The Incidence of Self-Assessment Through Virtuality in the Learning of Writing

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Due to the quarantine decreed by the central government and the suspension of face-to-face classes in the different schools in the country, the way of evaluating students changed in many ways. Education has been completely transformed with respect to the use of virtual tools to carry out the teaching-learning process.

The Minister of Education Monserrat Creamer (2019), who stated that in Ecuador 3 out of 10 students have serious connectivity problems and do not have digital devices for their classes, in this situation the aforementioned determines that the use of WhatsApp will be the tool that would take center stage in this new modality of virtual education.

The problem observed during the intervention was the lack of vocabulary at the time of forming sentences. they cannot elaborate a paragraph regarding any topic. the writing criteria is limited due to the ignorance of the grammar rules.

Literature Review

Self-assessment in the educational field means that students evaluate or reflect on their own learning based on objectives or performance criteria established by the curriculum. Self-assessment refers to the involvement of students in activities of their own work and their progress (Wong, 2019).

Self-assessment is a reliable procedure that encourages student reflection to identify needs and overcome weaknesses to achieve goals and improve performance (Wong, 2019). It is an essential component in the development of teaching and learning processes.

Aguirre (2022) indicated that self-assessment practices should be a space in which reflection becomes a key aspect to take into account in the hard process of

learning English as foreign language. Self-assessment is the student's participation in judging their own learning, specifically their achievements and the results thereof.

Advantage

Self-assessment (SA) is regarded as a prestigious method of formative assessment in higher education. self-assessment is not synonymous with making students feel bad or embarrassed, in addition, it is a tool that will allow them to enhance their study skills and more, using technological applications to self-assess and receive feedback of the teacher in a personalized way. The present study explored the use of SA as an inclusive practice aiming to help students improve their writing performance, self-regulation, and attitudes.

Disadvantage

One of the main disadvantages of self-assessment is the honesty with which it is done. Honesty and ethics are values learned from home. Students tend to overestimate their homework. Students must self-assess to improve their teaching-learning process regarding writing in English (Widiastuti, 2018). It is important that the student sees the self-assessment as an opportunity to improve their learning process and not as a source of shame.

Burns (2009) indicated that writing is the free composition where the creative activity of the student must be fully exercised so that a language can be learned properly. It is necessary that the teacher, previously, has progressively programmed a series of exercises and compositions in which the student has been gradually granted greater freedom to perform writing exercises on topics related to the current reality of the student so that the learning is meaningful.

Brandt (2020) and Rini (2020) highlighted that writing is important. The fact of writing does not only involve joining a few words or sentences on a piece of paper, but

punctuation marks and grammar rules must be respected, most children know how to write, but not in an academic way. The practice of writing is an essential exercise in learning, and must be practiced in parallel with the other skills.

Innovation

The school is located in the city of Milagro. It has 42 years of institutional life at the service of the youth of Milagro. The institution has a total of 1200 students divided into two sections; morning and evening. Their English level is between A1 and A2. The classes were taught in a virtual modality using WhatsApp. In the development of this action research study, students were involved and motivated with the use of technology and the use of writing to improve their learning.

A Check-list was used. The checklist had various aspects such as: the use of new vocabulary, the use of compound grammatical structures and the correct use of punctuations.

Students can identify the shortcomings and correct them. Many times, when feedback is received from a third person it is not assimilated in a self-critical way, this technique is applied to determine if it can be better in the teaching-learning process (Meletiadou,2022).

The contents of the innovation were used to create writing conversations about topics provides by the teacher; Those writings were uploaded to the Google Drive platform, which was used as a common repository. It was chosen by the students to collaborate and have access to the files of their classmates.

The role of the teacher was to familiarize and guide the student to activities. The self-assessment was carried out through the google-form platform where the students were rated their abilities and skills on the development of writing with respect to the language used, its organization and form.

The teacher extracted the previous knowledge of the students. Students could think and improve the content of their writing production a lot. The teacher trained the students on how to use the rubric to self-assess their writing. Once students handle the rubric, they are given a grade and feedback on how their work could improve; this also gave a clearer view of how to improve based on rating and feedback. The students practiced and wrote conversations as many times as they needed before uploading their final product, which was the post-test.

Research Methodology

The present study explored the use of SA as an inclusive practice aiming to help students improve their writing performance, self-regulation, and attitudes. Several investigations have been carried out linked to the thematic proposal, the type of investigation was quantitative with statistical resources that allowed us to determine with a degree of certainty the phenomena that converge so that the differentiating events occur from a face-to-face to the virtual education.

Action research is an orientation to knowledge creation that arises in a context of practice and requires researchers to work with practitioners. Unlike conventional social science, its purpose is not primarily or solely to understand social arrangements, but also to effect desired change as a path to generating knowledge and empowering stakeholders. Action researchers do not readily separate understanding and action, rather we argue that only through action is legitimate understanding possible; theory without practice is not theory but speculation (Wong,2019).

Problem Statement

Writing reflects the level of education that each person has and is even a true reflection of personality at school we already have prior knowledge of grammar and

vocabulary to better write our writing (Papanthymou, 2019). Writing is an intrinsic skill acquired over time. when the human being grows, the ability is perfected.

Research questions

What is the incidence of self-assessments in the learning of English writing in eighth grade students of a public school in Milagro?

Operationalization of variables

The impact of self-assessment through virtuality to improve writing skills in eighth grade students in a public school in the city of Milagro.

Independent Variable: Self-assessment

Dependent variable: Writing skills

Participants

The students who participated in this research report are between the ages of 11 and 13, belonging to the eighth grade of higher basic education in the public sector. Their English level goes from A1 to A2 according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). They do not have disabilities associated with learning, the students are Spanish-speakers from the rural sector of the city of Milagro. A total of 20 students participated, 8 men and 12 women.

The information was obtained through a survey of the google-form tool in order to determine the specific information of the students. Regarding the use of technological resources, students had access to a cell phone and a computer at home. All 20 students reported that they used their computers or mobile devices to carry out their activities for learning purposes.

Instruments

The instruments used for this research were a pre and a post test. These two instruments answered the following research question: What is the incidence of self-

assessments in the learning of writing in English through self-assessment in eight grade students of a public school in Milagro?

The pretest was a diagnostic activity that determined if the student manages the grammar, content and language of the proposed topic. The activity was as follows: write a conversation about the progressive return to classes. For the post-test, a final assignment was given on the last day of the unit and students worked in pairs. It consists of presenting a conversation by WhatsApp.

The exercises had to include the vocabulary of the following topics; Covid #19, vaccination, return to school, and biosecurity measures. The process began with the application of the pretest where students were asked to record themselves imagining that they gave the weather report in the main cities of Ecuador. The information collected was referred to each criterion of the rubric applied both in the pretest and in the posttest. It was approved by the English Academic Coordinator of the High School.

Data Analysis

The data from this action research was uploaded on Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. To inform the first action research question. To what extent will students improve their writing using the self-assessment technique? The researcher got the maximum, minimum, mean, standard deviation and the p value of the students' scores in the pretest and the posttest. A database was raised to be analyzed with statistical methods and formulas that affirm the idea to defend.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained written authorization from the Director of the school in Milagro in the province of Guayas to carry out this action research. The participants, were eighth grade students who were asked for permission from their parents to carry out the study and they agreed. Both the authorities and participants were informed that

the objective of this investigation was to academic purposes. Parental consent was provided for 20 students.

Results

To answer the research question: What is the incidence of self-assessments in the learning of English writing through self-assessment in eighth grade students of a public school in Milagro? These are the results: Table 1 note: N=Sample, Min=Minimum, Max= Maximum, M=Mean, SD= Standard Deviation, Sig (*p*)=Significance.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pretest	20	6.5	8.5	7.55	0.5355
Posttest	20	7.5	10	8.65	0.7089
Valid N (listwise)	20				

Table 2

Inferential Statistics

Minimum	7.5
Maximum	10
Mean (average)	8.75
SD	0.71
p less than .005	0.00

Table 1 shows an improvement when comparing the results of the pretest and the posttest or the Minimum values the *p*-value is less than 0.05, which means that the

students increased their grades comparing the pre-test and the post-test. Standard deviation in the posttest it is closer to the mean value than in the pretest.

Table 2. To answer the research question, what is the incidence of self-assessments in the learning of English writing in eighth grade students of a public school in Milagro? the investigator took in consideration the observation of the reactions of the students during the implementation of the innovation. The following notes are some of those reactions.

At the beginning of the application of the self-assessment, the students were evaluated with the best possible grade from their academic perspective. They were surprised when they received feedback from the teacher when they were evaluated with the rubric. Consequently, the teacher proceeded to give the formative feedback on their self-assessment explaining to students that the purpose of self-assessment is to improve the production of their writing in an objective manner.

One of the causes and reasons for this problem was the lack of honesty at the time of self-assessment. This problem prevents performance-critical skills from being meaningfully learned. It was observed that when the students self-assessed they do not respect the parameters established in the rubric or the checklist, most of the students tend to over-evaluate themselves with good grades.

It was possible to evidence a significant change in the production of writings of the students in comparison of pretest vs posttest the students understood that self-assessment helps to better understand the skills and abilities that each student possesses. Also self-assessment helps students to enhance their weaknesses with respect to length, content and organization. Communication must be effective and not simply give feedback without listening to the student.

Discussion

This study found that the application of the self-assessment improved writing skills. This is consistent with other studies that have shown similar results. One of them stated that "self-assessment helps improve future performance, increase writing confidence between student and teacher" (Brandt, 2020).

Other researcher who found positive results when applying self-assessment was Wong (2019). The author stated that in a sample of 120 Mexican participants, the implementation of the self-assessment technique helped the participants to improve their writing skills.

This study revealed that the students showed more expertise in themselves with the application of the self-assessment technique English writing because the teacher could see that they had fewer language errors in the content of their writing.

The teacher showed that they managed to self-evaluate more objectively after practicing for many days and receiving formative feedback from the teacher. Aguirre (2022) found in their study that self-assessment increased values such as: confidence, security, and honesty of students and they developed critical skills to assess themselves.

Conclusions

The implementation of self-assessment activities in writing can have many benefits not only for students but also for teachers. The positive results of this may show that gaps in mastery and related research were reduced, as well as students' negative feelings towards this ability to write correctly. Self-assessment improved the written production of the students, as shown in the results.

It can be considered that the great impact for learning obtained in this study accelerates the competence of the students. It is necessary to highlight the characteristics of this study: users need training in the use of rubrics and must be

monitored in the initial steps. Furthermore, to produce understandable writing, three elements are required: content, organization, and language.

The contribution that is intended to be made with this intervention is to show that self-assessment is not synonymous with making students feel bad or embarrassed, on the other hand, it is a tool that will allow them to enhance their study skills and more, using technological applications to self-assess and receive feedback of the teacher in a personalized way.

Limitations

There were some limitations to develop this study, such as the short time to carry out the innovation and the delicate conditions due to the pandemic, students were able to carry out the pretest and posttest. Most of the parents did not give the respective consent to evaluate their children, only 20 parents out of 24 said yes.

Some of the most significant challenges in the application of this innovation were especially lack of teacher oversight regarding the writing. In addition, on certain occasions, the students stated that the internet connection was very weak and therefore their screenshots were not quickly uploaded to the Google Drive platform for evaluation.

The problem that arises with the students when applying the self-assessment of the academic activities developed in a virtual way is that it is not assumed in a serious and responsible way. Early-age students such as eighth graders need to have teacher feedback synchronously for the teaching-learning process to be effective.

Recommendations

My recommendation within the field of research is as follows: apply self-assessment as a means to improve learning in its different skills, in this case writing. Another suggestion is to plan all learning units in advance to avoid any delay. The

second recommendation is the following: may exist at the time of applying the innovation external factors that must be taken into account.

The non-availability of sufficient connectivity to carry out the activity efficiently and optimally. Another factor to take into account is the lack of high-end devices with which they can carry out their school activities. The last recommendation and the most important is the role of the teacher. The teacher must motivate the students at all times to enhance their skills and writing skills.

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Appendix 1

Lesson Plan

Available upon request.

Appendix 2

Rubric

Available upon request.

Appendix 3

Checklist

Available upon request.

Appendix 4

E-Portfolio

Available upon request.