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# Research on Written Communication

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*Abstract: The research described in this article is in the area of expository writing and was conducted at a European University (University of Granada, Spain). It is part of the on-going work in the area of linguistics and cognition and encompasses social and cultural aspects. The article reports on findings of its research and aims to identify cross-cultural and technological competencies required for the 21st Century. In these societies multicultural values, participation in production media, social exchange and multilingual written communication competences will be spread through new computer technologies. In order to fulfil the social exigencies created by new communication ways, the collaboration of research groups for designing and applying international research projects is needed. This research line is innovative because is based on the collaboration with different European University Institutions on the new projects which are being developed to design strategies for the developing of cognitive, multilingual and technological competences simultaneously. These strategies are coherent with the research projects carried out by different research groups at an international level, which are presented in this manuscript.*

Keywords: Written Communication

## Introduction

**T**HE NEW EUROPEAN policies' exigencies<sup>1</sup> and the guides established by the research on written composition at an international level (MacArthur, C. A; Graham, S. and Fitzgerald, J. 2006; Bear, R; Myhill, D; Nystrand, M; Riley, J. 2008, Arroyo, 2008), established written communication as a cognitive and social competence that every European citizen must command. Moreover, scientific discoveries on writing development have shown that writing competence is achieved by an extremely complex process which must be taught carefully, because it involves processes of different natures.

This article has been written researchers of the University of Granada, Spain. The authorship of this paper represents an innovative issue because the afore-mentioned group normally deals with linguistics as well as cognitivism and social and cross-cultural processes. This article is also innovative because it has the aim of designing written communication's multilingual and technological competences and because it describes a recompilation of its citizens' training programs and their implementation and assessment.

It must be noticed that this new research line is developed in collaboration with different European Institutions which are working simultaneously on the creation of strategies for the improvement of cognitive, multilingual and technological competences. These strategies are in line with international research projects, which will be listed in the next section.

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<sup>1</sup> Decision n° 1720/2006/CE of the European Parliament, in the Council held on the 15th November 2006, by which it is established an action program within the life-long learning framework.

## Previous Studies. Theoretical Framework of the Writing Development Research

The above mentioned research groups are working to answer the following question: Can citizens' written communication competences be improved by giving them adequate strategies to implement written expression processes?

Currently research on written expression is the result of an historic process in which different conceptual approaches have converged, at least during the last three decades. Different empirical research have emerged from these conceptual approaches. A wide variety of knowledge and educational practices with solid bases was included by these approaches, which are briefly described as follows:

In the product-focussed approach, with linguistic character, the centre of the attention is the text. On the contrary, in the process approach, with psychological character, it is the person (the writer). Differently, the contextual or ecologic approach with didactic character focuses the attention on the context in which the learning is carried out and the assessment of teaching programs. This approach tries to optimize the writing process using the didactic intervention. These approaches should be complementary.

The described different approaches correspond, partially, to a moment in time (Wong, 2000). In this way, in the 70's, attention was focussed on the text's formal aspects (orthographic mistakes); in the 80's emerged the cognitive orientation, which laid the emphasis on the writer's mental processes and in the decade of the 90's, there was a remarkable increase in cognitive programs of writing development. In the contextual approach, researchers have assessed the development of the writing process. This research approach started twenty years ago and has received a great deal of interest in the current scene, as it can be checked in the "Handbook of Research on Teaching" (Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1986; Sperling and Friedman, 2001), the "Handbook of Writing Research" (MacArthur *et al.*, 2006) and the "Handbook Writing Development" (Bear, *et al.* 2008).

In the 80's, at the same time as the cognitive approach, appears this contextual research and many prestigious Universities and Research Institutions contributed to it. Following this line, two independent research groups on writing appeared, one of them is directed by S. Graham and K. Harris, of the Special Education Department of the University of Maryland; and the other by C. S. Englert, of the Canadian University Simon Fraser. On the same basis of the theoretical models about writing and in order to prove efficient the didactic intervention, various writing development models were designed by different research groups.<sup>2</sup>

Englert, departing from the theory of Vigotski, created a social and cultural model (Cognitive Strategy Instruction in Writing), in which cognitive strategies were designed to promote written expression abilities. In the elaboration of this model contributions from different theoretical models were put together (Hallenbeck, 2002): a) cognitive learning models, which empathise cognitive processing, the generalizing of strategies and the learning self-regulation; b) social and cultural teaching models, with social and cultural mediation and learning motivation as a centre of reference; c) texts of linguistic models which explain the text structure and form; d) behaviourist models, with a central dimension is the direct teaching of the

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<sup>2</sup> C. S. Englert and team, S. Graham and team, B. Wong and team, D. Butler and team, A. Graves and M. Montague, M. Gerber and R. Hall.

writing process, in a sequence of steps, using the support, the effort and the corrective feedback if required.

Similar to the model designed by Englert; Graham and Harris created a model based in the cognitive theory called “Strategies for Composition and Self-regulation”. The authors include the self-regulation concept as the model’s central element and use the self-reflection procedure on the components of this strategy as well as on its application, supervision and assessment (Graham *et al.* , 2000). In this model various contributions from different authors and learning approaches are integrated: 1) cognitive patterns modification (Michenbaum); 2) self-control social origin and thinking development (Vigotski *et al.*); 3) cognitive strategies teaching (Deshler and colleagues); 4) research on self-control, meta-cognition and critical aspects of learning strategies (Brown and Campione).

These training models are based on research results. In the same line, in several research projects dysfunctions in written expression have been found and its effects are visible in various aspects of the text: length, organization, linguistic form (including orthography and spelling) and global quality. These problems could partially come from the difficulties to implement and regulate the cognitive processes involved in the text’s writing: planning, construction and revision of the text (Troia, 2002).

Consequently, in the written development models based on cognitive strategies the following are fundamental objectives: 1) commanding high level cognitive processes implied in written composition; 2) applying effective writing strategies in an autonomous, reflexive and self-regulated way; 3) knowing the meaning of writing properly and the processes involved in writing; 4) having a positive attitude towards reading; and 5) having a positive perception of one’s own writing skill.

From the 90’s, several research projects have been planned, especially in the Anglo-Saxon area. Those projects have validated at least one of these strategies. The projects are organized in two theme groups: 1) intervention strategies, included in different programs and deriving from different models; and 2) the programs’ effectiveness to improve the cognitive and metacognitive processes, the subject’s motivation and aptitudes, and the text’s characteristics. Two criteria are applied for the assessment of the programs: the assessment of the teachers who have applied the program and the results obtained by the students.

All the mentioned research projects have achieved positive results. In general lines, it has been proved that quality improves in the written text, regarding the content (what) and the form (how), it has been specifically proved that writers change in several aspects: a) attitude towards writing; b) their awareness about what writing well is; c) confidence in their own writing capacity; d) ability to maintain and generalize the use of strategies. Undoubtedly, the best contribution of these projects is the list of efficient cognitive and teaching strategies to improve written expression. On top of general strategies, there have also been evaluated some concrete strategies. Now, the strategies will be listed and also the dimensions of written composition in which their influences have been proved positive.

A. Strategies and teaching procedures to improve specific aspects of written composition,

1. Strategies to facilitate planning: a) brainstorming b) using the general structure to generate and organize a text; c) setting objectives for the process and the product; d) reading for obtaining information and establishing a semantic net ; e) creating drafts; f) taking notes (Englert *et al.* , 1988; Graham *et al.* , 1991; Lecuona, 1999; Wong *et al.* , 1996;

- de la Paz *et al.*, 2000; Gersten and Baker, 2001; De la Paz, 2001; Marchisan and Alber, 2001; Fisher and Frey, 2003; Schunk, 2003).
2. Strategies to facilitate revision: a) fellow students' response and support in the revision process; b) text's form and context revision; c) immediate and differed revision (Wong *et al.*, 1996; Chanquoi, 2001; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002; García and Arias-Gundin, 2004).
  3. Strategies to create different kinds of texts: narrative (Graham and Harris, 1989; Staal, 2001), informative (Englert *et al.*, 1988), expositive (Englert and Raphael, 1988; Wong, 2000) and argumentative (Castelló and Monereo, 1996; Wong *et al.*, 1996; Sexton *et al.*, 1998).
  4. Strategies to improve the linguistic form and the text coherence (Higgins *et al.*, 1999; Silliman *et al.*, 2000): "Language experience", sentences building (Fisher and Frey, 2003), orthography (Brooks *et al.*, 1999; Graham, 1999; Mäki *et al.*, 2002).
  5. Strategies to develop metacognitive skills: processes of self-regulation and generalizing the strategies' use (de la Paz, 2001; Troia, 2002).
  6. Strategies to develop a positive attitude towards writing and self-perception of the efficiency of its development (Schunk, 2003; Walker, 2003).
  7. Other strategies and general resources to improve cognitive processes in written expression a) repeated practice; b) contextualized writing experiences; c) interactive writing; d) model-texts copying; e) non-stop writing; f) autonomous writing; g) cooperative learning strategies; h) using IT resources (Johnstone *et al.*, 2002; Fisher and Frey, 2003, : Hallenbeck, 2002; Schunk, 2003; MacArthur *et al.*, 2001; Goldberg *et al.*, 2003).

B. Aspects which improve by applying teaching programmes based on strategies:

1. Cognitive processes: planning (de la Paz *et al.*, 2000; de la Paz, 2001; Gersten and Baker, 2001), transcription (Gersten and Baker, 2001) and revision (Gersten and Baker, 2001; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002; García Sánchez and Arias-Gundin, 2004).
2. Metacognitive processes: knowing what implies writing well (Graham and Harris, 1989; Gersten y Baker, 2001), self-regulation of the writing process skill (de la Paz, 2001: Gersten and Baker, 2001; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002) and strategies elaboration and use (Troia, 2002).
3. Affective dimensions: positive attitude towards writing (Gersten and Baker, 2001), motivation (Wong, 2000; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002), self-capacity to write well positive perception (Graham and Harris, 1989; Gersten y Baker, 2001; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002; Schunk, 2003).
4. Texts' general dimensions: global quality (Graham and Harris, 1989; Gersten and Baker, 2001), textual structures (Gersten and Baker, 2001): narrative (Graham and Harris, 1989), expositive (Wong, 2000) and argumentative (Castelló and Monereo, 1996).
5. Texts' linguistic form: length (Chanquoi, 2001), syntax and semantics (Silliman *et al.*, 2000; Zimmerman and Kitsantas, 2002), spelling and orthography (Graham, 1999; Brooks *et al.*, 1999; Gersten and Baker, 2001; Mäki, Vauras and Vainio, 2002).

The research projects of the University of Granada, which are presented in the following section, have always been in line with the scientific advances included in written composition research.

## **The Objective of the Research and the Research Questions**

In the same way in which the different international approaches to written composition have evolved, researchers from the University of Granada have varied the focus of the investigation chronologically regarding the dimensions and the subjects studied. In this sense, three different moments can be identified, even if no interest focus has been abandoned at any time. So, three interest focuses can be distinguished, even if they have been studied one after the other as well as simultaneously. These are: 1) analysing written composition's syntactic structures; 2) studying writing expression cognitive and metacognitive processes and 3) social and cultural research on written expression.

As a general matter, the questions which have motivated the research projects of the University of Granada have been the following: expressing themselves when writing: Do subjects use cognitive planning, transcription and revision strategies? ; What kind of metacognitive skills linked with written expression do the subjects have? ; Which difficulties do the subjects find in written expression? ; Which are the structural characteristics of the texts written by the subjects? ; Which are the formal characteristics of the texts written by the subjects? ; Which didactic model is applied when teaching basic processes of written composition? ; To what extent does this model consider the degree of multiculturalism in the environment? ; Which didactic strategies could be the most appropriate when teaching declarative, procedural and conditional writing knowledge and how are these put into practice? ; Which writing teaching strategies can encourage an intrinsic affective tendency towards written composition tasks?

### ***Analysing Written Composition's Syntactic Structures***

For years, written expression has been one of the principal research lines, even though the main focus of attention at the beginning was the text as a result of the textual production. Many research projects partially founded by the Spanish Government were inserted.

All these research projects dealt with syntactic structures of written expression. In some projects the written expression of the subjects was analysed. These subjects had a range of age corresponding with the second and the third cycle of the Compulsory Secondary education (8-14 years old). Some research projects included subjects with learning difficulties or were carried out in socially and culturally deprived areas. Other projects analysed the didactic proposal for the program materials in order to learn syntax.

The objectives of these investigations were the following: describing written texts' syntactic characteristics, analyzing logical and syntactic dysfunctions which appear in written expression, detecting significant different in the syntactic structures' use accordingly to the psychosocial characteristics of the students (age, disability, sex, social class, social context); analyzing didactic proposals to improve the development of written expression through program materials; deriving didactic proposals to optimize written expression<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Some of the results of these projects have been presented in several specialized publications: (Salvador, 1992<sup>a</sup>, 1992-93, 1992b, 1993a, 1993b, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1996a, 1996b, 1999).

### ***Studying Writing Expression's Cognitive and Metacognitive Processes***

In the following ten years, the research activity of the University of Granada, without ignoring the text analysis approach, was focussed, for the first time, on the study of written expression's cognitive and metacognitive processes, taking students with educative necessities as a reference point. The study of these subjects had not been previously performed.

The main objective of the research was assessing the written expression of students with educational needs in two different dimensions: 1) cognitive and metacognitive processes and student's attitude; 2) elaborated text characteristics, at a micro-structural and macro structural levels. Significant exponents of this research line are some doctoral theses referring to hearing or visually impaired students and high-intellectually-gifted students or students belonging to the gypsy ethnical group.

A great part of the results of these projects have been shown through several publications and scientific events at a national and international level (Salvador, 2001 , 2005; Gutiérrez and Arroyo, 2001; Rodríguez and Gallego, 2001; Gutiérrez, 2002a, 2002b, 2004a, 2004b; Salvador and Gallego, 2002; Rodríguez, 2003, García 2003; Arroyo and Salvador ,2005; Gutiérrez and Salvador, 2006).

### ***Social and Cultural Research on Written Expression***

Another research line which interacts with previous projects during the 90's is the one which deals with social and cultural processes influencing composition processes and which are expressed in writing.

This line begins with the participation in the project called "Analysis of the Scholars in Melilla [Spain] Bilingual Situation: Educative Research Proposals and Strategies", financed by the Spanish Pedagogic Renewal General Direction in 1996. Within this framework interested in multiculturalism and its expression in languages appears the doctoral thesis titled "Values Proposal for an Islamic-Western Intercultural Program of Studies in the City of Melilla" (Arroyo, 1998a), in which the expression of cultural values in written language is analyzed as a basis of an educative program which tries to promote the values of interculturality. In this doctoral thesis written language is shown as a powerful instrument of value expression in subjects of different ages and from different cultures. It is also presented by publications (Arroyo, 1998b, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2001, Arroyo and González, 2000, Salvador *et al.* , 2007).

The Project titled: "The Communicative Processes in Students with Learning Difficulties in Context of Cultural Diversity" funded by the Spanish General Direction of Universities in 2001 and developed in the city of Bradford (United Kingdom), enables the ethnographic research of didactic processes, applied to the development of written composition in the multicultural English-speaking context.

In the project the following general objectives were established: highlighting the objectives and contents made explicit in the learning process of written expression in the classroom; highlighting basic cognitive processes of written composition which are promoted in the classroom activities, describing teacher activities during the students follow-up in the classroom in order to help possible learning difficulties of learning processes involved in written composition; identifying social and multicultural elements in the classroom learning



environment; proposing an intercultural didactic model of written expression, inspired in the contributions and limits of a real case studied.

And the following objectives that were more specific: describing the strategies applied in the classroom in order to develop written composition planning and its adaptation to the writing competences of different students; describing applied strategies in the classroom for the development of the transcription of written composition and its adaptation to student's written skills, describing strategies applied in the studied case to develop the revision of written composition and its adaptation to student's written skills; describing different teachers' actuation to the follow-up, counselling and guiding of students in written expression tasks; deeply understanding strategies for the development of procedural and declarative knowledge in written composition processes, discovering strategies to intrinsically motivating towards written composition and its connection to conditional knowledge, describing types of material support that students receive during written composition learning as sources of extrinsic motivation, describing interactive modalities among the students in the learning experiences of written expression and assessing the cultural option in the classroom in the development of written composition.

This project has encouraged several publications (Arroyo, 2005a; Arroyo, 2005b; Arroyo, 2006a; 2006b, Arroyo, *et al.* 2003; Arroyo and Gallego, 2003; Arroyo and Gervilla, 2007; Arroyo and García, 2006).

### **How was the Research Conducted? Applied Methodology in the Cognitive, Social and Cultural Writing Processes Research Projects**

In order to answer all these fundamental questions, the research projects developed by the researchers of the University of Granada have progressively been adapted to the methodological strategy called "Case Study".

In some projects, wider samples have been studied, and the Multi-method methodology, a combination of quantitative and qualitative strategies and techniques has been applied. (Arroyo, 1999; Arroyo and Salvador, 2005). In the case selection randomized sample techniques and "natural groups" have been used, the last one has been the most frequently used strategy. The different analysed "cases" were: 1) hearing impaired subjects; 2) visually impaired subjects; 3) mentally handicapped subjects; 4) intellectually highly-gifted subjects; 5) subjects in social and cultural deprived areas 6) subjects from different cultural origins.

The subjects' age range is very varied: children, young and adults. In order to obtain and register data, different techniques have been used ; the vast majority of them designed by the researchers themselves.

For reducing and interpreting the data the process which has always been applied has been the "Content Analysis", fully described in one of the previously mentioned publications (Arroyo, 2000b). In the Content Analysis the efficiency depends on the elaboration of valid and trustable categories systems. In this aspect, one of the most difficult tasks, has been designing and empirically and theoretically validating the categories system, in order to analyze writing different dimensions, cognitive processes and values.

"Linguistic Analysis" has also been applied to written texts to determine and assess their textual structures and their linguistic form. Even if this kind of analysis may be thought as a variable of the Content Analysis, it has a methodological specificity (Salvador, 1999, 2000).

As a last point, the procedures applied to guarantee the validity and the reliability of the results of these projects have been the following:

1. Triangulation. Several triangulation strategies and procedures have been applied:
  - a. Data sources triangulation. This is a strategy which consists of widening the type of data, applying different techniques for its collection. Within the different investigations, researchers there have simultaneously been several data sources such as, in-place note-taking, photographs, semi-structured interviews, etc.
  - b. Research Projects triangulation. With this procedure the reliability of the visual and written documents' analysis has been estimated, calculating the percentage of times that different independent coding systems have coincided in the codification of the same material.
  - c. Experts' judgement. Teachers involved in the projects have assessed the categories systems applied to reduce and classify data following these criteria: 1) Mutual exclusion that consists of checking that each registry unit does not belong to various categories; 2) Homogeneity, which consists on checking that the categories are defined according to the same classification principle; 3) Relevance which consists on checking that the categories are adapted to the selected material and 4) Exhaustively, which consists in checking that the system allows classification of every data included in the analysed section.
2. Saturation. This strategy demands the collection of a relevant quantity of representative data of the observed phenomena. In these projects the data collected is generally translated into written documents which are computerized to be, later on, reduced and interpreted.
3. Crystallization. This procedure consists on searching both the understanding of the objectives of the research from a variety of approaches offered from their protagonists and the moral criticism of the situation that is being analyzed, with the final aim of providing the projects with a scientific rigour agreed by consensus (Richardson, 1997; Dezin, 1998; Hodder, 2000). The referred crystallization process was implemented in the project "*La reflexividad en un grupo de investigación y su proyección docente*" [Reflexivity in a Research Group and its Educational Projection], financed by the Unit for Quality in Andalusian Universities, and in which a video that reflected the whole procedure was elaborated and discussed.

## **Results of the Research Projects on Cognitive, Social and Cultural Writing Processes**

In the research projects developed by the University of Granada dealing with different groups of subjects, there have been detected some general difficulties, linked with the different dimensions of personality:

1. Cognitive dimension: problems in activating, harmonizing and regulating cognitive processes, implied in efficient written composition (planning or revising) as well as in generating or using effective strategies to implement these processes.
2. Behaviour dimension: there is not an adequate use of verbal mediation processes, to guide one's own behaviour when writing.

3. Affective and motivational dimension: writing is not properly valued or there are doubts about one's writing capacity. This stops the performance of the cognitive processes involved in writing and stops the use of the subject's cognitive resources.

These dysfunctions are presented in the following aspects of the text: length, structure and linguistic form (including spelling and orthography); global quality. These problems can be explained, to some extent, by the difficulties in implementing and regulating cognitive processes involved in efficient writing: planning, construction and revision of the text. But they can also be caused by the affective-emotive dimension of the subject (motivation to write, attitude towards writing and writing capacity self-perception). The obtained results in these research projects have enabled the deeper understanding of some of the aspects of written expression, and especially, of the dysfunctions in the development of some subjects:

- Cognitive processes: planning, transcription and revising.
- Metacognitive skills: a) Awareness of the process (concept of writing); b) Awareness of the textual structures; c) Awareness of their capacities; d) Implementing-processes self-regulation; e) Attitude toward writing.
- Text structure: a) Structural elements; b) Cohesion Mechanisms; 4) Text's grammatical form a) Lexis; b) Syntax; c) Spelling and orthography.

From these results comes the necessity of dealing, from social institutions, with the difficulties that subjects find in written expression, designing, applying and assessing intervention programs appropriate to the detected needs.

Social and cultural research have proved, on the one hand, the links between the subject's culture and the values expressed through the written language in subjects of different ages and cultures, and on the other hand, the existence of a group of common values in subjects with different cultures. This empirical verification is the basis for the potential intercultural development of any person, as it proves that building one's own cultural identity is not incompatible with unity with people having a different identity. At the same time written language is shown as the main communication means for their differential and common identity features. In the same way, this unity in the difference of identity of every person enables the design of procedures to the development of cultural competences shared by citizens of different cultures; that is to say, supports intercultural programs of study.

To sum up, these research projects have enabled to identification of:

- Categories of common values expressed in written language by subjects from different cultures, in children as well as in young or adults. These values refer to fundamental necessities in the development: affective, productive, etc. These values support the possibility of different cultural competences' common learning. Among these basic competences is highlighted the written language in different cultures and using different media.
- Categories of values which are expressed not in the same frequency in the subjects' written language, with different cultural origin and which can be the source of possible intercultural conflicts. These values are linked with moral, social, geographical and human dimensions. These values support cultural competences' learning leading to conflict solving. Among these competences multilingual intercultural writing value has been highlighted.

- Categories of values of low frequency in the different culture subjects' verbal written expression. These values should build the common aim of the citizens who wish to live in the same society. These are values for change, intellectual and aesthetic. These values are the basis for the learning competences which allow: a) the adaptability of new situation of the societies of the 21st Century; b) the access to knowledge of every culture and, c) the collecting of the beauty of every social and cultural and natural form. There is no doubt that multilingual writing in the technologies used, has been developing as a basic competence of adapting cognitive development and beauty expression for every citizen of the 21st Century.

Another social and cultural aspect of writing is the one which dealt with a didactic process applied to the development of written composition in an English centre. From this project there can be deduced: strategies for teaching planning, transcription and revision processes of written composition, teaching meta-cognition in written composition and define cultural identity; strategies to promote self-emotional control, collaborative social relations and a positive self-concept (intrinsic motivation); strategies to create adequate physical conditions (extrinsic motivation) and to promote creativity.

To sum up, this project has proved, in an empirical way, the improvement of linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural processes in writing within the following elements of the studied didactic processes:

1. The learning environment encourages the efforts and productions of the students and also applies motivation strategies. This environment values in a special way: a) concentration; b) flexibility in the relationships; c) adaptability of behaviours; d) group leading, and, e) environmental interculturality.
2. The variety of interactions which are encouraged among people in the classroom.
3. Material and human support received by the students, from which it can be highlighted its variety, their motivational potential and the adaptation of them to the task that is being performed.
4. Activities for the development of written composition, among which there can be identified: a) writing planning activities; b) transcription activities; c) revision activities; and d) metacognitive activities to raise awareness and self-regulating processes of written composition.
5. The roles assumed by the teachers are: encouraging thinking and expressions about processes and operations of written composition through questions; b) organizing students' groups (criteria, number of people) in order to fulfil a written composition task and organizing human support; c) being an external agent for the classroom self-control and order.
6. Acts shared by all teachers within the classroom, which are: a) indicating or showing the students the written composition task that they must perform; b) provide the students with what they need to implement their tasks (materials, proceedings, contents); c) assessing the writing learning process; d) planning and assessing the teaching process, and, d) support the tasks performed by different students.
7. Continuous and simultaneous use of writing, reading and speaking.
8. Encouraging the imaginative use of semantic and episodic memories, in a collective, group or individual way.

Finally, in this project there must be stressed: the exclusive development of one language: English; a main option by contents and cultural proceedings: the Anglo-Saxon, the focus in linguistic and cognitive processes and the learning experiences focused on the academic learning exigencies as well as the use of non computerized resources.

The results obtained by the previously mentioned projects have been the starting point to the elaboration of research initiatives with the final aim of improving the writing skills through the teaching of strategies. These strategies should develop different processes of the writing development: linguistic, cognitive, social and cultural. A proposal elaborated in this sense has been implemented in one Spanish educative centre, applying strategies to improve the multilingual writing development and using computerized technologies. From this study onwards (Arroyo, 2006c) the advantages and the potential of these strategies are discovered:

- The text itself becomes an essential resource for the learning of the processes and reflections on intercultural contents.
- Products created are projected and spread (in different media) involving different people from the closer and distant contexts.
- Written productions of students suffer qualitative changes (increasing the quality of expressed information and improving their expressive coherence and structure).
- Students' creativity became clear when choosing topics of social concern and when applying their own strategies to enrich the text.
- As a last point, it should be stressed that these strategies also promote proceedings for the generalization of the writing learning such as:
- Identifying opportunities to apply the learnt strategy in different social and cultural situations.
- Locating the objectives and the goals towards which a strategy is aimed in this new situation where it can be applied.
- Promoting, among professionals, the use of this writing development strategies on topics related to their field of knowledge.

### **Future Research Lines**

Currently, the future of research in the area at the University of Granada is being designed by the elaboration of programs and strategies aimed at the development of written composition among citizens in the 21st Century (Salvador, 2008, Arroyo, 2009).

In the same line, the University of Granada is currently immersed in a Teaching Innovation Project, which aims at the development of multilingual scientific writing in university students. This project implements seminars in which computer technologies are used (computer and digitals white boards) and cognitive and multilingual strategies in order to write scientific essays are applied. For its assessment, this project is using the students' written productions, metacognitive processes questionnaires and videos.

Lastly, it must be stressed that the confluence of research is currently inspiring training and knowledge spreading projects in collaboration with other European Universities. These projects, which have been elaborated from a global and integrated approach in written composition, are:

1. Organizing The International Congress Writing in the 21st Century. Cognition, Multilingualism and Technologies ([www.asprogrades.org](http://www.asprogrades.org)), held in during the 25th, 26th and 27th March 2008. The minutes of this project have been published (Arroyo, 2008).
2. Coordinating the *International Master Multilingual Writing. Cognitive, intercultural and technological processes in the written communication*. ([www.multilingualwriting.com](http://www.multilingualwriting.com)). In this Master participate the following universities: a) University of Granada (Spain); b) Università Degli Studi di Roma “La Sapienza” (Italy), c) Anadolu University (Eskişehir, Turkey), d) the University of Coimbra (Portugal); e) the Institute of Education of London University (United Kingdom); f) the University of Saragossa (Spain); g) the University of Perugia, (Italy); h) the University of Jaén, (Spain) and i) Middle East Technical University, (Ankara, Turkey).

These activities are aimed to be a platform for the design of National and International Research Projects. These Projects show the efficiency of global strategies for the development of writing development in the training of the citizens of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Definitely, writing development should allow new citizens to be: a) cognitively more flexible b) better adapted to the use of computerized technologies, c) more competent in multilingual communication, and c) committed to the spread of ethical and esthetical values to renew the Knowledge Based Societies.

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