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FACULTAD DE EDUCACIÓN Y HUMANIDADES  
DEPARTAMENTO DE ARTES Y LETRAS  
ESCUELA DE PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS**

**“DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF COMPOSING COMPETENCE  
ACHIEVED BY THIRD-YEAR STUDENTS OF ENGLISH TEACHING  
INITIAL PREPARATION PROGRAM AT UNIVERSIDAD DEL BÍO-  
BÍO”**

Seminario para optar al título de profesor de Educación Media en Inglés

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**CHILLÁN, DICIEMBRE DE 2009**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*We would like to give our gratitude to Professor Margarita Ulloa in appreciation of her unconditional support, great patience and excellent guiding.*

*We also want to express our thanks to Professor José Brauchy for his invaluable support.*

*Finally, we thank our families for their unconditional support and advice.*

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## SUMMARY

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La presente investigación analiza el nivel de competencia en escritura académica de los estudiantes de tercer año de la carrera de Pedagogía en Inglés de la Universidad del Bío-Bío, a través de habilidades cognitivas y metafunciones.

Este estudio de carácter experimental consistió en analizar composiciones escritas por los estudiantes; recopilando de éstas la información concerniente a los niveles más altos de las habilidades cognitivas: análisis, síntesis y evaluación y a las metafunciones. Estos análisis se fundaron en tres composiciones, la primera escrita a comienzo de semestre (agosto), la segunda a mediados de semestre (octubre) y la última al finalizar el semestre (diciembre). Estos tres análisis midieron el nivel de avance en escritura académica que tuvieron los estudiantes durante el semestre, y tras cursar las asignaturas Discurso Escrito y Literatura Siglo XIX.

Esta metodología entregó información para dilucidar la problemática existente, es decir, si las asignaturas de Discurso Escrito y Literatura Siglo XIX incrementan el nivel de competencia en escritura académica en la población examinada.

**Palabras claves:** Habilidades cognitivas, análisis, síntesis, evaluación, metafunciones, discurso escrito, literatura, competencia escrita.

INTRODUCTION

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Today, when information about the acquisition of a language is easy to find on the web, on books, on magazines and other sources, we can take advantage of it and look for information such as second language acquisition, writing skills and linguistic interference. Nevertheless, there are aspects which have not been studied at all; therefore it is difficult to find information about composing competence and advantages of writing activities in the development of that composing competence. Thus, the main objective of this research is to determine the level of composing competence achieved by third-year students of English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío. In other words, we want to investigate whether students write in a fluent, coherent and effective way.

The present investigation *“Determining the Level of Composing Competence in Third-Year Students of the English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío”* is focused on finding whether students from the sample have been able to develop cognitive skills and metafunctions after three years of exposition to the language and after taking the subjects 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature and Written Discourse.

The first chapter of this investigation provides the theoretical basis to carry out this research. The second chapter is made up of the requirements and analysis selected according to the features of the investigation. The third chapter shows the results and discussion obtained after the analysis of the different compositions.

Finally, we present the conclusions and contributions carried out through this research.

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CHAPTER 1

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THEORETICAL BACKGROUND



THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

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**1. Language acquisition**

According to linguistic literature, comprehensible input is the key feature that effective methods should have in order to make the acquisition of a second language possible. In other words, people do not require being aware of grammatical rules nor do they need to make tedious drills in order to develop the four language skills reading, writing, listening and speaking. According to Krashen (2009), learners can produce when they are ready to do it because these methods do not force production in second language at early steps. On the other hand, Dorte Albrechtsen (2009), on the article "*Language in Writing Experiences*", states that written production is a good way to acquire a language.

Contreras et al (2008) quoting Ulloa & Brauchy (2008), authors of the article "*An account of writing strategies for the development of professional competences of modern language teaching students: Spanish and English*" state that students who enroll into English Teaching Programs are not trained enough to develop reading comprehension and expository writing during their school life. What do we mean by 'reading comprehensibly' and 'writing competently' in a second language? A learner that reads comprehensibly and writes competently has a good level of linguistic competence, which according to Noam Chomsky (1965) is the ability to produce grammatically correct expressions. That is to say, how well people form words or sentences grammatically in the correct form. On the other

hand, linguistic competence defines the system of rules that governs an individual's tacit understanding of what is acceptable and what is not in the language they speak. The concept introduced by Chomsky (in 1965) was intended to address assumptions about language, especially in structuralist linguistics, where the idea of an unconscious system had been extensively elaborated and schematized.

Notwithstanding a writer who reads comprehensibly and writes competently, in the process of acquiring a good level of linguistic competence in a second language, experiences the interference phenomenon which refers to speakers or writers applying knowledge from their native language to a second one<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore, the problem of interference appears from the very first time because a person using two different languages may transfer errors from one language to the other, since the two language systems are constantly in contact. During the process of learning a language, there exists a period of chaotic and incoherent production that is improved after a trial and error period. Friz et al (1993) quoting Mc Laughlin (1984) states that when two languages are in contact one of them is dominant; therefore people will tend to transfer rules from the mother tongue to the second language. Barbara Kroll (1990), on the other hand, mentions that in any case of language prescription, writers will transfer writing abilities, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic\\_interference](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Linguistic_interference), retrieved on March 24<sup>th</sup>

To develop a good level of linguistic competence, it is necessary to possess several cognitive skills. In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed a taxonomy in which he classified cognitive skills into six levels<sup>2</sup>: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

- a) **Knowledge:** Learners exhibit memory of previously- learned material.
- b) **Comprehension:** Learners demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions, and stating main ideas.
- c) **Application:** Learners use new knowledge and solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts, techniques, and rules in a different way.
- d) **Analysis:** Learners examine and break information into parts by identifying motives or causes.
- e) **Synthesis:** Learners compile information in a different way by combining elements and proposing alternative solutions.
- f) **Evaluation:** Learners present and defend opinions by making judgments of information.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy\\_of\\_Educational\\_Objectives](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taxonomy_of_Educational_Objectives), retrieved on August 6<sup>th</sup>

Bloom classifies the cognitive skills from the lowest to the highest competencies that an individual has, as well as he gives several clues about the specific abilities or competencies in each specific level that are shown in Table 1<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1** **BLOOM'S TAXONOMY**

<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	<b>Competencies</b>
Knowledge	Defines, describes, identifies, knows, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, recalls, recognizes, reproduces, selects, states.
Comprehension	Comprehends, converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalizes, gives Examples, infers, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites, summarizes, translates.
Application	Applies, changes, computes, constructs, demonstrates, discovers, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, relates, shows, solves, uses.
Analysis	Analyzes, breaks down, compares, contrasts, diagrams, deconstructs, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, identifies, illustrates, infers, outlines, relates, selects, separates.
Synthesis	Categorizes, combines, compiles, composes, creates, devises, designs, explains, generates, modifies, organizes, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, relates, reorganizes, revises, rewrites, summarizes, tells, writes.
Evaluation	Appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticizes, critiques, defends, describes, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies, relates, summarizes, supports.

On the other hand, Gardner (1985) classifies these cognitive skills into three: Analytical, Critical and Synthetical skills.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.nwlink.com/~Donclark/hrd/bloom.html>, retrieved on August 6<sup>th</sup>

**a) Analytical skill** is the ability to visualize, articulate, and solve complex problems and concepts, and make decisions that make sense based on available information.

**b) Synthetical skill** is the ability to create something that did not exist before by integrating information that had been learned at lower levels.

**c) Critical Skill** is the ability to think critically. A critical thinker is able to decide what to believe or do, ask appropriate questions, gather relevant information, efficiently and creatively sort through this information, reason logically from this information.

Marcia Pally (2001), in her research "*Skills Development in 'Sustained' Content-Based Curricula: Case Studies in Analytical/Critical Thinking and Academic Writing*", portrays a pedagogical approach which proposes that analytical/critical thinking skills are learnt when students face authentic academic/professional task in which skills are modeled, explained and practiced. Pally (2001) quotes Vygotsky (1962), who argues that students can find the best context for learning those skills in language classes since teachers ask for academic works, so oblige students to put into practice academic skills with scaffolding from language teachers. One of those skills, which have direct relation to academic writing, is argumentation that has been defined as the assembly of a coherent series of statements leading from a premise to a conclusion and the act

or process of forming reasons and drawing conclusions, and applying them to a case in discussion (Webster's, 1989).

## 2. Writing

Writing is defined as the action of creating pieces of written work such as poems, articles, stories; among others (Cambridge Dictionary)<sup>4</sup>. Writing is also a way of discovering ideas and being able to express them in a good way. However, most authors write several drafts before they reach a text that can fully communicate their ideas. As time goes by, people learn to write well in a second language; therefore, they have more control over their skills and abilities to plan, edit and revise their writings in order to find the more appropriate words and phrases<sup>5</sup>.

Silva (1993) on his research titled "*Second Language Writing and Research: The Writing Process and Error Analysis in Student Texts*" states that adult second language writing is completely different from the mother tongue writing and second language writing is less effective and simpler than the mother tongue writing. Pagner (2009), on the other hand, on the article "*Language in Writing Experiences*" states that textual production is a thought process because writers have more time to think, to reflect and to find alternatives to solve their problems<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/define.asp?key=91740&dict=CALD&topic=writing-and-typing>, retrieved on March 24<sup>th</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ccc.commnet.edu/sensen/part3/sixteen/index.html>, retrieved on March 24<sup>th</sup>

<sup>6</sup> [http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr\\_nr16.html](http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr_nr16.html), retrieved on May 10<sup>th</sup>

According to Krashen (2009), good writers make use of certain techniques and strategies that help them to write well. They plan what they are going to write, they reread what they have written and they edit all their ideas once they are on the page. Besides, good writers follow several strategies as shown in Table 2<sup>7</sup>.

**Table 2 STRATEGIES FOLLOWED BY A GOOD WRITER**



<sup>7</sup> <http://www.wikihow.com/Be-a-Good-Writer>, retrieved on July 8th

Reading contributes to writing and several studies confirm that those who read more write better. Reading helps writers with grammar, vocabulary, discourse style and knowledge about the language. In other words, people who read more acquire more of the written language. On the other hand, reading all kinds of texts will contribute to general writing, but reading for example a newspaper will contribute in the learning or acquisition of writing a newspaper. (Krashen: 2009)

There is no evidence that writing contributes to writing competence. Those who write more do not write better, and increasing writing does not result in better writing. Therefore, according to Krashen (2009), writing does not contribute specifically to writing but makes people smarter.

## **2.1. Academic writing**

There exist different types of writing; among them creative and academic writing. On the one hand, creative writing is the use of the imagination to produce pieces of written work; on the other hand, academic writing consists of a composition of any kind and its purpose is to supply several needs such as keeping records of significant experience, sharing personal experiences with an interesting group and feeling free, which contributes to mental and physical health. The type of writing that includes all cognitive skills is academic writing, which has been defined as a structured research written by scholars for other scholars<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.uta.fi/FAST/FIN/RESEARCH/acadwrit.html>, retrieved on august 27<sup>th</sup>



However, there are common issues and problems that students have to face when writing because they have to be able to use every skill critically in order to achieve an effective academic text.

To understand the real meaning of this term, it is useful to check what some scholars say about this. Williams (2006) on the article "*Personal and Academic Writing: Revisiting the Debate*" quotes the psychologist and educator Jerome Bruner, who states that the human thinking is divided into two distinct modes: the narrative mode and the paradigmatic (or logical- scientific) mode. In Bruner's opinion, the paradigmatic mode has to deal with academic writing and its main goal is to develop a topic based on the experience or experiments that can be proved. In addition to that, this mode looks for transcending the particular to make valid generalization and takes the form of arguments.

There is a very important point of view, from a scholar called David Bartholomae, quoted by Williams (2006), who argues that all writing in the academy is academic and that all training is influenced by the social context in which a writer moves. Additionally, he claims that teachers should be managers in the cultural system in order to make students be critic. For this reason, he encourages students to read key texts and write critically about their reading and, in the process, they practice the academic skills of paraphrasing, quoting and citing sources. Conforming to David Bartholomae:

The movement towards a more specialized discourse begins (or perhaps, best begins) when a student can both define a position of privilege, a position that sets him against a

“common” discourse, and when he or she can work self-consciously, critically, against not only the “common” code but his or her own. (Carter: 2009, p. 6)

Today academic writing is a crucial type of writing and should be developed in EFL programs. There exist several exams, which measure the level of competence in writing; most US colleges and universities have writing placement exams, among them there is one named CUNY (The University of New York) Proficiency Exam (CPE) which evaluates academic writing competences in students. It is expected that students' exam essays provide a coherent written response appropriately focused on the topic, demonstrate understanding of the readings, use the readings appropriately to support their own ideas, and communicate ideas clearly and in accordance with basic linguistic conventions.

## **2.2. Voice in writing**

Voice is defined as the substance of somebody's writing. It is what characterizes the self of somebody on a paper, transforming their writing from mere information and words to a form of creative expression. Voice refers to writing style, and style can be developed by understanding strong writing moves, observing them in published writing and practicing/applying them to their own writing (Admin: 2009). Writers need to be conscious of how the readers will feel their writing voice, and stylistic choices are the equivalent to their non-verbal actions. Appropriate and individual voice alludes to how your writing feels to someone else when he/she reads it.

### 3. Text and effective text

When acquiring a second language, students are expected to write effective texts. This implies that a text should have texture, cohesion, context, and carry out its purpose, considering the functions of language. According to Steve Peha (2002), an effective text should have several characteristics such as interesting and important ideas, organized and logical ideas, appropriate and individual voice, specific and memorable words, fluent and communicative sentences and communicative and correct conventions.

On the one hand, the word *text* is used in linguistics to refer to any spoken or written passage of whatever length, that does form a consolidated whole. Halliday (1989) says that as general rule, our own language constitutes a distinction between what text is and what it is not. According to Halliday (1989),

A text also may be spoken or written, prose or verse, dialogue or monologue. It may be anything from a single proverb to a whole play, from a momentary cry for help to an all-day discussion on a committee. (p.1)

On the other hand, Halliday (1989) states that a text is a unit of language that is not a grammatical unit like a clause or a sentence and it is not defined by its size. A text is sometimes expected to be a type of super-sentence, which is a grammatical unit larger than a sentence and is related to sentences in the manner that the sentence is related to a clause or a group of clauses.

Halliday (1990) expresses that the importance about the nature of a text is related to the text and its meaning; when people write and check what they have written, they see words and sentences but do not see that the text is really made of meanings. Because of its nature as a semantic unit, a text has to be regarded from two different perspectives at the same time, as a product and as a process. In other words and according to Halliday (1990), a text is a product and a process. While the text is a product that can be recorded and studied, the text is a process that constitutes the environment of the meaning. Halliday (1990) says that it would be fallacious to consider that the concept of text is completely established, or that it would be easy to make clear decisions about what a text is and what it is not. On the other hand, Halliday (1989), states that individuals often say that a text is a complete passage and, at the same time, they need to deal with more than one text. Although there are several definitions of *text*, M.A.K. Halliday (1989) says that a definition is not sufficient to provide individuals good criteria in the recognition of what a text is and what it is not.

On the one hand, the concept of cohesion is also present in an effective text. M.A.K. Halliday (1989) suggests that a text is not a structural unit and cohesion is not a structural relation. In other words, the parts of a sentence or a clause are obviously in coherence with each other, due to the structure. On the other hand, Halliday (1989) states that cohesion is semantic, which means that relations of meaning are present in a text and that constitutes a text. He also states that cohesion is part of the text-forming component in the linguistic system, in other words, elements that have no relation or are not linked in a text depend on

the others because of its interpretation. Therefore, when a sentence is destroyed or disturbed, the complete meaning changes. Within a text, the meaning of each sentence depends on the others, which include cohesive relations between sentences. Halliday (1989) says that in a text, every sentence shows some form of cohesion with the previous sentence; in other words, every sentence contains at least one logical connection with what happened before. According to Halliday (1989), the general meaning of cohesion is included in the concept of text, and in the act of providing texture, cohesion helps to create text. Finally, Halliday (1989), states that cohesion is a necessary but not a sufficient condition in the creation of a text.

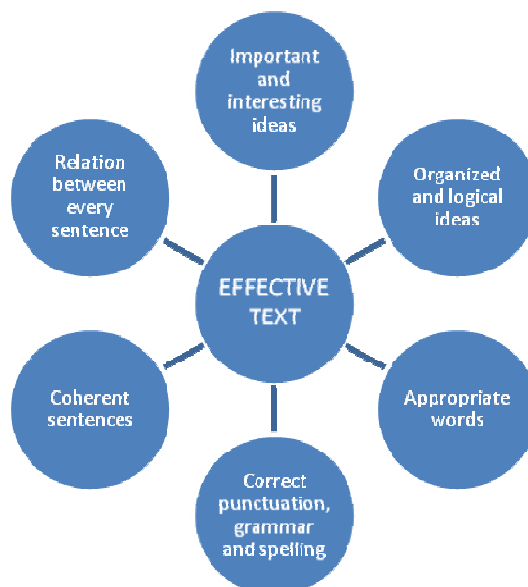
The concept of *texture* is also present in an effective text, and it is completely suitable to express that a text is a text because it has texture. In other words, texture in a text, is what distinguishes a text from being a text or not. Halliday (1989), states that texture is the basis for unity and semantic interdependence within text. In other words and according to Halliday (1989), a text without texture would be a group of isolated sentences with no relationship to one another. On the other hand, Crane (2009) quotes Eggins (1994) who states that texture has a sequential implication, which means that a line of a text follows another, and each line is related to the previous one.

Genre is also an important feature in a text, and refers to, as Swales (1991) says, the different categories of written or spoken discourse. It includes poems, narratives, exhibitions, lectures, seminars, recipes, manuals, among others. On the other hand, Martin (1985) says that genre is used to assemble every linguistic

activity related to our culture. Halliday (1990) expresses that familiarity with different genres does not proliferate automatically, as language does. In other words, genre is not acquired according to age, what is needed here is social experience. Halliday (1990) gives a very good example, which explains the importance of genre in a text, “to write an excellent essay about the causes of the Second World War does not entail that one can produce an excellent report or essay about any other topic”. This is not because one piece of writing is more difficult than others; it is just because one may have more experience in a specific genre.

Considering all above, an effective text should have several characteristics summarized in the following table.

**Table 3 CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE TEXT**



#### 4. Metafunctions

Several studies state that, when beginners are in contact with a new language, they apply some unconscious strategies in order to understand the message.

According to Van Pattern (1996), some of these strategies are:

- Language processing: students try to process the language naturally in order to understand the message and the contents, before paying attention to the form.
- Subject assignment: they assign the subject function to the first noun phrase.

Halliday and Rugaiya Hasan(1985), on the other hand, developed a theory about the fundamental metafunctions of language. To understand the metafunctions of language, it is necessary to know the notion of function of language, which can be understood as the use of language in different context of situations. The word function can be thought of as a synonym for the word “use”, so that when one talks about functions of language, they mean no more than the way people use their language or their languages if they have more than one. Halliday (1985) developed three metafunctions: the interpersonal metafunction, the ideational metafunction and the textual metafunction:

a) **The ideational metafunction** refers to the natural world in its whole sense, including our own consciousness; it relates to the context of culture.

b) **The interpersonal metafunction** refers to the relationship between communicators and addressee. It also has to do with how language and its various types of interaction makes social relationships possibly maintained over time.

c) **The textual metafunction** refers to the production of actual texts. The role of these metafunction is to act as a facilitator; its function is to make a relation between this metafunction and the other two.

There are specific abilities or competencies that should be present in each fundamental metafunction of the language. These abilities are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4 METAFUNCTIONS**

METAFUNCTIONS	COMPETENCIES
Ideational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize experiences and understanding of the world.</li> <li>▪ Organize the reasoning on the basis of experience.</li> <li>▪ Construe logical links between figures.</li> </ul>
Interpersonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use social distance.</li> <li>▪ Use neutral language and attitude.</li> <li>▪ Use relative social status.</li> </ul>
Textual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ State main idea.</li> <li>▪ Break information into new parts.</li> <li>▪ Coordinate sentences and paragraphs with cohesion.</li> <li>▪ Use of sense and logical relations.</li> <li>▪ Use good grammar: Organize nominal groups and function words.</li> <li>▪ Use appropriate vocabulary and lexical repetitions.</li> </ul>



## 5. Composing

Composing involves communicative and cognitive skills and, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, composing is the act of putting words and sentences together according to grammar rules and rhetoric and the ability to organize ideas using rules of language effectively. Besides, composing involves the ability to write narratives and descriptive texts and transform ideas into a new text. That is to say, a competent writing composer should write well-told stories, drawing on their own experiences, developing their own voice and finding power within his/her own ideas (Williams: 2006). Moreover, a competent writing composer should define a position, where he can work critically and consciously and against some common codes. Williams (2006) on his work titled *“Personal and Academic Writing: Revising the Debate”* states that a good writer reflects on his own reading using personal language in order to acquire academic writing, and not just imitate their professor’s language. Additionally, Barbara Kroll (1990), based on Jones (1982), Zamme (1982) and Reimes (1985), states that a lack of competence in writing English results more from the lack of composing competence than from the lack of linguistic competence; therefore, *composing competence* can be considered as a skill that is acquired or developed through training and experience.

For the purpose of the present research, that is, determining the composing competence, we might consider that a competent writing composer may make use of the cited cognitive skills and metafunctions. Considering these issues

addressed in the literature, a table containing those categories would be useful to determine third-year students' composing competence.

**Table 5 Cognitive skills and Metafunctions**

<b>Cognitive skills</b>	
Analysis	Structuring
Synthesis	Giving solutions
	Synthesizing
Evaluation	Explaining and justifying
	Arguing
<b>Metafunctions</b>	
Ideational	Content
	Logical relations
Interpersonal	Voice
	Audience
Textual	Grammar
	Vocabulary
	Organization and production of ideas

In other words, each of the cognitive skills may be determined by checking if students can structure ideas, give solutions, are able to synthesize, explain, justify and argue. Equally, each of the metafunctions may be determined by seeing if they can state content and logical relations; if they can express voice and recognize their audience; and if they can organize grammatical structures and use vocabulary in an elaborated way.

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CHAPTER 2

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REQUIREMENTS AND ANALYSIS

## REQUIREMENTS AND ANALYSIS

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### 1. Problem Formulation

Students of English at Universidad del Bío-Bío when starting their programme with an elementary level, have many difficulties in writing. They also have difficulties in recognizing main and secondary ideas. Therefore, they also have problems when they need to elaborate conclusions. As time goes by, they improve their abilities, but when they are in the advanced levels, they still present difficulties in writing. Therefore, we would like to study whether they write in a fluent, coherent and effective way, in other words, we would like to know whether they become competent writers of academic work.

### 2. Objectives

#### 2.1 General Objective

- To determine the level of composing competence reached by third-year students of English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío.

#### 2.2 Specific Objectives

- To determine the level of composing competence achieved by third-year students of English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío- before taking the subjects Written Discourse and 19<sup>th</sup> Century Literature.
- To determine the level of composing competence achieved by third-year students of English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad de Bío-Bío- after taking the subject Written Discourse and Literature.

- To evaluate the effect that writing activities have in the development of composing competence in third-year students of the English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío

### **3. Hypothesis**

The academic subjects Written Discourse and Literature increase the level of composing competence in third-year students of the English Teacher Initial Preparation Programme at Universidad del Bío-Bío.

### **4. Methodology**

To carry out this research, a sample of compositions written by third-year students was analyzed. The sample was selected at random (every seven students) from the total number of students who were taking both Written Discourse and Literature. Those students who were taking Written Discourse for the second time were left apart as they had had some previous training but most of them had quit the course before the end. The sample consisted of four students who were taking both subjects for the first time. Three texts of each student were analyzed: a personal statement, a comparative essay and an argumentative essay.

### **5. Instruments**

Based on the theoretical concepts revised in the literature, all the categories that a competent composer is expected to demonstrate were included on a rubric

which was designed in order to measure the pieces of writing composed by the students selected on the sample.

This rubric was elaborated considering cognitive skills and metafunctions of language. In cognitive skills the selected levels were the higher: analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In metafunctions, the selected ones were ideational, interpersonal and textual.

**Table 6 Rubric for determining the level of composing competence reached by third-year students of the English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío**

		Category	Effective	Rather effective	Rather ineffective	Ineffective
<b>COGNITIVE SKILLS</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Structuring</b>	Thorough development of topic.	Limited development of topic.	Inadequate development of topic.	Not pertinent.
	<b>Synthesis</b>	<b>Synthesizing</b>	Synthesis is clear and effective.	Synthesis appears in some paragraphs but is obscure.	Synthesis is used in one paragraph.	Synthesis is not applied.
		<b>Giving solutions</b>	There are several solutions through the whole text.	There are solutions but they are not clear.	There are very few solutions.	There are no solutions.
	<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Explaining and justifying</b>	There is explanation and justification in all the paragraphs.	There is explanation in all the paragraphs, but justification is sporadic.	There is only explanation in most paragraphs.	There is neither explanation nor justification.
		<b>Arguing</b>	There are powerful arguments.	There are few arguments.	There are limited arguments.	There are no arguments.
<b>METAFUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Ideational</b>	<b>Content</b>	Knowledgeable. Substantive.	Some knowledge of subject. Mostly relevant to topic but lacks detail.	Limited knowledge of subject. Little substance.	Does not show knowledge of subject. Non-substantive.
		<b>Logical Relations</b>	Logical relations are effective.	Logical relations are not so effective.	Logical relations are established but weakly.	Logical relations are not established.
	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Voice</b>	Voice is engaging, expressive, sincere. Gives strong sense of "Who I am".	Strong voice. Gives sense of "who I am".	Occasionally gives a sense of "Who I am".	No sense of "Who I am".
		<b>Audience</b>	Social distance, neutral language and social status are used in the whole text.	Social distance, neutral language and social status are sometimes confused in the text.	Social distance, neutral language and social status are occasionally used in the text.	Social distance, neutral language and social status are not used in the text.



		Category	Effective	Rather effective	Rather ineffective	Ineffective
<b>METAFUNCTIONS</b>	<b>Textual</b>	<b>Ideas Construction</b>	Order of ideas is engaging and fully developed. Exceptional main idea with rich, supporting details.	Organization enhances main idea.	Attempts to organize, but organization is not effective.	Lacks sense of direction.
		<b>Grammar</b>	Effective complex constructions. Few errors of agreement tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions.	Effective but simple constructions. Minor problems in complex constructions.	Several errors of agreement tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions, but meaning seldom obscured.	Major problems in simple/complex constructions. Frequent errors of negation, tense, number, word order/function, articles, pronouns, prepositions. Meaning confused or obscured.
		<b>Vocabulary</b>	Vocabulary is used correctly and appropriately. A variety of words is used.	Effective but simple vocabulary.	Several vocabulary errors.	Major problems in vocabulary. This makes it difficult to understand.

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CHAPTER 3

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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### 1. Application of Instruments

The instrument to determine the level of composing competence reached by third-year students of the English Teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad del Bío-Bío was the rubric. This rubric was applied to analyze three different kinds of writing: a personal statement, a comparative essay and an argumentative essay.

The personal statement consisted of writing a piece of personal academic information in order to apply for a Master Degree on a foreign university. The comparative essay, on the other hand, consisted of comparing two kinds of writing: academic v/s personal writing. Finally, the letter on intention consisted of giving arguments for and against a general in order to apply for a scholarship in a foreign country.

The personal statement was the first piece of writing written by students, so it was considered as pre-test, the comparative essay was analyzed as the second test and the argumentative essay was considered as post-test.

## 2. Test Results

Based on the rubric elaborated according to the higher levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions of language, the information obtained was interpreted while analyzing each piece of writing level by level.

On the other hand a number was assigned to the different levels of competence in cognitive skills and metafunctions. The assignment was as follows:

- Effective : 3
- Rather effective : 2
- Rather ineffective : 1
- Ineffective : 0

After the analysis of each test and each student a table summarizes all the competencies shown by students; besides, after the analysis of the three compositions, some graphs show the data obtained through the analysis.

First of all, the personal statements of each student were analyzed, then the comparative essay of each student and finally the letter of intentions of each student.

In a general analysis, the results obtained by each student are the following:

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **A**  
 Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

In relation to structuring a personal statement, student A relates successions of events of different nature, such as her identity, her interest and facts about English as a universal language or the application to a foreign University. Besides, she writes several generic and common sentences without support, for example:

“I know every person has a different language learning potential.”

This student gives more opinions than facts, which makes the structure of her personal statement rather ineffective.

**Synthesizing**

In relation to her synthesis capacity, she is able to summarize at the end of the personal statement and tries to give a solution to improve the quality of English education in Chile. The solution is related to making methodological changes in learning strategies, which would show that the student is able to synthesize.

**Evaluating**

The student occasionally explains her ideas without giving a justification. Most of the time she explains the situation then she justifies; therefore, her piece of writing in relation to explanation and justification is effective. However, there are no arguments in her writing; therefore, we say that the student may not be very competent in the evaluation skill.

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **A**  
 Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

Content in the whole text is varied and dispersed; most of the time, it is not well organized. Facts are not supported at all with details or specific information. The content, as a whole, is rather ineffective. In relation to the sequence of logical relations, they are not so effective because ideas do not have a clear common order of development. Connection of ideas is abruptly established.

**Interpersonal**

Considering voice, the student presents it in a strong form, showing who she is. In relation to the audience, she uses neutral language and maintains a social distance almost in the whole text; but she breaks social distance in paragraph 2 using the modal will when saying: "Your lectures and advisers of studies will also monitor my progress and give me the support I need."

**Textual**

In relation to the use of vocabulary and grammar, the student shows an appropriate use of language; however, there are few mistakes such as an overuse of the connector *due to the fact* and a wrong use of the connector *yet*. Sentences are excessively complex and very much expanded having the length of a paragraph.

Table 1

Pre – test		Student A	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	1
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	2
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2
		Arguing	0
Total			<b>5/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	1
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	1
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	1
Total			<b>12/21</b>

Table 1 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student A in the pre - test (personal statement).

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **B**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

In relation to the structure of a personal statement, the student relates several facts, interests and gives various personal opinions, such as the importance of teamwork or advantages of studying abroad. The information is written without organization and most paragraphs are just opinions.

**Synthesing**

In relation to the synthesis in the text, this skill is present in most paragraphs and solution proposals as well. For example, one of the solutions given by the writer is to increase her knowledge in order to contribute to the improvement of Chilean education.

**Evaluating**

The student explains and justifies her interest for applying to the University; however, arguments are not present though out the whole text; therefore, her evaluation skill is not so effective.



PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **B**  
 Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

In relation to the content, the organization is not quite articulated; ideas from the beginning appear again in the next paragraphs. There exist logical relations within the paragraphs but not between them.

**Interpersonal**

Voice is developed in an engaging strong way; by showing who she is all the time. The language used is neutral and social distance is maintained in the whole text.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are used appropriately by student b; nevertheless, there are few grammar mistakes such as scarce use of connectors and overuse of the connector *thus*. Simple and complex ideas are well constructed and there is expansion of them.

Table 2

Pre – test		Student B	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1
		Giving Solutions	2
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2
		Arguing	0
Total			<b>7/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	2
Total			<b>16/21</b>

Table 2 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student B in the pre - test (personal statement).

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

Student C relates several facts, experiences and interests. There is a predominance of opinions and generic ideas, for example:

“[...] every person deserves the chance to realize his or her dream.”

In relation to structuring, the development of the topic is rather ineffective because paragraphs are too short and with several opinions instead of facts.

**Synthesizing**

Student C synthesizes and gives solutions just at the end; in the sense that being a great teacher will help students to improve their learning.

**Evaluating**

Explanation is present in the whole text, but justification sporadically. On the other hand, argumentation does not take place through the text, which would mean that student C's text does not show the evaluation skill.

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

The content has little substance; ideas are unorganized in the text as the ones which were written at the beginning appear in the next paragraphs. There are several generic ideas and most of them are opinions. In terms of logical relation, they are not well established; they lack connecting thread.

**Interpersonal**

Voice is strongly used in the whole text as the student shows her own self throughout the text. Considering the audience, the student uses neutral language and maintains social distance, with the exception of “[...] in order to give them the opportunity that I hope to have from you, education, [...].”, which would sound impolite.

**Textual**

Student C uses appropriate vocabulary and grammar; there are few grammatical mistakes such as punctuation, tenses, lack of subject in a few sentences. First paragraphs have a good use of connectors; the last ones have no connectors. Ideas are not well developed, but they are expanded when they have to.

Table 3

Pre – test		Student C	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1
		Giving Solutions	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2
		Arguing	0
Total			<b>6/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	1
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	2
	Textual	Grammar	1
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	2
Total			<b>13/21</b>

Table 3 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student C in the pre - test (personal statement).

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

In terms of structuring, there are several generic ideas and opinions, but there are also several facts and interests which means that the development of the topic is rather ineffective.

**Synthesizing**

This skill is shown in only one paragraph; but there are no solutions which would mean that the text is rather ineffective in terms of synthesizing.

**Evaluating**

Explanation is predominant in the text, whereas justification is occasionally present. Argumentation is not present throughout the piece of writing. Therefore, explanation and justification are rather ineffectively developed and argumentation is ineffective, without development at all.

PRE-TEST DISCUSSION

PERSONAL STATEMENT

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

There is a diversity of ideas throughout the text; most of them are not organized. Logical relations are not well established and sentences are not articulated.

**Interpersonal**

Student D shows her own self and voice is strongly used in the whole text. On the other hand, the student uses neutral language and maintains social distance.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; although, there are few grammatical mistakes such as tense and lack of prepositions. Some connectors are repeated, and other connectors are not used correctly. There is neither elaboration nor expansion of sentences.

Table 4

Pre – test		Student D	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1
		Giving Solutions	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	1
		Arguing	0
	Total		
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	1
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	1
Total			<b>14/21</b>

Table 4 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student D in the pre - test (personal statement).



SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **A**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of facts such as the debate about personal and academic writing between well – known linguistics, and opinions from her about the difficulties in relation to the achievements of writing skills. The essay contains an introduction and a reflection about the difficulty of the process of writing which may prompt us to say that the topic is effectively developed.

**Synthesizing**

Student A does not offer a response for the question that she makes at the beginning, in relation to the most suitable type of writing. In addition to that, the information presents in the text is taking from opinions of different authors, using the same words of them.

**Evaluating**

Student A explains and justifies in the entire text, except in one paragraph; however, there are no strong arguments that hold her judgments and opinions.

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **A**

Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

The contents of the comparison contrast essay are not related at all. The first two paragraphs are related to each other; paragraphs three, four and five are related among them. The sixth paragraph has no relation, but there is a slight thread to the previous one. Logical relations are established in the whole text.

**Interpersonal**

Student A gives little sense of who she is in the comparative essay. The text development looks as somebody else's writing due to the words used are just the opinions of well - known authors. Social distance and neutral language are maintained in the whole text.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriately used in the comparison contrast essay; nevertheless, there are some punctuation mistakes, for example "Nevertheless the question of most first-year students is; which is the most suitable type of writing?" (1), and double subject use, for example "Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk, who takes another look [...] as the basis for analysis, she argues about the importance [... ]" (2). Sentences are complex, elaborated and very much expanded, for example "When students are asked to write essays at college, for most of them it could sound easy to do it, but when they are in practice,

they realize how difficult the process of writing is and how different is writing from high school” (3).

Table 5

<b>Second – test</b>		<b>Student A</b>	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	0
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2
		Arguing	0
	Total		
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	0
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	2
Total			<b>14/21</b>

Table 5 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student A in the second test (comparative essay).

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **B**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

Student B gives a blue print of three ideas in the introductory paragraph, the differences between academic and personal writing, supporters and detractors, voice and objectiveness of this type of writing. She makes a comparison in the next paragraph and finishes her essay with a summary. She gives facts and specific details though out the whole text which shows that her text is effectively developed.

**Synthesizing**

Student B makes a synthesis in the last paragraph, compiling and paraphrasing the information in order to make them understandable to everyone which would show that she is able to synthesize.

**Evaluating**

Student B explains several ideas, justifies, and supports them with strong arguments which would show that the evaluation skills are developed effectively in the essay.

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **B**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

The content of the text is about the comparison between personal and academic writing; for this reason the whole text presents ideas supported with facts such as the characteristics of both types of writing. The contents are organized and logical relations are established throughout the whole text.

**Interpersonal**

In the whole text, student B gives sense of “who I am” because the information has been transformed into a creative writing, showing the student’s self. She maintains social distance and use neutral language.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate, although there is a little collocation mistake, for example: “voice has been always a very essential factor within [...]” (4). Sentences are complex and well elaborated.

Table 6

<b>Second – test</b>			<b>Student B</b>
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	2
		Giving Solutions	0
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	3
		Arguing	3
	<b>Total</b>		
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	3
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	3
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	3
<b>Total</b>			<b>19/21</b>

Table 6 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student B in the second test (comparative essay).

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of a brief introduction to the topic. Then differences between personal and academic writing are established. After that comparative ideas are present but in the last paragraph ideas have no relation between them which would show that the essay is not well developed.

**Synthesizing**

Student C does not give any solution or summarize ideas. The whole text is about the information taking from scholars who explain the characteristics of personal and academic writing.

**Evaluating**

Student C is able to explain and justify ideas in the text, but they are not supported with arguments or specific details, which would show that this skill is rather ineffectively developed.

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

The content of the text is about the comparison between personal and academic writing, for that reason the whole text presents ideas supported with facts such as the scholars' definitions about both types of writing. Logical relations are established within paragraphs and between them.

**Interpersonal**

Student C gives no sense of "who I am" because it is the scholars' voice which is present in the entire text. On the other hand she used neutral language and maintains social distance within the text.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriately used; nevertheless, there are few grammatical mistakes in relation to collocations, for example: "[...] a difficult decision at writing a composition [...]" (5) or "While narrative mode is based in personal experience [...]" (6). Sentences are complex, well elaborated but a little bit extent.



Table 7

<b>Second – test</b>			<b>Student C</b>
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	0
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	3
		Arguing	0
Total			<b>5/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	0
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	2
Total			<b>14/21</b>

Table 7 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student C in the second test (comparative essay).

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of a brief introduction to the topic; then, the next paragraphs mention the differences and similarities between personal and academic writing and the last paragraph contains personal opinions. Almost the entire text refers to facts.

**Synthesizing**

There is no synthesis in the entire text, or solutions. Student adds more information in each paragraph but she does not combine them with the previous one.

**Evaluating**

Student D explains and justifies in the whole text, but there are no arguments or specific details to support her judgments which would show that this skill is rather ineffectively developed.

SECOND TEST DISCUSSION

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

The content of the text is about the comparison between personal and academic writing, for that reason, the whole text presents ideas supported with facts. Logical relations are established within paragraphs and in the whole text.

**Interpersonal**

Student D does not give sense of “who I am” because the whole text looks like somebody else’s opinions and judgments; on the other hand, she uses neutral language and maintains social distance.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; nevertheless, there are few collocation, for example: “There are two types of writing that students can choose according their style [...] (7), [...] personal writing sees a teacher as instructor or coach [...] (8) and spelling mistakes: “ prowess” (9). Sentences are complex and elaborated.

Table 8

<b>Second – test</b>			<b>Student D</b>
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	0
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	3
		Arguing	0
<b>Total</b>			<b>5/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	3
	Interpersonal	Voice	0
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	1
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	1
<b>Total</b>			<b>13/21</b>

Table 8 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student D in the second test (comparative essay).

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **A**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of reasons, interest, goals, opinions and several facts. The relation to the topic is not so close. The student developed a personal statement instead of a letter of intentions.

**Synthesizing**

In relation to her synthesis capacity, student A gives a solution to improve the quality of English education in Chile in the third paragraph, in relation to making methodological changes and in learning strategies.

“I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs [...]”

**Evaluating**

Student A explains a situation in most of the paragraphs sometimes justifies but does not argue.

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **A**  
 Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

Contents are related to interest ideas and facts. Ideas are not well organized and logical relations are established in passages of the text. Nevertheless, there is little thread among paragraphs.

**Interpersonal**

In the whole text, student A occasionally gives a sense of “who I am” because the self is not shown in the writing. Language is neutral and social distance is maintained almost in the whole text, exempt for one idea which is rude and impolite.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; nevertheless, there is an overuse of the connector *due to the fact*, a wrong use of the connector *yet*. Sentences are complex excessively. They are well elaborated very much expanded.

Table 9

Post – test		Student A	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	1
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	2
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2
		Arguing	0
	Total		
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	1
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	2
		Audience	1
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	2
Total			<b>13/21</b>

Table 9 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student A in the post test (letter of intentions).

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **B**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of facts of different nature: identity, reasons for the application and opinions. Academic or professional interests are mentioned, as well as her future intentions.

**Synthesizing**

Student B synthesizes and gives solutions in the last paragraph. The solution is not set at all.

**Evaluating**

Explanation and justification predominate in the whole text, but there are neither judgments nor evaluations. There is a kind of argumentation in just a paragraph.



POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **B**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

Contents are diverse with a predominance of opinions rather than facts. Interest and future intentions are also set. Paragraphs are well organized and there are logical relations within paragraphs and between them.

**Interpersonal**

Voice is strongly developed and social distance is maintained in the whole text. Language is neutral.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; however, there are few grammar mistakes. There is a scarce use of connectors, only *5* and *thus* is repeated. Ideas are well constructed and well developed. There is expansion of ideas.

Table 10

Post – test		Student B	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1
		Giving Solutions	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	3
		Arguing	0
Total			<b>7/15</b>
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	3
	Interpersonal	Voice	3
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	1
Total			<b>17/21</b>

Table 10 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student B in the post test (letter of intentions).

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of facts, goals, and objectives of the application, interests and future expectations. There is nothing related to activities she would do after the semester abroad. There are several opinions but few facts; therefore the topic is scarcely developed.

**Synthesizing**

There is no synthesis in the entire text, but there is a kind of solution in one of the paragraphs.

**Evaluating**

In terms of explanation, student C explains, occasionally justifies but she never gives arguments.

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **C**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

Contents in the text are diverse but a little bit organized. Disorganization appears in the presentation of the ideas. Logical relations are established in most paragraphs, but there are some ideas that are not well articulated and have no relations to the others.

**Interpersonal**

In relation to voice, there is a strong sense of “who I am”. Language is neutral through the whole text and social distance is maintained.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; however, there are few grammar mistakes in spelling and tense. Connectors are used properly, but they are a few. Sentences are grammatically correct complex and expanded.

Table 11

Post – test		Student C	
Cognitive Skills	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0
		Giving Solutions	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	1
		Arguing	0
	Total		
Metafunctions	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	3
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	3
Total			<b>18/21</b>

Table 11 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student C in the post test (letter of intentions).

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Cognitive skills**

**Analyzing**

The text is made up of sentences of different nature such as experiences, academic interest, goals, opinions and activities she would do after the semester abroad. The development of the topic contains several intentions more than opinion, in accordance with the structure of letter of intentions.

**Synthesizing**

There is synthesis in the last paragraph and solutions are done in paragraph 5.

**Evaluating**

Explanation and justification are developed throughout the text; nevertheless, argumentation is not used.

POST TEST DISCUSSION

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

---

Student : **D**  
Analysis : **Metafunctions**

**Ideational**

Contents are diverse and not organized at all. Logical relations are established but in the first paragraphs, whereas at the end there is a complete disorder of ideas

**Interpersonal**

In terms of voice, it is strongly developed. Language is neutral and social distance is maintained through the text.

**Textual**

Vocabulary and grammar are appropriate; nevertheless, there are few grammar mistakes such as contractions and extremely long sentences. Connectors are few.

Table 12

Post – test		Student D	
<b>Cognitive Skills</b>	Analysis	Structuring	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1
		Giving Solutions	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	1
		Arguing	0
			Total
<b>Metafunctions</b>	Ideational	Content	2
		Logical Relations	1
	Interpersonal	Voice	3
		Audience	3
	Textual	Grammar	2
		Vocabulary	3
		Ideas	1
		Total	<b>15/21</b>

Table 12 shows the extent levels of cognitive skills and metafunctions reached by student D in the post test (letter of intentions).



SUMMARY OF THE THREE TESTS OF EACH STUDENT

Summary of the three-test analysis			Student A		
			Pre Test	Second Test	Post Test
Cognitive Skills	Analysis	Structuring	1	2	1
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	0	0	0
		Giving solutions	2	0	2
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2	2	2
		Arguing	0	0	0
Total			<b>5/15</b>	<b>4/15</b>	<b>5/15</b>
Metafunctions	Ideational	Content	1	2	1
		Logical relations	2	2	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	2	0	2
		Audience	1	3	1
	Textual	Vocabulary	2	2	2
		Grammar	3	3	3
		Ideas	1	2	2
Total			<b>12/21</b>	<b>14/21</b>	<b>13/21</b>

Summary of the three-test analysis			Student B		
			Pre Test	Second Test	Post Test
Cognitive Skills	Analysis	Structuring	2	2	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1	2	1
		Giving solutions	2	0	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2	3	3
		Arguing	0	3	0
Total			<b>7/15</b>	<b>10/15</b>	<b>7/15</b>
Metafunctions	Ideational	Content	2	2	2
		Logical relations	2	3	3
	Interpersonal	Voice	2	2	3
		Audience	3	3	3
	Textual	Vocabulary	2	3	2
		Grammar	3	3	3
		Ideas	2	3	1
	Total			<b>16/21</b>	<b>19/21</b>

Summary of the three-test analysis			Student C		
			Pre Test	Second Test	Post Test
Cognitive Skills	Analysis	Structuring	2	2	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1	0	0
		Giving solutions	1	0	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	2	3	1
		Arguing	0	0	0
Total			<b>6/15</b>	<b>5/15</b>	<b>4/15</b>
Metafunctions	Ideational	Content	2	2	2
		Logical relations	1	2	2
	Interpersonal	Voice	2	0	3
		Audience	2	3	3
	Textual	Vocabulary	1	2	2
		Grammar	3	3	3
		Ideas	2	2	3
Total			<b>13/21</b>	<b>14/21</b>	<b>18/21</b>

Summary of the three-test analysis			Student D		
			Pre Test	Second Test	Post Test
Cognitive Skills	Analysis	Structuring	2	2	2
	Synthesis	Synthesizing	1	0	1
		Giving solutions	1	0	1
	Evaluation	Explaining and justifying	1	3	1
		Arguing	0	0	0
Total			<b>5/15</b>	<b>5/15</b>	<b>5/15</b>
Metafunctions	Ideational	Content	2	2	2
		Logical relations	1	3	1
	Interpersonal	Voice	2	0	3
		Audience	3	3	3
	Textual	Vocabulary	2	1	2
		Grammar	3	3	3
		Ideas	1	1	1
Score			<b>14/21</b>	<b>13/21</b>	<b>15/21</b>

#### 4. Analysis

The results of the complete investigation would be shown in the next graphs, in terms of percentages of effectiveness. The first three graphs show the effectiveness achieved by test. The next four show the effectiveness achieved by each student and the last graph summarizes all the data.

Figure 1

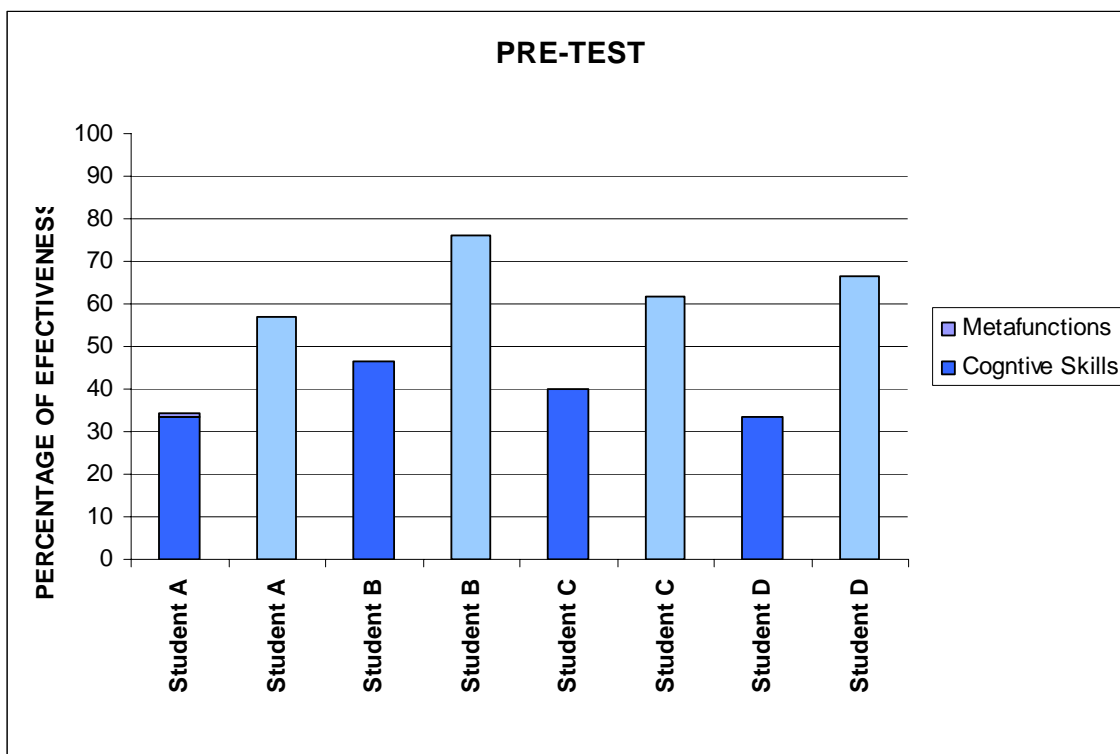


Figure 1 shows the percentage reached by each student in the pre-test (analysis of the personal statement).

Figure 2

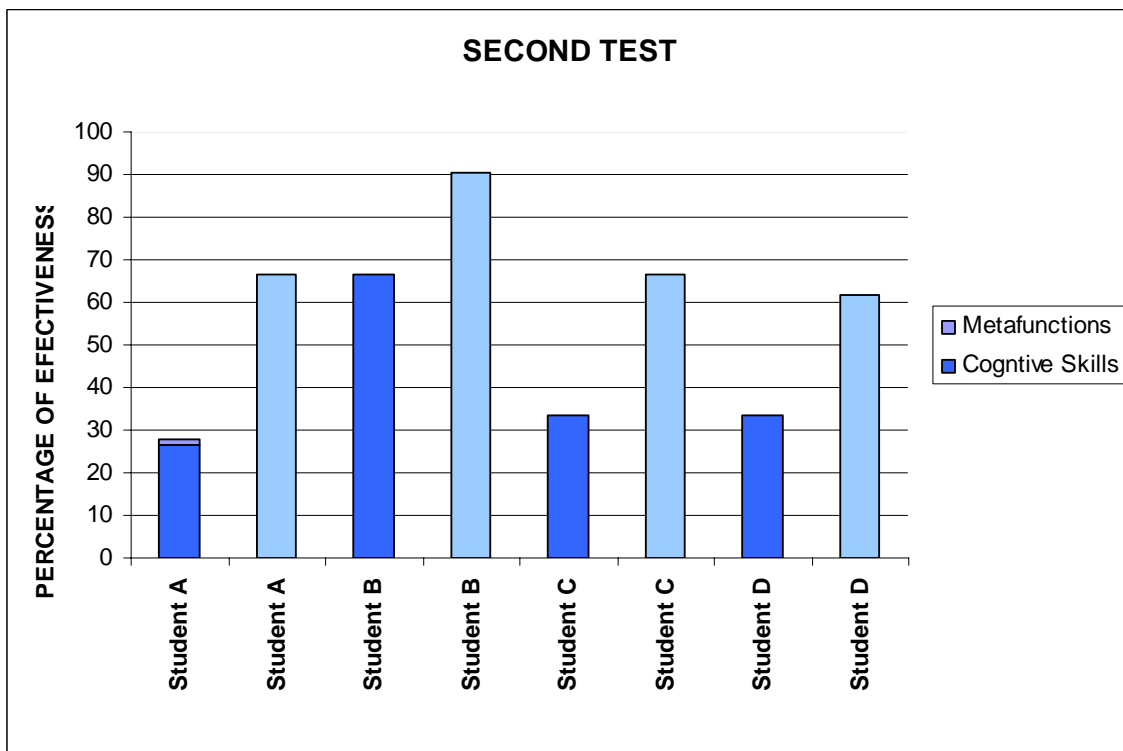


Figure 2 shows the percentage reached by each student in the second test (analysis of the comparative essay).

Figure 3

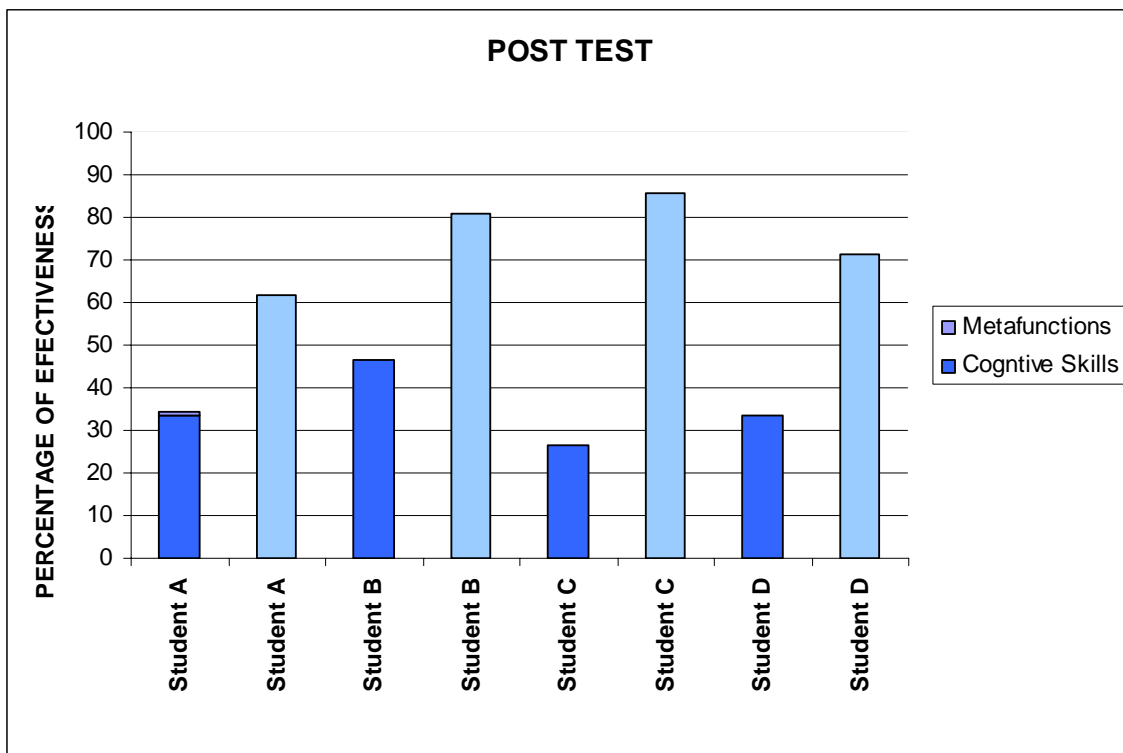


Figure 3 shows the percentage reached by each student in the post test (letter of intentions).

Figure 4

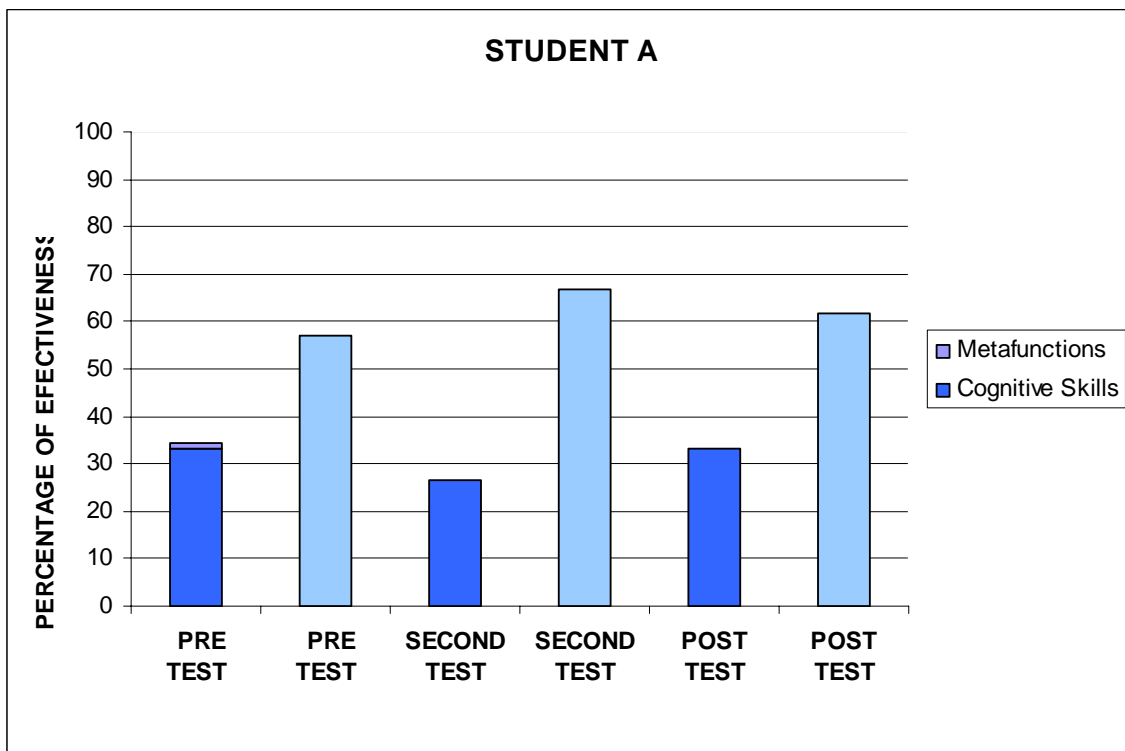


Figure 4 shows the percentage of effectiveness achieved by student A in the pre-test, second test and post-test.



Figure 5

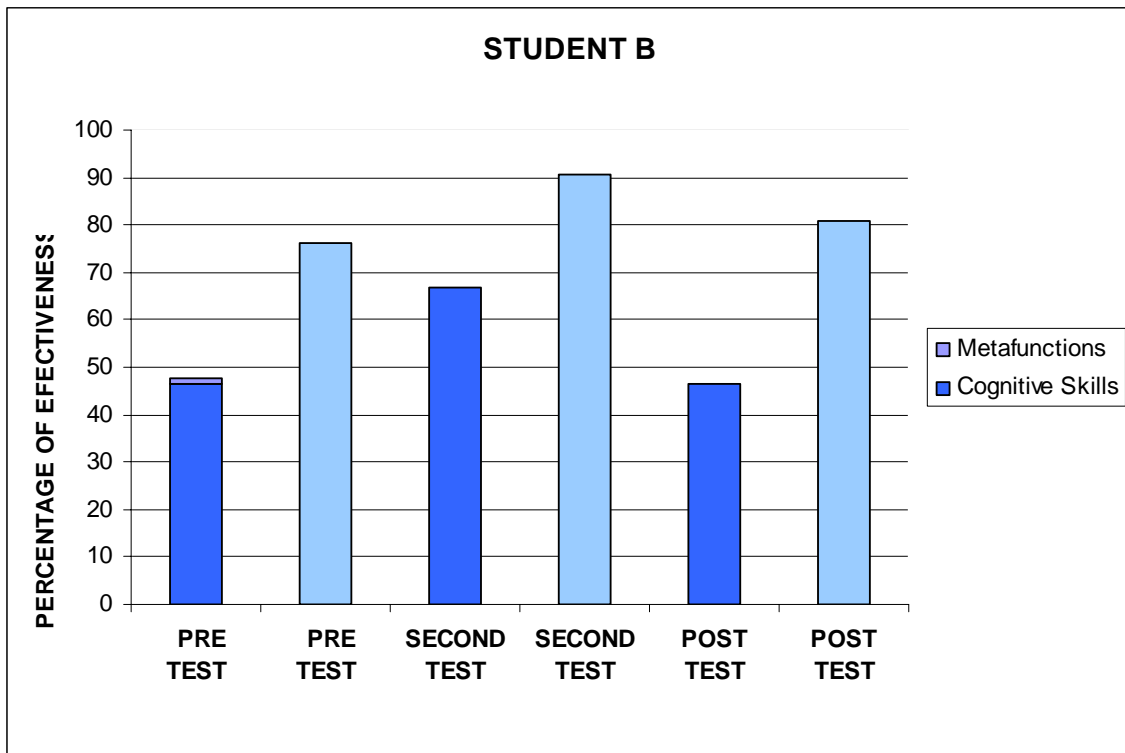


Figure 5 shows the percentage of effectiveness achieved by student B in the pre-test, second test and post-test.

Figure 6

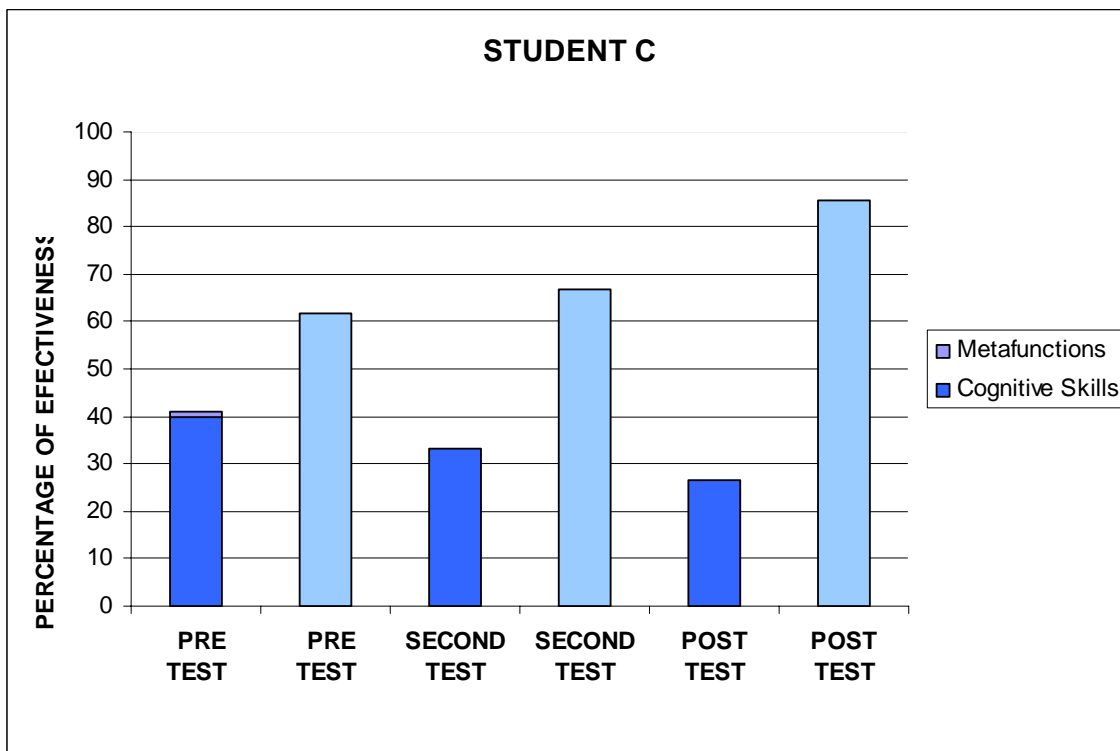


Figure 6 shows the percentage of effectiveness achieved by student C in the pre-test, second test and post-test.

Figure 7

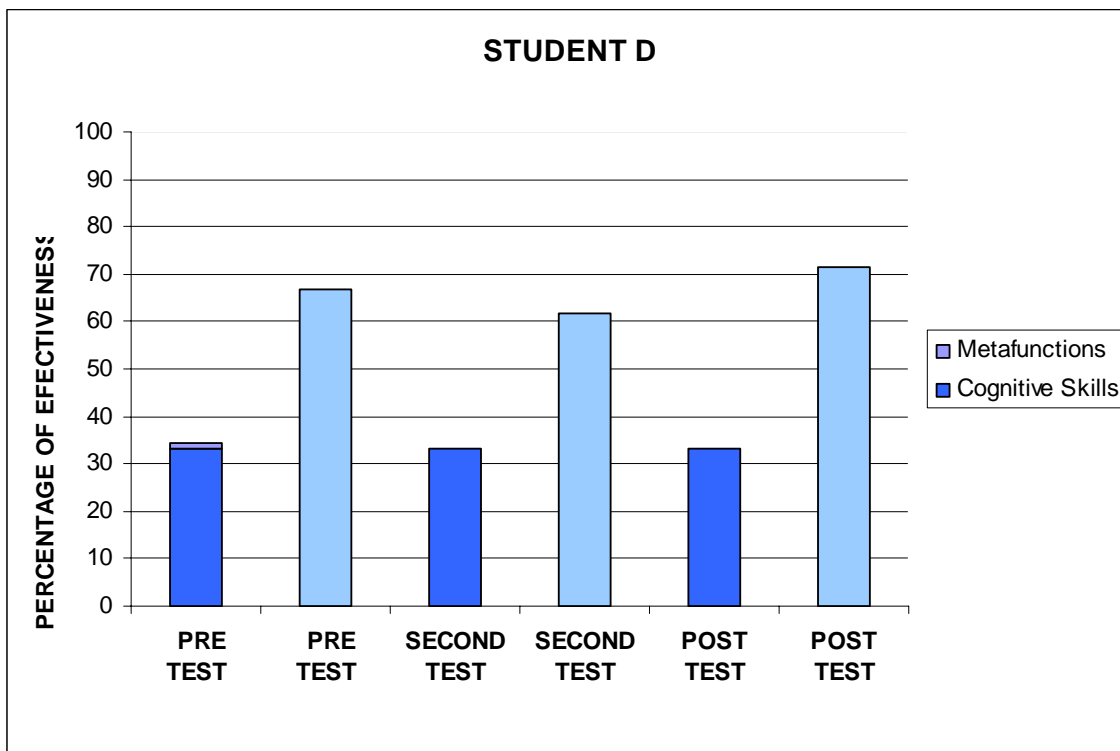


Figure 7 shows the percentage of effectiveness achieved by student D in the pre-test, second test and post-test.

Figure 8

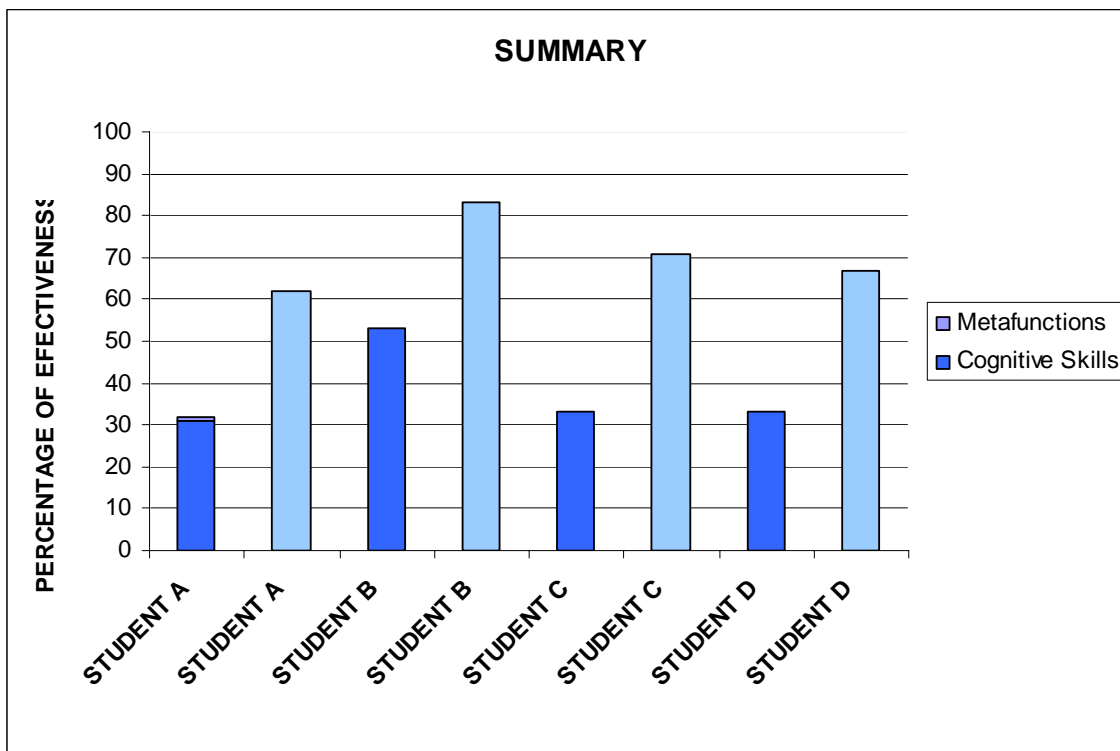


Figure 8 shows the percentage of effectiveness achieved by each student in the three tests.

## CONCLUSIONS

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The study “Determining the level of composing competence achieved by third-year students of English teaching Initial Preparation Program at Universidad Del Bío-Bío” sought to clarify writing competences in students of our program.

It was not easy to define the characteristics of a competent writer and, at the same time, creating an instrument which determines whether or not these skills are present in writing. After reviewing varied literature concerning the topic, we set certain parameters that would be useful when reviewing each of the writings. Every competence is closely linked with the cognitive skills of each individual. Based on the theoretical background, a rubric was created for determining the level of composing competence in third-year students; the form used to measure it was by means of reviewing three written works presented by the students during the second semester of the year, with an interval of two months each.

The first work, a personal statement, was written at the beginning of the semester. It showed that although students were unaware of their cognitive skills and they did not have more training in writing, their texts were more natural, free and with fewer structural errors.

Two months later, they delivered the second worksheet written in a different style from the first one which was analyzed using the same rubric. It yielded better

results than the previous one, taking into account that there was further training than before; as a result, students achieved superior structured texts, with strong teachers' support.

The third and final paper which was delivered two months later, instead of showing an improvement in cognitive skills, it shows a significant setback in competences in general. This can be explained by the long period of time during which students did not receive systematic training due to the strike of the University.

This study helps widely in the development of future generations of this program, by showing a latent reality today that is the lack of abilities to achieve a better development in personal or academic writing skills. Students can find a guide indicating which the characteristics of good writers are; the steps to be taken to achieve an effective text; what is an effective competent text, and besides, different opinions of experts in the field text.

Teachers may take this thesis as a reference to tell students what they expect from a written work, which skills they should develop to achieve a consistent, coherent work and with strong arguments; they also could use this thesis to measure levels of composing competence, not just with students, but with teachers applying for giving classes to students of the English teaching Initial Preparation Program.

It is not unbelievable to think that this thesis could also be used by institutions from the government, as the Ministry of Education, since the content has been structured with solid foundations and it directly contributes to the development of cognitive skills and functions of language in students. While this study is based on third year students of the English program, it can perfectly be addressed to students of secondary schools, in order to prepare them for their future College, professional and taking different certification tests of English as the KET, PET, FCE, CAE, and CPE.

We consider that systematic training is essential to develop cognitive skills and functions of language for achieving a type of text that is consistent, logical and with strong arguments; however it could also contribute to the development of other skills in reading comprehension and speaking.

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APPENDIX

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : A**  
**Page : 1/1**

I am a third-year student in the English Teaching Program at Universidad del Bío Bío in Chillán , Chile, and I am applying to your University, the University of Glasgow, for the reason that you have more than 550 years experience in providing a quality education. Knowing you have plenty of courses, I would like to do a semester abroad in order to achieve my goals.

It has always been my greatest ambition to learn to speak a second language fluently. During my time in college, fluency has become one of my main goals, although I know every person has a different language-learning potential. From this point of view, I believe that being in a foreign country in which the language I am studying is spoken, would be the best way to improve my fluency. This is due to the fact that where, when, and how one studies is extremely important. I am especially interested in entering your University, since you offer a variety of assessment methods that will give me helpful feedback. Your lecturers and Adviser of Studies will also monitor my progress and give me the support I need.

In the future I want to employ all of the techniques I learn to my teaching process. This is particularly important in Chile due to the fact that English has become a very important worldwide language, yet the language learning process has become difficult among Chilean students due to their lack of interest. As a future English Teacher, I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs, which are amongst the weakest in my country.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : B**  
**Page : 1/2**

I am applying for admission to the M.A. in Applied Linguistics EFL program at University of California, Los Angeles, for the reason that I think my school background and teaching experience fit within the core values and goals that the university pursues.

I am a current teacher of English graduated from Universidad del Bío-Bío, Chile with a BA in English teaching pedagogy. At university I passed all courses which talks about my steadiness and responsibility to achieve my purposes and face challenges. I have worked both public and private school as a result, I have had a taste of how wide is the breach between this two systems: differences in education quality and resources which have influence with learning. Thus I am interested in increasing my knowledge to contribute to the improvement of Chilean education facing today's issues by expanding my professional skills.

I would like to enter University of California to take the M.A. in Applied Linguistics EFL program to study in depth knowledge in language acquisition, language assessment and grammar analysis. Taking this course will provide me the possibility to learn more about new techniques to teach English in my country to improve my knowledge in order to increase my professional skills and especially to acquire the necessary tools to approach English classes as a foreign language.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : B**

**Page : 2/2**

My experience in diverse kind of jobs have contributes to my understanding with different settings. Through my community work, I learnt how important teamwork is and how valuable it can be a little help to someone in need. I worked as a volunteer translator for the FIFA u-20 women's cup Chile 2008, experience that allowed me to meet people from different countries and put into practice my knowledge of foreign languages. I also worked helping children from low backgrounds and problems with learning in order to improve their school achievement. Being able to help people is a feeling that is truly gratifying to me.

During my years at college I also took up French lessons which enabled me to develop my communicational skills ad improve language learning abilities. Finished the course, I applied to work abroad as an assistant of Spanish. I worked at France for a year, where I taught Spanish at high school students and at the same time, learnt about diverse ways of teaching. It was an enriching experience which enabled me to learn about different cultures and accomplish my own goals.

I am looking forward to continuing my higher education in University to innovate the way we teach English. Thus, studying abroad at graduate school would be a heartening experience that would enable me to face today's challenges within the English teaching world.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student** : C  
**Page** : 1/3

I am a 23-year-old English teacher graduated from Universidad del Bío bio Chile, and am applying to an MA in literature in the University of Essex.

Literature and English Language are two of my lifelong passions. My love for reading books and writing poems dates from young age. As a matter of fact, I was in charged of a poetry group in primary school, where I was able to show my abilities and aptitudes at writing poems, tales and so on. However, the time I used to dedicate to literature, books and letters changed to numbers at secondary school due to the fact that I studied in a co-education high school that offered associate's degree in accountancy. I learnt valuables things and I worked two years but that experience helped me to realize what I really want to do for the rest of my life.

I preferred to set aside my love for literature and concentrate myself in learning English, as a first achievement, making use of my abilities into languages; in fact, I excelled in languages such as French and English at school. That is why I decided to study in an English teaching program at Universidad del bío bío, Chile. From that program I received training in academic areas such as: discipline, pedagogy or education courses, teaching practice and generic skills.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student** : C  
**Page** : 2/3

So far and, thank to the preparation I received, I have worked as a teacher in Colegio Concepción and Commonwealth School. I have also been giving private lessons, but as time passed I realized that I could work and teach without numbers but not without literature, my most hidden desire. This is what I really want to do and my hugest accomplishment. I prefer to do things motivated by a strong desire in myself, adding passion for what I do. I consider myself able to use my abilities and knowledge to help others. I am doing what I really want, with the suitable attitude, I do not hope only to enlarge my CV. Love for literature is not an instinct feeling, is a feeling you cultivate, like a flower over the time and that is what I want to do with my students, to leave a mark on them and a love for literature. My pursuit is to make my students able to learn how literature is useful and helpful even in a globalized world.

The experience I got from being an English teacher has been very useful in my professional life but as a real professional I desire to improve my knowledge and complement it with a MA in Literature. I have been looking for a program where literature concentration offers extensive training in critical thinking, advanced reading and analysis, and oral and written communication, and this is what I have found.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student** : C

**Page** : 3/3

Now I comprehend how useful could be my experience in your program. I now know that, given my experience and the direction I have found myself taking, an MA in literature is my only true option.

Finally, I aspire to be a great English teacher with an MA in literature, to help students to improve in order to give them the opportunity that I hope to have from you, education, because from my point of view every person deserves the chance to realize his or her dream.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : D**

**Page : 1/3**

Not many people have the vocation to instruct and educate children, for that reason people say that teaching is an art. Languages have always drawn my attention; therefore I realized that I had to learn a new one, urging myself with a strong desire to study English Teaching. Structures, spelling, vocabulary, and ways to form sentences are some of the English rules that I have always wanted to explore. Seeing teachers helping children was the reason I studied that Program, and I am looking for getting a Master's Degree in English composition at California State University, Fresno.

Living English has been part of my life, such as participating in debates and having good marks in English language at school. I studied in a little co-educational school, that gave me the opportunity to deal with people that have different backgrounds and helped me know something that is important for all the people who want to be a teacher: To treat diverse people that share and spend all the time with you. To see teachers helping children has been the motivation to study English Teaching Program.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : D**

**Page : 2/3**

A five year education provided me new skills and knowledge that were developed through the time and hard training and working. Bio Bio university is a Public State institution that helps students to progress and expand abilities that are important to be successful to teach a second language to Spanish speakers. The education that I received in Grammar, the strong formation in Phonetics, Anglo-Saxon Culture, Literature and Morphology, gave me tools to be ready to teach. Finishing the program successfully, I put all the knowledge into practice working as an English teacher in a bilingual school. I learnt to deal with young students, supplying their needs as much as the necessary tools to get by in life and how to use English language to communicate and express ideas.

To study in an English speaking country was my objective, for that reason I applied for a job in California. As I had the opportunity to work in the USA system, I practiced with native speakers that helped me improve my pronunciation, something that many Spanish speakers of English teaching struggle with. Dedicating some hours of the week to translate documents into Spanish and helping tourist that come from different Spanish speakers' countries are important elements to develop my speaking and writing. With this practical knowledge I am ready to pursue further education.



PERSONAL STATEMENT

**Student : D**

**Page : 3/3**

Studying a Master's Degree in English Composition at California State University (Fresno) is the aim of being in the US. I have been looking a Master's Degree which brings me strong skills for writing, editing and proofreading to improve my knowledge as a professional educator. This Degree fits me owing to the fact that it imparts my experience and offers an extensive training, as a result of strong foundation in literature and academic composition.

Besides, the possibility of acquiring techniques of expressing, evolving and selecting ideas in appropriate written forms and finally have critical thinking. With those abilities, I will develop my expertise to teach in a proper way by being a competent professional.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student** : A  
**Page** : 1/2

When students are asked to write essays at college, for most of them it could sound easy to do it, but when they are in practice, they realize how difficult the process of writing is and how different is writing from high school.

To write clearly is a difficult process to achieve, and it takes plenty of time while you are improving it, the point is to strive as much as you can your writing skills by practicing, due to the fact that strategies that used to serve students well in high school, they will not serve them well at college. Nevertheless the question of most first-year students is; which is the most suitable type of writing to write?

There was a great debate about personal and academic writing between Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae, but later, Richard Fulkerson makes it clear that both personal and academic writing continue having strong adherents among faculty teaching composition, especially in first-Year College.

Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk, who takes another look by using the psycholinguistic theories of Jerome Bruner and James Britton as the basis for analysis, she argues about the importance of going beyond Personal Writing, in order to help basic writers to acquire academic discourse, to read and write intelligently about their reading. In addition, Fulkerson identifies "expressivism" as an Elbow's concept of Personal Writing of this type of writing.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student** : A  
**Page** : 2/2

According to Elbow's point of view, he remarks that the proper goal of the first-year students is writing, so he says that is good to start this process by using the student's own experience, in order to make them feel comfortable when writing.

Teachers have an important role in this process, since their labour is to act as a coach; to train instead to evaluate students. In this way, students will trust language, which means, according to Elbow, "to pretend that no authorities have ever written about their subject before". Doing things in this way, student will get uniqueness in their own way of writing, making them feel as they were the central speaker at the central of Universe.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student : B**

**Page : 1/2**

When studying the structure of personal or academic writing you will find many differences between them. Being a point of debate, personal and academic writing have each one supporters and detractors which defend their own position. Overall it is very important to know and consider certain characteristics such as voice and the objective that these different types of writing pursues as fundamental elements when writing.

Personal and academic writing go after a different objective which is reflected in particular characteristics. While personal writing try to evocate, to convince by lifelikeness or verisimilitude, academic writing strives to convince through logic and hopes to arrive at supportable generalization. Another dissimilarity is that personal writing delights on the particular whereas the academic writing seek to transcend the particular. Personal writing is private and close to the self because you give facts about yourself in comparison to academic writing which is more public. Personal writing is based on your own experience is more subjective on the other hand academic writing is objective for the reason that you only write based on what you know about the topic. Thus both, personal and academic writing, go behind a different purpose.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student : B**

**Page : 2/2**

Another difference is how voice is expressed in personal and academic writing. Voice has being always a very essential factor within writing due to the fact it is necessary for students express their own opinions and ideas and develop critical thinking respect to the topic. In personal writing voice is present in many levels because you write about your individual experiences however; in academic writing it is rather difficult express yourself because you have to be objective. Nevertheless it is vital to introduce your own voice within the writing to make it authentic and original.

To summarize, it is important to know and learn how personal and academic writing are organized by understanding their differences in terms of particular features such as voice and purpose. Both types of writing are unlike in their intention and differ in how to introduce your voice within the writing. Although both have certain characteristics which make each one be very different from the other, it is very important to know about what you are writing and express ideas clearly in order to make the reader feel connected with your writing.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student : C**

**Page : 1/2**

A difficult decision at writing a composition is what type of writing one will use: Personal or Academic. The fact is that both are supported by important and recognized scholars: Jerome Bruner, Edward Sapir, Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae. First to choose one type is important to know the characteristics and the differences of each one.

Personal writing is also called "Narrative mode" by Bruner. It often takes the form of stories. On the contrary an example of Academic writing, called Logico-scientific mode by Bruner, is an argument. While narrative mode is based on personal experiences and the goals are to be evocative, bring to mind and convince by being true to life. Logico-scientific mode tries to convince using logic and proofs, based on what is experienced or seen rather than on theory. Academic writing should present the reader with an informed argument. To compare the two modes is to understand the differences between a sound argument and a good story.

Sapir calls "Expressive and Referential Language" to Personal and Academic writing respectively. To illustrate both, Expressive Language is the every day speech, whose aim is to transmit meaning in explicit ways using the closest language to the person, for instance the language you use at writing an informal letter or an e-mail, and Referential language is a scientific discourse, linked to the Logico-scientific mode of Bruner.

## COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student** : C

**Page** : 2/2

In like manner, not only students must choose what type of writing are going to use but teachers what type of writing are going to emphasize. Teachers as Elbow recognize the abilities and great ideas of their students and encourage them to write as if they were the only experts in the subject. Elbow wants his students to "trust language", to enjoy and feel comfortable at writing their own ideas, so he prefer Personal writing which allows them to discover how capable they are. After learning to write a personal writing they are much more able to write academic essays. Bartholomae, a supporter of Academic writing, thinks students must imitate their instructors and write solid arguments after a critical reading of significant texts and at the same time they move closer to the language of the academic world.

Even though there is no wrong or right type of writing essay at first, teachers should start by giving lessons of how improve writing and if necessary teach how include the "own voice" in writing. Students know how difficult write about a topic or even about a personal experience is if no one gives the clues. To summarize, Personal and Academic writing will continue into the debate up to one can prove which the most suitable way at writing a composition is. Meanwhile the most proper way at writing will depend of the context and the objective the writer hopes to achieve.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student : D**

**Page : 1/3**

Writing is a difficult ability that has to be improved on ESL students. In their compositions, they should show they are ready to express their own ideas and knowledge by essays. There are two types of writing that students can choose according their style: Personal and Academic writing. Both are supported by important scholars: Jerome Bruner, Edward Sapir, Peter Elbow and David Bartholomae. However, which are the differences between these types of writing? Which are their characteristics? To make a choice it is important to consider these questions.

First of all, Personal writing differs from Academic writing in which the former is private: meaning that this type of writing is "closest to the self and is influenced by the rhythms of everyday speech". In other words, it is connected with the language that is used in personal conversation with friends and family. In contrast, the latter is related to transactional language: it means "public". According to Britton's Theory of language, is the language of scientific reports, in which the aim is to make other understand things, ideas, etc. in explicit ways. Scientific discourse is a good example of this type of writing.



## COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student** : D

**Page** : 2/3

To identify more differences, we have to focus our attention in the teacher's role. Personal writing sees a teacher as instructor or a coach that encourages their students to trust in their own language, assuming that their students have valuable ideas to express and build texts up. Whereas Academic writing, that sees teachers as "managers", supervising all the work that their students do in order to make them better. Besides, teachers are seen with more power than students; for this reason, they make them aware of the dynamics of college classrooms. This point is important as teachers shape student's ideas and ways of writing.

Despite students need prowess to write in a proper way, the abilities needed in Personal and Academic writing are different. Beginning with the ability "to think by writing freely" that related to Personal writing; since students have to process their ideas in order to write what they want, thinking first, and then writing what they consider important. "to process ideas mentally" is another ability that helps to create and improve a Personal writing. Instead Academic writing, that needs other abilities such as to be reflective. The reason? As the person writes, must think very well what wants to say in order to be clear about the ideas that are exposed in their work. In addition, the student cannot write about something that he doesn't know; the first step is get into the topic.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY

**Student : D**

**Page : 3/3**

Nevertheless, there are similarities between these types of texts that are important to consider. As students write, they have the possibility to be aware and realize what they are writing about in the essay. Likewise Personal and Academic writing make students improve their way of writing, acquiring the appropriate skills.

In conclusion, despite Personal and Academic writing have several differences; they are helpful for practicing an ability that is not intrinsic in ESL student. In which they can improve their process of writing in a different way: more personal or public, depending on what they choose or be comfortable.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student : A**

**Page : 1/1**

I am a third-year student in the English Teaching Program at Universidad del Bío Bío in Chillán , Chile, and I am applying to your University, the University of Glasgow, for the reason that you have more than 550 years experience in providing a quality education. Knowing you have plenty of courses, I would like to do a semester abroad in order to achieve my goals.

It has always been my greatest ambition to learn to speak a second language fluently. During my time in college, fluency has become one of my main goals, although I know every person has a different language-learning potential. From this point of view, I believe that being in a foreign country in which the language I am studying is spoken, would be the best way to improve my fluency. This is due to the fact that where, when, and how one studies is extremely important. I am especially interested in entering your University, since you offer a variety of assessment methods that will give me helpful feedback. Your lecturers and Adviser of Studies will also monitor my progress and give me the support I need.

In the future I want to employ all of the techniques I learn to my teaching process. This is particularly important in Chile due to the fact that English has become a very important worldwide language, yet the language learning process has become difficult among Chilean students due to their lack of interest. As a future English Teacher, I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs, which are amongst the weakest in my country.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student : B**

**Page : 1/2**

I am a current student of English teaching program at Universidad del Bío Bío and I am applying for a scholarship to "Becas Chile" for the reason that I am interested in the program "studying one semester abroad" at the prestigious Oxford University, provided that I think my school background and teaching experience fit within the core values and goals that the university pursues.

My experience with the language has been constant but not vast enough and it is time to put into practice my knowledge and skills within the real context and moreover, to find out what other things I am able to learn, given that it is not the same to study English in a non-native speaker country that living the language every day, therefore, studying abroad would be a very heartening experience which will allow me to expand my skills in the field of teaching and in the language itself.

My goal is to study a program that allows me to get prepared to face the challenges that involve teaching English as a second language, to learn about new techniques to teach the language in Chile, to improve my knowledge in order to increase my professional skills and especially to acquire the necessary tools to approach English classes as a foreign language.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student : B**

**Page : 2/2**

As a future teacher, I am interested in increasing my knowledge to contribute to the improvements of Chilean public education mainly; facing today's issues by improving myself in certain areas that will make possible to do a better job. I am looking forward to experiencing the language and certainly being trained enough to innovate the way we teach English. Undoubtedly, studying abroad would be an enriching experience that would enable me to face today's challenges within the English teaching world.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student** : C

**Page** : 1/2

Becas Chile committee:

I am a 21-year-old student and I am studying in the English Teaching program at Bío Bío University. This program offers training in academic areas such as discipline, pedagogy or education courses, teaching practice and generic skills. The areas of phonetics and grammar have been essential part of my training. Even though it has not been easy to take part in an English class, I have never failed one.

I am applying for the scholarship studying a semester abroad at the University of California-Irvine and be part of the School of Education where I know I will obtain a solid foundation of understanding about human development and cognition, and practices for teaching and learning in different subjects areas. As my achievement is to be an English teacher, will be very useful the direct observation of bilingual classroom in local elementary schools, classroom lectures, discussions, and presentations on the culture and language of the bilingual student, it means the methods for elementary bilingual teachers, a course that the university offers, a non-existent opportunity in my country.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student : C**

**Page : 2/2**

Although I have not worked as a teacher in schools, I have been giving private lessons to children who attend private schools; this has given me the opportunity to see the differences in quality between public and private education and at the same time it has motivated me to focus my training as a teacher on public schools. Moreover I participated in a program to teach about the Bible to deaf people in signs language, that experience made me feel more confident while teaching but it also gave me the strength I will need to continue and make more effort when students seem to understand nothing.

After finishing the semester abroad program I strongly believe I will have improved my abilities at writing and speaking as a result of the training in an English country that will help me to finish my program but also I will be able to share and provide my knew knowledge to students who deserve a higher level of education in public schools, which is a need in my country.

LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student : D**

**Page : 1/2**

I'm a third year student at the English Teaching Program at Bio Bio University, Chillan. I'm applying for a scholarship to study "Secondary Teaching" Program at the University of Newcastle, Australia, that provides all the knowledge, skills and dispositions for a highly flourishing career in teaching English.

During these three years of education, I have been taught in many fields to be successful. All the academic preparation that I received in Grammar, strong formation in Phonetics and Literature have given me the tool to be ready to apply for a scholarship for studying abroad and improve my own abilities as a future secondary school teacher.

Due to the fact that Chile is not an English speaking country, I am interested in developing my skills to communicate effectively. For that reason, I want to study abroad and make my pronunciation and interaction with people better, that have different backgrounds and culture, which will enhance my own experience as an undergraduate.

As an English Teaching student, I have had the opportunity to give private lessons to children. This experience have given me the chance to see beyond and taste by myself that I need to learn more about different methods of teaching English as a second language, techniques provided by Secondary teaching at Newcastle University.



LETTER OF INTENTIONS

**Student** : D

**Page** : 2/2

After finishing the semester abroad, I will be delighted to share my knowledge and experience in Public Education. I am strongly interested in teaching at school which are located in rural areas at the south of my country, for the reason that they are in considerable disadvantage from private schools. I will glad to help them know more about English language and open their minds to another culture.

QUOTED EVIDENCE

This section presents some pieces of writing obtained from the compositions written by the students. No grammatical or spelling mistakes were corrected.

Pre-test	Quoted Evidence	Analysis
1)	"I am a third year student in the English Teaching Program at Universidad del Bio-Bio."	
2)	"I am applying to your university."	
3)	"I believe that being in a foreign country [...] would be the best way to improve my fluency."	
4)	"I know every person has a different language learning potential."	
5)	"This is due to the fact that where, when, and how one studies is extremely important."	
6)	"I'm applying for admission to the M.A. in Applied Linguistics in EFL program [...]"	
7)	"I am a current teacher of English graduated from Universidad del Bio-Bio."	
8)	"I have worked both public and private school."	
9)	"Taking this course will provide me the possibility to learn more about new techniques [...]"	

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
10)	"I learnt how important teamwork is and how valuable it can be [...]"	
11)	"I worked as a volunteer translator for the FIFA u-20 women's world cup [...]"	
12)	"During my years at college I also took up French lessons [...]"	
13)	"I worked at France for a year [...]"	
14)	"Studying abroad at graduate school would be a heartening experience [...]"	
15)	"I was in charged of a poetry group in primary school [...]"	
16)	"The time I used to dedicate to literature, books and letters changed to numbers at secondary school [...]"	
17)	"I preferred to set aside my love for literature and concentrate myself in learning English [...]"	
18)	"[...] every person deserves the chance to realize his or her dream."	
19)	"I have been looking for a program where literature concentration offers extensive training in critical thinking [...]"	

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
20)	"Now I comprehend how useful could be my experience in your program, [...]"	
21)	"Love for literature is not an instinct feeling, is a feeling you cultivate."	
22)	"Not many people have the vocation to instruct and educate children [...]"	
23)	"I studied in a little eco-educational school, [...]"	
24)	"Bio-Bio University is a Public State Institution [...]"	
25)	"I learnt to deal with young students, supplying their needs [...]"	
26)	"This degree fits me owing to the fact that it imparts my experience [...]"	
27)	"With those abilities, I will develop my expertise to teach in a proper way by being a competent professional."	

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Synthesis</b>
	1) "I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs [...]"	
	2) "[...] increasing my knowledge to contribute to the improvement of Chilean education [...]"	
	3) "[...] continuing my higher education in University to innovate the way we teach English."	
	4) "[...] acquire the necessary tools to approach English classes as a foreign language."	
	5) "[...] to help students to improve [...]"	
	6) "With this practical knowledge I am ready to pursue further education."	

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
	<hr/>	
1)	"[...] and teaching experience fit within the core values and goals that the university pursues."	
2)	"I have worked both public and private schools, as a result, I have had a taste of how wide is breach between this two systems: [...]"	
3)	"[...] to improve my knowledge in order to increase my professional skills and [...]"	

**Pre-test**

**Quoted Evidence**

**Ideational**

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- 1) "I am a 23-year-old English teacher graduated from Universidad del Bio-Bio [...]"
- 2) "So far and, thank to the preparation I received, I have worked as a teacher in Colegio Concepción and Comewealth School."
- 3) "[...] I aspire to be a great English teacher with an MA in literature [...]"
- 4) "Now I comprehend how useful could be my experience in your program [...]"
- 5) "I have been looking for a program where literature concentration offers extensive training in critical thinking [...]"

**Pre-test**

**Quoted Evidence**

**Interpersonal**

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- 1) "Your lectures and advisers of studies will also monitor my progress and give me the support I need."
- 2) "I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs, which are amongst the weakest in my country."
- 3) "[...] in order to give them the opportunity that I hope to have from you, education, [...] every person deserves the chance to realize his or her dream."



<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Textual</b>
	1) "This is due to the fact that where, when, and how [...]"	
	2) "This is particularly important due to the fact that English [...]"	
	3) "[...] English has become a very important worldwide language, yet the language learning process has become difficult among Chilean students [...]"	
	4) "I am a third-year student in the English Teaching Program at Universidad del Bio-Bio in Chillán, Chile, and I am applying to your university, the university of Glasgow, for the reason that you have more than 550 years experience in providing a quality education."	
	5) "[...] and am applying to an MA in literature [...]" a. "[...] Universidad del Bío-Bío, and am applying."	
	6) "[...] that helped me improve my pronunciation [...]"	
	7) "This degree fits me owing to the fact that it imparts my experience and offers and extensive training, as a result of strong foundation in literature and academic composition."	

<b>Second test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
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1) "They realized how difficult the process of writing is [...]"

2) "To write clearly is a difficult process to achieve [...]"

<b>Second test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Textual</b>
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1) "Nevertheless the question of most first-year students is; which is the most suitable type of writing?"

Rebecca Williams Mlynarczyk, who takes another look [...] as the basis for analysis, she argues about the importance [...]

2) "When students are asked to write essays at college, for most of them it could sound easy to do it, but when they are in practice, they realize how difficult the process of writing is and how different is writing from high school".

<b>Post - test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
	1) "[...]. I would like to do a semester abroad in order to achieve my goals."	
	2) "[...], I believe that being in a foreign country in which the language I am studying is spoken, would be the best way to improve my fluency."	
	3) "In the future I want to employ all of the techniques I learn to my teaching process."	
	4) "[...] experience which will allow me to expand my skills in the field of teaching and in the language itself."	
	5) "[...] it is not the same to study English in a non-native speaker country that living the language every day [...]"	
	6) "My goal is to learn about new techniques to teach the language in Chile, [...]"	
	7) "I am looking forward to experiencing the language and certainly being trained enough to innovate the way we teach English."	
	8) "Undoubtedly, studying abroad would be an enriching experience that would enable me to face today's challenges within the English teaching world."	
	9) "The areas of phonetics and grammar have been essential part of my training."	

<b>Post - test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
10)	"As my achievement is to be and English teacher, will be very useful the direct observation of bilingual classrooms in local elementary schools, [...]"	
11)	"[...] this experience has given me the opportunity to see the difference in quality between public and private schools; [...]"	
12)	"After finishing the semester abroad I strongly believe I will have improved my abilities at writing and speaking [...]"	
13)	"I'm applying for a scholarship to study Secondary Teaching Program at the University of New Castle"	
14)	"[...] apply for a scholarship for studying abroad and improve my own abilities as a future secondary teacher."	
15)	"Due to the fact that Chile is not an English speaking country, I am interested in developing my skills to communicate effectively."	
16)	"I want to study abroad and make my pronunciation and interaction with people better [...]"	
17)	"[...] I have had the opportunity to give private lessons to children."	

<b>Post – test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Analysis</b>
	18) "I will glad to help them know more about English language and open their minds to another culture." 19) "I am strongly interested in teaching at schools which are located in rural areas at the south of my country."	

<b>Post - test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Synthesis</b>
		<b>Synthesis</b> 1) "I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs [...]" 2) "[...] experiencing the language and certainly being trained enough to innovate the way we teach English." 3) "I will have improved my abilities at writing and speaking as a result of the training in an English country [...]." 4) "[...] help them to [...] open their minds to another culture."

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
		1) "[...] and teaching experience fit within the core values and goals that the University pursues."

<b>Post - test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Ideational</b>
	1) "In the future I want to employ all of the techniques I learn to my teaching process."	
	2) "[...] I think my school background and teaching experience fit within the core values and goals that the university pursues."	
	3) "As an English teaching student, I have had the opportunity to give private lessons to children [...] techniques provided by Secondary teaching at Newcastle University."	

<b>Post - test</b>	<b>Quoted Evidence</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>
	1) "Your lectures and advisers of studies will also monitor my progress and give me the support I need."	
	2) "I want to change this problem by providing new methods of teaching, especially in language programs, which are amongst the weakest in my country."	

**Post - test**

**Quoted Evidence**

**Textual**

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- 1) "This is due to the fact that where, when, and how [...]"
- 2) "This is particularly important due to the fact that English [...]"
- 3) "[...] English has become a very important worldwide language, yet the language learning process has become difficult among Chilean students [...]"
- 4) "I am applying for the scholarship studying [...]"
- 5) "I'm a third-year student [...]"
- 6) "I'm applying for a scholarship [...]"

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