing process to describe, communicate, and transmit their ideas, feelings, and personal experiences, organizing them through better strategies that facilitate their written expression and the readers' perception of the topic. According to Aluemalai & Maniam (2020), students have a positive attitude to follow a process where planning, writing, and revising facilitate word productions.

In addition, a study that lasted a school year, on with junior, senior, and middle school students disclosed significant results indicated that learners at these ages can comprehend the specific tasks they need to complete in each stage of the writing process until they reach a final text. Then one assumption could be that the students in the intervention of this proposal, might be capable to assimilate the concepts and activities each the exploring and developing steps in the writing process demand to generate, join, and express organized ideas in a coherent and fluent paragraph.

### **Theoretical foundations**

#### ***The writing process approach***

The results appear to show that the writing sessions seem to be a source of support and help for the experimental group, where using the writing process guides the organization of their ideas or information and then produces more concrete messages in their paragraphs. Participants in the sample have comprehended the importance of following the stages of the writing process that the exploratory





and developing macro-stages (Gaetz, 2017) demand. In addition, ordering ideas, experiences, information, and opinions and giving them a hierarchy helps students increase their capacity to discriminate between principal and secondary facts for their short paragraphs.

According to analyzed data, vocabulary was a limitation that did not facilitate learners' written expression. Even though they could generate new ideas in their first language, transferring them to English could not be easy. Then, some interferences originating from the mother tongue were trouble the researcher and participants had to avoid. It was not an easy issue to achieve. However, students' use of connector words increased their vocabulary and punctuation rules, which were new for some participants. Besides, it is evident from the data that students seem to have increased their vocabulary on specific topics such as food, movies, tourist places, and family. All the participants in the experimental group can write more than thirty or forty-word paragraphs. The number of words in their written descriptions was not a requirement to fulfill, but it is a clear indicator that evidence learners have gained vocabulary. Given this information, it is relevant to indicate that most students in the sample felt motivated seeing their expanded paragraph through more words that were making up longer sentences.

The literature suggests reading is crucial to improve writing capacities (Olson, 2021). When learners integrate these two language aspects, they can show progress, especially in writing when the vocabulary usually tends to extend.

Considering the results, learners in the experimental group have ensured the utilization of simple present structures. It could be seen as a positive impact on their linguistic development that has been achieved at a higher level in the organization and language rubric descriptors. At the beginning of the writing practices, it used to take more time to generate ideas for the proposed topics. Equally, learners used to take more time to brainstorm their information. However, this is evident from the data that practicing following the writing process and its steps helped learners in the experimental group to classify information, examples, ideas, and personal experiences quickly.

When assessing the organization criterion, data indicate that punctuation also suffered advances in the experimental group. Most of the students used commas and periods stronger after the intervention. They used commas with connector words and the period to separate their ideas, writing with a better quality. Messages in the paragraphs have fluency, which means a consequence of using connector words and their specific punctuation properly.





### **Strategies to improve the effectiveness of the writing process**

The results of the experimental group post-test reveal the statistical significance of using samples and models of paragraphs to read and analyze before starting participants' descriptions. In other words, samples are beneficial to present students with a clear idea and a path to create their paragraphs with a concrete base that guides learners to an organized structure and use of specific vocabulary according to the topic asked in the task. In addition, models could contribute to better development of thinking abilities such as comparing, contrasting, and analyzing. They have relevance because learners are completing a complex activity while writing. It means to express concrete information to readers who need to comprehend their messages.

Moreover, it can be argued that reading and writing samples guarantee learners concentrate more deeply on their ideas and narrow the topic as specific and concrete as possible. Students communicate essential details to tell the audience coherently about the theme, leaving aside mentioning unnecessary facts that could bore the readers or make them lose their interest quickly.

### **Characteristics of the proposal**

This proposal is conducted at La Inmaculada public school, a large institution with more than a thousand students who attend classes in two sections, in the morning and the afternoon. La Inmaculada school offers education from Initial, Basic, and Baccalaureate in Sciences Education.

English classes are only from the second year of basic education, with three hours weekly. Students use a textbook according to their ages and proficiency level in English. Teachers can use technology for their classes. The school offers an image projector and loudspeakers for developing the language learning process including the five threads the National Curriculum proposes.

However, it was clear the English Curriculum in our country, especially for public education, does not address the development of writing skills. There is a lack of materials and approaches that support the advancement of word production.

Teachers must create the space for reinforcing writing skills, being conscious that they are productive skills that must be developed from the start of the elemental years of education to ensure some linguistic elements such as vocabulary, meaning of terms, and their use.



### **Objectives of the proposal**

#### **General objective:**

To determine methodological recommendations that help tenth graders at “La Inmaculada” school to write descriptive paragraphs with organization following specific steps in the writing process through the implementation of entrance and exit test and action research.

#### **Specific objectives:**

- To design and implement activities for the purpose of improving writing skills.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented writing process in its development.

### **Structure, and dynamics of the components of the proposal**

#### ***Curriculum Framework:***

The writing skills described in the National Curriculum are relevant, and at the same time, they want to obtain high development. Even the timing of classes every week in public institutions is very low. Three hours weekly do not permit a strong and quick advancement in writing skills. In addition, the lack of concrete space and materials to teach how to write adequately in English is another aspect that needs to be solved by teachers in the classrooms. Thus, this proposal pretends to offer a possible solution and support for improving these weak aspects identified in a public school.

#### ***Instructional Methods:***

The writing process approach in descriptive paragraphs was the most significant method utilized to improve writing skills in 10th graders. It was supported by models and sample paragraphs that clarified a new vision of writing in the learners of the experimental group. At the beginning of the intervention, they read, analyzed, and imitated writing samples. Consequently, the experimental group incorporated the writing process more independently, with self-confidence and spontaneous ways to express ideas by writing paragraphs with better organization, coherence, and use of linguistic elements, especially punctuation. The experimental group was able to use the exploratory and developing macro-stages in the writing process strongly.



***Assessment Strategies:***

Firstly, formative assessments are crucial in this study. They permit the researcher and the experimental group to advance in this complex writing skill that demands thinking competencies such as self-regulation, discrimination, analysis, and summary. Besides, it supports other positive effects like self-monitoring and self-reinforcement (Reid 2010) that make learners more conscious of their errors, needs, and progress.

Thus, writing well involves a long and serious process that demands a more objective analysis of the students' productions. Then rubrics are assessment tools capable of measuring writing development delving into details that describe features in the paragraphs such as coherence and effectiveness in communication.

Paragraphs written by the learners in the experimental group were read and valued according to the rubric adapted to their proficiency level and context.

Feedback was another relevant part of the assessment strategies, considering that writing well-organized paragraphs demands time in the pre-writing activities and while writing. Feedback was focused and reinforced in two planes. On the one hand, giving feedback in every online and face-to-face session gathers learners in the experimental group to memorize the steps in the writing process. On the other hand, feedback was given during the sessions while students were writing their paragraphs. More personal suggestions and corrections to their word productions were very beneficial for learners who comprehend the structure of a paragraph, spelling, vocabulary, punctuation, and grammar.

**Human resources:**

***Authorities***

The Dean, Vice dean, and the English Area Coordinator have supported this study giving the facilities to get the legal permissions and the parents' consent that regulate the formal issues of this research. In addition, the authorities have relied on the plans for the online and face-to-face sessions during the intervention



### ***Teacher who assessed the post-test***

A colleague of the researcher that is close to the context of this research. Also, she has shared the methodology applied in this study and its intervention. The analytical rubric was analyzed with the researcher in order to guide the assessment objectively. This collaboration meant a mechanism to guarantee ethical consideration every study demands to contribute effectively to educational needs or deficiencies. The pre-test was assessed by the researcher because it was the origin of the diagnostic stage of the data collection. Moreover, the researcher did not know about the bias that in this kind of study must be avoided.

### ***Students***

Learners in the experimental and control groups have participated actively during the process of this research. The control group collaborated in the pre-and post-tests, showing a positive attitude. The experimental group was always in permanent activity, attending the writing online sessions twice a week. Also, they developed the writing practices following the suggestions and guidelines given in the session classes. They have been frequently interested in showing progress and advancements in their writing skills through questioning and taking advantage of the explanations by the teacher. They have been informed about the results they got after the pre-and post-tests to motivate them to continue using the strategies implemented in the intervention.

### ***Researcher***

Researcher has collecting assumptions, observations, and then patters of the deficiencies in the writing skills of 10<sup>th</sup> graders. Thus, it was possible to plan and organize a design that wants to support with ideas of strategies and innovations to improve writing skills.

### **Material resources**

**Books:** These books have been the base to take samples and models to plan the writing practices with the experimental group. Then, they guide the researcher to create new writing activities aligned with the context of the participants in this study. These books are crucial resources for the context of this research. They offer proven and certificated activities that ensure outcome improvements because of their pedagogical and practical design.





**PowerPoint Presentations:** They were used in the intervention when the sessions were online. They present relevant content about the writing process and its steps. Besides, these presentations showed accurately the models and samples learners followed to create their productions. Finally, PowerPoint presentations are meant as files that register the activities in detail during the online sessions.

**Worksheets:** They represent the activities that ask learners specific topics, vocabulary, and grammar structures besides their writing performance. Worksheets in this research were designed following samples from proven books and also with the implementation of the writing process in each one to clarify the experimental group the correct way in the writing process. It facilitates the activity and reinforces the use of this approach.

#### **Technological resources:**

**Laptops and mobile phones:** These technological tools enable the intervention to a high degree. The experimental group attended eleven online sessions through these resources.

**Printer:** It facilitates the creation of material and the distribution to learners who work better with material planned and prepared in their context. Besides, it saves time when learners get their materials ready.

**Internet:** The Internet helps significantly in every stage of this study. Its support was crucial during the intervention and could advance thanks to online classes taking advantage of the time, resources, and interest of the participants in the experimental group.

#### **Description of the budget or financial analysis**

**Table 7.**

*Budget or financial analysis*

ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
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LAPTOP	1	\$700.00
INTERNET SERVICE	3 months	\$90.00
WORKSHEETS	180	\$360
TOTAL		1,150

Note. Description of the budget

**Laptop:** It facilitated the 70% of the online intervention. The sessions were possible with material and resources that made the classes clear and more understandable.

**Internet service:** A safe Internet service guarantees the research of material for the study and the intervention itself. In addition, it makes possible more interactive sessions where the sources can be more than worksheets. A good Internet service can support the integration of gamification and different activities to motivate the learner's participation in their learning process making it more natural and spontaneous.

**Worksheets:** They are the main elements of writing practice. According to my experience, writing on paper, reading, and following instructions can connect more with the performance of their writing competencies. Writing on paper is more pedagogical for young learners than using any technological tool.

The approximate cost that this study has had can serve as a reference for future research in similar contexts that suggest the use of the resources that have been previously exposed. The budget of this proposal has resulted from characteristics and actions conducted below proper issues a public school could describe in their reality. The materials designed by the researcher and captured in the worksheets are the most relevant expenses. However, these materials and resources were vital to implement strategies, activities, and tasks planned to chase the objectives in this proposal that pretended to improve writing deficiencies dynamically. With a not-so-high budget, it is possible to innovate strategies in the educational fields, giving a space of relevance to the development of language abilities that also mean thinking skills. This financial aspect of the proposal has considered the most elemental and necessary investments done by the researcher, the experimental group, and the institution where the study was applied.



### Analysis and discussion of the results obtained from the implementation of the proposal

In the tables below are the results after the strategies implementation of this research, where the outcomes of the experimental and control groups are disclosed.

**Table 8.**

*Post-intervention average results table*

PRE-TEST				POST-TEST			
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	Average	CONTROL GROUP	Average	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	Average	CONTROL GROUP	Average
CONTENT	3,3	Content	2,50	Content	4	Content	2,86
ORGANIZATION	2,6	Organization	1,82	Organization	4	Organization	2,09
LANGUAGE	2,9	Language	1,82	Language	3,6	Language	1,73
TOTAL /15	8,8	TOTAL /15	6,14	TOTAL /15	11,6	TOTAL	6,68

Note. Results about the experimental and control group.

The previous table indicates the general comparison and final results of the experimental and control groups. Thus, these numerical views describe and summarize relevant information that started as assumptions from observations by the researcher on learning deficiencies in writing skills through more deep signs, which originated from technical proposals to improve communicative written productions. Moreover, this analysis sets a relation between the independent and dependent variables in this study: the writing process approach and the writing skills.

The results disclosed that both groups have improved in content and organization criteria. The experimental group increased its language average. On the contrary, the control group decreased its rating in the language criterion. It could be possible because the learners in the experimental group



learned to find more specific vocabulary to write about different topics. The ten learners in the sample wrote more carefully about the spelling and grammar structures they used. During the intervention, these learners stored words and terms frequently used in their paragraphs with fewer errors. The students in the experimental group were selected by convenience sampling. They were willing and available to participate in the research in virtual sessions (asynchronous sessions) after their regular class schedule.

The most developed criterion was content, graded with the highest scores in both groups. On the one hand, the experimental group increased its content rating by 0.7 points. On the other hand, the control group gained a 0.36-point increase. These upper ratings in content in the experimental and control groups could be a positive aspect of continuing with the development of the organization and language criteria, whose scores need to increase through better use of vocabulary, grammar forms, connector words, and punctuation. Simply put, these results confirm that content is now a strength for 10th graders.

However, the intervention seemed to have had a clear increase in the experimental group in all aspects of the rubric, especially in organization, where the average increased from 2,6 to 4, which means a 1,4-point increase. Hence, the writing process approach was comprehended and applied by the experimental group, whose students learned how to generate, organize, and give sequence to their information before it is considered a paragraph. Linguistic aspects such as vocabulary and grammar structures could be more abstract concepts for learners in high school, and they take more time to be assimilated in their use, meaning, and function.

After the intervention, the experimental group improved by 2–8 point in the general results about the rubric, which seemed to be a significant difference between the writing abilities the experimental group developed from the pre- to the post-test. The writing sessions and their practices had a strong effect on the word production of these learners.

### **Pre- and post -tests analysis experiemental group**

**Figure 6.**





*Average-Difference results*

CRITERIA	STUDENT 1			STUDENT 2			STUDENT 3			STUDENT 4			STUDENT 5			STUDENT 6			STUDENT 7			STUDENT 8			STUDENT 9			STUDENT 10			AVERAGE DIFFERENCE				
	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference	Pre-Intervention	Post-Intervention	Difference								
CONTENT	3	4	1	4	5	1	3	4	1	5	3	-2	3	5	2	2	4	2	5	5	0	3	3	0	3	3	0	3	0	2	4	4	0	2	0,70
ORGANIZATION	3	4	1	4	4	0	2	4	2	3	3	0	3	4	1	2	4	2	3	3	0	2	4	2	2	5	3	2	5	3	5	5	0	3	1,40
LANGUAGE	4	3	-1	4	5	1	1	3	3	4	3	-1	3	3	0	2	2	0	3	4	1	2	3	1	4	5	1	2	4	2	4	2	0,70		
TOTAL	10	11	1	12	14	2	6	12	6	12	9	-3	9	12	3	6	10	4	11	12	1	7	10	3	9	13	4	6	13	7	7	2,80			

Note. Elaborated by: Diana Arciniegas Fárez.

**Observations about the experimental group**

After the post-test, there are differences that the results appear to show. In general terms, they are positive for the writing skills, especially of the ten learners in the experimental group whose abilities assessed through a rubric have advanced to some degree. Six students have improved in the content criterion. Three learners maintained their scores, and one student got a worse score. This meant that the intervention supported the way of comprehending the writing activity presented to be done. Learners in the experimental group have developed the habit of carefully reading the instructions in the different writing practices they faced. They also generated ideas and information that helped develop the asked topic and guaranteed better results in content indicators and assessments. Those ideas were more specific to develop the topic they had to write about, thus they could write more precisely avoiding irrelevant information. There were three learners who got the maximum grade (5/5) in content. It meant an encouraging result in the sense of learners are able to inform their reader the most concrete details of a certain topic. In other words, there were nine learners in the experimental group who have improved in content in an acceptable degree.

In the organization criterion that was most worked on during the intervention, seven students improved their ratings. Two learners increased their grade by 1 point. Three students increased their original results by 2 points, and two students improved in the post-test by 3 points. These grades in the organization criterion suggested that most of the participants in the experimental group showed





coherence, linking their ideas and information with connector words frequently in the paragraph. The sample group used at least seven words to join their ideas during the practices in the writing sessions. They were: first, second, third, in addition, also, finally, for example, and such as. Students in this group learned their meaning and function, and then students knew how and when to use the connectors in their paragraphs. Also, they were taught about the punctuation connector words have specifically. This issue could support the fluency of the paragraph. The messages could be more comprehensible for the readers who had the opportunity to face a narrative with a sequence guided by the connector words, expressions, and punctuation.

Even though three participants did not gain any points in the organization criterion, it did not affect the score negatively. These three learners have gotten 3 and 4 points over 5, which were upper ratings that supported the total average difference in this criterion. Participant 4 is a different case who got low ratings in content and language criteria, even though his grade in the organization was the same in the pre-and post-tests. Participant 4 was capable of generating and organizing his ideas. However, he did not communicate relevant information or use everyday vocabulary or basic grammar forms in the post-test.

Participant 7 only improved in the language criterion one point. In the content and organization his grades are high (5/5 and 3/5). The intervention was positive in this case where the most learner's skills are strong in their paragraph and the language increased in a point.

The last criterion in the rubric was language, but in the experimental group, it was also the weakest aspect of writing skills. This criterion involves the use of everyday vocabulary and grammar structures. On the one hand, learners in the sample have gained the use of connector words, but using and expanding vocabulary is a deep need to improve. They can join their ideas, but their sentences could be longer and more complex if they handled a larger number of words in their lexicon. Gaining vocabulary involves more time because its use can guarantee fluency in language. On the other hand, it was the spelling that was constantly a weak aspect for learners.

The interferences of the L1 and the errors in writing vocabulary in English were aspects to be analyzed since elementary school, when learners generally repeated isolated vocabulary, and it can have resulted in it being easier to memorize the correct spelling of vocabulary demanded in the next school years. Language indicators are usually the ones that need more time and work to be assured.

Then it was an important proposal to start with the objective of improving writing skills in





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10th grade and continue working in the next years of high school with older learners who are more conscious of these abstract parts of the language, such as grammar structures.

Among the three criteria in the rubric (content, organization, and language), organization was the aspect that improved the most with 1,4-point increase.

In conclusion, the methodological recommendations for improving writing skills using the writing process approach could be considered positive. Its impact on the learning process of 10th graders has originated more advantages in learners' communication abilities. Technically, the word productions by the learners in the experimental group are more organized and coherent, including improved punctuation and fluency. Of the twelve students, eleven improved their grade in the post-test. The only student who didn't improve was Participant 4.



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The results in the control group seemed positive for the control group even they did not attend the intervention sessions. It could be because these learners were familiar with the pre- and post-test. The conditions of this research demanded the same activity in this quantitative instrument. The topics to write about were also familiar to the control group.

The analysis of the results disclosed that in the content criterion, fourteen learners improved their ratings. Five learners stayed in the same grades, and three students went down. The majority of students in the results of the content reinforced the previous statement that they were familiar with the topics to write about and the task in general. It could facilitate the activity for the students in the control group. In addition, it could also influence the fact that most of the students chose the topic “My family” rather than “My routine” in the post-test. In conclusion, this topic seemed to be easier to write about. The ideas, information, and grammar forms are also less complicated, with some topics being “My family” rather than others.

Another important conclusion is that fourteen learners in the control group increased their rating in the organization aspect of their paragraphs. It meant that they improved their skills to communicate ideas more comprehensibly for the reader, who was a different teacher than the researcher. She was a colleague who works at the same public school and has a close relationship with the educational environment of this group. However, of the fourteen learners who improved in the organization criterion, eleven increased their rating by 1 point and three increased their grades by 2 points. It was observed that learners in this 63,63% (fourteen students) included in the post-test “and” as a connector word

Besides, eight learners did not change their grades in the organization criterion. They did not show the paragraph itself. Most of them listed the details about the topic they chose using bullet points and also headlines to write about the different ideas in their text.





The language criterion was a deficiency according to the results. Comparing the pre- and post-tests it is observed that the learners in the control group increased the number of words in the post-test but the spelling of the vocabulary and the correct use of grammar forms is very limited. Eight learners showed increased ratings in language criterion. Eight students stayed in the same grade as the pre-test, and six learners got worse grades in the post-test.

### **Qualitative data analysis**

In this research there were three instruments that supported the qualitative data collection and their analysis. They were a survey (before the intervention), a journal written by the researcher (during the intervention), and an open-ended questionnaire (at the end of the intervention). Hence, their main objective was to gather the most responsible and true feelings, attitudes, and opinions of the writing process, activities and tasks, the intervention and the aspects it involves. For instance, the sample learners in this study could have expressed freely their opinions about the online writing sessions and materials they used.

### ***Open-ended questionnaire***

This questionnaire was applied at the end of the intervention. Six open-ended questions wanted to find or discover the truth about the writing sessions they attended for eight weeks. Each session was planned based on specific goals that wanted to guide the research to its general objective of determining methodological recommendations to improve their writing skills following specific writing process steps.

According to most of the learners' opinions, the strategies used to explain the writing process were appropriate and originated an acceptable comprehension of the steps this writing approach involves. Three of the nine participants were satisfied with the researcher's methodology for teaching the writing process.





Participant 3 said, "The explanations of the professor were understood quite well." Also,

participant 9 indicated, "The explanation was clear to me."

Each session had at least two activities to practice the topic learners studied. It was considered positive for Participant 2, who mentioned that he could practice the new content. Hence, both aspects of methodology and strategies had an impact on the learning process. It is important to mention that it could also be an advantage for learners' comprehension of the writing process, the feedback at the beginning of each class, and recalling new content at the end of the sessions.

Besides the methodology and writing practice, models and examples learners could read and analyze were another aspect that made participants feel more comfortable and confident in creating their word productions, as a participant indicated: "I could practice." Thus, most of the lesson plans integrate reading and writing tasks that could also develop critical thinking in the participants. This integration of skills, according to Cooney (2018), can be beneficial for the learning process in a communicative and social sense. When learners read, they can identify some of the stages in the writing process easier, for instance, the topic sentence. Then they can adapt their own ideas and information by following an organized paragraph whose schema guides them clearly. It was mentioned by Participant 8, who considered it an advantage to use "examples before writing." Presenting examples created by the teacher and models taken from certificated books such as Cambridge University Press offered learners more confidence in their idea about the structure of the paragraph.

Finally, at this point, it is relevant to consider how modeling by the teacher could help students apply the writing process in each of its steps.





Most of the participants have indicated their positive opinions about the 40-minute

sessions they attended twice a week for 8 weeks. Participants 2, 3, and 6 said they were satisfied with the way the teacher explained the writing process. Participant 6 emphasized this aspect, saying that "she explains in a funny way and is more comprehensible. Now I can comprehend more about this topic and be less lost.

Even with these positive opinions, six participants believed face-to-face sessions were better than online ones, where losing concentration in the class seems to be easier. Participant 7 thought that the 40-minute writing session must have been longer.

Accordingly, to three participants, the easiest step in the writing process was brainstorming their ideas in the exploratory macro stage. At the beginning, it seemed a complex activity to generate ideas, even if the topic was very familiar to learners. Thus, the first practice was to write about themselves using their personal information, but it took participants a lot of time. The information and ideas were not easy to come to their minds. This limitation changed while they practiced brainstorming for the next tasks. It is important to recap the adaptation of the writing process and its steps proposed by Gaetz (2017), where a step was added to hierarchy ideas by giving them a number and facilitating their organization in the following steps. Accordingly, for participant 6, "creating ideas and giving them numbers" was the easiest activity to organize ideas.

At the same time, learners could monitor their own creativity to produce ideas or consider information for different topics. As Ritter (2018) indicates, creativity means an option to master abilities, and brainstorming demands generating ideas and information, first from students' experiences and then making connections to the paragraph models they analyzed.





On the other hand, four learners considered one of the most difficult aspects of writing

skills: producing a topic sentence. Participant 6 wrote, "The most difficult part was the topic sentence. I did not know what to write." This opinion showed that writing a short introduction for the paragraph resulted in a complicated activity for learners. They could not summarize the information in a paragraph into two or three sentences. Their skills to synthesize ideas have deficiencies.

Three participants also thought that their vocabulary was another limitation in transmitting ideas, information, and experiences. Two students believed that some topics were difficult to write about because of the vocabulary; as participant 2 indicates, "the most difficult part was writing because of my deep lack of vocabulary." Hence, the necessity of working on vocabulary has originated based on these opinions that indicate the number of words in different topics we wrote is not as wide as learners need.

Online sessions were not considered the best way to learn about writing skills. Three participants indicated that online classes were an aspect of change. Even though four learners in the intervention indicated a positive attitude toward online sessions, participant 2 expressed, "I would change that from the beginning the sessions were face-to-face with more exercises, examples, and games." In addition, participant 8 mentioned "more face-to-face classes" as an aspect to be changed.

Finally, all the participants who responded to this open-ended questionnaire considered the writing process as a way to organize their ideas and then write paragraphs. In addition, they will apply this process to their next or future writing activities. Participant 4 said, "I will continue using the writing process because it has helped me... Before I used to write, the first thing came to mind, and the ideas were mixed. Now they are organized and comprehensible."





**Table 9.**

*Aspects for writing process*

<b>Strong aspects of the writing sessions</b>	<b>Weak aspects of the writing sessions</b>
Methodology	Online sessions
Samples and modeling	Loss of attention easily
Feedback and recalling content.	Writing the topic sentence.
Brainstorming ideas.	Revising paragraphs
Face-to-face sessions at school.	among students.
Models to read and write their own paragraphs.	Timing of sessions was short.
Models with visual support.	
Future uses of the writing process.	

Note. Strong and Weak aspects

***Journal***

The most important aspects that originated after the journal analysis were two. Firstly, the relevance of reflecting after each session of the intervention, and secondly, the advantages learners could discover of using the writing process approach (exploratory and developing macro stages) to generate more concrete and well-organized paragraphs.





Reflection is one part of the action research approach, that offers teachers the possibility of rethinking about the methods, materials, and strategies used to teach. Reflection must go further than admitting the teaching practices need modifications (Clark, 2020). It is considered in this research, as an opportunity to report and replant initiatives accordingly to the different context teachers face and depend on the learners, their age, interests, and needs.

Hence, the researcher could register any news, think about it, and improve if it meant trouble or perfect it if it was positive. Giving feedback at the end of each class and recalling previous ideas and concepts at the beginning of a new one could be a very known part of a lesson plan, but in this intervention giving feedback and recapping were crucial to reinforce the new topics and guided the learners realize if they were making progress in their knowledge about the writing process. For instance, on July 6th, 2023, the researcher wrote, "It seems better for learners when they repeat the main points about the last class. We reviewed some terms again, such as process, steps, organization, ideas, brainstorm, sequence, and draft, to check if learners were familiarized with their meanings and the conception of the terms themselves. "I told them that any time they heard "process," they must think in a sequence of steps." This practice of feedback could guarantee the students' confidence when they needed to develop the writing process comprehended by them as a group of steps with a specific sequence.

Other important aspect the journal originated, was the reflection about the topics the researcher planned for the students in the intervention. As closer or familiar the topics were for learners, as easy it resulted to write about. Ideas, experiences, information and vocabulary came to their minds and papers quickly. It was reported on July 11th, 2023, when students brainstormed about their personal information, their best friends, and their school. Those three were very familiar topics for students, and they could generate ideas quickly.





It can also be seen in the responses of three participants in the open-ended questionnaire who indicated that one of the easiest aspects of the sessions were the topics: "The easiest topics were about my family and my favorite movie." Participant 8 mentioned that "the simplest aspect of the writing sessions was when we wrote about food and personal information." Thus, the information from the open-ended questionnaire seem aligned with the reports in the journal.

The journal collected impressions of the teacher who felt their learners were more confident when they follow samples or models to write their own word productions. They could also comprehend more directly the parts of a paragraph (topic sentence, for example) and the importance of the connector words in the written text. At the beginning of the intervention, the sample paragraphs were written by the researcher. Then they were from text books by Cambridge University Press.

These materials increased learners' interest in reading and were positive for the comprehension of new vocabulary useful for students' future productions. Visuals that certificated materials usually have, meant an important cue for motivation at the same time photos and pictures clarify the different written ideas that helped learners in this research to had more tools of how and what a paragraph must communicate.

After session 8 the idea about the relevance of models and samples to develop writing skills was stronger for the researcher who were sure about the useful role of the writing models, especially when the level proficiency is not as high as their grade at secondary school and learners need to identify clearly the structure of a word production.

The journal reported that learners seemed optimistic with their advance when they counted the number of words in their paragraphs.





It was not required to fulfilled certain number of words, but they realized they could write more than thirty or forty words they usually wrote in school tasks. It was a benchmark to be compared to the paragraphs they wrote while the intervention and it made them feel more capable. It was reported on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 when learners wrote with their teacher a paragraph about their school.

Five students who attended that session wrote a 77-word paragraph. All of them contributed ideas, vocabulary, opinions, and suggestions. At the end of this activity, learners felt they were more skilled at writing tasks. Even though there were mistakes in the spelling and grammar structure, those 77 words in a paragraph meant a positive result for students. The researcher reported: "Tonight, my students felt they could write. They counted each word in the paragraph and realized they had written more than isolated sentences." It was also possible because they followed the first steps of the writing process: brainstorming, hierarchizing ideas with numbers, and producing a topic sentence for the paragraph. The researcher indicated that perhaps the topic sentence was very short and simple; it showed learners had a basic idea of where it generally is in the paragraph and its function. In addition, learners had used connector words to join ideas, which was an indicator of improving.

Learners started to be conscious of the importance of using the writing process to express their ideas using words. They were convinced about the advantages of following the steps to organize their ideas, giving them sequence in a whole paragraph. They mentioned something similar they studied in their literature class (L1), but the writing process in "the English class was simpler to remember," a participant indicated in one of the last sessions.

The journal reported the most important observations and impressions the researcher had after every session, especially about the theory (concepts, new terms, diagrams), activities and tasks, and the materials we used.





These three aspects were relevant in the sense that they are crucial in the learning process, as the input teacher plan was detailed in order to get positive modifications in students' writing production and linguistic performance.

Learners in this intervention were more independent in handling the writing process at the time the sessions advanced. They needed less support to remember and follow the steps in the exploratory and develop macro-stages, but they continued to need support related to the grammar structures and specific vocabulary they had to use in the different topics. During the face-to-face sessions, the researcher saw some of the participants using their e-dictionaries, and they also asked her for some clarifications of grammar structures. The journal says, "My students write longer sentences, but they ask for some words that are very specific to the topics they write. Vocabulary about movies, for example" (September 22nd, 2023).

It is relevant to indicate that the researcher observed that it could be useful for her participants to review the writing process in a general way every time they prepare for writing, then she planned the format of the worksheets with the writing process in their tops seeking learners would have the possibility to internalize its steps.

As a result of reviewing the writing process constantly, it was observed that learners were more confident when they wrote. It was described that students wrote almost by themselves without asking their teacher to help them, as at the beginning. They could support each other with small corrections on grammar issues and contribute vocabulary to expand sentences. Participants could also use punctuation and connector words more frequently. It has been reported after the 10th session on September 11th, 2023: "Today, I observed most of the participants wrote alone, by themselves. They asked for help related to grammar and vocabulary. Four participants can write better messages following the writing process. in the session





**Table 10.**

*Reflections*

Reflections on the intervention	Advantages learners could discover of using the writing process approach
Feedback and recalling specific content about the writing process.	Learners felt more confident and independent.
Samples and models are crucial to guiding participants in writing activities.	Internalizing the steps in the writing process organized their time for tasks.
Models with visuals illustrated new vocabulary.	Using connector words to join different ideas in the paragraph.
The use of a larger amount of vocabulary is a relevant need.	The writing process was simpler in English rather than in L1.
	Giving numbers to their ideas facilitated the sequence in their paragraphs.

Note. Advantages learners could discover of using the writing process approach.

**Limitations in the study**

The results appear to show some limitations in this study. Firstly, the survey had the objective to collect information at the beginning of the methodology section of this research. It could not take objective information, facts, and impressions from the population. Analyzed results from the survey they tell, it was simple. On the one hand, the questions were very close for the participants. On the other hand, the scales did not permit the collection of deep information that tells the researcher more relevant information about the learners' attitudes towards writing activities. The scales must be numerical and wider than an affirmative or negative answer.





The time was a negative factor that affected the correct elaboration of the survey. The school

year was near its end, and trying to obtain more time for the post stages of this study as the application of the pre-test and enough time for the intervention session, pressure in some way, and the creation and application of that weak survey.

Secondly, only the post-test was assessed by a different teacher than the researcher. It was because when the researcher proposed the instruments did not know that bias needed to be avoided, causing wrong information and affecting the findings. Thus, the opportunity to analyze data from the post-test by another teacher who knew the context of the experimental group originated a higher degree of objectivity. Before she started to grade the post-test the rubric was read and considered. Consequently, the benchmarks were also discussed in detail because they were adapted from a certificated rubric by Cambridge University Press according to the language proficiency of the 10<sup>th</sup> graders in a public school.

Online sessions seemed to be a limitation, especially for the experimental group whose participants mentioned in the open-ended questionnaire as one of the aspects they did not like the most. Deconcentration was usually present in the sessions. In addition, virtual sessions did not permit the space to revise learner's texts. It was not effortless to get spontaneous participation from students with their descriptions to be assessed. It changed dramatically during the face-to-face session. The experimental group usually could share their ideas and contribute suggestions to improve their spelling, correct grammar forms, and help each other with recommendations about the details in their paragraphs.

The macro-stages of revising and editing were not entirely achieved. During the intervention, the steps of revising for unity, adequate support, coherence, and style and editing for technical errors did not have considerable space. The revising stage was more developed, but only for the teacher in the intervention.





It was not possible to have deep revisions among partners. It would have relevance to developing self-confidence and co-assessment, where peer feedback can be helpful in a positive sense.

Even though the experimental group attended fifteen writing sessions, twice a week and following a lesson plan, it was not enough in the opinion of some participants and the researcher. The data analyzed through the different data collecting instruments, evidence that the results are positive and offer advantages to the experimental group that now is conscience of how beneficial results to apply the writing process for their paragraphs. However, with more intervention time learners' knowledge and communicative writing skills could be developed deeply.

### **Ethical considerations for the implementation of the proposal**

Ethical considerations are crucial in the topic selection, research, methodology, citation, and results of this proposal.

**Data Quality and Accuracy:** Tenth graders as participants in this research and their deficiencies when writing, provide the framework for starting this study. In this research for improving writing skills, the context has been relevant because, through it, the needs and limitations are more comprehensible and the possible solutions are according to the class profile. These two details (context and class profile) can help the researcher decide the next steps in the research.

Then this initial information was used for designing the instruments and collecting data, always avoiding tools that could go against the objective of the study. It is also important to plan the subjects, words, sentences, and questions for the instruments.





For example, respecting the real level of English proficiency, the survey for measuring the independent variable is in the learners' first language. The same is true for the open-ended questionnaire. As Arifin 2018, indicates, the researcher is the one who create a free and comfortable environment to let participant answer the questions. Thus, learners can have a true idea of the questions and the responses they can give honestly and non-directive. Hence, the analysis and interpretation of these facts must be processed, ensuring data quality.

**Data Privacy and Security:** Working with children and teenagers, observing their natural behavior and analyzing their forms of learning demands being respectful and responsible with the information we can collect by interacting with our students. The sensible information in this study can handle must be used to search for benefits and positive changes in their learning and lives. Moral and social implications must be added to the participants' rights, which guide the whole research process. Therefore, in this project, the parents' consent helps to reinforce ethics issues. The objectives and the details of how the researcher will manipulate the information are declared in this formal document that guarantees learners feel confident to participate in learning activities to be part of a demonstration of writing skills improvement.

**Data Ethics and Values:** One of the most controversial aspects of ethics is bias, which is an inclination or a sort of preference to direct the answers in the case of some instruments. They need to be highly considered to avoid in the research process, especially because they can cause wrong information and affect the findings. Consequently, the generalizations cannot be meaningful for contributions, solutions, or future studies.





Finally, I think it is important to mention that ethical issues must be treated carefully during all the stages in the research. According to Hasan et al. (2021), ethical considerations are crucial in the topic selection, research, methodology, citation, and results.

Researchers need to consider that ethics can also guarantee effective results as innovations and contributions for educational gaps and deficiencies.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Accordingly, in my experience, writing skills must be worked with a stronger vision from the last year of elementary school, especially with the aim of building up paragraphs rather than a list of phrases and sentences. Learners must create word productions with fluency and sequence joining their ideas with basic punctuation. These bases can possibly better content, organization, and use of language in the next secondary years. Teachers must generally work on writing skills with models and samples that young learners can follow to get productions that in the future will have personal features and details when communicating.
- Reading is a receptive but relevant skill that could be developed from the first years of elementary school. Reading needs to be supported by other significant thinking capacities, such as memory and attention, that make it possible to start reading photos, pictures, and images. Then, letters, words, and phrases. It would help young learners decode and comprehend messages and imitate the form they could express.





- As the use of language (use of everyday vocabulary and basic grammar forms) got the lowest rating in the results, it must be improved deeply. Teaching practice must find better strategies to expand the terms and words learners handle when writing. In addition, activities that reinforce the meaning and use of new words and expressions. Games, contests in the classroom, and constant quizzes that assess the use of vocabulary could be educational options for developing the use of language at the time learners get motivation and practice vocabulary naturally.
- For further researchers in these writing skills, it can be convenient to analyze from the reflection, the signals students offer in daily. Teachers have to observe and interpret the small needs our learners show. It is possible when we apply formative assessment in a proper way and then it is read pedagogically. It is comprehending how the outcomes come in our learners. The assumptions teachers collect every day will be seriously studied and then motivation to investigate new innovations through activities and material that facilitate the learning process.





## CONCLUSIONS

Firstly, this study about methodologies to improve writing skills reveals significant reflections about applying the writing process to create paragraphs able to communicate messages effectively. The theoretical aspects, the pre-, intervention, and post-test, offer a clear vision of the importance of the development of writing competencies in 10th graders. These are possible to do and gain advancements in language acquisition. Learners can comprehend strategies that facilitate their writing productions at a high level.

Secondly, the post-test ratings that show improvements in the content and the organization criteria in paragraphs about different topics indicate this study has reached its principal objectives. Now, learners are able to write coherent information, linking ideas through connector words with proper punctuations, and better use of vocabulary and grammar forms. The positive numerical results after the intervention connect the advantages of using the writing process approach as a practical strategy with strong attitudes originated in learners through the writing practices.

Thirdly, the unexpected results of a participant in the experimental group who got lower ratings in the post-test. It affects his general and also the experimental group's average.

Even though his grade on the pre-test was over half of the final rating and his attendance at the writing sessions was regular, his grade on the post-test was low. The improvement of fourteen students in the control group in content and organization criteria is relevant to mention. These learners were familiar with the activity post-test then, which could explain their results. However, it is also significant to recognize their interest when doing the post-test, where they have observed advances in their writing skills and, thus the multifaceted





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and holistic nature of language development.

In addition, it draws attention to the use of language as the criterion with the lowest results in both groups of participants. Definitely, it is relevant to consider using everyday vocabulary and grammar when writing, which results in a limitation to be analyzed seriously. Educators must study methods, strategies, and activities that promote top outcomes in these two aspects of a second language acquisition process. Finally, the writing skills can be improved using adequate approaches and strategies that lead activities and material that support better word production. The positive impact of the writing process and its constant use even done from earlier levels of elementary school can provide our students with decisive language tools to get better linguistic competencies that help their communication.



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ANNEX 2

RESEARCH PLAN FOR THE PROPOSAL

**Research Topic:** "Methodological recommendations for improving writing skills using descriptive paragraphs with 10<sup>th</sup> graders A1 level".

Author: **Diana Arciniegas Fárez**

**TITLE OF THE THESIS:** "Methodological recommendations for improving writing skills using descriptive paragraphs with 10<sup>th</sup> graders A1 level".

**AUTHOR 1:** Diana Patricia Arciniegas Fárez.

**RESEARCH CONTEXT:** Methodological recommendations for improving writing skills among 10th grade learners are important and pertinent in the field of language education and language acquisition.

These students are in the tenth grade at the basic education level, and their English proficiency level is A1 according to their grades after eight months of regular classes. This is also a consequence of the pandemic time that originated the loss of important fundamental English competences such as organization of ideas, word order, and using of basic punctuation. In this context, it is imperative to investigate the advantages of applying methodological recommendations to improve writing skills.

**1. Brief analysis and description of the situation that justifies the presentation of this proposal.**

The proposed study is pertinent and timely because of tenth graders' developmental and language acquisition stages. The writing process has been shown to be effective in language learning because it determines specific steps to write organized information. Also, there is a lack of clear strategies and activities that describe and practice the writing process. The contextualization of this research is important to investigate factors that may affect the writing process by students of English as a foreign language.





## 2. Statement of the problem to be investigated.

This research proposes to investigate the effectiveness of methodological recommendations for improving writing skills develop written communication at the A1 level for tenth Graders. The methodological strategies will motivate learners to practice English beyond the classroom and value it as a tool for their future studies and professional preparation.

## 3. Justification of the research

The proposed research on improving writing deficiencies is justified by the need to improve language education, because of the tenth graders' developmental and language acquisition stages and there is a lack of clear and effective strategies that describe the writing process.

## 1. Description of the relationship between the proposal and the research lines of the university.

This thesis topic, "Methodological recommendations for improving writing skills using descriptive paragraphs with 10th graders at the A1 level," at La Inmaculada School aligns well with the research lines of the university, particularly the methodological proposal modality that focuses on integrating knowledge for solving problems.

The thesis aims to address a specific problem in the field of language education by proposing a methodological approach that utilizes activities to enhance writing skills. It also involves structuring a comprehensive plan with a focus on identifying what needs to be done and how to implement it effectively.

Moreover, the research project aligns with the university's research lines by emphasizing the importance of providing practical and didactic solutions that can be implemented in real-world educational settings.

## 4. Object of the research

To investigate the effectiveness of methodological recommendations for improving writing skills among tenth grade of basic education students. The research aims to detect the current level of writing skills and identify areas that require improvement. Furthermore, the research seeks to explore the impact of writing activities on enhancing the written communication abilities of the students.

Specifically, the research aims to:





- Determine strategies that help tenth grade of basic education students to write with organization to transmit concrete written information.
- Assess the effectiveness methodological recommendations in developing the writing skills of the students.
- Identify specific areas of writing skills that show the most improvement through the use of the writing process, models, and examples.
- Explore the perceptions and attitudes of the students towards the writing process as a language learning method.
- Provide recommendations and strategies for improving the implementation of the writing process to enhance writing skills among tenth grade of basic education students in similar contexts.

#### **5. General objective (one)**

To determine methodological recommendations that help tenth grade students at La Inmaculada school write descriptive paragraphs with organization following specific steps in the writing process through the implementation of entrance and exit test and action research.

#### **7. Specific objectives (three)**

1. To assess the current writing proficiency level of tenth grade students at La Inmaculada School.
2. To select, modify and implement writing activities for the purpose of improving writing skills.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented writing process in developing the writing skills of tenth graders'.

#### **8. Description of the variables of the study (independent & dependent)**

In this research, the independent variable is the use of the writing process in written language education. Specifically, the study aims to investigate the effectiveness of the writing process in developing writing skills among tenth grade students.

The dependent variable is the writing skills of the students. The study will measure the improvement in the writing skills after following the writing process as compared to their writing skills before using the writing process. Other factors that could influence writing





skills, such as cultural background, access to resources, and teaching methods, will be controlled or accounted for in the study.

## 9. Description of the research approaches, methods, data collection

### 1. Research Approaches:

- **Quantitative Approach:** This approach involves the collection and analysis of numerical data using statistical methods through peer and self-evaluation. It is good for the investigation because it will allow us to quantify the effectiveness of the writing process in developing writing skills among Tenth grade students.
- **Qualitative Approach:** This approach involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data, such as observations and survey responses. It is good for the investigation because it will allow to gather rich and detailed information on the experiences and perspectives of the participants in the study. This data can be used to provide contextual information, identify potential factors that may influence the effectiveness of writing activities, and gain insights into the strengths and weaknesses of the method.

### 2. Research Methods:

- **Inductive Method:** It is good for the investigation because it will allow generating hypotheses about the effectiveness of writing process in developing writing skills among tenth grade students based on the data collected from the survey, pre-test and post-test.
- **Deductive Method:** It is good for research because it can use existing literature and theories on language acquisition and teaching methods to develop hypotheses about the effectiveness of writing process, and then collect data to test these hypotheses.

### 3. Data Collection:

- **Empirical Method:** It is beneficial for the study because collecting data on the effectiveness of writing process in developing writing skills will be more objective through the pre-test and post-test.
- **Pre-test and Post-test:** It is good for the investigation because it will allow to compare the writing skills of tenth grade students and determine whether there was





a significant improvement tested through the criteria and format of the entrance quiz.

### **10. Description of the beneficiaries and their main characteristics.**

The main beneficiaries of the research are the tenth students' morning parallel at La Inmaculada School.

The main barrier for the students is their limited knowledge and practice of writing, which may impact their language learning. Additionally, the reduction in English language classes due to the pandemic and in the Curriculum based on competences (2021) have also affected their proficiency in the language.

The research will ultimately benefit the students by providing insights into effective language teaching methods that can be tailored to their specific needs and limitations.

### **11. Description of the research context**

La Inmaculada School is a public school in Cuenca with 1,065 students between 5 and 18 years old. There are 38 teachers. In the tenth grade there are 37 students who come from traditional families.

Furthermore, the students at La Inmaculada School learn English, following the curriculum provided by the Ministry of Education. This suggests that their English instruction may not be tailored to their specific needs or focused on developing their writing skills effectively. The lack of a textbook for learning English in a more proper way further limits the students' access to effective resources for language learning.

Considering these factors, the research context highlights the challenges and limitations faced by the students in terms of reduced instructional time, general English curriculum, and limited access to methodological recommendations for writing skills.

### **12. Description of the practical contributions of the proposal.**

The proposed thesis has significant practical contributions that include enhancing writing skills by providing opportunities for students to practice and gain confidence in expressing themselves in English. In addition, it promotes engaging and interactive learning, through the student-centered approach that encourages participation and realistic language application. Additionally, the thesis focuses on developing transferable skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration, and creativity. Lastly, the research conducted will offer pedagogical insights, contributing to the existing knowledge in language education and





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providing evidence-based recommendations for incorporating methodological recommendations for improving writing skills. Overall, the thesis aims to improve language learning outcomes, empower students with valuable skills, and advance language education practices.

### **13. Importance of the proposal from the following perspectives: Professional, methodological, technological, and social need**

The proposed thesis for improving writing skills holds significant importance from multiple perspectives. Professionally, it addresses the need for enhanced language education practices by incorporating innovative teaching methods. By focusing on methodological recommendations, the proposal offers a practical approach that benefits students and educators in writing skills. Methodologically, the study expands the existing knowledge base in language education research by implementing a quasi-experimental design with pre-test and post-test measurements, aiming to provide empirical evidence on the impact of writing activities. From a social standpoint, the proposal addresses the specific needs of students in A1 level fostering confidence and promoting stronger social skills.

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