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# **GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING AND ASSESSING WRITING**

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# TABLA DE CONTENIDO

ABSTRACT .....	1
RESUMEN.....	1
AUTHORS .....	2
INTRODUCTION .....	3
I. TEACHING WRITING .....	4
1. Selecting a topic .....	5
2. Generating ideas .....	5
3. Writing a draft .....	6
4. Revising.....	6
5. Editing.....	6
6. Scoring.....	6
II. ASSESSING WRITING .....	7
1. Designing assessment tasks .....	9
2. Responding to students – Writing conventions.....	11
3. Scoring students’ writings .....	13
4. Reaching consensus on scoring.....	15
CONCLUSION.....	15
REFERENCES .....	15
TABLE INDEX	
Table 1 Taxonomy of language knowledge .....	8
Table 2 Discourse modes and genres of writing.....	9
Table 3 Verbs for writing purposes .....	10
Table 4 Writing conventions and examples .....	12
Table 5 Writing assessment rubric for beginners .....	14



## **ABSTRACT**

Since writing represents an important language skill for professional and academic needs, it is our interest to deal with two aspects of writing, one being the mirror image of the other: teaching and assessing. Therefore, this document presents two main sections. The first one gives an overview of the different approaches to the teaching of writing and the second suggests some guidelines to assess students' writing. The document also includes some practical exercises to help teachers assess their understanding of the concepts herein presented.

## **KEY WORDS**

Approaches to teaching writing, genre, discourse mode, writing conventions, prompts, writing rubric, scoring.

## **RESUMEN**

La escritura representa una habilidad importante tanto para fines profesionales como académicos. Por tal motivo, en este documento tratamos dos aspectos principales en el desarrollo de la escritura: su enseñanza y su evaluación. En la primera sección del documento presentamos una descripción general de diferentes enfoques para la enseñanza de la escritura. En la segunda sección, sugerimos algunos lineamientos para su evaluación. Igualmente incluimos algunos ejercicios prácticos que ayudarán al profesor a tener una mejor comprensión de los conceptos presentados.

## **PALABRAS CLAVES**

Enfoques en la enseñanza de la escritura, genero, modo discursivo, convenciones, instrucciones, rubrica para la escritura, asignación de puntajes.

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# GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING AND ASSESSING WRITING

## INTRODUCTION

The ability to write in English is important both for professional and academic needs. Professionally, the need to write in English has become essential in today's global community because it allows citizens from different cultures to communicate through letters, e-mails, business reports, web pages, etc. (Weigle, 2002). Academically, writing effectively in English is highly valued because of the possibilities it offers teachers, students, and researchers to extend their intellectual production to international communities.

But, why is it essential to develop good writing skills? Kaye and Matson (2000) from the GALI Language Institute in California argue that people usually produce a simplified written version of their intended message, even in their own native language, because conveying an impression of self-confidence seems to be more important than expressing precise and complex thoughts. However, they claim, writing can promote the exploration and discovery of deep ideas since in order to produce a quality text, good writers follow a process oriented approach that allows them to brainstorm for ideas, find the structure of their text, draft it and edit it several times before coming up with their final piece. Kaye and Matson state that "quality conversation is an art, one that can be learned through writing". They suggest that from the

various discourse modes, narration and argumentation can be the most helpful to students who want to improve the quality of their conversation.

Research studies also suggest that writing is important because it can improve attention or what cognitive psychologists call *working memory*. Klein (undated) from the Social Cognitive Laboratory in North Carolina State University, conducted a study that measured participants' ability to concentrate, which was translated into real world outcomes, like better college grades. In her study, Klein found that people who wrote about a stressful experience showed improvements in their ability to concentrate, measured by a standard test of working memory capacity. She explains that our memories for negative experiences are often fragmented and disorganized and that when we write about them, they gradually become more organized, allowing us to understand what happened to better deal with the emotions surrounding the experience.

Since writing represents an important language skill, it is our interest to deal with two aspects of writing, one being the mirror image of the other: teaching and assessing. For the aforementioned reason, this document is divided in two main sections. The first one gives an overview of the different approaches to the teaching of writing and the second, presents some guidelines to assess students' writing. This working paper also includes some practical exercises to help teachers assess their understanding of the concepts herein presented.

# I. TEACHING WRITING

One evident thread among the abundance of research into L2 writing over the last 20 years has been a focus on approaches to the teaching of writing. These approaches include: First, the product approach which recognizes the need to concentrate on the final piece of writing. This approach leads teachers and students to believe that the planning stage begins and ends in the initial period of composition. Teachers measure the writing against criteria of “vocabulary use, grammatical use, and mechanical considerations such as spelling and punctuation,” as well as “content and organization” (Brown 1994: 320). Therefore, writing is seen as a product “constructed from the writer’s command of grammatical and lexical knowledge, and writing development is considered to be the result of imitating and manipulating models provided by the teacher” (Hyland, 2003:3). The product approach has been criticized because it ignores the actual process used by students.

Second, the process approach to writing appeared in the mid-1970s. It can be seen as a series of decisions and choices that should be made in a certain order. This suggested order is what many authors have called the process-oriented approach to writing, practice that began to replace the product approach. The process approach identifies four stages in writing: (1) prewriting, (2) drafting, (3) revising, and (4) editing (Tribble, 1996). One of the views of this approach is the importance of building in a revision or editing stage into the process of generating a text. Flower’s (1989) process-oriented

strategy for revision is to define the task, comprehend it and evaluate it. The process approach has also aroused criticism because it gives insufficient importance to the purpose of the writing.

Third, in response to the process approach, the genre approach became popular in the 80s. The awareness of the existence of a plurality of writing styles infiltrated conventional theories recognizing the influence of genre on writing. Therefore, this approach stresses the importance of the particular genre the students are producing (letters, essays, biographies, reports, etc.). According to Cope and Kalantzis (1993), there are three stages in this approach: (1) modeling of the target genre for the students, (2) construction of the text by the teacher and students together, and (3) construction of the text by each student individually. The genre approach has also been questioned because it fails to appreciate the process needed to produce a text and views students as passive (Badger and White, 2000).

The EAFIT Language Center does not strictly adopt one single approach in the writing classroom. We believe that a combination of approaches which emphasize on the process, the product, and the genre can help students greatly develop their writing skills by considering (1) the personal process students go through when writing such as drafting, revising, and editing; (2) the accuracy of the language used as reflected by the control of grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, and coherence and

cohesion; and (3) the purpose of the writing as specified by the discourse mode and genre. We will refer to this combination of approaches as the 'process-product approach' to writing, which involves the following steps:

## 1. Selecting a topic

In negotiation with the students, teachers select a topic based on the writing standards, the genre, and the most appropriate discourse modes for the course. Then teachers give detailed instructions for students to complete the writing task. Instructions consist of the specific criteria for designing writing prompts at the language Center: audience, genre, discourse mode, and organizational plan (Muñoz, et al., 2006).

## 2. Generating ideas

Before writing, students explore ideas on the topic with the help of different techniques such as the ones proposed by Leki (1989):

### *Free writing*

Students write the topic at the top of a page. Then they begin to write down everything that comes to their mind on this topic, no matter how disorganized it is. Students write continuously for ten minutes. Finally, they underline or circle the ideas and expressions they like and that will help them write.

### *Listing*

Students write everything that comes to their mind about a topic, but they do not write sentences. Instead, they write words or quick phrases. This technique is one of the most useful ways for writers to get started if, for some reason, their ideas dry up as they are writing a draft. Listing can be an individual, small group or whole class activity.

### *Mind mapping*

Students write the subject of their composition in the middle of a piece of paper, and then write down all the

things associated with it. They continue the process by finding associations for each of the things they have written down. Sharing associations might trigger memories for students having difficulty thinking of topics. When they are done with the associations, they try to group items into clusters or categories.

### *Cubing*

Students spend three to five minutes examining their topic from each of the following angles:

- Description (What does it look like? What do you see?)
- Comparison (What is it similar to? What is it different from?)
- Analysis (What is it made of? What are its parts?)
- Association (What does it remind you of? What do you associate it with?)
- Application (What can you do with it? What can you use it for?)
- Arguing for or against it. (Take either position. Give any reasons, even crazy ones.)

When students have finished, they reread what they wrote to find ideas that they like. Perhaps one of those ideas may be the topic for a composition on the subject.

### *Outlining*

The outline functions as a plan for writing. It basically helps students:

- Organize ideas
- Present material in a logical form
- Show the relationships among ideas
- Construct an ordered overview of their writing

When developing an outline:

- List all the ideas to be included in the writing
- Group related ideas together.
- Create main and sub headings (labels)

### 3. Writing a draft

Students take their ideas from the two steps above and write a draft (in class activity). At this stage, there is a searching for words, trying out sentences, and putting pieces together. Concerns for mechanics should be set aside for later. Instead, students' energy should be focused on organization of ideas.

### 4. Revising

Teachers collect the draft and check it using writing conventions (out of class activity). At this point, it is very important to include additional personal comments regarding degree of formality, genre or discourse mode.

### 5. Editing

Using the teacher's feedback, students can make major (or minor) revisions in ideas, organization, sequence, sentence structure, and word choice (in class activity or homework). Students can also use revision techniques of insertion, deletion, reordering, rephrasing, etc. Editing is critical because students actually move into higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. At this point, the text is handed back to the teacher.

### 6. Scoring

Teachers score the edited piece of writing using standards of excellence for specified performance levels and a checklist or rubric that at least includes:

1. aspects of the language to be assessed
2. descriptors for each level of performance in each aspect of the language
3. a numerical or qualitative scale

The EAFIT language Center relies on an analytical writing rubric for the scoring of students' writings as can be seen in Table 5 below.

All the steps contemplated in the product-process approach to writing can be clearly reflected in a writing portfolio. A portfolio is a purposeful collection of students' writing, containing drafts, revisions, and the final written work. It is used to keep track of the process students go through when developing a writing piece. This method allows teachers to observe students' gradual improvement as well as encourage them to see their writing as something they have done by themselves. It also enables students to look back and reflect on their development as language learners.

The portfolio enables teachers and students to:

- Become aware of their writing practices and strategies in teaching and learning.
- Become aware of the connection between curriculum and instruction.
- Determine improvements in language aspects such as coherence, cohesion, grammar or vocabulary.
- Observe the writing process and not just the final product.
- Engage in self assessment practices.

The use and analysis of portfolios can also allow the language program detect areas of strength and weakness in student performance in a course or in the curriculum.

To conclude this section, the usefulness of portfolios is put forward by Boyle (2003, cited by Banta, 2003) when he says: "The portfolio, as an element of authentic assessment, has captured the interest of many instructors who want a more comprehensive way to assess their students' knowledge and skills, to have students actively participate in the evaluation process, and to simultaneously develop students' skills of reflective thinking. These latter features make portfolios an attractive alternative to traditional summative testing."

## II. ASSESSING WRITING

The primary purpose of evaluation is to make interpretations and decisions about students' language ability. In view of this, it is essential to define the construct "language ability or communicative competence." Construct definition is the most important consideration when evaluating because it determines what aspects of the ability are to be measured and how they are going to be measured.

In the communicative framework to language teaching and assessment, language ability or communicative competence is not only the good command of grammar. It is the ability to use the language system appropriately in any circumstances, with regard to the functions and the varieties of language, as well as shared socio-cultural suppositions.

The term competence was introduced by Chomsky (1965) in his theory of transformational-generative grammar whose aim was to describe language through a set of idealized abstractions in the mind of an idealized speaker – listener in a completely homogeneous community. Competence was the idealized speaker's implicit or explicit knowledge of the system of the language as opposed to his or her actual production and comprehension of language in specific instances of language use (proficiency).

The proposal for a theory of communicative competence was motivated by the recognition of how far short of

the mark linguistics came to account for people's ability to understand sentences and utterances in a communicative context, since such important aspects as appropriateness and social significance were being neglected (Campbell and Wales, 1970). Thus Campbell and Wales (1970) and Hymes (1972) introduced the concept of communicative competence which was later redefined by many authors. Hymes' original idea was that speakers of a language must have more than "grammatical competence" (as they called Chomsky's view of competence) in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language and that they must know how a language is used by members of a speech community to accomplish their purposes. Apart from grammatical competence, communicative competence includes other components that are involved in communication such as negotiation of meaning, context, communication strategies, social rules, etc., which have been given different names and have been grouped in different fashions by a number of authors.

Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980) and Bachman (1990) divide language knowledge into three types: linguistic competence, discourse competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Linguistic competence refers to the knowledge of the basic structural elements of language. Discourse competence is the knowledge of the rules of cohesion and coherence across sentences and utterances. It is the ability to combine ideas in order to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought.

Sociolinguistic competence is the sensitivity to, or control of the conventions of language use that are determined by the features of the specific language use in context. It enables us to perform language functions in a way that are appropriate to that context. Table 1 below presents a description of these competences which may be used when defining language constructs.

**Table 1 Taxonomy of language knowledge (adapted from Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 220)**

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<p><b>I. Linguistic competence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Knowledge of syntactic/structural patterns</li> <li>B. Knowledge of vocabulary</li> <li>C. Knowledge of the written code                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Spelling</li> <li>2. Punctuation</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>II. Discourse competence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Knowledge of cohesive devices</li> <li>B. Knowledge of organizational structures</li> </ul> <p><b>III. Sociolinguistic competence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Knowledge of functional uses of written language</li> <li>B. Knowledge of register and situational parameters</li> </ul>	<hr/> <p>We have presented a general description of language ability that may be taken as the basis for defining the writing construct according to specific contexts. It is important to note that construct definitions vary according to the goals and needs of an institution. In other words, defining writing within instructional settings is different from defining the construct for employment purposes. For instance, if a business company is interested in making inferences about employees' ability to communicate effectively in writing with customers, the definition of the construct may include: Correct topical knowledge for dealing with trade, knowledge of specialized vocabulary, appropriateness of register, among other abilities. For language instruction purposes, the definition of writing may be derived from a theory of language ability, syllabus content, and specification of standards ("logros") for different levels of proficiency.</p> <p>The definition of the construct for the Adult and Adolescent English Programs at the EAFIT Language</p>
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Center includes the specification of writing standards and the following components of language knowledge and ability:

*Grammar and Vocabulary (linguistic competence)*

The grammar and vocabulary domain addresses the control of grammar, vocabulary and sentence structure. It examines the appropriate use of language structures, effectiveness and range of lexical choice, and the appropriateness to context and to the demands of the task. It also covers the control of spelling and punctuation.

*Coherence and Cohesion (discourse competence)*

The coherence and cohesion domain addresses the logical development (organization) of the text that enables the reader to follow a thread through the development

of the written piece. Cohesion measures the students' ability to link ideas by using cohesive devices such as transitions and connectors. Such devices permit logical sequencing; establish time frames for actions and events, and create structure of meaning by establishing main and supporting language units.

#### *Task completion (sociolinguistic competence)*

The task completion domain addresses the students' ability to thoroughly complete the given task. It examines students' ability to achieve the specified writing standards, through their knowledge of functional uses of the language and the appropriate register. It also examines the extent to which the students are able to elaborate and provide sufficient details to illustrate ideas and go beyond the given task, avoiding digressions and irrelevancies.

After defining the construct, we need to plan carefully how we are going to measure it. This involves the design of the assessment tasks and the scoring of the final written piece.

## 1. Designing assessment tasks

Students' successful performance on assessment tasks greatly depends on how well teachers and test developers design those tasks. The primary consideration when planning writing assessment tasks is determining the purpose (or discourse mode) for which students are asked to write. The purpose refers to the intention of the writing and there are at least four purposes in writing:

- a. tell what happens (narrative)
- b. describe people, places, things, moments, and theories (descriptive)
- c. inform or share knowledge (expository)
- d. convince or persuade (persuasive/argumentative)

In order to accomplish the purpose of a writing task, students can use a variety of genres or types of writing. The genre refers to the expected form or communicative function of the written product; for example, a letter, an essay, a laboratory report (Weigle, 2002). The table below shows the different purposes or discourse modes and their corresponding types of genre.

**Table 2 Discourse modes and genres of writing**

Discourse mode	Characteristics	Genre
Narrative	<b>Intent:</b> to tell what happens, real or imaginary; to put in a time sequence (autobiographical incident, story) Normally chronological (though sometimes uses flashbacks) A sequential presentation of the events that add up to a story	Journal entries, personal essays, biographies, personal letters, poems
Descriptive	<b>Intent:</b> to describe in vivid sensory detail and to express individual feeling. Descriptive writing portrays people, places, things, moments and theories with enough vivid detail to help the reader create a mental picture of what is being written about.	Anecdotes, captions to cartoons/pictures, dialogues, folk tales, scripts, myths, short stories, letters
Expository	<b>Intent:</b> to present basic information clearly (report of information) A process paper either tells the reader how to do something or describes how something is done.	Applications, business letters, commercials, directions, friendly notes, lecture notes & class notes, memos, news reports, postcard messages, summaries, research papers
Persuasive / Argumentative	<b>Intent:</b> to explain, analyse, to convince readers of a particular point. (evaluation, problem solution, speculation about causes or effects, interpretation)	Editorials, letters to the editor, reports, research papers, reviews, single paragraphs

Adapted from: [http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/writing\\_genre1.htm](http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/writing_genre1.htm)

A writing task is specified by **the prompt** which defines the task for student writing assignments. It refers specifically to the written instructions to the student. The prompt consists of the question or statement students will address in their writing and the conditions under which they will write (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996).

According to Hyland (2003), a prompt can include both contextual and input data. Contextual data relates to information about “setting, participants, purpose, and other features of the situation” (Douglas, 2000:55 cited by Hyland, 2003). This type of information should be clearly and briefly stated in the prompt and should be appropriate to the students’ level of proficiency and background experience. Input data, on the other hand, refers to the “visual and/or aural material to be processed in a communicative task” (Douglas, 2000:57 cited by Hyland, 2003). Different types of input data may be responding to a short reading text, analysing a table or chart, or describing a picture.

It is important to note that the amount of specification in a prompt may affect students’ written performance. Too many details may detract students’ attention from the main focus of the writing task; too little specifications may leave students wondering what they need to do. For instance, Brosell (1986) found out that prompts that had a medium level of specifications produced higher quality writings than those with either a full or no specification at all.

The wording of the prompt may include the **purpose** (or ‘discourse mode’) of the writing. It may also specify the **genre**, which refers to the expected form and communicative function of the written product, such as a letter, an essay, a report, etc. (Weigle, 2002). The prompt

may also make reference to **the pattern of exposition** (Hale *et al*, 1996), which refers to the specific instructions to the students, for example, making comparisons, drawing conclusions, contrasting, etc. And finally, the prompt may mention the **audience** (the teacher, the classmates, general public), the **tone** (formal/informal), the **length** (100 word, one page, etc), and **time allotment** (30 minutes, one hour).

Weigle (2002) considers that a prompt should, at least, include the audience, the purpose and some indication of the length, but that the ultimate choice of specification depends on the definition of the construct. Therefore, based on the literature presented above and on the definition of its writing construct, the EAFIT Language Center considers that prompts at the institution should:

1. Be connected to the writing standards for a specific course.
2. Include the genre or the purpose of the writing.
3. Include the audience, either implicitly or explicitly.
4. Include the organizational plan or pattern of exposition which specifies how students are to develop the writing. It refers to the process or the steps students have to follow when developing a writing piece. It may include the number of paragraphs, number of words, and sequence.

Since the prompts stimulate students’ written response, the manner in which teachers state them is crucial in determining what and how students write. In other words, the type of language that teachers use in the wording of prompts will elicit different types of writing, that is, narration, description, exposition, or persuasion. The table below presents a list of verbs that can be used for obtaining different types of writing.

**Table 3 Verbs for writing purposes**













Writing Purpose	Related Verb
<b>Narrative</b>	tell, relate, present, name, list, give an account, detail, reveal, disclose
<b>Descriptive</b>	describe, clarify, define, portray, depict, name, express
<b>Expository</b>	report, classify, explain, instruct, review, analyse, state
<b>Persuasive</b>	convince, judge, analyse, evaluate, conclude, explain, interpret, support, determine, decide, defend, argue, make a case, compare, estimate





concluded that students given informative feedback comments that explain strengths and weaknesses are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of intrinsic motivation towards the task than those receiving just a grade.

**Table 4** Writing conventions and examples

Convention	Type of Error	Examples of errors		
	Spelling	Mechanics	<i>Francisco is a <u>bussines</u> man</i>	
	Case - capital or small letter		<i>I 'm going to <u>argentina</u> next month</i>	
	Punctuation		<i>The students completed their <u>work. they</u> went to the cafeteria</i>	
	New Paragraph		<i>Ideas need to be separated into a new paragraph</i>	
	Word choice	Vocabulary	<i>He's trying to make <u>friendship</u> with the new students</i>	
	Word order (words, phrases, sentences)	Grammar	<i>The <u>old big</u> house.</i>	
	Insert word		<i>She <u>is very</u> special person.</i>	
	Omit word		<i>Britain exchanges products with <u>the</u> different countries.</i>	
	Verb tense		<i>Students <u>will learning</u> English. I went to school yesterday. I <u>eat</u> lunch. After lunch, I played with my friends</i>	
	Agreement		<i>The <u>people</u> in my class who <u>is</u> studying English do a lot of extra reading <u>Mary and her sister wants</u> to go to the mall</i>	
	Fragment sentence		<i>Even though he had the better arguments and was by far the more powerful speaker...</i>	
	Coherence		Coherence & cohesion	<i>Illogical or non-sequential development of the text Omission or overuse of connectors and transitions</i>

It is important to note that there is a difference in the feedback provided on instructional and assessment writing tasks. Feedback on classroom writings gives students the opportunity to identify their errors, self-correct, edit, and rewrite a checked piece of writing. In contrast, feedback on test tasks, though based on the same criteria as were used for classroom tasks, does not allow students to rewrite or improve their texts.

Once the teachers check a test writing task and record grades, students can do nothing to change the text.

How to use the conventions?

- Underline the error and indicate the type of problem using the corresponding convention. If the problem makes part of a sequence of words, underline all the sequence.
- Put the convention on top of the underlined error.

**Example:**

In 1992 when I was in my teen, I didn't pass the 8 grade from the school because I failed 3  
 subjects: technical drawing, spanish and religion. I didn't pay attention to the study in that year because the thing only  
 that is important for me was going to a Punk concerts all the time. My mother was so angry with that situation because  
 she thought I was very intelligent and she didn't understand the reasons for my actitude. In that years I didn't give my  
 attention to anything different the punk music Today I think punk and Hardcore is the best music around the world,  
 but I think too that there are a lot of things in my life like my bussiness administration studies, my job, my family and  
much more. All this things are very important for me.

**Exercise 2:** Using the conventions, check the following in-class writing assignment written by a high beginner student.

*Prompt:* Your parents are in the USA. Write them a letter telling them about your best friend. In paragraph one, give some general information about the person (name, age, occupation, place of residence, marital status) and the person's appearance and personality. In paragraph two, describe where and how you met that person.

**Dear Mom and Dad,**

*I' am very well because I have a new best friend. Her name is Paulina. She is very intelligent and serious because she studies medicine in Antioquia's university. She live in conquistadores and she often go to out because she like to study. She is 19 years old and she is very special person.*

*I met Paulina in the Antioqui'as library and she searched healt's information and I read about healty for the homework, and she asked about a book, and then we talked about our lifes. We have very good friends*

Your son/daughter,

**3. Scoring students' writings**

The judgment of student work is inevitably a subjective one on the teacher's part. To reduce teacher bias and increase the value of assessment, a clear set of criteria must be identified and then applied consistently to each student's samples of writing. Instructors have found that a well-designed rubric (or scoring scale) can provide such a tool in promoting accurate, reliable writing assessment (Stansfield & Ross, 1988; Weigle, 1994).

In the scoring of writing, or any other skill, two types of rubrics may be used: holistic and analytic. A holistic rubric uses a variety of criteria to produce a single score. An analytic rubric separates the aspects of a writing piece into components that are scored separately. The EAFIT Language Center relies on an analytical rubric for the assessment of students' writings because this type of tool allows for a more detailed assessment of language abilities. Therefore, based on the writing standards and the definition of the construct, two assessment rubrics were designed for the Adult English Program: one rubric for courses N-6 and another rubric for courses 8-13 (except for course 7 and 14 whose focus is on speaking and listening. The adult program rubric for N – 6 was adapted for courses 1-10 of the Adolescent Program (Muñoz et. al, 2006).

It is important to remember that the scoring of a piece of writing should reflect the knowledge and abilities that students are expected to have at any specific level of proficiency. Therefore, teachers should always refer to the writing standards per course and assess across a variety of tasks

**Exercise 3:** Using the rubric presented in Table 5 below, score the sample presented on exercise 2, page 23.

**Table 5** Writing Assessment rubric for beginners

Aspectos / nota	5	4	3	2	1
<b>Coherencia y Cohesión</b>	a. El texto es desarrollado, <b>en su totalidad</b> , de una manera lógica y secuencial. b. Utiliza conectores y transiciones básicas <b>de manera excepcional</b> .	a. <b>La mayor parte</b> del texto es desarrollado de una manera lógica y secuencial. b. <b>La mayor parte</b> del texto es conectado mediante el uso variado y apropiado de conectores y transiciones básicas	a. Tiene <b>dificultades</b> para desarrollar el texto de una manera lógica y secuencial b. En <b>algunas partes</b> del texto hay un uso adecuado de conectores y transiciones básicas.	a. El desarrollo del texto es en su mayor parte <b>ilógico</b> y falta de secuencia b. Uso <b>mínimo</b> de conectores y transiciones básicas.	a. El texto <b>no</b> tiene un desarrollo lógico ni secuencial. b. <b>No</b> hay uso de conectores ni transiciones.
<b>Gramática y Vocabulario</b>	a. El texto presenta un <b>control total</b> de estructuras requeridas para el curso. b. Utiliza <b>gran</b> variedad de vocabulario básico en contextos familiares	a. <b>La mayoría</b> del texto presenta un uso adecuado de las estructuras requeridas para el curso. b. <b>La mayor parte</b> del vocabulario básico es variado y <b>apropiado</b> al contexto	a. El texto presenta un <b>control parcial e inconsistente</b> de estructuras requeridas para el curso b. Utiliza un rango <b>limitado</b> de vocabulario y <b>algunas veces inapropiado</b> para el contexto.	a. <b>Control mínimo</b> de las estructuras requeridas para el curso. b. Es evidente la <b>falta</b> de vocabulario y su <b>frecuente</b> uso inapropiado.	a. No utiliza las estructuras del curso. b. El vocabulario se limita a unas cuantas palabras usadas <b>inapropiadamente</b> .
<b>Ortografía</b>	El texto es fácil de leer gracias a: a. <b>Excelente</b> dominio de la puntuación b. <b>Excelente</b> dominio de la ortografía.	a. <b>Buen</b> dominio de la puntuación b. Comete <b>pocos</b> errores de ortografía	a. <b>Inconsistente</b> uso de la puntuación b. <b>Inconsistente</b> uso de la ortografía.	a. Comete errores <b>muy frecuentes</b> en la puntuación b. Frecuentes errores de ortografía.	a. Errores <b>severos y persistentes</b> en la puntuación. b. Hay interferencia con la claridad y comprensión del texto debido a la incorrecta ortografía.
<b>Cumplimiento de la Tarea</b>	a. Desarrolla <b>todos</b> los elementos del prompt de una manera equilibrada b. <b>Excepcional</b> elaboración y detalles para ilustrar las ideas.	a. Desarrolla unas partes del prompt <b>mas que otras</b> b. Buena elaboración y detalles para ilustrar las ideas.	a. <b>Omite algunos</b> de los requerimientos del prompt b. El desarrollo y la elaboración de las ideas es <b>superficial</b> .	a. <b>Pocos</b> de los requerimientos del prompt están presentes b. <b>No</b> desarrolla o elabora las ideas.	a. La realización del escrito <b>no</b> tiene relación con los requerimientos del prompt.

#### 4. Reaching consensus on scoring

One source of unreliability in writing assessment is due to inconsistencies in scoring among different evaluators. Sufficiently high consistency in scoring can only be obtained by means of proper training of the evaluators. Prior to proceeding to the scoring stage, examiners should understand the principles behind the particular rating scales they must work with, and be able to interpret their descriptors consistently (Alderson & Wall, 2001). Therefore, the training of evaluators to the procedures and rubrics employed require an accurate and unambiguous description of a set of criteria to assess students' performance. This may be achieved by conducting meetings where a group of examiners get together, at the same time and place, to score samples and reach consensus. During the meetings, raters compare their scorings and discuss any differences of opinion they might have.

#### CONCLUSION

Writing is an essential skill highly valued as a powerful means of self-expression as well as a support for further learning. Gaining proficiency in writing can open up opportunities and empower students to take on new roles as citizens within the community. Whenever we talk about the need to develop a certain ability, teaching and assessment become imperative. Writing well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is a process that needs to be taught, practiced, and assessed. It is therefore of utmost importance that second and foreign language teaching institutions emphasize the teaching and assessment of writing in their language programs.

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