



DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION EXPERIENCE OF A DIDACTIC SEQUENCE BASED
ON THE GENRE-BASED APPROACH FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF WRITING SKILLS
IN A B2 LEVEL STUDENT GROUP.

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ABSTRACT

Writing stands as one of the most complex and demanding skills in the process of learning English as a second language. It is especially challenging for those seeking academic or professional opportunities. This research focuses on recounting the experience of designing and implementing a didactic sequence based on the genre-based approach, with the aim of improving the writing competence in a group of B2-level students at a language institute in Cali, Colombia. The information gathered came from two writing activities developed at the start (pre-test) and after the intervention with the sequence (post-test). These productions were analyzed using the same criteria to evaluate the students' progress in this skill. In summary, a substantial improvement in the students' ability to write in English was observed. This progress was attributed to the detailed conceptualization of the literary genre explored (personal statement), which sparked significant interest among the students considering its importance in academic and professional contexts, as well as a great deal of exposure to various practical writing activities within the didactic sequence contributing to the delivery of a final composition task.

Keywords: *Writing, Didactic sequence, Genre-based approach, Academic and professional contexts.*

RESUMEN

La escritura se erige como una de las habilidades más complejas y exigentes en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés como segundo idioma., especialmente para aquellos que buscan oportunidades académicas o profesionales. Esta investigación se centra en relatar la experiencia de diseñar e implementar una secuencia didáctica basada en el enfoque basado en géneros, con el objetivo de mejorar la competencia escrita en un grupo de estudiantes de nivel B2 en un instituto de idiomas en Cali, Colombia. La información recopilada provino de dos actividades de escritura desarrolladas al principio (pre-test) y después de la intervención con la secuencia (post-test). Estas producciones fueron analizadas utilizando los mismos criterios para evaluar el progreso de los estudiantes en esta habilidad. En resumen, se observó una mejora sustancial en la capacidad de escribir en inglés por parte de los estudiantes. Este progreso se atribuyó a la detallada conceptualización del género literario explorado (ensayo personal), el cual despertó un interés significativo entre los estudiantes considerando su importancia en contextos académicos y profesionales, así como a una considerable exposición a diversas actividades prácticas de escritura parte de la secuencia didáctica, contribuyendo esto en gran medida a la entrega de la composición final.

Palabras clave: *Escritura, secuencia didáctica, enfoque basado en géneros, oportunidades académicas y profesionales.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The following study addresses the process of English writing development of a group of students at an English institute in the city of Cali, Colombia. The aim is to document the design and implementation of a [didactic sequence](#) based on the genre-based approach, an approach that focuses on the relationship between context and language (Derewianka, 2003: 134), with the goal of enhancing the writing skills of advanced-level learners (B2) at this educational institution.

The design of this sequence is grounded in the Genre-Based Approach (GBA), which aims at the appropriation of a topic through the comprehension and analysis of a literary genre. Additionally, it incorporates the Task-Based Approach, involving the completion of various activities to achieve specific objectives during the class session. The implementation of this sequence took place over approximately two and a half weeks, addressing seven sub-units and culminating in the presentation of a written production. It is noteworthy that this process is guided by the action-research paradigm. Therefore, there is an ongoing review of students' progress with the objective of observing, addressing, and resolving issues throughout the implementation phase. As Carr and Kemmis (1986) assert, action research is important because it is a powerful tool for improving the quality of an individual's practice and the level of an organization's performance, enabling individuals and groups to undertake research and development within their own practice" (p. 194-195).

During the implementation of this [sequence](#), students received a comprehensive conceptualization regarding the personal statement with the aim of fully understanding its purpose and main characteristics. Additionally, they engaged in a series of exercises such as

questionnaires, descriptive compositions and drafts completion that allowed them to carry out various writing practices, facilitating the structuring, revision, and eventual composition of this document. The entire process of elaboration served as a guide for improving the writing skills of students, considering their own contexts, needs, and motivations, which in this case revolved around both work and academic aspects, making students capable of delivering well structured and articulated personal statement that would eventually help them get a job or apply for a postgraduate study program. Similarly, throughout the implementation, various data collection instruments were employed, including a characterization survey, a pre-test, a field diary, a final composition (post-test), and a self-evaluation form. These tools were examined meticulously allowing us to gather a substantial amount of data to subsequently assess comprehensively how the English writing of students changed after the intervention.

In the analysis chapter of this research, a detailed examination of the impact of the [didactic sequence](#) on students' writing is illustrated. This section meticulously elucidates the key aspects considered, providing valuable insights into the subtle ways through which the instructional approach influenced the students' writing proficiency. The findings highlight the intricate relationship between instructional methods and students' writing development, offering valuable implications for educational practice. Finally, particular attention is devoted to exploring the dynamic relationship that emerged between the students' academic and professional needs and the composition of the personal statement. This in-depth exploration sheds light on the intricate interplay between individual aspirations and the crafting of personal narratives. Moreover, the discussion extends to how the aspects considered for evaluating the

implementation of the didactic sequence may hold relevance for guiding future similar productions and instructional endeavors in the field.

2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The primary aim of this study is to document the process of designing and implementing a genre-based unit to enhance written English proficiency in an English as a second language class. This stems from the initially perceived needs among a group of advanced (B2) EFL learners at a private language institute (Institute A onwards) who wanted to pursue academic and professional opportunities in English. Therefore, they had to go through different application requirements, involving the writing of a range of academic communication texts (e.g. resumé, cover letter, emails requesting information, personal statements, letters of motivation, research proposals, etc).

The reason for this focus is that, despite the presence of strategies intended to foster students' writing skills, these are not accorded adequate emphasis in the formulation of the institute's courses. Therefore, students fail to develop a strong writing competence, which clearly goes against their academic interests and future prospects. This research seeks to address this gap and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding and development of writing skills in the given educational context.

To address this imperative, various aspects must be considered. The first of these is which genre would be most meaningful, so that students can improve their writing competencies by prioritizing their main reasons for studying the language. Additionally, it is essential to explore how this genre can be better understood by learners to the point where they can describe each of its components. Subsequently, we need to analyze how the aforementioned process will be carried out, including the materials and activities that will be provided for this purpose.

Finally, it is crucial to consider how the implementation of this sequence and the findings based on it can serve as input to provide meaningful feedback for the writing of the genre in question in the future.

Addressing these questions offers dual advantages, both socially and didactically. Firstly, students will recognize how engaging in various activities to improve their writing skills contributes not only to enhanced academic performance but also to greater employment opportunities. This perspective aligns with the principles outlined in the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) of the institute, which emphasizes the importance of institutional development, academic excellence, and comprehensive student formation (PEI, 2019, p. 58). Secondly, from a didactical standpoint, the resulting [instructional sequence](#) serves as a fundamental resource for continuing the instruction of advanced students in English writing, thus offering a more comprehensive and effective training program for academic excellence, ultimately benefiting both students and the institution.

3. OBJECTIVES

General objective

- To document the process of designing and implementing a genre-based approach unit for the development of the writing skills of an advanced class (B2) at a private language institute in Cali.

Specific objectives

- To assess the needs of the participant students in relation to specific writing skills.
- To design and pilot a genre-based writing unit focused on the production of a personal statement.
- To evaluate and adjust the writing unit based on the reflection of the implementation stage.

4. PREVIOUS WORK

In the realm of English language education, the search for enhanced efficiency and effectiveness has been an enduring pursuit. Over the past several decades, educators and scholars have explored various elements and pedagogical approaches to refine the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. Among these, a notable and increasingly relevant approach in recent years has been the incorporation of textual genres. This approach is dedicated to fostering a more profound understanding of the language by conveying them through a spectrum of text forms.

This chapter delves into the background work surrounding the application of textual genres in English language education. It seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the research landscape, highlighting studies conducted at local, national, and international levels. These investigations collectively shed light on how the textual genres approach guides the development of writing skills, offering valuable insights into its impact on students' linguistic proficiency. As we embark on this exploration, we uncover the pivotal role played by textual genres in study as an alternative in English language instruction, both within and beyond national borders.

5.1 Research conducted using the genre-based approach in secondary or high school educational institutions.

Arteaga (2015) conducted a teaching instruction unit based on the textual genre approach, aimed at enhancing the writing skills of tenth-grade students in a school in Cali. This was achieved through the creation of various texts with a commercial emphasis, aligning with the high school specialization. The research followed the action research model, where observation, planning, execution, and reflection during the intervention played key roles. Three data collection

instruments were employed, including classroom observation, a diagnostic test, and a field diary. The observation period took place between September and October 2013. Additionally, a diagnostic test was administered both before and after the final sequence implementation to assess various aspects of students' writing skills in accordance with the unit under study. As for the didactic proposal, it comprised guided exercises to enhance students' writing, specifically focusing on commercial communication documents such as business letters, memoranda, and reports.

At the end of the intervention, a significant improvement was demonstrated in the unit's two assessed products, "writing a business letter" and "writing a business memorandum." In the former case, there was a 28% improvement in the diagnostic test results after the sequence implementation, while in the latter, "writing a business memorandum," the improvement was 27%.

Arteaga's work highlights the importance of conducting various exercises to comprehend and subsequently enhance students' writing skills in terms of specialized texts, tailored to their linguistic needs and prospects. It is related to my own research in terms of its objective, as both seek the development of English writing skills in a group of students within the framework of specific needs. Regarding the methodological section, the research-action paradigm will be as well the guiding principle in my study. Additionally, instruments such as class observation, and their corresponding documentation in journals will be essential for data collection.

In a similar vein. Bae (2012) focuses on examining the effectiveness of genre-based instruction in writing and students' perception of it in a second language English classroom within a secondary school in South Korea. This was accomplished through the implementation

of five genre-based instructional sessions over a span of 5 weeks in two metropolitan schools located in Gwangju, South Korea. The study involved the participation of more than 595 students who were divided into two groups: an experimental group, which received the aforementioned genre-based instruction, and a control group, which did not receive explicit writing instruction. These students underwent a diagnostic test both at the beginning and at the end of the instructional intervention. Subsequently, they were exposed to 13 sample texts for which they had to identify their nature and main characteristics. Following this, they were required to compose a reflective text with the assistance of their peers. Upon completion of this process, each student had to construct a journal within 40 minutes, which would be assessed in terms of organization, content, and language usage.

The group exposed to genre-based instructional intervention experienced a notable improvement in their test scores administered at the culmination of the intervention. Concurrently, the data collected through questionnaires and interviews conducted throughout the study period demonstrated a discernible positive shift in the learners' perceptions regarding their competence in the second language, underscoring the efficacy of the instructional approach in shaping a more favorable perception of their language proficiency.

A key procedural aspect of this study to my proposed design is to ask students to identify different text genres and their key characteristics. This approach enables learners to develop a much closer familiarity with these genres and encourages them to exchange ideas with their peers, subsequently assessing their grasp of these contents. On the other hand, although this study involved a large substantial number of students, requiring the use of interviews and

questionnaires, unlike my study, making use of a pre and a post test will provide a much more specific insight into the outcomes of my instructional sequence.

Another very important study to take into account is the one carried out by Horverak (2016) in which he aimed to investigate whether an intervention based on systemic functional linguistics and genre-based pedagogy could assist a group of Norwegian high school students in developing their written argumentation skills. This intervention is characterized as a qualitative study in which a set of classroom observations and a series of semi-structured interviews were conducted with both teachers and students. The purpose of this work was to understand their perceptions of the genre-based pedagogy approach used in the intervention and to determine its effectiveness in developing written argumentative competence. The participants included four teachers, all with master's degrees in language-related fields, and eight randomly selected students. The intervention was supported by a diagnostic test administered both before and after the intervention.

The intervention involved dividing the teachers into two pairs and providing them with different materials for genre-based instruction. In terms of these materials, one was more explicit and deductive, based on the understanding of textual genres as presented by Martin and Rothary (2012). This approach included a detailed description of the elements of a paragraph in an argumentative text, providing students with more precise and traditional instruction. The other approach was more inductive, allowing learners greater freedom for comprehension and writing work. This approach was influenced by Kress's perspective, where texts are considered elements serving a social purpose (Kress 2012). It is worth noting that despite the dissimilarity in the

applied materials, the four groups involved in the intervention were treated as a single experimental group.

Overall, there was a very positive response from both teachers and students who participated in the intervention, particularly in terms of how genre-based pedagogy can aid the development of written argumentation in a second language. Teachers expressed satisfaction with the clarity, coherence, and relevance of the materials for teaching argumentative writing. An important aspect for educators was the use of grammatical elements to guide students in terms of the presented text, taking into account the differences between the two proposed approaches.

Regarding the students, it is also worth highlighting their natural reception of the intervention. Learners reported feeling much more confident in terms of text structuring and the use of sources. Additionally, there was a recurring improvement in the language used in their productions, particularly in terms of connectors and formal language. Although the research methodology I propose partially differs from the study in question, which included semi-structured interviews and classroom observations, Horverak (2016) provides some significant elements to my investigation. Firstly, despite a relatively small and statistically non-significant participant pool I include, the study's sample remains reasonably representative in the given context. Secondly, the inclusion of both pre- and post-intervention assessments offers a clearer view of the potential impact of the intervention on the experimental group.

Finally, Rodríguez. and Yatacué (2022) conducted the design and evaluation of a didactic sequence that utilized comics as a tool to enhance writing skills in a group of tenth-grade

students at an educational institution in the city of Cali. This study was undertaken in response to a need identified during the authors' teaching practice, during which they observed that instruction regarding writing skills in English classes was nearly nonexistent. The instruction mainly relied on written translation and grammar exercises, with little emphasis on planning, coherence, and other fundamental aspects of writing. To address this issue, a didactic sequence was proposed, centered on the use of comics as a means to promote reading and the creation of narrative texts. This sequence spanned a duration of four months and involved students taking both a diagnostic and a final test, both of which were evaluated using a rubric specifically designed for this study. The process involved reading, analyzing, planning, and creating comics based on the genre of narrative illustration, its characteristics, and implications. This study employed a mixed-methods approach and an action research design, making the entire research-action cycle visible in terms of planning, action, observation, and reflection concerning the proposed intervention.

Qualitative analysis conducted between the initial and final productions revealed a significant improvement in the students' writing skills. They demonstrated enhanced ability to organize ideas and maintain textual cohesion through the use of connectors, as well as the ability to structure their texts narratively. These improvements were confirmed through the daily field notes kept during the research. Additionally, there was a substantial increase in students' motivation to write texts of this nature, as many students showcase their skills and preferences in their productions.

This research provided several valuable elements for conducting a similar study. First, the creation of a rubric specifically designed for the research enhanced the accuracy of evaluating initial and final productions. Second, the segmentation of the creation process during the sequence—reading, analysis, planning, and creation—allowed students to consciously engage in the writing process in their second language. Finally, the selection of an attractive genre for the students and their context highlights how motivation to produce such works can undoubtedly improve learners' linguistic competence.

5.2 Research conducted using the genre-based approach at English institutes

The work to be addressed proposes the development of a didactic sequence based on the comprehension and writing of narrative and descriptive texts with the aim of enhancing writing skills in a group of students aged 10 to 13 at a language institute in the city of Cali. Ávila and España (2013) presented a study framed within the paradigm of action research, whose premise was to emphasize writing as a fundamental element for the second language learning process in a group of adolescents. This involved giving greater attention to grammatical, orthographic, and syntactic elements that allowed writing to be established as an important means of communication. The proposed study was divided into several parts. The first part involved observing a set of classes in the "junior" program to establish the aforementioned need. Subsequently, the planning phase took place, during which different lesson plans were devised according to the specific needs of the experimental group. In this regard, a class from the "junior 1" level was chosen, and within the framework of action research, the intervention took place. Through this intervention, students gained the necessary guidance to produce two final products, one descriptive and the other narrative. After the sequence was implemented, a survey was

conducted to gather information on how students perceived the writing activities, which approach was most effective, how they were able to recognize and correct their errors, and which writing activities were most beneficial. This aspect, along with its proper dissemination, was a fundamental element within action research, as it allowed the information obtained to serve as a basis for improvement for both teachers and the institution as a whole.

In addition to the research phases, another fundamental aspect of this study was the data collection mechanisms, including questionnaires, field diaries, and the creation of two diagnostic tests, one for narrative writing and the other for descriptive writing. Additionally, a draft was produced prior to the submission of the final productions at the end of the intervention. Regarding the results, it was established that students transitioned from viewing the writing process as something that was solely part of their academic obligations, such as note-taking, summarizing, and creating posters, to a much more conscious process through which they could express themselves in terms of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Another critical aspect of the conclusions drawn from this study was the improvement of the learners in areas such as organization, content, and grammatical accuracy. The importance of peer evaluation was also a significant element in the results, as students expressed increased confidence in their learning process when they had the opportunity to provide feedback on the work of others and incorporate the opinions of their peers into their own work. Overall, the application of the sequence was highly positive for the holistic improvement of the students' writing, enhancing not only their execution but also their creativity and teamwork in the process.

This work was framed within the paradigm of action research, which is of great importance for our research objectives. Compartmentalizing the processes into observation, planning, execution, and reflection phases allows for a more significant impact on the linguistic need we aim to address. Furthermore, the context in which the previous research was conducted is quite similar to what I describe in my study we will encounter in our work—a private language institute where motivations for learning English are diverse, with a similar number of students. Finally, the didactic sequence was organized through the creation of lesson plans, which had a fairly explicit structure and were likely to serve as an excellent guide for the development of our sequence.

5.3 Research conducted using the genre-based approach at tertiary or university level.

Trebucq (2005) investigated how a genre-based approach influenced business report writing in a Business English class at an Argentine university. The research utilized three experimental and two control groups from the fourth level of the previously mentioned course. Results, assessed through statistical tests, questionnaires, and interviews, indicated the approach's positive impact on writing and communication skills.

Trebucq's objective was pursued through the selection of three experimental groups and two control groups, all part of the fourth semester of a Business English course, which comprises six levels. Each group was asked to complete an initial test involving the writing of a business report. Subsequently, the experimental group received a 4-week instruction based on the genre-based approach aimed at developing the students' writing skills. For this purpose, a guide for the acquisition of explicit grammatical and textual content was used, afterwards, a final test

with the same characteristics as the initial one was administered. In contrast, the control group did not receive any form of intervention. The students' productions were assessed using a five-point scale test adapted for this study, based on Wilcoxon Rank Sums and Cohen's Simple Unweighted Coefficient statistical tests. Furthermore, this information was triangulated using questionnaires and interviews with the students, ensuring greater reliability of the results.

The results showed that the application of the genre-based approach in this Business English class for intermediate-level students improved their ability to write texts relevant to the course's nature and their proficiency in communicating in these terms. This work focuses on developing writing skills with reference to a specific genre, which is of paramount importance for my research because it illustrates the significance of undertaking a sequence of work aligned with purposes dictated by the context's nature. On the other hand, the writing test used at the beginning and the end of the intervention, which is focused on a specific task (business report), provides an element that I also used to enhance the reliability of the results analysis once the didactic proposal was finished. Finally, while our study is more qualitative in nature, the way information was handled in Trebucq's study, its triangulation, and other procedures shed light on the necessary rigorosity in the research process.

Subsequently, Londoño (2017) aimed to determine the utility, effectiveness, and limitations of genre-based instruction in the development of academic writing proficiency among a group of students in an English composition course at the Universidad de Antioquia in Colombia. This study is characterized as a case study, investigating various teaching and learning experiences occurring in a tertiary education setting focused on academic text writing. In this

context, a didactic sequence was designed for expository essay writing, which was implemented over a period of 12 weeks with two classes per week, involving a class of 9 students. During the initial phase of the intervention, which focused on understanding various social issues affecting the university, students were divided into groups to gain a deeper conceptual understanding of these social phenomena and the concept of genres. This was achieved through peer conversations and the use of worksheets to outline this information. Subsequently, learners were exposed to four different types of text (historical accounts, explanations, information reports, and argumentative essays) to understand their characteristics and what each could contribute to their final assignment: the expository essay. Additionally, students were exposed to two argumentative essays, one considered effective and the other not, to help them grasp the rhetorical strategies associated with this genre through comparison.

In the final part of the intervention, students worked together to create a guide, a "decálogo," on creating an expository essay, which served as a fundamental reference for their own essay compositions. The expository essays produced by the students at the end of the sequence were based on individual topics of interest, giving their work more significance. They were subjected to various planning, execution, and revision strategies, including drafting, peer review, and continuous guidance from the class tutor. Lastly, it's worth mentioning that the evaluation of these productions was carried out based on the criteria outlined in the "decálogo" developed by the students, with a focus on text structure, coherence, and alignment with the target audience.

In terms of data collection, three fundamental elements were used. First, interviews were conducted, both at the beginning and end of the intervention, in a semi-structured manner, to assess the students' knowledge of the genres in question. Second, various artifacts such as worksheets, outlines, and self and peer evaluation rubrics were employed to systematize the information gathered during the implementation of the proposal. Finally, video recordings of class sessions were used to document students' progress in terms of understanding and using different genres.

The results of this research suggested that there was an improvement in students' academic writing proficiency, particularly in creating expository essays, highlighting the usefulness of genre-based instruction in terms of conceptual clarity and organization. In interviews, students expressed that the instruction they received allowed them to structure their final productions and other university-level texts concisely. Furthermore, the metacognitive process required for essay writing was emphasized and well-received by students, as they expressed interest in seeking different sources, organizing ideas, and finding evidence to support their arguments. However, some shortcomings were identified in this process, exacerbated by the fact that both the instructor and students were encountering this type of intervention for the first time. Initially, students' lack of knowledge about the basic structure of essays made them feel uncomfortable, requiring the instructor to spend more time on foundational work. Another factor was the inability to complete all the class sessions included in the intervention due to the extended nature of some tasks and unforeseen circumstances, which led to a partial execution of the sequence.

This work was characterized by its comprehensive nature, with each element serving a specific purpose and playing a crucial role in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the intervention. Notably, the group work carried out by participants during the comprehension and writing stages of their productions significantly enhanced both the quality of their work and their engagement with the intervention. Additionally, requiring participants to create drafts was instrumental in planning and constructing their essays, allowing for continuous assessment and better workload distribution. On the other hand, the inability to complete all the sessions emphasized the importance of designing shorter activities that enrich students' knowledge without negatively affecting the implementation timeline. In conclusion, this work provides valuable insights for future interventions but does not address the relevance of the activities to be performed.

The last study sought to determine the role of a complementary online access-self material based on a genre approach called "We write!" in the development of writing competencies among a group of Modern Languages undergraduate students at Universidad Javeriana, located in Bogotá. Ruiz and Castañeda (2016) & Castañeda González. (2016) conceptualized two phases in the methodological scaffolding of this research: the design phase and the implementation phase. Initially, the design phase involved an exploration and identification of students' needs, their context, and the relevance of the instructional material. In this context, the genre-based approach (Hyland, 2004) was integrated as the instructional foundation of the sequence. Additionally, Hammer's (2007) Boomerang model was adapted to facilitate the development, study, and practice of specific textual genres. As for the implementation phase, it combined the pilot testing of the self-access material and its partial

utilization in an advanced English class within the Modern Languages program at Universidad Javeriana. Students were encouraged to access the material to complement their classroom learning. Subsequently, the written productions of students on the platform were used as input for the evaluation phase, along with a series of interviews aimed at gauging their perceptions of the material.

At the end of the intervention, an evaluation was conducted, which revealed an improvement in the students' writing abilities and a generally positive perception of the material. The collaborative aspect promoted by the use of "We write!" created an environment where the writing exercise was greatly enriched. Furthermore, different roles in the writing process undertaken by the students were identified. They were able to recognize various features in their own productions, enabling them to provide and receive feedback to and from their classmates, thus activating their abilities to identify both their own and others' errors.

This research establishes a comprehensive theoretical foundation for my investigation. It draws upon key components critical to executing an intervention designed to improve English writing skills. These components include the material development framework by Jolly and Bolitho in 1998, Hyland's genre-based approach from 2004, and Harmer's adapted Boomerang sequence introduced in 2007. These theoretical underpinnings serve as the guiding principles for the study, providing a robust framework for both the design and implementation of the research intervention.

Moreover, the collaborative aspect of this methodology is integral to the research's success. Within this collaborative context, students actively engage in offering feedback on their peers'

written work. This interactive feedback loop fosters a dynamic learning environment, where students not only learn from the instructional material but also from one another. The collective effort to enhance writing skills through peer interaction enhances the research's overall effectiveness, adding depth and richness to the study's impact.

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the dynamic landscape of language education, our didactic sequence is positioned as a response to the perpetual quest for pedagogical methodologies that meaningfully enhance language acquisition. This designed framework navigates the terrain of language learning, acknowledging the interplay of cultural nuances, individual characteristics, and evolving socio-linguistic dynamics. Inspired by influential pedagogical paradigms, including Action Research, the concept of Writing in a second language (Genre-Based Approach and writing and communication) as well as the Task- Based approach, our didactic sequence transcends traditional boundaries, weaving these approaches together into a comprehensive toolkit for language educators. This theoretical framework stands as the cornerstone for the didactic unit, prioritizing the empowerment of learners not only with linguistic proficiency but also with the adeptness to navigate and produce texts within specific discourse communities.

Aligned with this theoretical foundation, the didactic unit seeks to cultivate a dynamic language learning environment. Through the scaffolding of learning experiences around authentic genres, we aim to furnish learners with the required linguistic tools for meaningful engagement in diverse communicative contexts. This educational journey involves the systematic deconstruction and analysis of genres, comprehension of their rhetorical structures, and ultimately, the synthesis of this knowledge to craft original texts.

In conclusion, this didactic sequence, informed by the genre-based approach and the concept of writing for specific purposes, both guided by the action research paradigm, endeavors

to instill in students awareness of the contextual nuances governing effective communication for developing a personal statement.

5.1 Action Research

This study aligns with the paradigm of action research, particularly within the domain of educational action research. This paradigm is concerned with establishing a structured framework for all investigative processes within the pedagogical field, taking into consideration its nature and specific characteristics. The concept of action research could be seen as embodying the practice of "taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to exploring one's own teaching contexts" (Burns, 2010, p. 2). Within this framework, the term "critical" does not denote a perspective that views education as ineffective or inefficient. Rather, it signifies an opportunity for educators to critically analyze their sphere of influence, identify areas for improvement, and enact meaningful changes. Additionally, it entails the active involvement of participants, particularly those engaged in daily pedagogical activities, with the objective of comprehending and refining these practices (Stenhouse, 1975). Practitioners engaged in action research are primarily focused not on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, but rather on critically examining their own instructional practices and exploring avenues for enhancement to attain more efficacious outcomes.

According to Burns (2005), action research is conceived as a catalyst for social transformation: "Action research is seen as a means towards creating meaning and understanding in problematic social situations and improving the quality of human interactions and practices within those situations, influencing numerous disciplinary fields and national contexts, including the field of applied linguistics." (p. 57). Hence, contemporary discourse regards this paradigm as

a viable and efficacious alternative for the analysis, reflection, and subsequent resolution of myriad global issues.

In a more specific delineation, Burns (2006, p. 58) characterizes action research as a methodical procedure entailing "participants in a process of planned intervention, where concrete strategies, processes, or activities are developed within the research context. Intervention through action occurs in response to a perceived problem, puzzle, or question – a gap between the ideal and the reality that people in the social context perceive as in need of change." Diverging from other research methodologies primarily concerned with validating theoretical constructs, action research prioritizes the observation of practical scenarios to derive and formulate theory. Within this framework, Burns (1999) delineates eleven distinct stages constituting the action research process.

- Exploration: consensus on an issue of interest and documentation to build collective knowledge.
- Identification: observations supporting the approach outlined in the previous stage.
- Planning: development of an action plan and research methodology.
- Data collection: Execution of data collection activities, with the possibility of modifications in qualitative research.
- Analysis-Reflection: analysis of collected data and reflection, following systematic criteria.
- Hypothesis: formulation of hypotheses based on data analysis.
- Intervention: implementation of new approaches or classroom practices.

- Observation: analysis of results obtained after the intervention.
- Reporting: articulation of data collection activities and results in discussions.
- Writing: conclusive phase synthesizing research questions, developed strategies, the research process, analysis, and results in a report.
- Publication: Dissemination of research work to benefit other communities.

On a different note, according to Nunan's perspective (1990), a preliminary phase and six essential steps are identified that should be considered when undertaking research under the action research approach in a classroom setting:

- Preliminary phase: once a potential problem is identified, it is crucial to examine how this problem manifests (current state) through observation and recording of events, whether through video, audio recordings, or other available media.
- Observation Coding: the observation must be coded based on the problem and what is observed, establishing unique codes for that problem or session.
- Positive Change Identification: using the coded information, a positive change that could impact the problem must be determined.
- Change Implementation: the identified change must be implemented in the course or classroom.

- Observation During Implementation: the class or course must be observed (similar to step 1) while the change is being implemented.
- New Observation Coding: the resulting observation must be coded following the same process as step 2.
- Comparison of Coded Sessions: finally, the coded sessions must be compared to assess the results of the change.

In light of the above, reflection should be a continuous process in action research, as the results of each step provide new perspectives that require constant analysis. These perspectives, in turn, lead to a reconsideration of intervention methods. In this context, the significant importance of action research in education is undeniable, as it contributes various elements that enable the conception of new approaches to pedagogy. This perspective encompasses both the enhancement of teaching practices and the potential benefits it can bring to students. Action research, as a paradigm of social research, is currently a global phenomenon applied to education, as it offers practical contributions to the advancement of schools, classrooms, the teaching profession, and the training of future educators (Muñoz, Quintero, & Munévar, 2001). Thus, action research constitutes a cornerstone in my investigation, esteemed for its analytical depth, reflective prowess, and efficacy in fostering solutions through targeted interventions. Its pertinence is amplified in environments such the current one, where learners perceive English writing as paramount to their academic and professional trajectories.

5.2 Writing in a second language

The importance of writing in a foreign language has significantly grown within the field of language education, especially influenced by the Communicative Language Approach (Hyland, 2003). Starting from the 1980s, the academic landscape has witnessed the emergence of various theories that categorize and outline methodologies aimed at achieving proficiency in foreign language writing. The incorporation of authentic materials and contexts in classrooms has spurred a shift towards a communicative approach to writing, emphasizing the inherent motivations of learners (Brown, 2007). This shift has streamlined the teaching of production skills, particularly writing, by recognizing the diverse competencies required for crafting relevant and well-structured texts.

However, the introduction of diverse methodologies has led to dichotomies in the teaching of writing in a foreign language, especially within the paradigms of process-production, as articulated by Brown (2007). One perspective leans towards a product-based methodology, where learners imitate specific text types or genres. In contrast, the process-based methodology focuses on cognitive exercises preceding the actual writing of a complete text. The latter, as proposed by Shih (1986) and cited by Brown (2007), is characterized by its emphasis on the process of writing, assisting students in understanding their composing process, developing strategies, and valuing activities such as drafting, revising, and rewriting.

Brown (2007) suggests that these two views are not mutually exclusive; instead, they complement each other. He posits that "process is not the end; it is the means to the end" (p. 337). Approaches such as Genre-Based ones integrate both perspectives, embodying a

comprehensive methodology that aligns with the standards of effective teaching in foreign language writing. Such methodologies take into account both cognitive processes and linguistic outcomes through didactic resources. For effective pedagogical practices in teaching writing, the teacher plays a pivotal role in guiding learners, articulating expected outcomes during the final stages of text production. Consequently, understanding how to assess production skills, particularly writing, is fundamental for achieving objectivity in evaluating learners' outcomes.

5.2.1 The Genre-Based Approach

The Genre-Based Approach (GBA) primarily aims to achieve expertise in the comprehension, structure, and use of different textual linguistic expressions. According to Sadeghi (2013), "the teaching of language based on genre analysis", constituting this a fundamental element for understanding how language can be taught through a textual element. This perspective is in alignment with Swales' assertion (as cited in Osman, 2004) that "genre analysis is the study of how language is used within a particular setting." Thus, a text can be interpreted as a linguistic expression carried out in specific times and places, mediated by unique cultural characteristics

Hence, at some point, language learners will be fully capable of producing a text whose characteristics are entirely aligned with their academic, professional, and/or social needs, as sought in the specific academic sequence in question. Feez and Joyce (1998), as referenced in Richards (2006), posit that Genre-Based Approach (GBA) is underpinned by an approach characterized by the explicit explanation of the grammatical structures inherent in various language forms. This approach extends to the production of contextually relevant texts, wherein linguistic skills are typically conveyed through the iterative development and creation of such

texts. According to Richards (2006), the proficiency of learners in diverse contexts necessitates a mastery of text types most frequently encountered within those specific contexts, particularly those linked to academic and professional domains. GBA, in alignment with Mansfield's perspective (1993), is seen as a preparatory tool that equips learners for the demands of authentic, real-world writing scenarios.

In this instructional model, the central objective of language learning revolves around "emphasizing the creation of meaning at the level of the entire text," as articulated by Derewianka (2003). In essence, meaningful learning is closely associated with texts that directly pertain to students' experiences. Within this paradigm, students are engaged in the process of acquiring and producing various spoken and written texts intricately connected to their professional and academic spheres, fostering effective communication skills.

The execution of the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) demands a structured progression through various stages, serving as a guide for learners as they transition from teacher-led and directed lessons to the independent production of the instructed text. Feez and Joyce (1998) advocate for a comprehensive five-stage instructional framework designed for teaching writing and speaking skills within this methodological approach. In the initial stages, learners immerse themselves in the contextual application of texts, exploring patterns and registers within specific settings. This involves a meticulous analysis, including the comparison of model texts to emphasize pertinent structures. Following this, the target text is exemplified through activities, explicitly identifying the descriptive structure to provide learners with a clear understanding.

Subsequently, learners progress to a stage where they gradually construct the text with diminishing guidance from the teacher. Common activities during this stage involve comparing skeleton texts and engaging in jigsaw activities. Ultimately, learners reach a state of independence in their production process, associating the text with related ones in similar contexts to discern common or distinct structural patterns. Throughout this dynamic process, learners actively generate content in the target language, cultivating a heightened awareness of the diverse communicative contexts prevalent in various professional and academic domains.

5.2.2 Specific Purposes Writing

The teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) has emerged as a focal point within the English Language Teaching (ELT) realm in recent decades. Its origins can be traced back to the 1960s, a period marked by remarkable advancements in scientific, economic, and technological domains, which consequently engendered a substantial demand for English proficiency (Ennis, M., & Prior, J, 2020, p. 1).

This new paradigm in English teaching was primarily aimed at fostering linguistic knowledge that could be directly applied in professional and academic settings. Consequently, it sought from its inception "to help language learners cope with the features of language or to develop the competencies needed to function in a discipline, profession, or workplace" (Basturkmen, 2005, p. 6).

A fundamental aspect of ESP lies in its definition as "an approach to language learning, which is based on learner need" (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p. 19). Therefore, the process of

needs analysis, defined as "the process of determining the need for which a learner or group of learners requires a language and arranging the needs according to priorities" (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 242), emerges as a cornerstone for the conception of ESP. It entails identifying the specific requirements of each learner as well as their expectations for language learning, ultimately aligning these with their professional and academic objectives.

Furthermore, another crucial element to highlight within ESP is its flexibility in addressing and providing diverse responses to the needs of workers and students, "given the variety of disciplines in which it operates, and the vast array of language skills, texts, and other features that characterize ESP contexts" (Ennis, M., & Prior, J, 2020, p. 2).

The reconfiguration of the professional and academic landscape, where the demand for English proficiency is ever-increasing, prompts us to question the skills that may be deemed most critical for the professional and academic development of learners. Considering the extensive volume of written exchanges, alongside various occupational and academic texts such as manuals, brochures, etc., writing emerges as the most pivotal skill in this regard. "Arguably the most important of the four macro-skills that students of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) will need is writing, as reflected, for example, in the number of EAP writing courses offered and in the demands put on students in their content courses" (Flowerdew, 2016, p. 1). Consequently, the continual advancements in ESP led to the development of a sub-discipline that addresses writing applied to specific processes: Specific Purposes Writing (ESPW), a field that remains of paramount importance in the study of English for specific contexts.

ESPW also known in different sources as English for Specific Academic Purposes Writing (ESAPW), adopts an eclectic approach to genre studies, drawing on disciplines such as text analysis, linguistics, sociology, and psychology (Bhatia, 1993). Therefore, this methodology emerges in response to the imperative of tailoring writing instruction to specific, practical contexts, challenging the conventional view of writing as a generalized skill. The following analysis delineates key theoretical frameworks that provide a foundation for and inform the teaching of Specific Purpose Writing.

Genre Theory

ESP finds its roots in genre theory, wherein texts within specific contexts share identifiable structural and linguistic traits. Swales (1990, p. 58) defines genre as "communicative events" with specific "communicative purposes," characterized by discernible "patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content, and intended audience"

The ESP/Genre approach has a rather extensive history, dating back to the middle of the 20th century with its theoretical foundation laid by the seminal work of Halliday, McIntosh, and Stevens (1964) in the areas of register and genre analysis. However, it was not until two decades later that it reached its zenith, aligning in this case with the study of specific-purpose English texts, which by that time were being produced in large quantities due to significant advancements in various fields of knowledge and their anglicization. Advancing and elaborating on the concept of genre, Swales's seminal publication on article introductions in the 1980s propelled genre theory and its application to the analysis of ESP texts into the limelight (Flowerdew, 2020, p. 58).

Flowerdew (2020, p. 580) highlights that some specialists define a genre according to the overarching communicative purpose of a text, considering how the discourse community, its participants, and communicative context influence text's rhetorical patterning. Thus, genre serves as a conduit for both the realities and expectations of individuals. This is evident in my research, where a diverse group of students articulate their experiences and motivations through personal statements, striving to achieve academic or professional aspirations, thereby underscoring the intricate interplay between genre, discourse, and societal norms. Consequently, the examination of genre theory extends beyond mere linguistic analysis to encompass broader sociocultural implications and power dynamics.

Cognitive, sociocultural and constructivist lens

The cognitive approach to second language writing elucidates the mental processes involved in linguistic expression. Within this paradigm, cognitive strategies such as problem-solving and critical thinking are deemed indispensable for tackling varied writing tasks (Ellis, 2003). Cognition, fundamentally construed as the process of 'thinking' or 'knowing', underpins the intricate mechanisms governing written language production (Lindemann, 1995).

This approach, underscored by seminal works of Britton et al. (1975) and Flower and Hayes (1981), acknowledges three pivotal determinants influencing the writing process: the intended audience, the author's purpose, and the contextual factors shaping the writing situation.

From a cognitive standpoint, the writing process is conceptualized as comprising several discernible stages. While Lindemann (1995) delineates these stages as fundamental phases of the writing process, Flower and Hayes (1981) offer a more nuanced breakdown, categorizing them as planning, translation, and editing/reviewing, respectively. Emig (1977) extends this schema by introducing a fourth stage termed "reformulation," encapsulating the iterative nature of the writing process.

Moreover, the cognitive approach in second language writing serves as a conduit for heightened self-awareness and metacognitive development among learners. By scrutinizing their learning styles, strengths, weaknesses, and decision-making processes, students become adept at monitoring and advancing their own learning trajectories (Sargunan, 2001). In sum, the cognitive framework in second language writing not only elucidates the cognitive intricacies underlying the act of writing but also fosters learners' metacognitive awareness, thereby empowering them to navigate their learning journeys autonomously.

In the sociocultural theory of writing, emphasis is placed on the inherently social nature of both learning and writing processes. According to Vygotsky (1978), social interaction and participation in specific discursive practices are integral to the acquisition and development of writing skills, particularly in specialized contexts. Thus, in the realm of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) writing, collaborative endeavors and the co-construction of meaning among learners and their peers are seen as beneficial and essential.

As Samovar and Porter (2004, p. 24) remind us, "each human being is unique and shaped by countless factors, culture being but one of them." Consequently, writing, especially for specific purposes, is influenced by various social and cultural factors inherent in the lives of the authors. Written communication thus emerges as a complex interplay of socio-behavioral conditions, incorporating both individual characteristics and contextual influences. As Clark and Ivancic (1991, p. 170) assert, language forms cannot be divorced from their contextual usage, and individual acts of communication within specific contexts are intricately intertwined with the social norms that govern appropriacy within those contexts.

In this regard, my research acknowledges the socio-cultural context of each student as a fundamental element in shaping their writing processes. This perspective aligns with the proposition put forth by Sargunan (2001), who underscores the importance of integrating culture at all levels of language instruction. With the increasing presence of non-native English speakers, the proliferation of multilingual societies, and the trends of internationalization and globalization, it becomes imperative to integrate cultural norms with language teaching practices. This integration not only enhances linguistic proficiency but also fosters intercultural competence and sensitivity among learners.

Finally, examining the constructivist approach, learners play an active role in constructing their understanding of language and writing. In ESP, learners are viewed as proactive knowledge builders, participating in authentic tasks reflective of real-world scenarios (Willis & Willis, 2007). In my research, the aim is to facilitate students' appropriation of knowledge through meaningful tools that resonate with their individual experiences, enabling

them to effectively apply this knowledge in their final writing production. Unlike traditional teacher-centered approaches that rely on fixed syllabi and standardized materials, a constructivist classroom prioritizes primary sources and materials relevant to each student's unique needs and interests (Fritz, E, 2017).

This approach serves as a potent tool for empowering students as authors, facilitating a deeper and more practical understanding of the language. As noted by Cooperstein and Kocovar-Weidinger (2004), the constructivist classroom is guided by four principles: learners construct their own meaning; new learning builds on prior knowledge; learning is enhanced by social interaction; and learning develops through 'authentic' tasks. Constructivist learning moves from experience to knowledge and not the other way around" (p. 141).

Collectively, these theoretical frameworks establish a robust foundation for the teaching of Specific Purpose Writing, integrating elements of genre, cognition, social interaction, active knowledge construction, and contextual nuances. This holistic perspective informs pedagogical approaches designed to cultivate effective and contextually relevant writing skills for learners across diverse professional and academic domains like those available amongst the group of students participating in this study.

5.3 Task-based learning approach

Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is a pedagogical approach grounded in various theoretical frameworks that shape its principles and practices. At its core, TBLT aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasizing communication as the

primary goal of language learning (Savignon, 2002). Drawing from interactionist theories, TBLT posits that language is best acquired through meaningful interaction and communication (Long, 1996).

In this context, language learning is conceptualized as the engagement in various goal-oriented tasks, each imbued with significant meaning for the learner. Through these tasks, learners acquire the requisite skills to master the target language. As articulated by Willis (1996), a 'task' refers to a purposeful activity in which learners utilize language to accomplish authentic objectives. In essence, learners employ available linguistic resources to address challenges, solve puzzles, engage in interactive games, or exchange and compare personal experiences. This approach foregrounds the active application of language skills within meaningful contexts, facilitating the acquisition of language proficiency and communicative competence.

Cognitive psychology plays a significant role in shaping TBLT, with tasks designed to engage learners in cognitive processes such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making. It is believed that these processes enhance language learning by activating mental functions (Ellis, 2003). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also informs TBLT, emphasizing the social nature of learning and the role of social interaction in language development (Vygotsky, 1978). Tasks in TBLT often involve collaboration and social interaction, creating a context where learners co-construct knowledge through interaction with their peers.

The constructivist perspective within Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) emphasizes a learner-centered approach, highlighting the active role of learners in constructing

their understanding of language. Tasks within this framework are meticulously designed to be meaningful and learner-driven, enabling students to actively engage with the language in authentic contexts (Willis & Willis, 2007).

The Noticing Hypothesis proposed by Schmidt constitutes another fundamental element integrated into Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT). According to this hypothesis, learners must consciously attend to linguistic features in the input in order for them to be acquired (Schmidt, 1990). TBLT operationalizes this concept by embedding language within the context of meaningful tasks, which, being significant to learners due to their proximity to social and cultural environments, as well as their direct relevance to their interests, prompt them to notice and internalize language forms during the process of task completion.

An exemplary demonstration of the Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) process is provided by Willis through a cyclical framework. Initially, learners embark on a communication task, utilizing language skills acquired from prior lessons or external sources. Following this, they engage in reflective discussions or written expressions, sharing their approach to the task and comparing outcomes. This reflective phase may involve listening to recordings or reading materials related to the task's theme, thus contextualizing their own task experience. Only thereafter does instructional attention shift towards specific language structures naturally encountered within the previously encountered auditory or textual resources (Willis, 1996, p. 52).

As a conclusion, it can be indicated that over time, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) has evolved into a valuable resource in terms of both research and implementation in education. The concept of TBLT has increasingly served as the theoretical foundation for task sequences in language education (Skehan, 1996; Long, 2014). Taking this into account, it can be asserted that identifying a convergence between writing for specific purposes and TBLT represents a significant advancement in terms of second language writing instruction and learning, particularly for individuals aiming to utilize it within their professional and academic domains. Integrating writing into the framework of TBLT will enable researchers and practitioners to develop a more comprehensive understanding of learners' language usage, particularly as it is driven by the functional necessity to convey complex content within discourse, achieved by amalgamating the communicative purpose of the genre, the content, and the intended audience (Yasuda, 2018, p. 45).

6. METHODOLOGY

In this section, the methodology employed for conducting the research is addressed. Initially, the discussion revolves around the context within which the research takes place, as well as its participants. Subsequently, the type of research is outlined, and finally, each step is detailed in accordance with the framework presented by Burns (1999), including identification, planning, data collection, analysis, intervention, evaluation, and writing. It is noteworthy that the eleven stages suggested by this methodology were not applied because they are implicit in the previously described steps.

6.1 Context

Institute A is a language learning center, with a history spanning over 27 years, has emerged as a prominent educational institution addressing the diverse English language learning needs of the population in Cali and the Valle del Cauca department, focusing particularly on English instruction.

The current student body at the institute totals approximately 3,000 individuals, distributed across three distinct shifts: morning, afternoon, and evening. According to institutional data, attendance is distributed as follows: 32% in the morning, 17% in the afternoon, and 51% in the evening. Furthermore, 72% of students participate in classes from Monday to Friday, while the remaining 28% attend Saturday morning and afternoon sessions.

The main commitment of the institute is to offer English courses with the highest quality standards, aimed at providing comprehensive education for all its students. "The Institutional Educational Project of Learn English proposes to base its objectives on institutional development

and the process of consolidating the quality of education with academic excellence and the comprehensive formation of its students. This is supported by a quality management system that allows constant monitoring and continuous improvement." (PEI, 2019, p. 5).¹

The institute offers different English courses with the "Live in English" program for adults being the most widely recognized. This program consists of six levels aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR): Basic 1 (A1), Basic 2 (A2), Intermediate (B1), Advanced 1 (B1+), Advanced 2 (B2), and Let's Talk (C1).

The pedagogical model employed by the Institute is characterized as an education focused on both vocational preparation and human development. Consequently, its language learners consist primarily of professionals, workers, or students spanning various educational levels, all seeking to complement their training by attaining proficiency in a foreign language, with English perceived as an indispensable component in their academic pursuits. A significant portion of the student body originates from local schools, universities, and various regional companies, some of which have established agreements with the Institute. Notable among these collaborating entities are Goodyear, Varela, Propal, Hotel Pacífico Royal, banks, Ingenios, Colombina, El Éxito, Tecno Cauca, Coca-Cola, Fundación Valle del Lili, Comfandi, among others.

¹"El Proyecto Educativo Institucional de Learn English propone la fundamentación de sus objetivos en el desarrollo institucional y el proceso de consolidación de la calidad de la educación con excelencia académica y formación integral de sus educandos, acompañados por un sistema de gestión de calidad que permita el monitoreo constante y la mejora continua." (PEI, 2019, p., 5). Traducción propia.

It is pertinent to highlight that the institution's attendees predominantly comprise professionals with diverse backgrounds, including engineers, healthcare practitioners, education graduates, social communicators, accountants, and business administrators. Additionally, individuals with various other profiles seek to enhance their English proficiency, driven by the goal of advancing their prospects in both professional and academic spheres.

6.2 Participants

Regarding the participants in this research, it involved a group of 8 students at the B2 level in English, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference. The majority of these students had been engaged in an English learning process at the institute for over a year. They exhibited heterogeneous ages, ranging from 15 to 52 years old. Additionally, diverse professional backgrounds and occupations were identified among them, including an economist, two web programmers, two teachers, a professional in international business, and two students..

In general terms, the students originated from a similar social environment, primarily from strata 4 and 5 of Colombian social composition. They shared certain preferences regarding their leisure activities as well as motivations for language learning.

In conclusion, it was possible to identify that the students met the necessary profile for the intervention, given that the enhancement of their writing skills would significantly contribute to their academic and/or professional objectives, especially considering the relevance of a text like the personal statement in these aspects.

6.3 Type of investigation

This research is deeply rooted in the action research paradigm, a methodological approach characterized by a deliberate and cyclical sequence of carefully planned steps. The dynamic nature of action research, in constant flux, is designed with the overarching goal of fostering transformative changes within the classroom environment. Action research places significant emphasis on collaboration, reflection, and iterative problem-solving, especially within specific contextual frameworks. The methodology involves a continuous cycle that includes planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting, allowing researchers to actively engage with participants throughout the investigative process (Lewin, 1946; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

In this context, the pivotal role of planning emerges as the foundational element of our research initiative. The planning phase serves as the blueprint, guiding subsequent actions and interventions. As we transition from planning to implementation, the meticulously devised elements are methodically put into practice to address a prevalent issue—specifically, the challenges faced by students in writing in the English language.

The implementation phase becomes a tangible manifestation of the theoretical groundwork laid during planning. Here, the researched strategies, carefully designed to overcome the identified difficulties, are applied in a real-world setting. The subsequent phase involves the systematic observation of how students respond to these interventions. This observational component is critical for gauging the effectiveness of the implemented strategies and understanding the nuanced dynamics of student behavior in the face of the targeted intervention.

Finally, the research reaches its culmination with a comprehensive analysis of the results obtained during the observational phase. This analysis forms the basis for formulating well-founded conclusions in alignment with the initially conceived plan. By integrating these insights, the research contributes not only to the specific context of English writing challenges but also to the broader understanding of effective pedagogical strategies within the dynamic realm of action research (Lewin, 1946; Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988).

6.3.1 Design of the didactic sequence

The didactic sequence devised for this intervention was formulated based on the Genre-Based Approach (GBA) and the Task-Based Learning approach (TBL). Its design incorporates diverse linguistic elements, significantly contributing to the development of activities aimed at fostering comprehension, appropriation, and the execution of a "personal statement." The primary goal is to enhance the written production skills of the targeted group. The sequence comprises a pre-test activity, where students refrain from disclosing their initial competencies in the written aspect. It further encompasses seven sub-units, developed throughout eleven classes. Each sub-unit was strategically structured to lead to the presentation of the established oral production. By intertwining GBA and TBL, the instructional framework provides a comprehensive and dynamic platform for students to engage with and improve their proficiency in crafting effective personal statements, thereby advancing their overall writing abilities.

6.3.2 Implementation

The implementation of this didactic sequence unfolded over a 2-week period, from January 17 to February 2, 2024. Daily activities were meticulously organized in alignment with the sequence's overarching objectives, with the primary focus on maintaining a steady work pace and fostering heightened interest among the participating students.

Initiating the intervention, the first day featured a pre-test activity, during which students offered a spontaneous self-description. This initial exercise served as a valuable tool for assessing the students' baseline writing competencies. Following the diagnostic phase, the subsequent days were dedicated to a comprehensive series of activities, systematically designed to explore foundational aspects, analytical components, and the active production of the specific text (subunits 1 to 5).

The sequence culminated in a capstone event comprising the presentation, evaluation, and a reflective session centered on the completed exercise. This systematic and strategic approach aimed to serve a dual purpose – assessing the current state of students' writing skills and fostering tangible improvement within the prescribed timeframe.

The structured progression of activities not only allowed for the assessment of existing competencies but also created opportunities for substantial enhancement. By combining elements of foundation, analysis, and production, the didactic sequence sought to provide a conducive environment for effective learning, ensuring that students could develop and refine their writing skills throughout the specified timeframe.

6.3.3 Evaluation

The evaluation of the implementation of the didactic sequence was characterized by a comparative analysis between two productions. The first one was an initiative-cut "pre-test," and the second was the final production, in this case, the "personal statement." Three essential elements were considered in this process. The initial element focused on the lexical aspect, entailing a comparison of different terms used in both productions to discern the students' progress in this regard. Following that, the grammatical component underwent evaluation, specifically unveiling the similarities and differences between the verb tenses implemented in both pieces of writing.

Lastly, both textual cohesion and organizational structure were assessed with the objective of determining the extent to which students had progressed in terms of how they articulate their thoughts in writing. This comprehensive analysis not only examined the mere use of language but also delved into the students' ability to construct grammatically sound sentences and effectively organize their ideas. The meticulous examination of these three elements aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the students' development throughout the didactic sequence, shedding light on their linguistic proficiency, grammatical competence, and the coherence and organization of their written expressions.

On the other hand, the students conducted a self-assessment at the end of the implementation, aiming to directly understand their reactions regarding the writing process. The goal was to determine how this could impact their perception of English writing. This aspect is considered a fundamental element to take into account for its improvement.

In essence, this comprehensive examination of lexical richness, grammatical intricacies, and textual coherence aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of the students' developmental trajectory throughout the didactic sequence. This, coupled with the effort to understand the students' perceptions of their performance, provided us with elements to comprehend how linguistic competence, grammatical skills, and the effectiveness of their written expressions in terms of cohesion and organization were positively impacted.

7. ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the data obtained during the research are presented, taking into account the various tools used to address the research questions outlined at the beginning of this thesis. In this regard, the fieldwork is divided into three parts. The first part involved a needs analysis to address two main aspects. Firstly, a characterization of the student group was conducted to determine the textual genre that best suited their interests and motivations, as well as the pedagogical model of the institute. This analysis relied on the examination of institutional documents and a survey of students to understand their occupations and motivations regarding English learning. Secondly, an assessment of the students' primary state in terms of English writing was carried out through an initial written production (pre-test).

In the second section of this analysis, the didactic sequence was implemented. The field journal was employed to facilitate ongoing assessment, aiming to ensure a proper understanding and appropriation of the targeted textual genre by the students. This was achieved through meaningful activities aligned with the group's expectations. The closure phase was executed to provide elements for determining the students' progress in terms of written production. Additionally, it sought to generate insights for delivering meaningful feedback in the future to students engaging in similar tasks. This phase included a post-test activity (final written production) and self-assessment by the students.

7.1 Needs assessment

In this section, the characterization of the specific group is presented. The instruments employed for this purpose included a survey administered to the students, the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) of the institution, and finally, a pre-test. The aforementioned data led us to the conclusion that "the personal statement" was the optimal choice in terms of the textual genre to be addressed with the students.

7.1.1 Contextualization survey

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of each student's professional domains and understand their motivations for learning English a survey was conducted at the outset of the course. This study, encompassing 8 participants, reflected a diverse mix of occupations, including a professional in international business, two software engineers, two teachers, one lawyer, and two students. The prevalent objective among them is to acquire proficiency in both oral and written aspects of the English language. This pursuit is fueled by the desire to enhance their working conditions or academic standing, opening doors to new opportunities such as employment in multinational companies or eligibility for scholarships abroad.

Furthermore, the survey unveiled another dimension of the students' aspirations – a keen desire to travel and expand their network of contacts. It is evident that the students perceive this networking as a crucial element to positively impact their professional careers. This dual aspiration, combining language proficiency with a broader global perspective, underscores the multifaceted motivations driving their educational journey.

Following, three excerpts from the survey are presented, providing glimpses into the varied goals and motivations that shape the educational pursuits of these individuals. -Through this exploration, we aim to capture the common tapestry of ambitions that weave together to form the collective narrative of our diverse student body.

Figure 1. Survey student A

Name: Juan David Arango Rodriguez	Age: 25
Birthplace: Cali	
Occupation: Software Developer	
Why are you learning English?	
I'm learning English because I want to get a job in a company where is the first language is English, and improve my english and fluency with native speakers, however, first, I want to study here and learn the basics.	

Figure 2. Survey student B

Name: Maria Camila Bolivar	Age: 33
Birthplace: Bogotá	
Occupation: Professor	
Why are you learning English?	
I want to study my PhD in another country (11)	

Figure 3. Survey student C

Name:	Dionisio Dugue Ramirez.	Age:	43
Birthplace:	Marquetalia Caldas.		
Occupation:	Lawyer		
Why are you learning English?	Because I have traveled to some countrys where don't speak spanish and although neighter speak spanish, IF you speak english you can communicate with them. And that is so important in your trips.		

7.1.2 Institutional documents

When addressing writing in a group of students within a formal education system, another crucial consideration involves gaining a deeper understanding of the institution's pedagogical model. To explore this aspect, an examination of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) at Institute A was undertaken.

Firstly, it is mentioned how various programs offered by the institute are designed to train professionals and students, emphasizing the use of English as a platform for career and academic development. The overarching objective is to equip individuals with the necessary tools to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, "In these times characterized by serious economic, geopolitical, and social trends, and in response to the different waves of change constantly occurring in society, citizens are compelled to prepare for globalization. Those who do not

master other languages and information technology will not competitively survive in the future." (PEI, 2019, p. 7).²

Secondly, the institution's pedagogical model is distinguished by its flexibility, allowing students to undergo diverse transformations based on the evolving needs of the environment. As articulated in the PEI (2019, p. 59), "The curriculum design for programs necessitates taking into account the formulation of gradual objectives that guide the processes, strategies, academic and learning activities, and job competencies. This involves a series of successive transformations of the participating individuals, the organization, available resources, and the conceptual, operational, and political relationships that the institution establishes and maintains with its environment."³

7.1.3 Pre-test

In consideration of the fundamental need to conduct an initial assessment of the students' written competencies, a primary production (pre-test) was undertaken. In this assessment, students were tasked with providing a self-description, with the overarching goal of evaluating their lexical knowledge and their capacity to articulate ideas in written form. Through this process, three discernible areas for improvement emerged in the students' performances.

² En estos tiempos caracterizados por tendencias económicas, geopolíticas y sociales serias, y en respuesta a las diversas olas de cambio que constantemente ocurren en la sociedad, los ciudadanos se ven obligados a prepararse para la globalización. Aquellos que no dominen otros idiomas y la tecnología de la información no sobrevivirán de manera competitiva en el futuro. Traducción del español.

³ El diseño del currículo para programas requiere tener en cuenta la formulación de objetivos graduales que guíen los procesos, estrategias, actividades académicas y de aprendizaje, así como las competencias laborales. Esto implica una serie de transformaciones sucesivas de los individuos participantes, la organización, los recursos disponibles y las relaciones conceptuales, operativas y políticas que la institución establece y mantiene con su entorno.

Considering the initial production by Student A, as depicted in Figure 4, three fundamental aspects requiring attention throughout the sequence are identified with the aim of enhancing comprehension and linguistic quality in terms of written production skills. The first of these aspects pertains to vocabulary, as evidenced by the lexical choices made by the student, which are not entirely appropriate. The document includes terms such as "stadistics," "mayority," and the expression "do friends," indicating not only a lack of suitable words to better convey the intended meaning but also significant difficulties in spelling.

Furthermore, the grammatical component must be addressed significantly, as observed in the inappropriate selection of verb tenses and incorrect verb conjugation in some instances. Examples include phrases like "the majority of my life I was a student" and "I was always wanting." It is noteworthy that the students were not instructed to use a specific verb tense more frequently, aiming for a natural use of tenses.

As a third aspect to be considered, the organization of the text needs attention. The student opted for a single paragraph in their production, which proves somewhat confusing given the variety of aspects about themselves addressed. Concepts such as personal introduction, relationships with others in different contexts, and their profession could be more clearly understood if addressed in separate paragraphs.

Figure 4. Pre-test student A

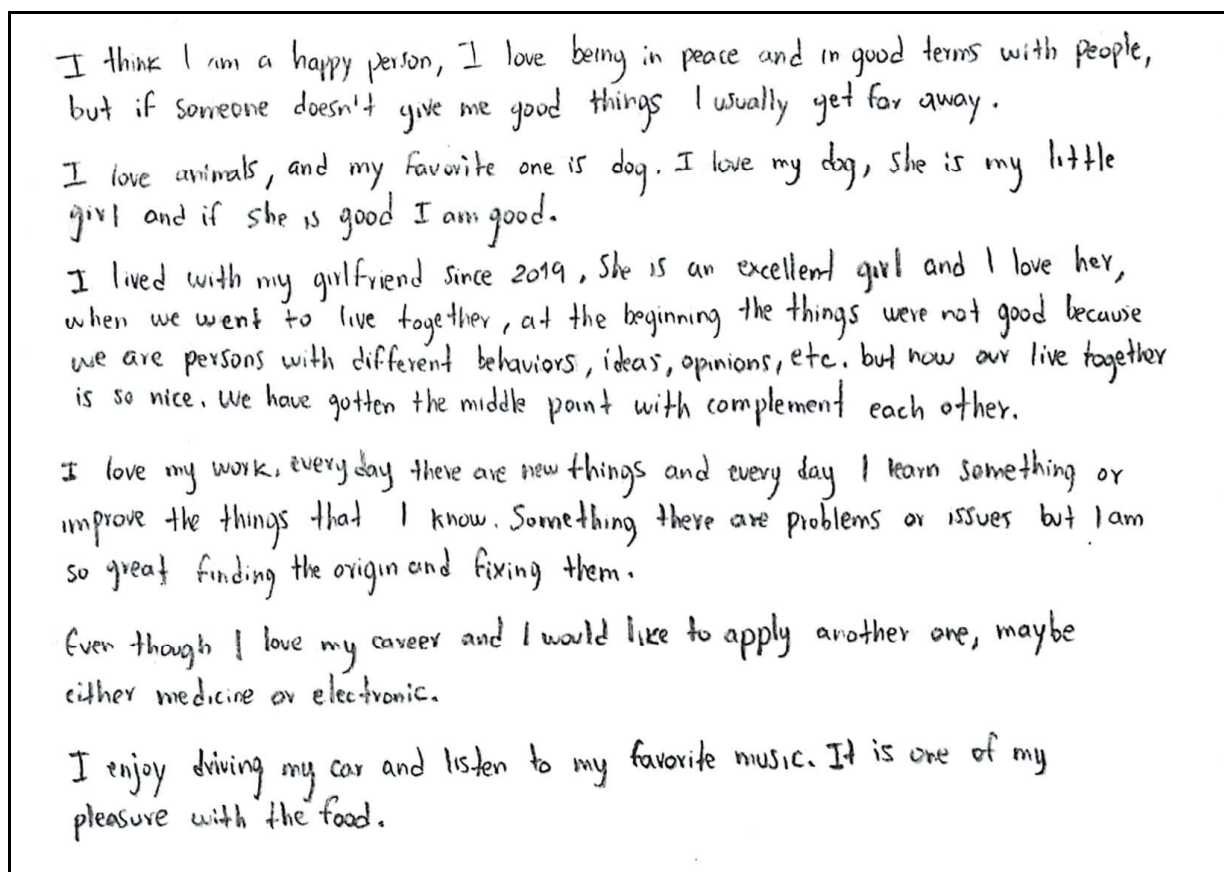
I'm a rational person. I like numbers, statistics and all that is logic. I am 29 years old and the majority of my life I was a student, first in school and later in University. In my free time, I enjoy to play soccer and to travel with my girlfriend, we visit different places, we go to little towns but also visit the beach and the mountains. I don't interact very much with other people but I have some friends. Something that I like about this English course is that I can do friends, I don't know why but I feel different when I speak English, I open more and speak about others topics. I forgot to say that I am a economist and since I was a child I was always wanting to study something similar. That is a little bit about me, I am a particular person but I am happy with that.

Regarding what was presented by Student B in the pre-test task, the following aspects were identified following the previously established examination order. Concerning the vocabulary section, while the student used appropriate terms as required by the task, there are evident errors in lexical choice as well as the use of articles. This is illustrated by the use of words such as "persons," "life" instead of "live," "the things," and "something" instead of "sometimes." This indicates the significant work that needs to be done to enhance students' lexical repertoire, enabling them to produce richer written compositions.

In terms of the grammatical aspect, the student exhibited some shortcomings in selecting appropriate grammatical structures for the context. An example of this is the phrase "I lived with my girlfriend since," where the use of "since" indicates a period of time, necessitating the use of the present perfect tense. Another example is the sentence "I enjoy driving and listen to my favorite music," where, considering that the first verb after "enjoy" is "driving," it follows that the subsequent verb should be "listening."

Lastly, concerning text organization, it is evident that although the text is presented in a reasonably coherent manner and follows a logical order, it could be better distributed by dividing it into at least two paragraphs. This would provide greater ease for the reader and simultaneously create a separation between the different aspects addressed throughout the document.

Figure 5. Pre-test student B



7.2 Implementation of the sequence

The didactic sequence was implemented over a period of two and a half weeks and was structured into 7 units. These units were designed with the goal of ensuring that the different characteristics of the "personal statement," the chosen genre for the intervention, were correctly understood by the students. This design aimed to facilitate the writing, revision, and presentation processes of the personal statement in the most effective manner.

7.2.1 Journal

The field journal was the instrument used to record the implementation of the didactic sequence. Through this journal, the way in which students assimilated the different sub-units of the sequence and how their understanding of the genre in question increased over time was documented.

During the first sub-unit of the didactic sequence, all fundamental elements for comprehending the concept of a "personal statement" were addressed. Various aspects, such as its utility, contexts in which it is used, and key terms essential for a full understanding of this textual genre, were explored. Students expressed satisfaction with the approach to this explanation, considering it a unique and clear presentation that hadn't been done before. They highlighted the clarity of the content and its urgency. This sentiment is reflected in the field journal entries for that day.

Figure 6. Journal sub-unit 1

Date: 22/01/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 1. Introduction to the Personal Statement Unit's goal/task: Introduce and define the concept of personal statement Class: 2 Class time: 50 minutes
General description: the students performed the first unit of the didactic sequence with the aim of understanding the concept of personal statement and its main characteristics.
Observations: the students executed the initial phase of the didactic sequence with the aim of comprehending and gaining clarity regarding the concept of a personal statement. The vast majority of them expressed surprise, as although they had heard about it in the context of their academic training, they had not envisioned it as a professionally-oriented text that could incorporate personalized elements to achieve genuine originality. The students encountered minimal difficulty in undertaking the activities outlined in this initial segment of the sequence such as reading about the concept of personal statement and answering some questions about it. However, they did indicate having certain reservations regarding technical vocabulary found in the reading, such as "input" and "compelling." The class concluded positively, with the students being quite content with what they had learned, and particularly eager to delve further into the intricacies of the personal statement.

Regarding the second sub-unit, the objective was to conduct a review of the students' previous experiences of significant nature. This was achieved through activities in which they could engage in discussions about different achievements in the lives of other people, explore the reasons for their importance, and compare these experiences with their own..

Figure 7. Activity 2 Sub-unit 1

2. Video session (15 minutes)

- Watch the video “70 People Ages 5-75 Answer: What’s Your Goal In Life?” and answer the following questions:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0JUAGsJMVA&ab_channel=Glamour

a. What goals caught your attention? Why?

b. What do people have in common in terms of their goals? Why?

The students articulated a heightened sense of motivation in response to the pertinence of the theme, catalyzing a robust discussion concerning their most pivotal achievements. This engendered a dynamic exchange of experiences, culminating in the development of a comprehensive narrative. The ensuing discourse provided a fertile ground for students to delve into the intricacies of their noteworthy accomplishments, fostering a nuanced understanding of their individual journeys. As a result, a cohesive reservoir of lived experiences materialized, strategically contributing to the organic evolution of the groundwork essential for the subsequent articulation of their personal statements.

Figure 8. Journal sub-unit 2

Date: 23/01/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 2. Identifying Relevant Experiences Unit's goal/task: Identify personal and professional achievements, experiences, skills, and goals. Class: 3 Class time: 100 minutes
General description: the students carried out a series of tasks with the aim of identifying relevant experiences in their lives and how these experiences contribute to making them truly unique individuals.
Observations: during the class observation, students initiated their session with a participatory game, tasked with sharing two truths and one falsehood about themselves, fostering mutual understanding and honing their self-awareness. Following this introspective exercise, they engaged in the challenge of identifying the false statement within the group, further emphasizing the pursuit of enhanced self-awareness. Subsequently, the class delved into a multimedia component, where a video showcased the diverse life goals of individuals spanning various age groups. This visual exploration served to generate a discussion, providing a platform for students to articulate and discern their primary aspirations. The interactive nature of the exercise encouraged thoughtful dialogue among the students, enriching the learning experience. In the second segment of the class, students actively responded to inquiries about their envisioned future selves and recounted significant achievements to date. The session concluded with the collective reading of a passage wherein an individual detailed their major accomplishments and outlined future objectives. This exercise prompted a reflective discussion on the nature of the text, underscoring the significance of self-knowledge in skillfully crafting a meaningful "personal statement."

During the implementation of the third section of the didactic sequence, students delved into the structure of the personal statement. The aim was to comprehend the components and

organizational principles of this document. Despite acknowledging its complexity as a blend of academic discourse and personal experiences, students expressed that the guidance provided in this class facilitated a more precise understanding of how to structure the narrative. Various activities were conducted to identify the introduction, development paragraphs, and conclusion. The goal was to furnish learners with a common framework for undertaking their own work. This approach aimed to enhance their comprehension and application of the personal statement structure.

Figure 9. Journal sub-unit 3

Date: 25/01/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 3. Structure of a Personal Statement Unit's goal/task: learn the typical structure of a personal statement. Class: 5 Class time: 50 minutes
General description: the students proceeded with a more practical exploration of the structure of the "personal statement" to deepen their understanding..
Observations: the analysis of the previously implemented text continued and concluded during this session, aiming to achieve a clear understanding of the structure of the personal statement. Subsequently, the students reviewed an example of the text in question, identifying and analyzing each of its parts. This exercise was intended to enhance their comprehension of the structure when applied to a real text. Following this, the students were divided into groups and tasked with creating a paragraph for each of the previously learned parts of the personal statement. Each paragraph was required to incorporate the distinctive features of each section, allowing the students to accurately express their understanding of the topic. Lastly, the class delved into the usage of the expression "look up to," which can be quite useful in essay writing. In this regard, questions were answered, and efforts were made to incorporate the expression in the most appropriate manner possible.

Concerning the fourth section of the didactic sequence, students concentrated their efforts on comprehending fundamental aspects essential for crafting their personal statements and actively engaging in the writing process. In this context, they articulated an elevated sense of confidence, ascribed to the conceptual foundation and the consistent writing activities undertaken within the sequence. These exercises contributed significantly to expanding their knowledge of English writing. Initially, students participated in a series of purposeful exercises tailored to enhance their writing of each section of the targeted genre. Following this, they concluded the process with a dedicated timeframe exclusively devoted to the meticulous composition of their documents.

The comprehensive approach employed not only solidified their understanding of the theoretical underpinnings but also honed their practical writing skills. It fostered a heightened level of proficiency, enabling them to articulate their thoughts with greater clarity and coherence in written English. Furthermore, the integration of a structured sequence allowed students to refine their ability to convey their ideas effectively within the specific context of personal statements. Consequently, students not only acquired a broader conceptual framework for writing but also developed a nuanced skill set that enhances their capacity to express themselves eloquently in the English language.

Figure 10. Journal sub-unit 4

Date: 29/01/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 4. Writing the Personal Statement Unit's goal/task: Completion of the exercises pertaining to the composition of each section of the personal statement, as well as the formulation of the document. Class: 7 Class time: 100 minutes
General description: during this session, students concluded the writing exercises associated with each section of the personal statement and undertook the composition of the respective document.
Observations: during this class session, students successfully concluded the writing exercises meticulously crafted for the purpose of honing their skills in each section of the personal statement. The exercises were strategically designed not only to reinforce their understanding but also to comprehensively address any lingering uncertainties about the intricacies of crafting this document. In the latter part of the class, students deeply immersed themselves in the actual writing of their personal statements. The level of concentration and dedication displayed was truly commendable. The class witnessed a remarkable enthusiasm among the students, who were evidently motivated and poised to deliver their utmost effort in producing a personal statement that resonates with their unique experiences and aspirations.

In the fifth section of the didactic unit, students dedicated themselves to the review and correction of their written productions, facilitated through a series of activities aimed at understanding the revision process and its significance. Initially, a reading activity was conducted, fostering a critical mindset in terms of the most important

elements that should be considered for the editing of the composition, as well as the manner in which this process should be executed. This activity is depicted in Figure 10.

Figure 11. Activity 2 Sub-unit 5

Developmental Editing: Shaping Your Non-Fiction Manuscript

The first stage of the non-fiction editing process is typically developmental editing. This stage focuses on the overall structure, content, and message of your manuscript. The goal is to ensure that your book has a strong foundation and effectively communicates your ideas to the readers. Here are some key aspects to consider during the developmental editing phase, whether you're doing it yourself or hiring a book editor:

An illustration showing several books and papers scattered on a light orange background. There is a blue book at the top, a red book in the middle, a green book at the bottom, and a purple book on the right. Several white papers are also scattered around, some with lines of text. The books and papers are connected by thin, curved lines, suggesting a flow or relationship between them.

1. Clarify and Refine Your Message

During the developmental editing stage, it's important to review your manuscript to ensure that your main message is clear and well-defined. Identify the core ideas and arguments of your book and ensure that they are effectively communicated to your readers. Remove any unnecessary or repetitive information that may distract from your main message. Viewing your book holistically is key during this stage.

Following the completion of this reading, students proceeded with the editing and correction of their documents, taking into consideration the principles outlined earlier. The class expressed considerable surprise as they did not anticipate the emergence of various aspects that, after thorough review, necessitated modification. This underscored the importance of the earlier conceptualization and the dedicated space for corrections. Students acknowledged the value of the prior understanding gained from the reading activity, emphasizing its role in preparing them for the identification and rectification of elements requiring adjustment in their written

compositions. The realization of the need for revisions highlighted the practical application of the critical mindset instilled during the reading phase. This reflective approach not only enhanced their editing skills but also reinforced the significance of a systematic and iterative process in refining their written work. Overall, the experience emphasized the dynamic interplay between theoretical knowledge acquisition and its practical implementation in the context of the revision process.

Figure 12. Journal sub-unit 5

Date: 30/01/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 5. Editing and revising Unit's goal/task: understanding the process of reviewing and editing a written document. Class: 8 Class time: 50 minutes
General description: in this class session, students acquainted themselves with the concept of reviewing and meditating upon a written document in a manner that ensures an understanding of its various stages and significance.
Observations: the class session initiated with the presentation of an instructional video, strategically designed to introduce students to the intricate concepts of editing and revising academic texts. Subsequent to this visual exposition, a series of thought-provoking questions were addressed, proving instrumental in not only capturing the attention of students but also in fostering a deep understanding of the profound significance associated with meticulous editing and revision practices. Following the interactive segment, a compelling reading activity was done, providing students with a nuanced insight into the systematic breakdown of the revision and editing process into distinct stages. The primary objective was to instill a more pragmatic and methodical approach to handling written documents. Students expressed considerable surprise at the effectiveness of these tools, dispelling their initial perception of the revision process as an overwhelmingly complex undertaking. In summary, the session seamlessly amalgamated theoretical knowledge with practical

application, equipping students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate the intricacies of academic text revision. The combined impact of the video presentation, interactive discussions, and illustrative reading materials effectively demystified the seemingly complex nature of the revision process.

The sixth phase of the didactic sequence implementation entailed the presentation of the written productions that had been thoroughly reviewed and edited. In this stage, students conducted a concise presentation in which they expounded upon their lives, interests, goals, and how the personal statement could contribute to the realization of these objectives. The students conveyed a notable satisfaction with the space provided, as it afforded them the opportunity to articulate aspects of their personal context that informed the execution of their written productions. This presentation not only served as a platform for showcasing their refined written work but also facilitated a more comprehensive understanding of the individuals behind the documents. The incorporation of personal narratives added depth to their presentations, establishing a connection between the content of their personal statements and their broader life experiences. Overall, the presentation phase not only demonstrated their proficiency in written expression but also underscored the significance of aligning personal and academic aspirations within the framework of the personal statement.

Figure 13. Journal sub-unit 6

Date: 01/02/2024 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 6. Presentation of the personal statements Unit's goal/task: carry out the presentation of the personal statement Class: 10 Class time: 50 minutes
General description: durante esta sesión de clase los estudiante realizaron la presentación de sus producciones escritas.
Observations: Today, students dedicated a substantial 50-minute block of class time to present their personal statements. The session commenced with a brief oral introduction, during which students spoke about their backgrounds, motivations, and objectives in a manner that would allow a better understanding of their personal statements. Following this, a comprehensive reading of their written statements took place. There was a lot of excitement in the atmosphere as students enthusiastically shared their compositions. Many expressed that this marked their inaugural foray into a thorough and structured writing process, highlighting a sense of accomplishment. They conveyed satisfaction, noting that it was their first experience with such a detailed task. The significance of the moment was underscored, emphasizing the valuable learning derived from this exercise in crafting thoughtful and well-structured pieces, leaving a lasting impact on their writing skills and overall academic growth.

Finally, students executed the seventh section of the didactic sequence. In this phase, they conducted a comprehensive self-assessment of their academic progress, coupled with a group reflection where they shared their perceptions of the sequence's implementation. The recurring theme in their comments centered on marked improvement, not only in their confidence when approaching a writing production task but also in their grammatical, lexical, and organizational knowledge essential for the execution of such tasks. Students emphasized that each stage played a pivotal role in the successful culmination of the final production.

The initial conceptualization, the subsequent structuring, the meticulous revision process, and the ultimate presentation of the document collectively contributed to providing them with a much clearer, comprehensive, and empowered perspective on writing. This newfound understanding extended beyond the specific text under consideration, enriching their grasp of writing principles in a broader context. The students acknowledged the holistic impact of the sequence, recognizing its role not only in enhancing their proficiency with the targeted personal statements but also in refining their overall approach to the art of writing.

Figure 14. Journal sub-unit 7

Date: 02/02/2023 Teacher: <u>Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama</u> Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals" Topic/task name: 7. Final reflection Unit's goal/task: fina reflection about the writing process Class: 11 Class time: 50 minutes
General description: En esta sesión los estudiantes evaluaron y reflexionaron sobre su proceso.
Observations: During this last class session, students conducted a final reflection in which they addressed several questions that led them to scrutinize the writing process they had undergone. They deliberated on the importance of such texts and their impact on both academic and professional aspects of life. Additionally, they underscored the fundamental nature of possessing strong writing skills, viewing language as an integral unit that facilitates better fulfillment of communicative purposes. In summary, the students expressed strong favor for the continued implementation of such activities as integral components of the course curriculum. They believe that these activities contribute to visualizing and raising awareness about aspects not commonly addressed in an English course but of immense significance, thereby aiding in their understanding and consciousness.

7.3 Closure

During the final stage of this analysis, two essential instruments will be examined to determine students' progress in their English writing skills: the personal statement conducted by the students (post-test) and the self-assessment conducted during the last session of the didactic sequence implementation. This will not only shed light on the improvement in writing by the students but also provide a set of elements that, together, can establish a conceptual foundation. This, in turn, can enable us to offer meaningful feedback for future written productions of a similar nature.

7.3.1 Post-test

The culmination of the didactic sequence was a meticulously crafted personal statement. Within this document, students adeptly applied the acquired elements from the sequence, all with the overarching goal of formulating a compelling text for future job or academic applications. This culmination underscored a notable enhancement in the students' linguistic proficiency, evident in the deployment of more sophisticated vocabulary coupled with impeccable spelling. Furthermore, an enhanced grammatical finesse and an elevated organizational structure were apparent in the students' compositions. This transformation is particularly noteworthy when comparing two distinct samples of this document with the pre-test task students carried about before implementing the sequence. The conscientious analysis of each factor—vocabulary, spelling, grammar, and text organization—revealed a commendable growth in the students' aptitude for effective written communication. The personal statement not only serves as a

testament to their acquired skills but also positions them favorably for success in their future endeavors.

Considering the post-test of Student A, different aspects were identified that improved significantly compared to the pre-test exercise previously proposed. Firstly, we can appreciate the use of more elaborate, precise, and well-spelled vocabulary; words such as 'fix,' 'reinforce,' 'statistics,' and 'absent' were clear examples of this. Secondly, grammatical use showed substantial improvement. The choice of verb tenses was appropriate, and there were no errors in verb conjugation. This can be seen in phrases such as 'I thought about this once I got accepted,' 'I've always wanted to be a scientist,' and 'My heart is stocked with the scientific method.' Finally, the text distinguishes itself with a commendable organizational structure. The incorporation of an introductory paragraph, followed by three explanatory paragraphs and a concise conclusion, not only enhances the document's original purpose but also facilitates a more coherent organization of ideas. This meticulous arrangement contributes significantly to the overall readability and effectiveness of the text, elevating it beyond a mere compilation of words to a thoughtful and well-crafted narrative.

Figure 15. Post-test student A

Cali is Cali and the rest is science

"The world is not made by atoms", it is made by stories. I thought about this quote once I got accepted at University. At that moment, my life changed. Since I was a child, I've always been a curious and creative person. Therefore, the main questions I ask myself when I have a problem are what the problem is and how I can fix it. University helped me reinforce that personality.

I love learning new things and even though in my city, Cali, Colombia it was very difficult to find a good library, I really appreciated those Saturday afternoons in which my father took me to the "Biblioteca Departamental" and I could read about math, statistics and algebra. I've always wanted to be a scientist but like the song says, "the child is grown, the dream is gone". I didn't choose an exact science degree. However, my heart is stocked with the scientific method. I'm an economist, I am a social scientist.

Like I said my personality is divided between creativity for solving problems and logical thinking to proceed. I remember being four years old and escaping from the window of my room to the living room due to the fact my mom had been absent for more than an hour because of a family issue.

In my studies, I learnt a lot about economics, numbers and policies. Every lesson added something to my understanding of how economics connects people's lives. I joined research groups that helped me see how we can use social science to solve problems such as poverty and lack of opportunities. It remarked my main goal, I want to help people.

In the end, my journey from a curious kid from Cali has taken me to be a young adult, an economist, worried about how people can be in better conditions. That's why I want to do a master's in social management, I want to give back a little bit of what I've received, I want to add not to subtract.

Regarding what student B (figure 16) expressed in their production, a quite significant advancement was evident concerning various aspects related to their writing practice. This discernible progress signifies an enhanced proficiency in terms of lexicum, grammatical use and organization. This positive shift underscores the effectiveness of tailored pedagogical interventions in refining students' writing skills. The structured approach employed in the didactic sequence evidently contributed to the notable development observed in Student B's writing practice, emphasizing the importance of strategic instructional methods in fostering tangible advancements in students' linguistic abilities.

Concerning the lexical content of the production, it is noticeable how precise and technically oriented terms are used, taking into account the student's field of action and aspirations. In this sense, terms such as "crafts," "earned," "programming," and "delve into" are employed, undoubtedly providing a deeper understanding and making the text more meaningful for the reader.

On the other hand, the grammatical structures used by the student also underwent a quite significant transformation, considering the production done initially. We observe the use of the present perfect "I've built small cars..." as well as more elaborate structures like "neither...nor," showing how the student began to employ a much broader range of structures in their writing practice.

Regarding the organizational aspect, there is evidence of a very well-distributed text due to the adoption of a structure comprising an introductory paragraph, three body paragraphs explaining the different reasons why this student possesses certain characteristics making them suitable for their goal, and a conclusion that serves to close and reinforce the preceding points.

With the aim of visually projecting more information about this comparison exercise between the pre- and post-tests, Figure 17 was arranged. In it, the three fundamental aspects in the analysis of the productions and evidence of the accomplishment or lack thereof are described.

Figure 16. Post-test student B

Hacking

I love building things, since being a child, I've built small cars with wood sticks, computers with cardboard boxes, telescopes with milk boxes and pieces of glass, etc. In spite of the fact I had not a manner to get the real things, I built them by myself and I pride of my work, they were so nice, well-built, beautiful and I could use them for a long time. I love the things with those characteristics.

Learning is one of the things that I enjoy a lot, it could be my favorite thing. Between my seven (7) and fourteen (14) years old, I learned how to do crafts which I earned some money from, origami, how to download music without an application, how to play a video game without neither the original CD nor hardware changer in the console, how to send text messages by the phone free and other things. When the Internet came up at the first time, the windows messenger was the hobby, after classes I stayed long time chatting with my classmate, and the xbox raise up as the best console game. It was a beautiful period.

At the university, the most important thing was believing in myself, in my skills and abilities. I began the university, studying statistics, I liked the maths but they weren't my forte, to be honest, I just entered because I didn't want to stay doing nothing or go to military service. In that career, I realized that I can achieve anything that I want and I am able to do great things. I taught my classmates, I discovered good ways to learn and understand the career subjects, and in one of these subjects I found out one of my passion - programming. Immediately, I looked for which career this subject comes from, how I learn more about that and all the things related to. My new goal was to study systems engineering, I tried several times to come into and in the end I was able to get my goal. Now I am an system engineer.

Three semesters before finishing the career I was victim of a cyber attack, in which someone deleted information in my student account and sent some email pretending to be me. I felt so weak and undefense even though in the university we talked about this kind of things, there was not a way to delve into it and know how we could protect ourselves and what other thing were stalking us.

Due to that experience, my interest in cyber security started. I looked for information in Internet and in the library. I applied different ways to be safe and when I finished the university I studied a specialization on that and now I want to continue learning and improve the education system, introducing this knowledge in the high school and in any career. I plan to study a master's on cybersecurity and so reduce the feeling of weakness and making an impact on people about what we are exposed in this

Figure 17. Production's comparative chart

Productions' Comparative Chart						
Satisfactory	Lexical aspect		Grammar		Cohesion and organization	
Unsatisfactory	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 1	"Do friends"(referring to make friends"	"Delve into"	"I was always wanting to study something similar"	"I used work on my math exercises for many hours"	"I don't know why but I feel different when I speak English, I open more and speak more about other topics"	"Since I was a child, I've always been curious"
Student 2	"Persons" (referring to people)	"Statistics"	"I lived with my girlfriend since 2019"	"At university, the most important was believing in myself"	"I love animals, and my favorite is dog. I love my dog"	"I didn't choose an exact science degree. However, my heart is stocked with the scientific method"
Student 3	"Music" (referring to musician"	"Orchestra"	"They will going to be there next month"	"By 2030, I will have already bought a house"	"I ate a lot of pizza, never vegetables"	Instead of working abroad, I want to contribute to my country's growth.
Student 4	"Maestry" (referring to Master's degree)	"Engineering"	" she eat only vegetables"	"I've always wanted to work there"	"Every day my first activity is do my bed, I go to work"	"Firstly, I decided to study English then I went to the US to practice"
Student 5	"Fabric" (referring to factory"	" Arrangements"	"I have lived in France 2 years ago".	"I have had three jobs in my entire life".	"Eating pasta, to go to the gym"	" Traveling around the world and learning new languages"
Student 6	"Library" (referring to a bookstore)	"Entreprise"	" I did go to the park last week"	" She will be living in another country"	After to play soccer , eat something and relax"	" First, I go to the gym, then I have breakfast and finally I get ready"

Productions' Comparative Chart						
Satisfactory	Lexical aspect		Grammar		Cohesion and organization	
Unsatisfactory	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Student 7	"Arbitrator" (referring to a referee)	"Athlete"	"I would going to the gym in the afternoon"	"I feel like creating new things"	"Laziness is bad. I have to take a shower early in the morning"	"I want to study physics so that I can understand different phenomenons in nature"
Student 8	"Market" (referring to marker)	"Rooftop"	"Be focus on to eat healthy".	"Working as a teacher and being able to give my best every day"	"Drinking coffee, eat and playing soccer"	"I have visited different cities, including Villavicencio, Medellin and Cartagena"
Student 9	"Coctels" (referring to cocktails)	"Human being"	"He have going"	"He has traveled to NY"	"I like to exercise not watch tv"	"I want to be a great professional. Additionally, I want to have a family"
Student 10	"Poteito" (referring to potato)	"Flip flops"	"I was studied las year"	"I had never been there before"	"My favorite book is the little prince, music I don't like it very much"	"I really like medicine. Therefore, I would like to keep on studying as much as possible"

7.3.2 Self-evaluation survey

With the aim of gaining further insights into students' experiences regarding the implementation of the didactic sequence, a self-assessment survey was conducted wherein students expressed their perceptions regarding the various stages of this process.

Regarding the purpose, the use of personal experiences and the audience's knowledge to whom their production was directed, students indicated their agreement with having a fairly

broad understanding of these aspects once the implementation was completed. This speaks highly of how the various exercises served as a theoretical foundation for learners to comprehend what was being done and the purpose behind it.

In terms of the document's structure, including the introduction, body paragraphs (explanatory), conclusion, and coherence in how these were organized, students expressed agreement with having done a commendable job. Undoubtedly, this demonstrates a very good contextualization regarding the components of the genre in question and how they should be distributed in its writing.

Regarding the language used, writing style, and document revision, students agreed with having employed clear and concise language, emphasizing the importance of the editing and revision process for this purpose. The elements described below (as depicted in Figure 18) show a high level of satisfaction among students regarding the work carried out during the implementation of the didactic sequence. This is because the implemented activities allowed them to feel much more prepared and confident when facing tasks involving English writing, leading to a significant improvement in their performance in this skill.

Figure 18. Auto-evaluation survey

Name: _____

Date: February 6th

Instructions:
Please rate yourself on each criterion based on your personal statement writing process. Use the following scale:

1: Strongly Disagree
2: Disagree
3: Neutral
4: Agree
5: Strongly Agree

1. Clarity of Purpose:

I clearly understood the purpose of my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 ~~5~~

2. Target Audience:

I considered the needs and expectations of the target audience (e.g., admissions committee).

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

3. Self-Reflection:

I reflected on my personal and academic experiences to identify key themes.

1 2 3 4 ~~5~~

4. Organization and Structure:

My personal statement has a clear and logical structure.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

5. Introduction:

My introduction effectively grabs the reader's attention and sets the tone.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

6. Body Paragraphs:

Each body paragraph focuses on a specific theme or experience.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

7. Coherence and Flow:

The ideas in my personal statement flow smoothly from one to the next.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

8. Conclusion:

My conclusion summarizes key points and leaves a lasting impression.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

9. Language and Style:

I used clear and concise language, avoiding unnecessary jargon.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

10. Revision Process:

I checked the text in order to improve my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 ~~5~~

Overall Self-Assessment:

I am satisfied with the final version of my personal statement.

1 2 3 ~~4~~ 5

Additional Comments:

(Provide any additional comments or insights about your personal statement writing process.)

I was an excellent exercise, the time, instructions and methodology were comfy

8. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This work aimed to narrate the experience in the design and implementation of a didactic sequence based on the genre-based approach, aimed at improving the writing skills of a group of B2 level students at a language institute. In this sense, various issues were evidenced throughout this chapter, providing a better understanding not only of the design and implementation process but also of the reactions and results obtained with the students.

The sequence's design, which proposed the distribution of contents into seven sub-units, each with a specific purpose, from conceptualization in terms of what a "personal statement" is, through its structuring, to subsequent revision, presentation, and reflection, allowed students to clearly comprehend each characteristic of this textual genre as well as its production stages. This process proved fundamental not only for the completion of the document in question but also for the enhancement of writing processes, enabling their structuring and the acquisition of new knowledge to enrich this skill.

The sequence was implemented over approximately two and a half weeks, a suitable period that allowed students to fully concentrate on the proposed tasks and establish a much closer relationship with the final product. Furthermore, throughout the implementation, a cooperative character was evident among the students, as they expressed that the developed contents, as well as the final product, would be of great importance for their future goals and how they intertwined with English learning.

Regarding the results, it was first determined that the implementation of the sequence had a significantly positive effect on students' motivation towards writing, not only for texts like the "personal statement" but for this skill in general. The production of a text of great significance for their future professional and academic endeavors led them to question the importance of writing well in English, considering any processes they undertake in their lives related to this foreign language. Learners mentioned that understanding the purpose and audience for whom the written production was intended (as evidenced in self-assessment surveys) provided them with great clarity regarding the fundamentals of writing in English. Hence, they maximized all possible opportunities to continue exploring it.

In a second instance, it was evidenced how students improved their writing competence in terms of three fundamental aspects. The first of these is lexical, considering the exposition during the initial production (pre-test) and the final product (post-test). The learners made better lexical choices, using more sophisticated terms in the second production, indicating a higher level of preparation and knowledge. Additionally, there was a significant improvement in orthography; students made fewer errors, with the revision and editing process playing a crucial role in achieving this.

The grammatical use of students was also another aspect that was positively affected. Students progressed from using rather basic grammatical structures and struggling with many of them to developing a composition where verb conjugation was correct, and the use of different grammatical forms aligned with the purposes of the text. Students expressed how the linguistic needs presented in the specific textual genre allowed them to understand the use of certain

structures, such as the past continuous or present perfect, which unfortunately they had not been able to grasp with other forms of instruction.

In terms of textual organization, students understood the importance of separating their texts into paragraphs to facilitate a clear understanding of the text's message and its different parts. There was a shift from having a single-paragraph text that contained information of all kinds without any differentiation to compositions properly separated according to the idea intended to be expressed in each section. Students themselves mentioned better comprehension of their texts and how this new distribution not only provided clarity about what they wanted to convey but also emphasized the need to compartmentalize their written productions in the future.

The design and implementation of this didactic sequence also served as a foundational input for evaluating writing within the chosen genre. It included a thorough examination of lexical usage, grammatical constructions, organizational structures, and the conveyed motivation and significance to students. This comprehensive approach aimed to provide students with a nuanced understanding of writing, emphasizing its multifaceted nature. By exploring the intricacies of different genres, students gained insights into language elements and developed a deeper appreciation for varied purposes and contextual appropriateness within each genre. This holistic approach facilitated a robust evaluation framework, allowing educators to assess proficiency not only in language mechanics but also in the effective adaptation and expression of ideas within distinct communicative contexts.

In conclusion, this research project has functioned as a crucial instrument, showcasing the substantial enhancement of students' writing skills. This improvement is achieved through the systematic implementation of a carefully designed sequence, comprising a series of well-structured tasks. These tasks are strategically oriented towards cultivating the ability to produce texts with a heightened level of relevance, aligning closely with students' academic and professional objectives. This transformative approach not only fosters academic growth but also prepares students for the demands of their future careers.

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10. APPENDICES

1. Didactic sequence

Available through this link and below.

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1thIyw_MGDL8bXQ7mddZAnGHOyPs4mYhl/view?usp=drive_link

"Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Index

Pre- test

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General objectives :

- 💡 Understand the purpose and importance of a personal statement.
- 💡 Identify and develop key elements that should be included in a personal statement.
- 💡 Write and revise an effective personal statement.



Pre- test

(30 minutes)

Write a description of yourself. Make sure it contains at least 200 words.

(1 class - 1 hour)

- ## ACTIVITIES:

- Students will take turns describing some words, with the condition of not saying some very related terms. Their partners will have one minute to guess what the word is.

Experience	Goals
Life	Objective
Lesson	Long
Work	House
Old	Motivation

Skills	Values
Talent	Home
Abilities	Moral
Performance	Respect
How	Tolerance

Personality	Motivation
Character	Objective
Characteristics	Family
Lifestyle	Reason
Individual	Purpose

2. Getting to know the Personal Statement (10 minutes)

a. What do you know about the personal statement? Brainstorm some ideas about it.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

b. Watch the video in which “What is the Personal Statement” and answer some questions.



 Watch this video

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOzegYvIEW0&ab_channel=CollegeEssayAdvisors

1. What is the personal statement?

2. What are we required to write about in a personal statement?

3. What tone are we recommended to keep in a personal statement?

- a. Direct
- b. Conversational
- c. Gloomy
- d. Optimistic

4. What core values should be taken into account when writing a personal statement?

- a. Compassion, gratitude, diversity and respect.
- b. Humility, respect, generosity and justice..
- c. Humility, confidence, humor and sincerity.
- d. Justice, generosity, love and compassion.

3. Deeping into the concept (30 minutes)

a. Read the following text in order to get some further information about the concept of "Personal Statement".

<https://www.loyola.edu/departments/national-fellowships/resources/personal-statement>



What is a Personal Statement?

by Mary Hale Tolar, Former Deputy Executive Secretary, Truman Scholarship Foundation

If you are applying for nationally competitive scholarships, for graduate school, or for a number of post-graduate service or employment opportunities, you have seen the vaguely phrased request; in one form or another, it comes down to "tell us something about yourself."

The Rhodes and Marshall competitions require a 1,000- word personal essay: the Fulbright, a "curriculum vita." You are asked to share your "academic and other interests." A clearer charge might be: compose an essay that reveals who you are, what you care about, and what you intend to do in this life. Tell this story in a **compelling** manner, and do so in less than a thousand words. What's so hard about that? Simply make sense of your life (right.) But what does that mean? What will it look like?



Because personal statements are personal, there is no one type or style of writing that is set out as a model. That can be liberating; it can also be **maddening**. But while every personal statement is unique in style, its purpose is the same. A personal statement is your introduction to a selection committee. It determines whether you are invited to interview; and if selected as a finalist, interview questions will be based on this material. It is the heart of your application.

A personal statement is:

- A picture. Your personal essay should produce a picture of you as a person, a student, a potential scholarship winner, and (looking into the future) a former scholarship recipient. An invitation. The reader must be invited to get to know you, personally. Bridge the assumed distance of strangers. Make your reader welcome.
- An indication of your priorities and judgment. What you choose to say in your statement tells the committee what your priorities are. What you say, and how you say it, is crucial. A story, or more precisely, your story. Everyone has a story to tell, but we are not all natural storytellers. If you are like most people, your life lacks inherent drama. This is when serious **self-reflection**, conversation with friends, family, and mentors, and permission to be creative come in handy.

A personal statement is not:

- An academic paper with you as the subject. The papers you write for class are typically designed to interpret data, reflect research, analyze events or readings--all at some distance. We are taught to eliminate the "I" from our academic writing. In a personal statement your goal is to close the distance between you and the reader. You must engage on a different, more personal level than you have been trained to in college. A resume in narrative form.
- An essay that reads like a resume of accomplishments and goals tells the reader nothing that they could not glean from the rest of the application. It reveals little about the candidate, and is a wasted opportunity.
- A journal entry. While you may well draw on experiences or observations captured in your personal journal, your essay should not read like a diary. Share what is relevant, using these experiences to give a helpful context for your story. And include only what you are comfortable sharing--be prepared to discuss at an interview what you include.

- A plea or justification for the scholarship. This is not an invitation to "make your case." Defending an assertion that you are more deserving of the scholarship than other candidates is a wasted effort—you've likely just accomplished the opposite.
- Most importantly, a personal statement is **authentic**. Don't make the mistake of trying to guess what the committee is looking for, and don't write what you think they want to hear. They want to know you.

So, what must you include in the personal statement?

An effective personal statement will answer the following questions:

- Who am I?
- Who do I want to be?
- What kind of contribution do I want to make, and how?
- Why does it make sense for me to study at Oxford (or York, LSE, Cambridge, Sussex)? For the Rhodes, you will want to include a proposal of study, one or two paragraphs devoted to why Oxford makes sense for you. (For the Marshall and Fulbright, your "proposed academic programme" is presented separately.)
- Why is this the right place and program? Is it consistent with your studies and activities to date? Draw connections.

Remember the goal: grab the readers' interest, and make them want to meet you for an interview. Get a sense of the experiences and dreams you wish to share, then examine them for a helpful means of making sense of it all. You will find your story; and if you share it honestly, you will have written a personal statement.

Finally, know that writing a personal essay is hard and will take many drafts and much reflection. Don't wait until you have it right to share it with others; their **input** will likely make it stronger, clearer, and tighter. Don't put it off until you have it right . . . just write!

b. Match the words with their corresponding definitions:

Compelling		It describes something that is genuine, real, and true to its original form or nature. It is not a copy or imitation but is characterized by sincerity, honesty, and a true representation of the person or thing it pertains to.
Maddening		It refers to information, data, or ideas that are provided or entered into a system, process, or discussion. It can also refer to advice, suggestions, or contributions from others in the context of a collaborative effort or decision-making

		process.
<i>Self-reflection</i>		It is so persuasive, interesting, or attractive that it captures and holds your attention. It has the power to evoke strong emotions or reactions. For example, a compelling story or argument is one that is difficult to resist or ignore because it's so engaging.
<i>Authentic</i>		It refers to something that is extremely frustrating, irritating, or exasperating. It can make you feel angry, annoyed, or driven to the point of madness due to its difficulty, complexity, or annoyance.
<i>Input</i>		It is the act of thinking deeply and carefully about one's own thoughts, feelings, actions, and experiences. It involves introspection and self-examination to gain a better understanding of oneself, one's values, and personal growth.

c. Answer the following questions based on the previous text.

1. What is the primary purpose of a personal statement when applying for nationally competitive scholarships, graduate school, or post-graduate opportunities?

2. How does the text suggest you should approach the task of composing a personal statement, and what key elements should it include?

3. According to the text, why is it important for a personal statement to be authentic, and what should you avoid doing in your statement?

4. What questions should an effective personal statement answer, and why are these questions important to address?

5. What advice does the text offer to individuals who are working on their personal statements, particularly in terms of seeking feedback and making the writing process more manageable?

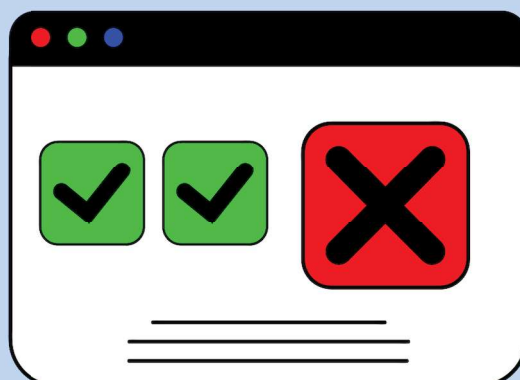
2. Identifying Relevant Experiences

(1 class – 2 hours)

- Identification of personal and professional achievements, experiences, skills, and goals.
- Brainstorming and reflection activities to gather information.
- Discussion on the importance of authenticity in a personal statement.

1. Warm up: two truths and a lie (15 minutes)

- Write three achievements of yourself, one of them has to be false, then your partners must identify which one the lie is and explain why.



2. Video session (15 minutes)

- Watch the video “70 People Ages 5-75 Answer: What’s Your Goal In Life?” and answer the following questions:



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u0JUAGsJMVA&ab_channel=Glamour

a. What goals caught your attention? Why?

b. What do people have in common in terms of their goals? Why?

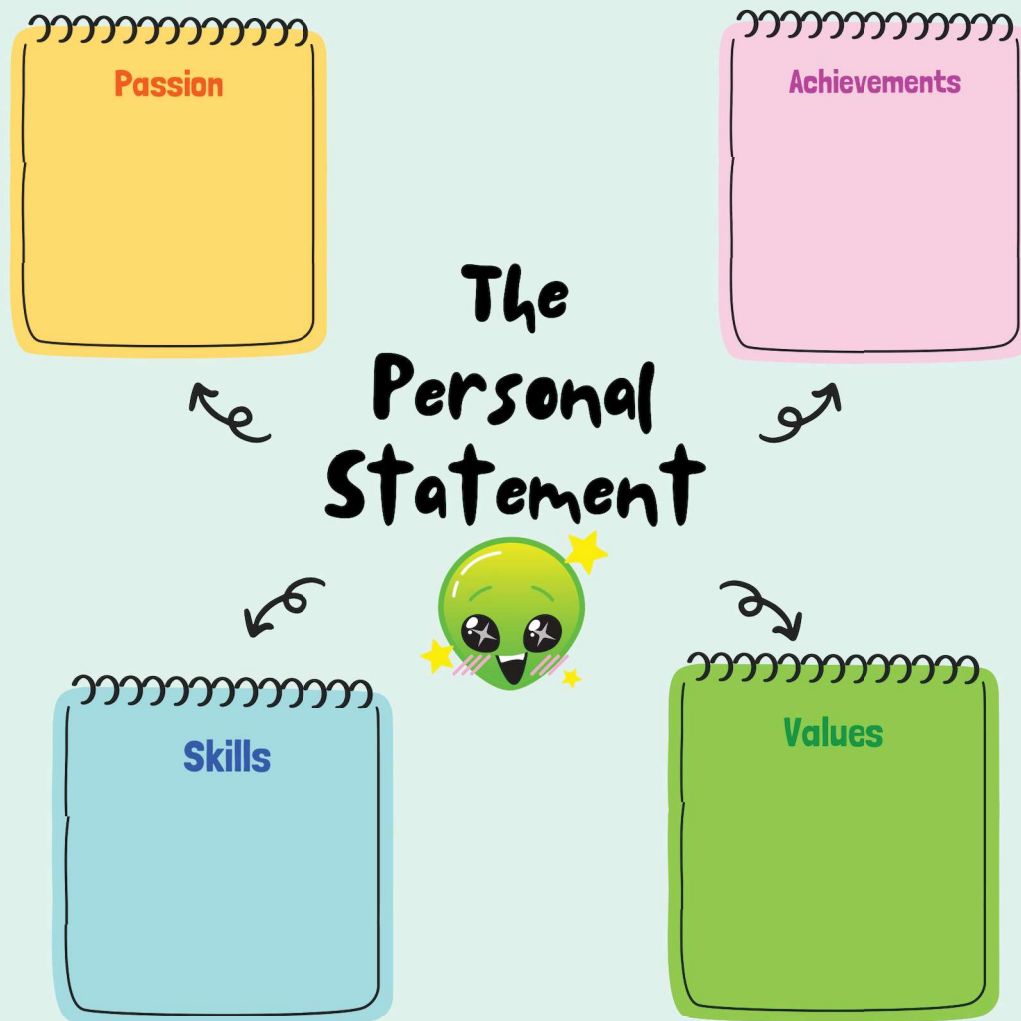
c. Are there any goals you have already achieved?

3. Pair discussion (20 minutes)

- Taking into account your personal goals, perspectives and achievements, discuss the following questions. Take four minutes to discuss a question with a partner and then switch to another person (from A to E)
- a. What's your biggest goal in life? Why?
- b. What makes you happy/sad? Why?
- c. What are your main strengths and weaknesses? Why?
- d. What have been your biggest achievements? Why?
- e. What's a job you would really like to do? Why?

4. Writing (40 minutes)

- a. Read the following quotes about authenticity and mention what you consider this value is about (5 minutes)



2. Deeping into the concept (30 minutes).

- a. Read the following text in order to get familiar to the structure of a personal statement.

Step 2. Create an Outline

Once you have assembled all of your information, you'll be ready to create an outline. Think of your outline as a skeleton; it is the basic framework or structure around which you will write your statement. Preparing an outline will help you logically organize all of your thoughts and seamlessly introduce them into your statement. The most basic parts to work on are the following:

- **Introduction.** Your introduction should declare why you are interested in a given school, job, or other programs, and why people should choose your candidacy. Generally, it should take only one paragraph.

- **Main Body.** . The main body will cover all of the key information you need to highlight. The main body will expand upon the rationale for selecting you that was provided in the introduction. It will also provide more information on your personal history and include past experience or expertise you have in the given field. If you have resume shortfalls or adverse actions in your record, you will address them in the main body as well. In most cases, the main body will consist of 5-8 paragraphs.
- **Conclusion.** . The conclusion should reinforce whatever you are attempting to persuade the reader to do. You should wrap it up in a single paragraph.

<https://www.essaytigers.com/how-write-personal-statement>

b. Now organize the outline for the writing of a personal statement and read the definition of each component.

1.	Main Body (5-8 paragraphs) expands upon the rationale for selecting you, provides more information on your personal history and past experience.
2.	Conclusion (one paragraph) reinforce whatever you are attempting to persuade the reader to do (pick you for the job, grant, college, etc.)
3.	Introduction (one paragraph) declare why you are interested in a given school, job or other program, and why people should choose your candidacy.

c. In groups, brainstorm the structure for a personal statement and write a sample paragraph for each one of them (around 50 words each).



My personal statement

d. Read the previous text to your partners and take notes about the recommendations they provide.

2. Reading: tips for creating a meaningful statement (30 minutes)

a. Read the following text containing some tips for writing a personal statement.

PERSONAL STATEMENT WRITING TIPS

- **Utilize multiple eyes and multiple opinions:** It is important that you ask multiple people to read your personal statement. Someone may catch a grammatical or spelling error. Another person may let you know that one of your points is unclear. Please keep an open mind, as doing this ensures that the statement is legible and interesting when it arrives at the medical school.

- **Be specific:** Admissions Representatives have seen it all. There is no new concept to them. However, you can still make your statement stand-out by illustrating your assertions with examples. It is important to avoid generalized statements, such as “I would be a great doctor because I have an excellent work ethic.” Admissions Representatives have seen this stated a million times in a million different ways. Instead, write out a story about yourself that illustrates this point. For example, you may want to explain how you worked your way through high school to save up enough money to go to college.
- **Go beyond the application:** Most of your academic and professional history will be noted on your application. The purpose of the personal statement is to give the Admissions Committee a glimpse into your motivation and ability to become a doctor. Therefore, it is extremely important that you incorporate personal stories and examples as mentioned above.
- **Avoid clichés:** Medical schools do not want to hear that you want to “help people.” This statement is overused and not a strong enough reason to admit you into the school. Remember, the personal statement’s purpose is to set you apart from other candidates.

<https://www.odu.edu/sites/default/files/documents/personal-statement-tips.pdf>

- b. Answer the following questions in order to reflect on the importance of the previous tips

How open-minded are you to receiving feedback on your writing?

How might incorporating feedback from others improve the overall quality of your statement?
What personal experiences do you have that could illustrate your qualities and assertions more vividly?

What aspects of your academic or professional history do you feel are not fully captured in your application that could be highlighted in your personal statement?

Reflect on common phrases or clichés you might have initially considered using in your personal statement. How can you rephrase them to convey your message more uniquely?

a. Idiom (10 minutes)

Read this idiom and then use it discussing some questions:

Look up to

To admire or respect

Example: I look up to Barack Obama, his leadership is something that is not very seen nowadays.

Who do you look up to?

What values does this person have?

How can you apply these values to your life?

What values should be emphasized when writing a personal statement?

4. Writing the Personal Statement

(3 classes - 1 hour each)

- Writing guidance and exercises for each section of the personal statement. Developing a first draft.
- Peer review and feedback.

Warm up: (15 minutes)

a. Write down some of your childhood dreams as well as your adult goals and mention what the main differences are.

Childhood dreams	Adult goals

1. Starting exercise (25 minutes)

Read the following personal statement and answer some questions in order to reflect on its structure

THE BUILDER & PROBLEM SOLVER

Since childhood, I have been an obsessive builder and problem solver. When I was 6, I spent two months digging a hole in my backyard, ruining the grass lawn, determined to make a giant koi pond after watching a show on HGTV. After watching Castaway when I was 7, I started a fire in my backyard--to my mother's horror--using bark and kindling like Tom Hanks did. I neglected chores and spent nights locked in my room drawing pictures and diagrams or learning rubik's cube algorithms while my mother yelled at me through the door to go to sleep. I've always been

compulsive about the things I set my mind to. The satisfaction of solving problems and executing my visions is all-consuming.

But my obsessive personality has helped me solve other problems, too. When I was 8, I taught myself how to pick locks. I always dreamed of how cool it must have been inside my brother's locked bedroom. So I didn't eat at school for two weeks and saved up enough lunch money to buy a lockpicking set from Home Depot. After I wiggled the tension wrench into the keyhole and twisted it counterclockwise, I began manipulating the tumblers in the keyhole with the pick until I heard the satisfying click of the lock and entered the room. Devouring his stash of Lemonheads was awesome, but not as gratifying as finally getting inside his room.

As the projects I tackled got bigger, I had to be more resourceful. One day in history class after reading about early American inventions, I decided to learn how to use a Spinning Jenny. When my parents unsurprisingly refused to waste \$500 on an 18th century spinning wheel, I got to work visiting DIY websites to construct my own by disassembling my bike and removing the inner tube from the wheel, gathering string and nails, and cutting scrap wood. For weeks, I brushed my two cats everyday until I had gathered enough fur. I washed and soaked it, carded it with paddle brushes to align the fibers, and then spun it into yarn, which I then used to crochet a clutch purse for my grandmother on mother's day. She still uses it to this day.

In high school, my obsessive nature found a new outlet in art. Being a perfectionist, I often tore up my work in frustration at the slightest hint of imperfection. As a result, I was slowly falling behind in my art class, so I had to seek out alternate solutions to actualize the ideas I had in my head. Oftentimes that meant using mixed media or experimenting with unconventional materials like newspaper or cardboard.

Eventually I went on to win several awards, showcased my art in numerous galleries and magazines, and became President of National Art Honors Society. Taking four years of art hasn't just taught me to be creative, it's taught me that there are multiple solutions to a problem.

After high school I began to work on more difficult projects and I channeled my creativity into a different form of art - programming. I'm currently working on an individual project at the Schepens Institute at Harvard University. I'm writing a program in Matlab that can measure visual acuity and determine what prescription glasses someone would need. I ultimately plan to turn this into a smartphone app to be released to the general public.

The fact is that computer coding is in many ways similar to the talents and hobbies I enjoyed as a child—they all require finding creative ways to solve problems. While my motivation to solve these problems might have been a childlike sense of satisfaction in creating new things, **I have developed a new and profound sense of purpose and desire to put my problem solving skills to better our world.**

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/personal-statement-examples#B>

- a. What made the start of the previous personal statement stand out to you? Why is it different or cool?
- b. How do sharing personal stories help when you're writing the main parts (body paragraphs) of your personal statement?
- c. Do you think it's a good idea to turn a weakness, like overthinking, into an argument in something like a personal statement?

- d. Did the ending of your personal statement feel like a good finish? Like, did it wrap things up nicely based on what you were trying to say?

2. Introduction paragraph exercise (20 minutes)

- a. Take a look at the following introductory paragraphs

I have been pooped on many times. I mean this in the most literal sense possible. I have been pooped on by pigeons and possums, house finches and hawks, egrets and eastern grays. I don't mind it, either. For that matter, I also don't mind being pecked at, hissed at, scratched and bitten—and believe me, I have experienced them all. I don't mind having to skin dead mice, feeding the remaining red embryonic mass to baby owls. (Actually, that I do mind a little.). I don't mind all this because when I'm working with animals, I know that even though they probably hate me as I patch them up, their health and welfare is completely in my hands. Their chances of going back to the wild, going back to their homes, rely on my attention to their needs and behaviors.

February 2011– My brothers and I were showing off our soccer dribbling skills in my grandfather's yard when we heard gunshots and screaming in the distance. We paused and listened, confused by sounds we had only ever heard on the news or in movies. My mother rushed out of the house and ordered us inside. The Arab Spring had come to Bahrain.

As a young child, I was obsessed with flying. I spent hours watching birds fly, noting how the angle of their wings affected the trajectory of their flight. I would then waste tons of fresh printer paper, much to the dismay of my parents, to test out various wing types by constructing paper airplanes. One day, this obsession reached its fever pitch. I decided to fly.

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/personal-statement-examples#E>

- b. Choose one of the following majors and write an introductory paragraph that matches it

- Business Administration/Management
- Computer Science/Information Technology
- Engineering (various disciplines): Includes mechanical, civil, electrical, and chemical engineering.

- Getting a new house
- Saving or investing money
- Starting to do exercise
- Getting into a stable relationship
- Traveling to a specific place



Body paragraphs

4. Conclusion paragraph exercise (20 minutes)

- a. Take a look at the conclusion paragraphs for the introductions provided in point I.

I sometimes wonder if my preoccupation with social and environmental causes just makes me feel less guilty. Maybe I do it just to ease my own conscience, so I can tell people “At least I did something.” I hope that it’s not just that. I hope it’s because my mother always told me to treat others as I want to be treated, even if I sometimes took this to its logical extreme, moving roadkill to the bushes along the side of the road because “Ma, if I was hit by a car I would want someone to move me off the road, too.” The upshot is that I simply cannot walk away from injustice, however uncomfortable it is to confront it. I choose to act, taking a stand and exposing the truth in the most effective manner that I think is possible. And while I’m sure I will be dumped on many times, both literally and metaphorically, I won’t do the same to others.

October 2016 – I have only begun to understand my people and my history, but I no longer live in fear. Instead, I have found purpose. I plan to study political science and economics to find answers for the issues that remain unresolved in my country. Bahrain can be known for something more than pearl diving, palm trees, and the Arab Spring; it can be known for the understanding of its people, including me.

Thirteen years have passed since that maiden flight, and I have yet to crack physical human flight. My five-year-old self would have seen this as a colossal failure. But the intense curiosity that I found in myself that day is still with me. It has continued to push me, forcing me to challenge myself to tackle ever more complex problems, engrossed by the promise and applicability of engineering. I may never achieve human flight. However, now I see what once seemed like a crash landing as a runway, the platform off of which my love of engineering first took flight.

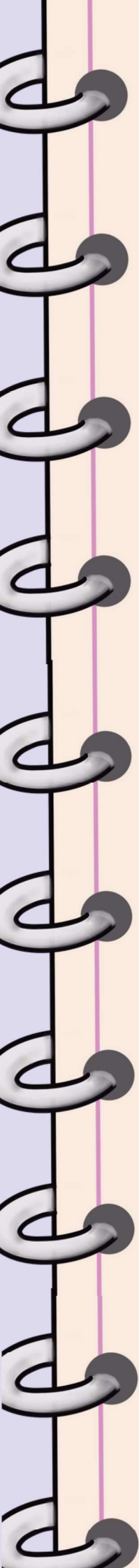
<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/personal-statement-examples#E>

- b. Write a creative conclusion for your previously created introductory paragraph

[illegible]

Title

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, spanning the width of the page.

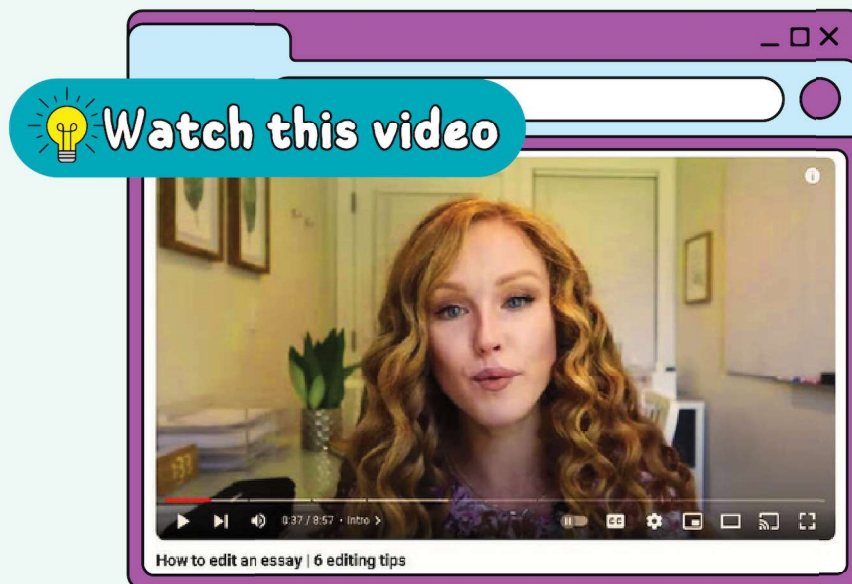
5. Editing and revising

(2 classes – 1 hour each)

- Editing techniques to improve clarity and coherence.
- Grammar and writing revision.
- Production of a final draft.

1. Video session: (15 minutes)

Watch the following video called “How to edit an essay | 6 editing tips” and answer some questions in order to reflect on that



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOJ6Q_sYXHs&ab_channel=SchoolHabits

- a. Why is it important to reformat your essay?
- b. Why should we read our essays out loud?
- c. Is it making a checklist important? Why or why not?
- d. Why is it helpful to put our essays away before handing them in?
- e. Is it reading from the bottom to the top a good strategy? Why or why not?

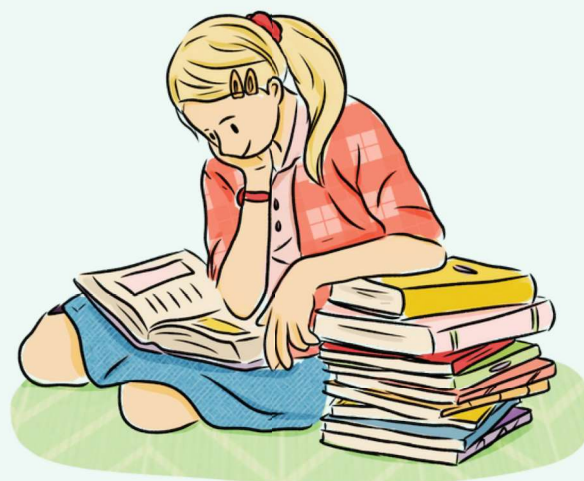
2. Editing techniques to improve clarity and coherence (25 minutes)

Read the following text about editing to improve clarity and coherence and answer some questions in order to properly acquire these techniques

<https://medium.com/@aliciawilcox/editing-techniques-to-enhance-clarity-and-flow-in-your-non-fiction-writing-925835175a73>

Developmental Editing: Shaping Your Non-Fiction Manuscript

The first stage of the non-fiction editing process is typically developmental editing. This stage focuses on the overall structure, content, and message of your manuscript. The goal is to ensure that your book has a strong foundation and effectively communicates your ideas to the readers. Here are some key aspects to consider during the developmental editing phase, whether you're doing it yourself or hiring a book editor:



1. Clarify and Refine Your Message

During the developmental editing stage, it's important to review your manuscript to ensure that your main message is clear and well-defined. Identify the core ideas and arguments of your book and ensure that they are effectively communicated to your readers. Remove any unnecessary or repetitive information that may distract from your main message. Viewing your book holistically is key during this stage.

2. Organize Your Content

Organizing your content is crucial to maintain a logical flow and structure in your non-fiction book. Consider the best way to present your information, whether it's through chapters, sections, or subheadings. Make sure that your content flows smoothly, with each section naturally leading to the next. Use headings and subheadings to guide your readers through your book and make it easy for them to navigate your content. If you made an outline for your book, this may be a good time to ensure that it flows just like the outline!

3. Develop Engaging Introductions and Conclusions

Introductions and conclusions are important elements of any non-fiction book. They provide an opportunity to grab your readers' attention from the start and leave a lasting impression. During the developmental editing stage, pay close attention to your introductions and conclusions. Ensure that they effectively introduce your topic, establish the purpose of your book, and provide a satisfying conclusion that reinforces your main message. It's also important to make sure you're using transition phrases between paragraphs or topics to ensure a great flow.

Line Editing: Enhancing Clarity and Readability

Line editing focuses on the sentence and paragraph level of your non-fiction writing. Now that you've done the developmental editing, you can take a closer look at the finer details of your book. This stage aims to improve the clarity, flow, and readability of your manuscript. Here are some key techniques to enhance clarity and readability during the line editing stage:

1. Simplify Sentence Structure

Complex sentence structures can make your writing difficult to understand. During line editing, review your sentences and simplify them where possible. Break long sentences into shorter ones to improve readability. Use clear and concise language to convey your ideas effectively. Your book's word count may go down during this stage and that is totally okay!

2. Choose Precise and Clear Words

Word choice is crucial in non-fiction writing. Use precise and clear words to convey your ideas accurately. Avoid jargon or technical terms that your target audience may not understand.

3. Ensure Smooth Transitions

Transitions help guide your readers from one idea to another smoothly. During line editing, pay attention to the transitions between paragraphs and sections. Use transitional words and phrases to create a seamless flow of ideas. Ensure that your readers can easily follow your train of thought.

Copy Editing: Polishing Your Non-Fiction Manuscript

Copy editing focuses on the technical aspects of your non-fiction writing. This stage involves correcting grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting errors. Here are some key techniques to polish your non-fiction manuscript during the copy editing stage:

1. Correct Grammar and Spelling Errors

Grammar and spelling errors can undermine the credibility of your non-fiction book. During copy editing, carefully review your manuscript for any grammar and spelling mistakes. Use grammar-checking tools and proofread your work to ensure accuracy. Correct any errors to maintain a professional and polished final product.

2. Ensure Consistency in Style and Formatting

Consistency is important to create a cohesive reading experience. During copy editing, check for consistency in style, formatting, and tone throughout your manuscript. Use a consistent writing style, adhere to a specific formatting guide, and maintain a consistent tone that aligns with your intended message.

3. Adhere to Style Guides and Guidelines

If you are writing for a specific publication or audience, it's important to adhere to their style guides and guidelines. During copy editing, ensure that your manuscript meets the specific requirements of your publisher or target audience. This includes following specific citation styles, referencing guidelines, and other formatting requirements. You may also want to develop your citations or references during this stage if you haven't already.

Proofreading: The Final Polish

Proofreading is the final stage of the non-fiction editing process. It involves reviewing your manuscript for any remaining errors or inconsistencies. Here are some key techniques to ensure a polished final product during the proofreading stage:

1. Check for Typos and Spelling Errors

Carefully review your manuscript for any remaining typos and spelling errors. Pay close attention to details such as missing or duplicated words. Use proofreading tools and take the time to read your manuscript carefully to catch any lingering errors. Since this is the final stage, it's best to take a look at it yourself since some editing tools may miss errors.

2. Review Formatting and Layout

During proofreading, check the formatting and layout of your manuscript. Ensure that headings, subheadings, and other formatting elements are consistent and visually appealing. Review the overall layout of your book, including margins, spacing, and alignment, to ensure a professional and visually pleasing final product.

3. Conduct a Final Read-Through

Before finalizing your manuscript, conduct a final read-through to ensure that everything is in order. Read your book from start to finish, paying attention to the flow, clarity, and overall effectiveness of your writing. Make any necessary revisions or adjustments to ensure a polished final product.

How well-defined is your main message, and in what ways can you improve its clarity during the developmental editing stage?

What strategies can be employed to ensure smooth transitions between ideas and paragraphs?

Which specific sentences can be simplified to enhance readability, and how can you refine word choices to ensure precision in your non-fiction writing during line editing?

As you conduct a final read-through, what revisions or adjustments are necessary for a polished final product during proofreading?

3. Grammar and writing revision (30 minutes)

Share your draft with a partner and take his in order to revise it in terms of text clarity, cohesion, grammar and spelling.

4. Correction and production of the final draft (30 minutes)

Based on your partner's feedback, make the necessary corrections to your document before submitting it.

6. Presentation of the personal statements

(1 class - 1 hour)

- Opportunity for students to present their personal statements.

1. Presentation and reading (50 minutes)

Carry out a presentation of around 5 minutes in which you explain the main characteristics of your personal statement, such as the degree you are applying for, the university, your main motivations, how it will transform your life, etc. After that, read your personal statement to the class.



7. Self-Evaluation and final reflection

(1 class - 1 hour)

- Students will evaluate their own work
- They will reflect on what they have learned in the unit.
- Discussion on the importance of the personal statement in their future applications.

a. Self evaluation form: (10 minutes)

Answer the following form in order to evaluate your performance throughout the personal statement's preparation and writing process.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

Please rate yourself on each criterion based on your personal statement writing process. Use the following scale:

1: Strongly Disagree

- 2: Disagree
- 3: Neutral
- 4: Agree
- 5: Strongly Agree

1. Clarity of Purpose:

I clearly understood the purpose of my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Target Audience:

I considered the needs and expectations of the target audience (e.g., admissions committee). 1 2 3 4 5

3. Self-Reflection:

I reflected on my personal and academic experiences to identify key themes.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Organization and Structure:

My personal statement has a clear and logical structure.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Introduction:

My introduction effectively grabs the reader's attention and sets the tone.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Body Paragraphs:

Each body paragraph focuses on a specific theme or experience.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Coherence and Flow:

The ideas in my personal statement flow smoothly from one to the next.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Conclusion:

My conclusion summarizes key points and leaves a lasting impression.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Language and Style:

I used clear and concise language, avoiding unnecessary jargon.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Revision Process:

I checked the text in order to improve my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

Overall Self-Assessment:

I am satisfied with the final version of my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:

(Provide any additional comments or insights about your personal statement writing process.)

b. Final reflection (40 minutes)

Provide opinions about the following questions in order to reflect on the process of planning and carrying out your personal statement.

-What motivated you to share specific personal experiences in your personal statement? How did you feel about making a personal connection with the content?

-Reflect on any challenges you faced during the writing process. How did you overcome these obstacles, and what did you learn from the experience?



-How did you feel about receiving feedback on your personal statement? How did the revision process impact your perceptions of your own writing?

-Did the process of writing your personal statement evoke strong emotions? How did you manage and incorporate these emotions into your writing?

To what extent did you feel comfortable being authentic and true to yourself in your personal statement?

-To what extent did the personal statement contribute to your sense of identity and self-discovery? Did the writing process lead to any revelations about yourself?

-Reflect on the sense of achievement you felt upon completing your personal statement. What aspects of the process were particularly rewarding for you?

-How do you believe the experience of writing your personal statement will impact your future academic and personal goals? Did the process shape your aspirations in any way?.

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2. Journals

17/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: Pre-test

Unit's goal/task: students will carry out their pre-test activity

Class: pres- test

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: students were given the task of conducting a self-description text of at least 200 words with the objective of identifying their initial level in terms of English writing.

Observations: The students received the assignment with enthusiasm as they reported that in previous courses, they didn't engage in many writing-focused activities. They appeared quite motivated to describe themselves in writing, expressing that this exercise had not been done in a written format before, so they believed it would help them think better in English. They were given a 50-minute class period to carry out the activity, involving various aspects of it, from reflecting on and organizing ideas to translating these into their written productions.

During the composition exercise, students constantly inquired about different words, both in terms of their meaning and spelling, to use them correctly. The majority of students effectively utilized the allotted time for the task, while a small group (3 out of 10 students) managed to complete it with 10 or more minutes to spare.

In conclusion, the students felt quite comfortable completing the task. Although some asked constant questions, they never expressed a lack of motivation or reluctance to carry it out. Finally, it's worth mentioning that since the topic was well-known to them, they did not have to conduct any prior research, making the writing process feel quite natural.

22/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 1. Introduction to the Personal Statement

Unit's goal/task: Introduce and define the concept of personal statement

Class: 2

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: the students performed the first unit of the didactic sequence with the aim of understanding the concept of personal statement and its main characteristics.

Observations: the students executed the initial phase of the didactic sequence with the aim of comprehending and gaining clarity regarding the concept of a personal statement. The vast majority of them expressed surprise, as although they had heard about it in the context of their academic training, they had not envisioned it as a professionally-oriented text that could incorporate personalized elements to achieve genuine originality.

The students encountered minimal difficulty in undertaking the activities outlined in this initial segment of the sequence such as reading about the concept of personal statement and answering some questions about it. However, they did indicate having certain reservations regarding technical vocabulary found in the reading, such as "input" and "compelling."

The class concluded positively, with the students being quite content with what they had learned, and particularly eager to delve further into the intricacies of the personal statement.

23/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 2. Identifying Relevant Experiences

Unit's goal/task: Identify personal and professional achievements, experiences, skills, and goals.

Class: 3

Class time: 100 minutes

General description: the students carried out a series of tasks with the aim of identifying relevant experiences in their lives and how these experiences contribute to making them truly unique individuals.

Observations: during the class observation, students initiated their session with a participatory game, tasked with sharing two truths and one falsehood about themselves, fostering mutual understanding and honing their self-awareness. Following this introspective exercise, they engaged in the challenge of identifying the false statement within the group, further emphasizing the pursuit of enhanced self-awareness.

Subsequently, the class delved into a multimedia component, where a video showcased the diverse life goals of individuals spanning various age groups. This visual exploration served to generate a discussion, providing a platform for students to articulate and discern their primary aspirations. The interactive nature of the exercise encouraged thoughtful dialogue among the students, enriching the learning experience.

In the second segment of the class, students actively responded to inquiries about their envisioned future selves and recounted significant achievements to date. The session concluded with the collective reading of a passage wherein an individual detailed their major accomplishments and outlined future objectives. This exercise prompted a reflective discussion on the nature of the text, underscoring the significance of self-knowledge in skillfully crafting a meaningful "personal statement."

24/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 3. Structure of a Personal Statement

Unit's goal/task: learn the typical structure of a personal statement, including the introduction, body, and conclusion.

Class: 4

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: the students had their initial exposure to the structure of the "personal statement," identifying its key components.

Observations: During the first part of the class, students engaged in a brainstorming activity in which they brought up some fundamental terms related to the concept of a "personal statement." The group responded very positively to this, as they were able to learn about some words they were previously unfamiliar with.

Subsequently, we began working on a short text with the objective of providing a detailed explanation for each part of the personal statement. Students took turns reading different paragraphs, allowing them to collectively comprehend the content related to each section of the personal statement. After a student finished reading a component, an oral explanation of the content was provided to reinforce what had been read.

25/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 3. Structure of a Personal Statement

Unit's goal/task: learn the typical structure of a personal statement.

Class: 5

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: the students proceeded with a more practical exploration of the structure of the "personal statement" to deepen their understanding..

Observations: the analysis of the previously implemented text continued and concluded during this session, aiming to achieve a clear understanding of the structure of the personal statement. Subsequently, the students reviewed an example of the text in question, identifying and analyzing each of its parts. This exercise was intended to enhance their comprehension of the structure when applied to a real text.

Following this, the students were divided into groups and tasked with creating a paragraph for each of the previously learned parts of the personal statement. Each paragraph was required to incorporate the distinctive features of each section, allowing the students to accurately express their understanding of the topic.

Lastly, the class delved into the usage of the expression "look up to," which can be quite useful in essay writing. In this regard, questions were answered, and efforts were made to incorporate the expression in the most appropriate manner possible.

26/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 4. Writing the Personal Statement

Unit's goal/task: writing guidance and exercises for each section of the personal statement.

Class: 6

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: the students will receive a much more extensive guide on how to write their personal statement, taking into consideration the various components of the document.

Observations: the students initiated this class by engaging in a "warm-up" activity, through which they hinted at the connection between the life goals they had as children and those they currently possess. The response to this exercise was quite positive, revealing a sense of surprise among several students.

Regarding the second part of the class, a reading activity was implemented in which students were required to read a complete personal statement and answer some questions about it. The purpose of this activity was to clearly illustrate how this type of text should be written.

Finally, a set of activities was introduced with the aim of practicing the writing of different parts of the personal statement: introduction paragraph, main body, and conclusion. This series of activities continued into the next class.

29/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 4. Writing the Personal Statement

Unit's goal/task: Completion of the exercises pertaining to the composition of each section of the personal statement, as well as the formulation of the document.

Class: 7

Class time: 100 minutes

General description: during this session, students concluded the writing exercises associated with each section of the personal statement and undertook the composition of the respective document.

Observations: during this class session, students successfully concluded the writing exercises meticulously crafted for the purpose of honing their skills in each section of the personal statement. The exercises were strategically designed not only to reinforce their understanding but also to comprehensively address any lingering uncertainties about the intricacies of crafting this document.

In the latter part of the class, students deeply immersed themselves in the actual writing of their personal statements. The level of concentration and dedication displayed was truly commendable. The class witnessed a remarkable enthusiasm among the students, who were evidently motivated and poised to deliver their utmost effort in producing a personal statement that resonates with their unique experiences and aspirations.

30/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 5. Editing and revising

Unit's goal/task: understanding the process of reviewing and editing a written document.

Class: 8

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: in this class session, students acquainted themselves with the concept of reviewing and meditating upon a written document in a manner that ensures an understanding of its various stages and significance.

Observations: the class session initiated with the presentation of an instructional video, strategically designed to introduce students to the intricate concepts of editing and revising academic texts. Subsequent to this visual exposition, a series of thought-provoking questions were addressed, proving instrumental in not only capturing the attention of students but also in fostering a deep understanding of the profound significance associated with meticulous editing and revision practices.

Following the interactive segment, a compelling reading activity was done, providing students with a nuanced insight into the systematic breakdown of the revision and editing process into distinct stages. The primary objective was to instill a more pragmatic and methodical approach to handling written documents. Students expressed considerable surprise at the effectiveness of these tools, dispelling their initial perception of the revision process as an overwhelmingly complex undertaking.

In summary, the session seamlessly amalgamated theoretical knowledge with practical application, equipping students with the skills and confidence needed to navigate the intricacies of academic text revision. The combined impact of the video presentation, interactive discussions, and illustrative reading materials effectively demystified the seemingly complex nature of the revision process.

31/01/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 5. Editing and revising

Unit's goal/task: review and editing for the generation of the final document.

Class: 9

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: During this class, the final review process was conducted with the aim of making relevant changes and generating the final document.

Observations: In this one-hour class session, students engaged in the revision of their drafts, drawing upon previously acquired knowledge in terms of grammar, vocabulary, cohesion, and organization. This process was grounded in the concepts discussed earlier in the course.

After completing this revision and making necessary corrections, students proceeded to compose the final version of their personal statements. In this context, students expressed a strong appreciation for the insights gained during the conceptualization phase, particularly regarding the critical aspects to consider for a comprehensive review and the various stages involved. These insights empowered them to be more meticulous in ensuring the quality of the final product. The students conveyed a high level of satisfaction with their ultimate production, highlighting the value of the conceptual framework in guiding them through the revision process.

01/02/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 6. Presentation of the personal statements

Unit's goal/task: carry out the presentation of the personal statement

Class: 10

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: durante esta sesión de clase los estudiante realizaron la presentación de sus producciones escritas.

Observations: Today, students dedicated a substantial 50 minutes of class time to presenting their personal statements. The session started with a brief oral introduction, followed by the comprehensive reading of their written statements. Excitement permeated the atmosphere as students eagerly shared their compositions. Many expressed that this marked their inaugural venture into a thorough and structured writing process, highlighting a sense of accomplishment. They conveyed satisfaction, noting it was their first experience with such an exhaustive undertaking. The significance of the moment was underscored, emphasizing the valuable learning derived from this exercise in crafting thoughtful and well-structured pieces, leaving a lasting impact on their writing skills and overall academic growth.

02/02/2024

Teacher: Enmanuel Rodriguez Carlosama

Unit: "Creating a Personal Statement: Your Story, Your Goals"

Topic/task name: 7. Final reflection

Unit's goal/task: self-evaluation and final reflection

Class: 11

Class time: 50 minutes

General description: in this session, the students assessed their own performance and also reflected on their writing process.

Observations: During this last class session, students were granted time with the aim of conducting a self-assessment format in which they provided a judgment on their performance in various stages of the writing process. This was done in order to gain firsthand insights into their perceptions in this regard. Additionally, they conducted a final reflection wherein they addressed several questions that led them to scrutinize the writing process they had undergone. They deliberated on the importance of such texts and their impact on both academic and professional aspects of life. Additionally, they underscored the fundamental nature of possessing strong writing skills, viewing language as an integral unit that facilitates better fulfillment of communicative purposes.

In summary, the students expressed strong favor for the continued implementation of such activities as integral components of the course curriculum. They believe that these activities contribute to visualizing and raising awareness about aspects not commonly addressed in an English course but of immense significance, thereby aiding in their understanding and consciousness.

3. Contextualization survey

Name:	Age:
Birthplace:	
Occupation:	
Why are you learning English?	

4. Auto-evaluation form

Name: _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

Please rate yourself on each criterion based on your personal statement writing process.

Use the following scale:

1: Strongly Disagree

2: Disagree

3: Neutral

4: Agree

5: Strongly Agree

1. Clarity of Purpose:

I clearly understood the purpose of my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Target Audience:

I considered the needs and expectations of the target audience (e.g., admissions committee).

1 2 3 4 5

3. Self-Reflection:

I reflected on my personal and academic experiences to identify key themes.

1 2 3 4 5

4. Organization and Structure:

My personal statement has a clear and logical structure.

1 2 3 4 5

5. Introduction:

My introduction effectively grabs the reader's attention and sets the tone.

1 2 3 4 5

6. Body Paragraphs:

Each body paragraph focuses on a specific theme or experience.

1 2 3 4 5

7. Coherence and Flow:

The ideas in my personal statement flow smoothly from one to the next.

1 2 3 4 5

8. Conclusion:

My conclusion summarizes key points and leaves a lasting impression.

1 2 3 4 5

9. Language and Style:

I used clear and concise language, avoiding unnecessary jargon.

1 2 3 4 5

10. Grammar and Mechanics:

My personal statement is free from grammatical errors and typos.

1 2 3 4 5

11. Revision Process:

I engaged in multiple revisions to refine and improve my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

Overall Self-Assessment:

I am satisfied with the final version of my personal statement.

1 2 3 4 5

Additional Comments:

(Provide any additional comments or insights about your personal statement writing process.)