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Dialogue Journal Writing in

# Batxillerat

M a Carmen

Rodríguez

Moreno

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1.THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING.

Every year the teachers of English that teach High School students in Spain have to face the duty of preparing their students to go to University with just two hours <sup>1</sup> of English a week in classes of 35-40 students. After two years, these students have to take the college entrance exam, that is, the *Selectivitat* exam, which evaluates their reading comprehension and writing skills.

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<sup>1.</sup> During the academic year 2001-2002 a new law came into effect that incremented the number of hours of English language that a High School student should have. Instead of two hours they would have three hours a week. However, this change did not affect the students object of this study who still had two hours a week.

Passing the writing part of the *Selectivitat* exam is hard for the High School students. I have been teaching English to High School students for twelve years and, from my experience, writing an acceptable text in English is one of the most difficult tasks that my students have to face. They have problems to find, express and organise their ideas in a correct way. There are always exceptions; but, I would say that 90% of the students who decide to continue their studies and begin High School have these kind of writing problems. But, are they the ones to blame or is this just the consequence of the Spanish School System?.

Spanish students are not used to writing a lot, either in their mother tongue (L1), Catalan or Spanish, or in a second language (L2), English or French. Besides, they begin to be asked to write compositions very late in their schools. Primary students spend most of their time in class learning basic grammatical structures, dialogues and vocabulary. Later on, at the secondary level the same grammar structures are taught to the students, and the number of writings they produce is very limited.

Moreover, the curriculum design, the textbooks, the absence of writing instruction or the minor place that writing has in the agendas of most teachers are factors that contribute to this reality. For example, most textbooks used in Spain to teach English have specific writing sections with the objective of improving the writing skills of the students. However, many of these exercises such as fill in the blank exercises or model imitation exercises only help the students to practice again the grammar structures already learnt instead of really helping them to improve their writing skills (Rodríguez, 2001)

Thus, Spanish students begin to be asked to write compositions very late at school and the number of compositions that they produce during a year is reduced to a few, and this is considered to be enough to master such a difficult skill as writing.

In view of this problem I started using journals in class to provide students with additional writing practice. Although in Spain using journals in class is not a usual

procedure, in my classes journal writing has become an essential part of the learning process. Before writing journals my students used to write a composition every now and then, following a model presented in their textbook (a letter, a description, a dialogue...) in order to practice the grammar structures studied in that lesson. But this method did not seem to help my students to acquire the necessary composition skills to become "good" writers.

My students continued having problems to generate ideas and many of them were "blocked" in front of a blank piece of paper when they had to write a composition. They had problems with audience awareness since the majority of the writing tasks of their books were not designed having an audience in mind. Furthermore, they were always worried about the number of words they had to write in the assigned composition. Fluency was a real problem for them. Lack of vocabulary was also a weak point among them and using the correct verb tense to express their ideas another. Topics were imposed following the book instructions which did not help much. And last but not least, editing was just considered at the surface level and they did not do any planning or write any draft paper before their final version. As a consequence, their compositions showed problems of organisation, lack of coherence and low grammar accuracy.

The main objective of this study is to see whether the use of journals helped my students to overcome some of these difficulties. For example, if it helped my students to generate ideas and organise them in a better way, if their fluency or accuracy improved or if it contributed to lose their fear to the blank page among other things.

Journal writing has been a non threatening means of communication that has become the perfect vehicle to produce a unique writing practice that did not exist in my classes before. This practice has been considered during the last decade by many researches as part of the learning process towards the acquisition of writing skills (Staton, Peyton & Reed, 1988; Eastman, 1997; Reyes, 1991; Burniske, 1994).

As Fulwiler affirms:

"...English and language arts teachers commonly assign journals to help students learn to write formal assignments. Here student writers keep journals for many of the same reasons as professionals writers: to find and explore topics; to clarify, modify, and extend those topics; to try out different writing styles; to sharpen their powers of observation; to practice fluency; and in general to become more aware of themselves as writers." ("The Journal Book" 1987, p.6)

Journal writing in general and dialogue journal writing (the type of journals that my students wrote during the study) have many benefits for the students (and the teachers). In dialogue journal writing the student writes entries periodically in a notebook and the teacher reads the students comments and responds to them. This private "conversation" (Staton, 1997), changes the traditional grammar-corrector role of the teacher. Writing becomes a genuine means of communication between two persons and the "the teacher's response in the journal serves as a model of correct English usage" (Peyton, 1993). The relationship between teacher-student improves, the teacher knows better his/her students and this "seems to improve classroom management and discipline" (Staton, 1987). The students have the freedom to choose the topic; they take more risks and begin to write longer entries. As Brian Ford said "what we know and love is what we can write about" (Essays of the Art of Mind, 1991). In short, they feel that "journals are a safe place to practice writing daily without the restrictions of form, audience and evaluation" (Sommer, 1989).

Peyton and Staton (1993) saw all these benefits in a comprehensive study of the journals used by the students of Leslee Reed in America. They concluded that the use of this learning tool helped her students to develop thinking, language and writing skills. Hudson (1995) experimented also the benefits of "listening" to her at-risk students' voices through their journals. Hudson decided to use this vehicle to help her students and thanks to it they learned to think about their lives and change. Special need students can also benefit from writing in journals. As an illustration, they gain self-respect and confidence since writing becomes a means of expressing themselves where there is no right or wrong answer (Marcus, 1996). It can become also the perfect vehicle to

understand literature and become better readers and writers (Daniel, 1996; Burniske,1994; Kingen, 1995). Students can write comments about the texts they have read, make predictions, have a conversation with one character or reflect about what they have read. And not only students, but also teachers have experienced the advantages of writing in journals. Thanks to this writing, teachers have found a unique means to reflect on what they do when they teach or learn; thus, gaining understanding and insight of their practice (Holly, 1989; Pennington, 1995).

But, although the benefits of journal writing are numerous, the use of journals as a learning tool has not been taken very "seriously" by the academic world until very recently. It has not been seen as proper *writing*, mainly because it does not follow any of the formats in which proper writing should be included. When writing in a journal, students are not asked to fit a topic into a rhetorical form, to imitate a model essay, to outline their main points before writing or to pay careful attention to the correctness of their grammar, punctuation or sentence structure. That is why an entry in a journal tends to be messy, digressive or mechanically flowed. In addition, such a product does not lead itself to formal evaluation. However, during the last two decades there has been a shift of attention on the part of researchers and teachers from the written product to the writing process (Zamel, 1982; White, & Arndt, 1991; Raimes, 1983; Byrne, 1993; Freedman, et al. 1987; Gabrielatos, 2002; Smith, 2000). And in this sense expressive writing in general and journal writing in particular have acquired a new importance in the process of learning.

Dialogue journal writing as a learning tool, and its effects on my students writings is the object of the present study which addresses the following research questions:

- Does the use of dialogue journal writing have any effect on my students' writing fluency?
- Does the use of dialogue journal writing have any effect on my students' writing accuracy?
- > What other effects, if any, can be observed?

#### **CHAPTER TWO**

#### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

## 2.1.WRITING OVER THE LAST CENTURY.

**W**riting is one of the most difficult language skills to acquire, and together with reading and arithmetic's are the basis ( the 3 'r' ) of education (Fulwiller, 1983). In spite of this, reading and arithmetic's are better recognised compared to writing which has received the least attention through time on the part of educators, researchers and theorists.

Writing is thought put into words, but it is much more because writing helps our students learn. As Raimes (1983) affirms:

"when they write, they necessarily become very involved with the new language; the effort to express ideas and the constant use of eye, hand, and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning" (p.3).

Writing instruction has changed considerably over these years. Nowadays, for example, many composing teachers and researches consider journal writing as an effective tool in writing instruction (Fulwiler,1987; Eastman, 1997;Staton, J., Shuy. R.W., Peyton, J.K. & Reed, L. 1988; Burniske, 1994). But before I present the tool used in this study, it will have a glimpse first at how writing in general and L2 writing in particular have been taught over the last years and what researchers have found about the nature of writing itself.

#### 2.1.1. L1 and L2 WRITING DIFFERENCIES

For many years there was the accepted assumption that L1 and L2 writing were practically the same thing. In fact, research on L2 writing is very new ,it started in the 50s, compared to L1 composing research that can be traced back as early as 1900.

As Silva points out, this claim seems possible at a superficial level, "it has been shown that both L1 and L2 writers employ a recursive composing process, involving planning, writing, and revising, to develop their ideas and find the appropriate rhetorical and linguistic means to express them" (Silva,1993, p.657). However, L2 writing research (Raimes, 1985; Silva 1993; Zamel,1982, 1983; Cumming, 1989; Grabes 2001 among others) has contributed to see the distinct nature of L2 writing and consequently the differences between them. According to Grabe "perhaps the most consistent effort to explore L1-L2 differences involved the work of Silva (1990,1993,1997; Silva, Leki & Carson 1997)" ( Grabe, 2001,p.45) . With the recompilation of 72 reports on L1 & L2 writing, Silva (1993) tried to see the differences that had been observed up to that moment on the composing process and the written text features, and these were his main conclusions:

	FLUENCY	L2 texts were shorter and less fluent.
	ACCURACY	<ul> <li>L2 writers made more grammar errors (with verbs, nouns, articles etc)</li> </ul>
THE WRITTEN	QUANTITY	The texts were less effective (lower holistic scores).
TEXT		L2 writers' texts were stylistically distinct and simpler in structure.
	STRUCTURE	They evidenced distinct patterns in the use of cohesive devices, especially conjunctive (more) and lexical (fewer) ties, and exhibited less lexical control, variety and sophistication overall.

(Adapted from Silva, 1993. p. 661-668)

COMPOSING  MODEL IN L2	PLANNING	<ul> <li>L2 writers did less planning</li> <li>They devoted more attention to generating material, but this generation was more difficult and less successful (they spent more time and some of the ideas were not reflected on the text).</li> <li>The organisation of the generated material was more difficult</li> </ul>
(more difficult and less effective)	TRANSCRIBING  (producing the written text was more laborious, less fluent, and less productive)	
	REVIEWING	<ul> <li>In general, L2 writing involved less reviewing.</li> <li>In this reviewing the focus was more on grammar and less in mechanics.</li> </ul>

(Adapted from Silva, 1993. p. 661-668)

Silva, in his more recent work (Silva, Leki & Carson 1997-cited in Grabe 2001) goes even beyond these findings and argues that "L2 writer differences may not only call for changes by L2 writers but also for changes by English L1 writing teachers" (Grabe, 2001, p.45). Thus, he mentions some cultural differences (p.661-668) that the L2 writer has and that should be considered also as legitimate by the L1 writing instructor for an effective and fair instruction.

The aim of these studies (Silva 1990,1993,1997; Silva, Leki & Carson 1997) is not to deny the similarities that exist between L1 and L2 but to help teachers to understand the differences that exist as well as consider L2 writers distinct nature in order to be appropriately prepared to teach them (Silva, 1993).

As Raimes points out "while ESL composition research has pointed out the similarities between the processes of experienced L1 and L2 writers, less attention has been directed to unskilled L2 writers and how composing processes differ from those of unskilled L1 writers" (1985, p.229). In this road towards the distinction between L1 and L2 composing model most of the time the subjects who showed similar L1 writing skills were "writers who are ready to compose and express their ideas" (Zamel, 1982, p. 203), but, as Raimes suggests there are quite a lot of differences between unskilled, basic, weak, poor, blockers or less experienced writers and skilled, good, strong, non-blockers or more experienced writers (whatever the terminology one wants to use).

The following chart adapted from Victori (1995;56) tries to summarise the main founding about the different processes that they experience as they write a text.

#### **GOOD WRITING STRATEGIES**

#### POOR WRITING STRATEGIES

- Spend more time thinking and planning.
- Write more draft papers
- They use complex strategies to transform knowledge that is not organised in their minds, establishing associations of ideas and relating new information to the text they have already created.
- Review more often.
- Revision involve a change of focus on meaning (add, delete, substitute and reorganise whole paragraphs if necessary)

- Spend less time thinking and planning (they work in small planning units)
- They are very dependent on text to generate ideas, that is they need to reread what they have written to generate ideas.
- Do little drafting, their first draft largely resemble their final products.
- Their evaluating strategies seem to be limited to surface level editing.

Little by little it has been discovered that writing is a much more complex process than initially was thought (Grabes, 2001; Cumming 1998). However, at the beginning of the century there was no theory of how writing skills developed (Freeman et al. 1987) and a study by Braddock et al (1963- cited in smith, 2000) showed how rudimentary the understanding of the teaching of writing on the part of the teachers was. So how has been writing taught over the last century?

#### 2.1.2. WRITING APPROACHES.

The first known approach or composing model emerged in the mid-forties and it was called The Controlled-to-Free Approach (Raimes, 1983), also known as the product oriented approach (Victori, 1995) where the product, that is, the composition was the centre of attention.

At this time, two methodological concepts dominated second language learning: the audio-lingual (AL) and the structural situational (SS) approach. Behaviourist learning theories were behind these methodological approaches in which students were considered as empty vessels whose heads should be filled with language. Form was above meaning and language could be broken down into lists of structural patterns. Grammar was taught in an inductive way, that is, students had to figure out the grammar rules by themselves after being presented with a large amount of examples, thus, drilling became part of the everyday life of the students. Mistakes were not seen as part of the learning process; they had to be eradicated from the very beginning and the teacher was responsible for that. The four skills were separated. Speaking was considered the most important skill in English Language Teaching (ELT) and writing was at its shadow. It was considered as an imitation of speech and as a means to master grammatical and syntactic forms (White, 1980). The teacher was the corrector/editor who had to correct the surface errors and was not concerned at all with the ideas expressed in the students writing. The idea was that once the student had

learned all the patterns and structures that formed a language they would then have acquired that language.

During this period SLA researchers based their investigations on the product answers. As Ellis affirms:

"The aim of this research, then , was, essentially descriptive –to document what kind of language learners produced, to try to establish whether it manifested regularities of some kind or other, and to find out how it changed over time" (1994, p. 16).

Audiolingual and structural situational approaches were totally uncommunicative in nature and very criticised later on because of the methodologies used such as substitution tables, drillings or controlled compositions. However, if we have a look at the majority of the textbooks that are used around the world nowadays, we will realise that there is a lot of inheritance of these methodologies in the kind of exercises that our students do.

In the mid-sixties, the product approach, apart from linguistic patterns showed an interest on the surface level and the discourse organisation of the written texts due to Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric (1967). According to Kaplan's theory, every culture communicates following an established pattern. It was then when the Paragraph-Pattern Approach was adopted. SL and FL students have to understand and study the pattern that corresponds to the language they are studying in order to organise the ideas expressed in the written text of that language. In this approach, as Raimes affirms "students copy paragraphs, analyse the form of model paragraphs, and imitate model passages. They put scrambled sentences into paragraph order, they identify general and specific statements, they choose or invent an appropriate topic sentence, they insert or delete sentences" (Raimes, 1983, p.8).

In the 1960's Chomsky presented his early work on first languages and universal grammar. Chomsky claimed that there are universals that underline all languages

(universal grammar). These rules are universal and common to all languages. The different transformations of these rules from the common deep level to the different surface level can generate any sentence in any language. At the same time, there was a reaction against Behaviourism and audiolingual and structural situational approaches. Learners were no more considered empty vessels to be filled up, and learning was not considered as a habit, it required cognitive processing and mental effort on the part of the learner with the guidance of the a teacher.

In the 1980s, the researchers shifted their interest from *product* to *process* (Grabes, 2001; Cumming 1998,), they discovered that writing was much more than a mere imitation of speech, that it was a much more complex process than initially was thought. There was a change of vision and from an interest in the growth of the written product there was a shift towards an emphasis on the process of writing. Writing was not seen as something linear but something recursive where pre-writing, writing and revising occurred at any moment of the composing process (Zamel 1982, Freedman 1987, White, et al. 1991). Process models followed two different but parallel ways and two models appeared: 'the expressivists' and 'the cognitivists'. Both of them consider the process that the writer has to follow in order to write a composition, as the most important element. However, 'the expresivisits' pay especial emphasis on the individual expression and self discovery. The writer has a more important role in this process since personal and creative writing is encouraged by doing for example free writing activities or journal writing.

Emig's classical study (1971) helped to change the vision of writing research completely (Freeman, 1987). It was the first attempt to try to understand what writers did when they wrote. After this case study some generalisations about the writing process were accepted among the *process approach* practitioners. They perceived writing as a non linear but recurrent process, in which planning, revising and writing occurred at any moment. Furthermore, the writing process was a problem solving process which novice and expert writers solved in different ways. But, perhaps the

most important finding of her study was the discovery of this cognitive dimension of the writing process (followed by "cognitivists" such as Flower and Hayes).

The 'cognitivists' see writing as "the process of discovering meaning' (Zamel, 1982) in which thinking is a key element. For researches such us Raimes (1983), Flower (1994) or Zamel (1982), writing is a complex process. In this process the writer does not start from a well preconceived idea and develop it, but he explores his thoughts and by developing an idea (writing, rewriting and revising repeatedly) it is extended until he achieves the intended meaning. Writing instructors try to help students see that what they first write on the paper is not necessarily their finished product, but the beginning, a draft that with time and work (individual as well as group work) will become an improved piece of writing. New ideas can be added, old ones can be rearranged to help the reader better understand what the writer wants to say.

Revision is not just seen as a grammar correction task on the part of the teacher, students' feedback as well as teachers comments (not grades) on content make this way easier for the student. Thus, the role of the teacher changes. He becomes a 'facilitator' in the process of writing, helping the students with tasks (readings, debates, brainstorming, mind maps etc) that will teach them strategies to face the process of writing a text. Two elements become crucial in this process writing approach: time and feedback. As Raimes affirms, "Teachers who use the process approach give their students two crucial supports: *time* for the students to try out ideas and *feedback* on the content of what they write in their drafts. Teachers find that then the writing process becomes a process of discovery for the student: "discovery of new ideas and new language forms to express those ideas" (1983, p.10).

The Process approach has nevertheless risen criticisms on the part of those who defend an *English for academic purposes orientation*. Following a *Social constructivist view* they claim that those students who receive L2 process writing instruction are not prepared to produce the kind of writings (that is, academic writings) that their community requires of them. They are not trained to write a piece of writing with time or

length restriction (for example when they do an exam) and do not consider the tasks that these students do before and during the writing process efficient for the production of a final good essay which is the only thing that in the end the teachers will consider and evaluate (Horwitz, 1986, 1986a). During the 1980s rose a concern on *context*; the home, the classroom, the workplace... the community where people learnt to write in interaction with other people. As Freedman points out "writing cannot be thought of as simply one of the basic skills. Rather, writing is a social activity, and learning to write is a process of enculturation into the social life of one's community, school and workplace" (Freedman, 1987, p.3).

Over the past sixty years, different approaches to writing have emerged. Little by little there has been a better understanding of the complex nature of writing. Raimes' adapted diagram (Fig.1, ) on the elements that a writer has to bear in mind as he writes a text will help us to see this evolution.

The emphasis on one or various elements of this circle derived in the different methods or approaches of writing just mentioned. As Victori suggests there seems to be a cycle "in which the focus of research and instruction shifts from the text, at one time, to the writer at another, then to the reader and then back to the text" (1995, p.25). The red arrows show this cycle.

During the last years most writing researches have tried to understand better the nature of L2 writing. Instead of considering only one element of the cycle (the text, the writer or the reader) there is an attempt to include ALL the elements that really participate in the production of a text and have resulted in a *social-cognitive* theory of writing.

However, this cycle does not follow a perfect circle. The evolution of writing instruction is something much more complex. Sometimes more than one approach can coexist and it can also happen that certain methodologies do not disappear completely in time.

After this quick look at the main writing approaches that have emerged over the last years, in the next section I will present the journal. The journal as a rich writing tool with a long history that became for 'the expresivists' the perfect vehicle to encourage writing for self-discovery which, at the same time, has become a very used tool in writing instruction in the last years.

## 2.2. JOURNAL WRITING

#### 2.2.1. JOURNALS THROUGH TIME

It is a strange thing that in sea-voyages, where there is nothing to be seen but sky and sea, men should make diaries, but in land travel, wherein so much is to be observed, for the most part they omit it; as if chance were fitter to be registered than observation. Let diaries, therefore, be brought into use.

-Francis Bacon (1561-1626)

Strange though it may seem, journals being a source for expression have a long and impressive history. Lowenstain (1987) affirms that journal keeping dates from at least 56 AD, when in China, journals were both written and archived as historical documents. In this sense, when investigating the history of personal journal writing, Autrey (1991) distinguishes between two historical genres to which she attributes the development of the journal as the pedagogical tool that we have nowadays: the <a href="mailto:commonplace book">commonplace book</a> and the <a href="mailto:diary">diary</a>.

The commonplace book was a collection of observations, guotes, knowledge, thoughts that would serve as a resource for public, polished writings. The Ancient Greeks used the commonplace book as an educational resource for their students. We have to be aware of the idea that that dominated this society, namely that "the self was constructed in terms of society" to understand that the commonplace book provided them with a place to gather information to help them better understand themselves in relation to their culture. In these books, filled with ideas, quotations, observations, bits of learning and wisdom, the students found the source of inspiration for further socially and rhetorically acceptable essays or speech. The use of the commonplace book lapsed in the Middle Ages but became popular again during the Renaissance when there was a resurgence of interest in the use of these books as a means of gathering ideas from other sources. Erasmus (1466?-1536), a Dutch priest and scholar, and Francis Bacon (1561-1626), an English philosopher and statesman, recommended the keeping of commonplace books. In the seventeenth-century, the use of the commonplace books together with other elements of classical rhetorical was very normal in the English schools. John Milton (1608-1674) for example was one of the students of those days that kept such a book. It was not until the early nineteenth century that this means for gathering ideas served as a way of assimilating communal knowledge for individual expression. Later on, when Romanticism emerged and with it the emphasis on personal insights rather than societal norms, the use of the commonplace book as a component of the classical pedagogy faded. Since then, only occasionally have commonplace books been used as aids to successful writing.

On the other hand, the diary is a more idiosyncratic private realm, it usually consists of very private writings. Thus, for Autrey the "pedagogical journal" (p.74) is the combination of the commonplace book and the diary.

The history of the diary can be traced back to at least the Ancient Greeks too. Autrey (1991) mentions that evidence of its use can be found as early as the fifth century BC. The commonplace book and the diary lived parallel lives, but their purposes were quite different, one wanted to connect the self with the community, as I have mentioned before, and the other to individualise the self. But despite its long history, and unlike the commonplace book, "the diary has seldom been used in education as an adjunct to other forms of writing or speaking" Autrey (1991, p.77). Lowenstein (1987) in her study about the history of journal keeping mentions the most outstanding forms of diaries in history. The Japanese pillow diaries appeared in the tenth century. They included dreams, poems, confessions and history, but although there was a connection between the individual and his culture, the main focus was on the self-discovery. From the tenth to the seventeenth century the act of travelling became very popular among priests, officials and the military who usually wrote diaries. The Japanese travel diary or the western travel diary are examples of the so called travel diaries. The spiritual or confessional diary became very popular also during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth century in America with the appearance of different religious groups (the Puritans, Quakers, or Mormons among others). These spiritual diaries emphasise the quest for an ideal relationship to the Church and to God, and what is more interesting, it is sometimes used as a means to teach the whole community. Thus, "the Puritans used the diary material to educate the community, and included diary selections in the "lean-to" or the biographical narrative of the funeral sermon" Lowenstein (1987,p.91). *The Journal of John Woolman*, published in 1774 after his death, is a record of his spiritual development as a Quaker, an investigation of his doubts about slavery, and travel journal.

Throughout the centuries diaries continued being popular; among the many examples existing we can mention those of Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), John Evelyn (1620-1706), James Boswell (1704-1795), and Henry Fielding (1707-1754). Many of them became important because they were considered as historical documents that reflected the life and events of the time. Leonardo da Vinci's recorded observations of birds and flight, Lewis and Clark's notes regarding the unexplored Northwest, Mary Chestnut's personal chronicle of the fate of the Confederacy during the American Civil War, and Anne Frank's recording of her experiences in hiding from the Nazis in Holland before her death in a concentration camp are further examples (Eastman, 1997). But, as I mentioned before, these writers kept diaries for personal

not pedagogical reasons.

During the nineteenth century, with an increased emphasis on personal writing and the popularity of the diary-keeping, one could expect that rhetorical theorists considered the diary as a useful tool in the art of writing. However, and as Crowley (1987 as cited in Autrey,1991) points out, invention in this era involved mental preparation and rehearsal, not prewriting. In books such as *Arts of Discourse* (H.N. Day 1867) or *Practical Elements of Rhetoric* (John Genung's 1885) the recommendation was to narrow the topic mentally and think carefully about it before actually committing words to paper. The diary was rarely mentioned in any of the rhetoric texts of the nineteenth century. For example, John S. Hart's *A Manual of Composition and Rhetoric* (1870) considers the diaries as "the least exact and formal of all kinds of compositions" and "a record made for the information of one's future self". All these ideas contrast with today's emphasis on the discovery of meaning through writing,

reading or interaction with others, and where diaries are considered a prelude to other writing rather than a "kind of composition".

In 1894, with Arlo Bates and his recommendation of keeping a notebook as something especially important for aspiring journalists, we see the beginning of a more modern concept of the diary. That is, as something preliminary to future writing more than just a record of its own sake. In another textbook for "college women", almost thirty years later, the authors suggest that writing in a diary is worth doing not so much as an end but for "facility of expression", "practice in many forms of writing," "increased power of observation," and "enrichment of life" (Moore, Tompkins and MacLean 291-293) ideas that could be linked with the ones claimed for recent journals.

According to Autrey (1991), the beginning of this modern conception of the classroom journals took place with the publication of Gordon Rohmann's "Prewriting: The Stage of Discovery in the Writing Process" in 1965. The implementation of the process approach to writing had begun, and the journal could be a tool in the personalised process of writing – an invention strategy during the prewriting stage (Eastman 1997). From this moment of turn towards a more process-oriented approach of writing, the journal has evolved to include many types –dialogue journal, reading logs etc. Nowadays journals and diaries are more popular than ever. All kind of people, businessmen, politicians or housewives are keeping journals. And they have also been used extensively in therapy –everything from psychotherapy to marriage counselling (Lowenstein, 1987).

Sometimes, the textbooks have ignored this rich evolutionary history, as we have seen, presenting the journal as a multifaceted, but static, genre that can just provide some practice space and some ideas for future writing. The journal is a combination of the commonplace book idea filled with public issues that may provide inspiration for

formal writing, and the diary containing private concerns. This unique union provides a student with an opportunity for self-expression, an analysis of his connection to culture and learning, and a resource for the future documenting his ideas and life.

#### 2.2.2. JOURNALS NOWADAYS: TERMINOLOGY, DEFINITIONS AND USES.

According to Webster, the word *journal* originates from Old French *journal* meaning daily and from Latin *diurnalis* going back to *dies* meaning day. For Eastman 'journal writing is characterised by writing that is personal and reflective in nature, completed on a regular basis, and often serves as a source of ideas for more formal writing' (1997,p.7). Thoreau almost 150 years ago would have probably been the best of our students using journals because he saw the power of this tool and took it to its limit. He can stand as the perfect example of what can happen when writing is used as a tool for learning. He said that 'by writing daily, a person would keep things straight in his own mind and would be able to move on to new ideas after having carefully looked over the old ones'. So almost 150 years ago he saw the importance of journal writing and also the use of it in the modern vision of process writing. He saw a journal as 'a spacious barnyard and each thought in it as a 'nest egg' (Lebeaux 1984, 155).

Much of the importance of journals has come from their adaptability to many different kinds of settings and to many different fields. The traditional term *personal journals* or *monologue journals* refers to the journals in which some or all entries are of personal nature. They are considered to be low-structured. The writers choose the topics and among most practitioners of this kind of journals are the language teachers. Mary Louise Holly sees the advantages of journals in our profession and defines what writing journals means for her in the following way:

'Keeping a personal, professional journal enables the author to develop an educational archive which serves as an evolving database for gaining understanding and insights which inform and enrich professional judgement.'

In general, journals have been used in many other subjects apart from English, for example in mathematics, science, art or in literature classes among others. In this context journals are called academic journals. Thanks to the writing that the student produces regularly in the class notebook, s/he reflects and makes connections between the specific course content and their personal experiences, realities and lives. Burniske's (1994) paper is a good illustration of this. He offers his class both assigned and open topics, with the purpose of weaving personal experiences into the study of literature. For example, when they were reading Otello he asked his students to answer these questions in their journals: 'Have you ever been caught in a web of lies or jealousy? If so, what did it take to untangle it? Is it possible for one to get out of a net like the one lago spins? Is so how? . Daniel (1996) when reading Agatha Christie's novel to her 8<sup>th</sup>-grade students, told them that she wanted them to write what they were thinking about the mystery and try to predict what would happen next (later on they would confirm or reject their predictions). She encouraged them to 'prove' their reasoning as much as possible by explicitly stating reasons for their predictions. Kingen (1995) asks her students to first do a summary of the contents or main ideas, second write three or four questions prompted by the material and finally a brief personal response every time they read a section of a book. This helps the students to better understand the basics, who, what, when, where, and how of the readings. Dow also (1996) sees the power of the link between students' lives and the readings assignments. Thus, when her students are reading a book, a phrase, sentence or section from the book starts each journal entry and then a response follows. Is it an experience they have also known themselves? Is it a stylistic element they admire? Is it humorous, poignant, a contrast? does it shift in tone? The students tell each other their own personal stories, their lives, their biographies, and their stories teach the students that they all posses a depth and range of shared experience they had never imagined.

Another prevalent term in journal literature is *dialogue journal* (Burniske, 1994; Peyton and Staton, 1988). *Dialogue journal* writing refers to the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written conversation between two persons, a student and the teacher, on a regular, continuous basis. Thus, it involves *interactive* and *continuous* writing. The students write regular entries in their journals reflecting on personal and class content issues, or they make connections between their readings and their lives, or record their thoughts and activities and ask questions about their learning. But all this on the basis of communication with another interlocutor, the teacher (and sometimes the other students). The teacher comments on their entries, trying always to provide positive feedback on their writing and comments that make them reflect on what they had written. There is communication between them, there is written communication and the students write having in mind that a person is going to read the ideas they are expressing, and not to correct the mistakes they make when trying to express them.

However, when a teacher decides to use journals as a writing tool in his class he has to be conscious also of the fact that this kind of expressive writing has its advantages and disadvantages, as we will see in the following section.

#### 2.2.3. JOURNAL WRITING: THE BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF JOURNALING.

According to Burniske (1994, p.84) the four questions that most colleagues ask in his workshop on journal-keeping are:

"Do you assign topics or let the students choose? How often do you collect journals? Do you check spelling and grammar? How do you grade or evaluate journals?"

Behind these questions one could see the normal uncertainty in front of the unknown. Introducing journals in the class means to change the classic conception of the writing task. There is the possibility that the student can choose the topic, the

teacher can just <u>read</u> the writing without being obliged to correct the grammar or evaluate it. And of course, there is this fear to be overwhelmed with pages and pages of writings that have to be read and represent extra-work for the teacher. However, this first impression changes as one decides to take the risk.

Writing a journal is different in nature from formal writing in terms of audience relationship, context of writing, topics, voice and style and evaluation (see Table 1). In fact, expressive writing (present in journal writing) is, according to Britton et al. (1975), the source from which more formal writing flows. Writing in diaries helps the student to express what they want to say. They exemplify the real essence of the writing process and the *bridge* between the idea and the formal essay.

Raime's chart

As Kingen (1995) affirms "using journal writing is not always successful. The key lies in the purpose for the journal". Journals are not the magic answer to everything but it can help to our students in many ways. For example, when they have the opportunity of talking about what really interests them, the effect is amazing.

Dialogue journals allow students to choose their topics and promote fluency by emphasising meaning over mechanics. Choosing their topics is one of the most appreciated "privileges" that a student has when a teacher decides to implement dialogue journal writing in his classes. They have a feeling of "freedom" to write about what is relevant for them. According to Staton (1988) "teacher-assigned topics do not reflect students' interests, ideas and feelings". Some entries can be totally restricted and others totally open, they can deal with academic or personal subjects and the topic selection may change from one teacher to another or from one school to another. But, what prevails is this different "feeling" that journal writing participants have when they write in their journals. As Brown's (1993) student states: "When writing in my journal, I write about my feelings and how I react to them. When writing an assignment, I have

to think hard about what I say, how I say it. It must have right grammar, and it must be punctuated. When in a journal, you don't have to worry about how you say it" (p.248).

Staton (1981) found five different types of discourse when she analysed the dialogue journals in Mrs Reed's sixth grade classroom:

- *Transitional discourse* is used at the beginning or at the end of the entries and acts as a link between classroom events and written interaction.
- Descriptive discourse is the one we find for example when the student explains something that has happened to him either at school or in his personal life.
- *Directive discourse* is used when one of the writers wants the other to do something or to accomplish a particular purpose (apologies, complaints, denials etc).
- *Problem-solving discourse* occurs when both writers discuss about a problem and try solve it together.
- Mutuality-building discourse or "mutual conversations" (Peyton, 1988) are conversations on a mutual topic maintained by the two writers over a period of time. They exchange information and opinion about the topic and is characterised by the equality of the participants, that is, the teacher and the student.

Peyton (1988) analysed in depth the last type of discourse found in dialogue journals, the "mutual conversations". The characteristics of these "mutual conversations" according to Peyton are the following:

- 1. They grow out of some experience which the participants have in common and on which they can build.
- 2. They involve a mutual *personal* interest in the topic This is demonstrated by the choice of topic content, which may grow out of school activities, but is more often focused on personal, non school matters.
- 3. They involve a mutual *decision* to discuss a particular topic, demonstrated by:
  - duration of the topic over several turns to write.
  - provision by both parties of new information that build on the other person's contribution and thus continues the discussion,
  - mutual use of certain lexical items, and
  - cohesive ties that link one person's contribution to a previous one by the other person.
- 4. They demonstrate awareness of the other's perspective, demonstrated by:
  - the use of the personal pronoun "you" to refer specifically to the other person, and
  - the use of questions to seek information that the other possesses.

(p.200)

He affirms that this kind of discourse helps to improve the relationship teacherstudent and also learning in general.

"Teacher and student develop an individualised, personal relationship, beyond classroom concerns and events. Typical classroom roles are set aside, as they share a common experience about which they both have information and an interest" (p.187)

In fact, this "mutual topic selection" encourages the student to write, to reflect about what he is writing and to <u>continue</u> writing. But to reach this point of mutuality some time is needed. When analysing the topics that Reed's students chose in their dialogue journals Staton (1988) observed that there is a shift from more academic subjects found in the first entries of the journals towards more personal subjects.

"Human dialogue, when it is carried on over a significant period of time, as it is in the dialogue journals, becomes a search for meaning and shared understanding of the participants' ultimate concerns, in the context of their own separate and shared realities"

Staton (1988, 254)

In addition, Fulwiler (1987) affirms that thanks to this dialogue the relationship teacher-student becomes one of mutual respect. He even suggests that reading student journals the teachers become more "human" and learning becomes really individualised. It helps also with disciple problems since the students speak about what happens to them and how they behave and they reflect on it (Burniske, 1994).

On the other hand, some students may find it difficult to know what to write about when the topic is open. They can also consider this duty of writing regularly in their journals as "busy work". And as a consequence their writing becomes descriptive rather than reflective (Holt,1994; Grennan,1989; Miller et al. 1994; Sommer, 1989 – cited in Kerka,1996).

Furthermore, the literature on journal writing usually centres the attention on how to use journals, how to evaluate them and if they have had any effect on the students' writing, but very little is said about how to respond to adolescent literature (Singer,1990). Sometimes, giving advice to a teenager that has had a fight with a classmate or has had a problem with another teacher could be considered as one of our tasks as educators. Having a common interest or hobby can be also the theme for a 'mutual conversation' that in this written form is helping our student to improve his writing. However, expressive writing is the perfect vehicle for the adolescents to open their world to an attentive listener like the writing teacher who is willing to read and respond to what really worries them. And the adolescent world includes family

problems, drug use, shoplifting, sex, together with music, football or computers. One may think that the solution could be to assign more specific journal topics, but this has not been the solution for the teachers who use journal writing because the very essence of this writing invites the student to elicit intimate feelings as Singer (1990) affirms. So, are teachers prepared to face these kind of problems?

Singer (1990, 74) offers some advice to those who have to respond to students who reveal this type of experiences:

- 1. Respect the students' possible anxiety in telling the story at all. Empathise with the author.
- 2. Once we have been handed a paper, there is a contract between us and that person. It is not necessarily a contract to change behaviour. We must decide what our role is and has been. It may be as facilitator, friend, advice-giver, helper, clarifier, information-giver, listener. It may be all of these at various times, or it may be a combination of some. Our definition of our own roles and relationships with students may help us sort out the kinds of responses that we make and their appropriateness for given situations. A teacher has power and influence that must be considered in the response to traumatic situations in students' writing. Not to accept this influence and to remain unaware of it is unethical.
- 3. These will be occasions when we are not equipped or capable to do anything but seek help. When this happens, it would be helpful to have already scouted out counselling staffs and to know who is accessible.
- 4. On occasion, we may need to know the legal ramifications of our knowing about students' crises and experiences.

Apart from topic selection, the next concern that may worry teachers that decide to introduce journals in their classes is time consuming. It is true that using journals means spending time outside and inside class both writing and reading other people's journals. However, this time is worth consuming as literature on this theme suggests.

Autrey (1991) for example recommends spending more time reading students' journals in class. Furthermore, Fulwiler (1987) or Burniske (1994) consider that because content prevails over form, grading journals can be a relative quick task for the teacher compared to the more tedious task of grammar correction of number of formal essays on the same topic. Writing back to the student also takes time, however, this represents a unique source from a more experienced writer for the student. As Cobine (1987, p.2) suggests:

"By using a dialogue journal, students automatically apprentice themselves to the teacher, a mature writer – that is, not only do students write about topics of personal concern, but they also observe a mature writer's response to these same topics and sometimes this mature writer's method"

All in all, there is this positive sense that all this time is not at all wasted either on the part of the teacher, writing comments or evaluating the journals or on the part of the student when he writes in class or reads other classmates' journals.

Going back to the evaluation of the journals concern, it is worth mentioning the change of role that the teacher-corrector experiences when he has to grade a journal. The students are used to get their writing back with the grammar errors corrected in red-ink. However, the new role of the journal teacher corrector is to respond to students' entries and to grade students effort and completeness if the teacher considers it necessary. The teacher responds to content only. The answer should be positive and sincere, Peyton and Staton (1993). It is time consuming and depends on the teacher, but it has been proved that supportive comments (not only questions) promote longer response entries by students. According to Peyton (1993) "the teacher response in the journal serves as a model of correct English usage" and behind this idea is Vygotsky's theory of education1.

Criticism on evaluating journals is also present in the literature of journal writing (Burniske 1994,Chadler 1997). Chadler ((1997) for example considers journals as learning tools that should not be graded because this means to penalise the students when they are trying to learn and think. She proposes that "journals not be assessed or evaluated, but simply assigned as a part of the student's final grade and accepted as either credit for completion or no credit for failure to complete"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Basically Vygotsky thought that a person, a human being, learns first through learner's cooperative participation in accomplishing tasks with partners that have more experience.

These tasks that the learner can do with help today can be done without help in the future. This process will be successful if the tasks that the learner have to do is within the learner's potential understanding and competence or what Vygotsky called "zone of proximal develpment". This zone could be defined as "the difference between those tasks the child can do unaided and those which can be accomplished only with assistance" Staton (1988,p.216)

According to Widdowson (1978) dialogue journals help students to, little by little, *use* the language rather than be concerned with its *usage* <sup>1</sup>. It provides a unique opportunity to practice writing and thanks to this practice their fluency improves (Liner 1981, Burniske 1994, Fulwiler 1978). They take more risks and write longer entries which make them being more creative.

To sum up, although journal writing can be criticised by some authors, there is an overwhelming positive persuasion of the literature on the benefits that journal writing has both on students and teachers. The students can choose the topics and talk about what really interest them, the relationship teacher-student improves, there are 'mutual conversations' that humanise teachers. Teacher response to students help them to improve their writing abilities, they are a model of correct English on a common topic that promote more writing. And last but not least, most journal writing practitioners are for the evaluation of journals, but always evaluating effort and completeness.

In the next section, an overview of the study object of the present paper, together with the instruments that were used will be presented.

¹ Widdowson was the first person to propose the distinction between *usage* and *use*. For him *usage* is 'that aspect of performance which makes evident the extent to which the language user demonstrates his knowledge of linguistic rules'. Whereas *use* is that aspect of performance which 'makes evident the extent to which the language learner user demonstrates his ability to use his knowledge of linguistic rules for effective communication'. We, as teachers, know that this distinction is specially true when we talk about writing. Our students can learn the grammatical rules of the verb tenses, and do a great exam in which they have to put the verb in a sentence in the correct tense. And then fail the real *use* of the verb tenses when they have to write a few sentences explaining something about what they did last weekend. I believe in the power of expressive writing as a mean to improve the *use* of a language.

#### **CHAPTER 3**

# **METHODOLOGY**

#### 3.1. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH DESIGN.

The research that will be described in the next section was conducted with High school students of the I.E.S Enric Borràs in Badalona, Spain. This research focused on the journals that as they were used in one of my two classes of Batxillerat where I taught English. The objective of this study was to see the effect of the use of journals as a writing tool introduced in one group compared to the other that did not use journals.

During the academic years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 the two groups followed the same English curriculum and did the same activities with the exception of the journal writings. How writing in their journals affected the students writing abilities, their writing attitudes or their relationship with the teacher are some aspects that will be investigated. The analysis of the journals, compositions and questionnaires that the students did during these two years conform the data of the study.

#### 3.2. THE SCHOOL.

The project took place at I.E.S. Enric Borràs, a High School located in the urban neighbourhood of "La Salut", in Badalona. In this neighbourhood the families are

primarily working-class families with many socio-economic problems. 31% of the population has no studies and 7% are illiterate (the highest percentage in the city). With a population of approximately 500 students, I.E.S. Enric Borràs houses students aged 12 to 19. All the students have to be at school until the age of 16 and then decide if they want to continue studying two more years to enter the University or take specialised courses. Almost 10% of the students in this school are immigrants, with a mixture of Chinese, Moorish, South American and Gypsy student. Discipline problems exist and motivation is another war that teachers have to fight every day. Less than 50% of the students who finish the obligatory education (E.S.O.) decide to continue studying at I.E.S. Enric Borràs High School.

## 3.3. THE PARTICIPANTS.

#### 3.3.1. THE ENTIRE SAMPLE

In September 2000, the 61 students enrolled to continue their studies were divided into two groups according to the curriculum they chose. The Humanistic group (group A in our study) with 35 students, and the Scientific group (control group or group B in our study) with 26 students (13 of them were repeating the course). In group A there were 31 girls and 4 boys, and in group B there were 19 boys and 7 girls. In general, most female students chose the Humanistic option. The two groups had common obligatory subjects such as Spanish, Catalan, English or Philosophy and other optional subjects depending on the studies they wanted to do at the University when they finished High School.

Before being accepted at the University, High School students have to pass the Selectivity¹ exam. However, there is another possibility for those students who do not want to do University studies and this is to study specialised courses <sup>2</sup> on any study that they choose. 75% of the 2000-01 High School students had the intention of continuing their studies at University.

During the academic year 2000-01 I taught English to these students two hours a week during three terms (September-December/ December-March/ March-May). The following course, 2001-2002 I had the same students during the final term (March-May 2002). Another teacher taught them two hours per week from September to March. During the four terms that I had these two groups of students I followed the same methodology with them with the exception of the use of the journals twice a week with group A. They had the same hours of English class with me, two per week. They followed the same curriculum, they used the same book ("Impact"), did the same exams and wrote the same compositions during the school year.

I carried out an initial survey on previous writing experience among the students of Group A, the Humanistic group that was going to write journals (see appendix A). 31 out the 35 students of group A answered the questions of this initial survey .The objective of this survey was to get background information about the participants of the study. According to the results, 64.5 % of the students had written journals before. They specified, though, that this practice had been in Catalan or Spanish. The rest of the students, 35.5%, had never written journals before.

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My next concern was on the writing instruction they had received up to then. The results showed that 80% of the students had not received any instruction on how to write compositions in English until that moment. A finding which did not surprise me as it has been shown that in Spain, our students do not receive instruction on writing until very late (when they are over 16). In contrast, with the exception of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This exam is a three day exam on the different subjects that they had studied at High School. The English part of this exam consists of a reading comprehension part with a text and six questions about the text and a writing part (a letter, a story, a dialogue etc.) based on the text.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Moduls de Grau Superior that normally last two years.

two students, the rest (29) affirmed that they had received instruction on how to write in other languages such as Catalan or Spanish. However, it could not be inferred, due to the question format, what kind of instruction this was and whether it was process or product-based.

After this first glimpse to my students' writing background, I also wanted to know whether this instruction was followed by a lot of practice on my students' part. The number of compositions that they had written was also different depending on the languages they had used. For example, 96.7% of the students considered that they had written more than 15 compositions in Spanish in their life, between 100 and 150. The number of compositions written in Catalan was lower. 90% of the students had written more than 15 compositions, between 30 and 40, and only 10% answered between 10 and 15. In contrast, 16.1% of the students considered that they had written only between 0 and 5 compositions in English, 38.7% between 5 and 10 and 45.1% that had written more than 15 compositions, between 20 and 30.

The results of this initial survey helped me to know what the writing experience of my new students was, which I consider quite representative of a Spanish student who begins High School in Spain. That is, according to the results, they believe that they have received some kind of writing instruction in Catalan or Spanish, not in English or French and they also recognise that the proportion of written assignments in Spanish or Catalan that they remember double those done in English.

Apart from the writing experience that my students had, I was also interested in another factor, which is presented in the following section, that could be determinant for the results of this study.

#### 3.3.2. THE TWO SUBGROUPS

In the design of my study I decided to consider also the variant of the level of English as important for my study. Were the effects of journal writing similar among those students considered as "poor" students and those considered as "good"

students?. The tool I used to measure this variant and *draw* an imaginary line between my "good" and "poor" students was a test that the new High School students always have to do at the beginning of the year.

In September 2001 I administered a test (see appendix B) to the 61 High School students. The number of students that passed and failed this test is showed in the following chart (Fig. 3.1.).

Fig. 3.1
Test results.

Exam results	Number students had passed.	that	Number students had failed.	of that
Humanistic Group A 35 students.	5		30	
Scientific Group B 26 students. (13 students were repeating)	8		16	

In view of these results, I took the decision of subdivide the two initial groups A and B into two subgroups A1,A2 and B1, B2. Group A1 was formed by the 5 students out of the 35 from the Humanistic group that had passed the exam. The other 30 students integrated group A2, these students had failed the exam. As for the results of the Scientific group, 8 students had passed the exam and formed group B1 and 16 students had failed the exam and became the components of group B2.

From this sample, a subsample was chosen for each level according to the following criteria: (a) students from group A who had written regularly (twice a week) in their diary during the four terms; (b) students from group A who had done the initial survey, the mid-term survey and the final survey (three instruments used in the study and described in the next section); (c) students from group A and B who had done all the

compositions selected to be analysed during the four terms. I followed a case study model of research, mainly because of the characteristic of the material that I had to analyse: journals, compositions and surveys and also because of time restriction. This criteria allowed me to select 8 students, 2 from every subgroup, A1,A2,B1 and B2. In the next chart appear the name of the students selected together with the mark that they obtained in the test in parenthesis (fig. 3.2.).

Fig. 3.2.
Students selected for the study.

GI	ROUP A		GROUP B
<b>A</b> 1	MÍRIAM (8,5)	B1	VERÓNICA (9)
	RAKEL (5,5)		MARIA JOSÉ (5,75)
A2	TAMARA DÍAZ (4,2)	B2	ANTONIO (3,6)
	ANA PALMA (2,2)		MÓNICA (3)

#### 3.4. INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES.

## 3.4.1. THE TEST.

All the High School students, the Humanistic and the Scientific group, did a test <sup>1</sup> at the beginning of the year. This exam had three parts: one reading comprehension part with a text and questions about the text that represented the 27% of the exam mark (8.5 points out of 38), a grammar part that was the 50% of the mark (19 points) and the remaining 22% of the mark (10.5 points) was for the writing exercise. The students' results followed a conversion 0-10 scale, considering a 5 (19 points) as the passing mark. The main objective of this exam was to know the level of English of the students that were going to participate in my study.

#### 3.4.2. MID-TERM SURVEY

In February 2001, I administered a survey (see appendix C) among the 35 students from the Humanistic group to assess their use of journals. The aim was to check if the way I was using my diaries could be improved. I wanted to check if they were happy on their free writing or they wanted me to suggest some themes. I also wanted to see if they wanted me to correct their grammar mistakes and if they wanted that I wrote something for them every week.

#### 3.4.3. OVERALL EVALUATION SURVEY

At the end of the study I administered the last survey of the study among my students. It had a first part in which the students had to answer YES/NO question and a second part with open-ended questions. The aim of this final survey was to know if the attitude towards writing of my students had changed and if

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> One of the accords taken by the English Department of the school is that the students have to do a summer book adapted to their level every summer. At the beginning of the course the students have to present the book done and they have to do a test based on the exercises they have done during the summer. The students who decided to continue their studies in June 2000 were asked to do a summer book during the summer holidays (Summer Book for 4rth of E.S.O.) to help them to improve their level.

so if writing their journals had influenced this change. Moreover, I wanted to know if they thought that this writing experience had helped them to improve their level of English or for example if the relationship with their teacher was more human because of the journals. I also wanted to know if they considered fair the mark that they had received or if it had been of any help the topics suggested for their writings during the second part of the study. In summary, I wanted to make them think about what writing journals had meant for them both academically and personally speaking.

To get this feedback from my students, I used an adaptation of Eastman's survey (1997). I eliminated some YES/NO questions and replaced the open-ended statements with open-ended questions written in Spanish (see appendix D). At this point I wanted that the students felt completely relaxed and comfortable so they could really express their opinions about their experience. The students expressed ideas that the first part (YES/NO questions) or the open-ended sentences could not have "captured".

I administered this final survey the very last day of school. The questionnaires were anonymous. Due to absences (many people had abandoned the studies by then or had decided to repeat the course) only 19 students from group A completed the surveys. However, I believe that these students (the ones who had followed the course and written in the diary regularly) answered the questions thoughtfully and honestly.

#### 3.4.4. THE COMPOSITIONS

The students of groups A and B wrote 5 compositions during the school year 2000-01, one composition at the end of every unit. Although the students were only with me during a term, during the academic year 2001-02 they also wrote 5 compositions, 3 more were optional <sup>1</sup>.

For the purposes of this study, I chose 3 compositions out of 10 from group A submitted in February 2001, March 2002 and April 2002. They were an informal letter, a story and a written speech in which they had to convince the audience about something that interested them. In addition, I selected also 3 compositions out of 10 from group B submitted in the same months. However, the format was: a letter, a for and against composition, and the same written speech.

These compositions were corrected following the *selectivitat* marking criteria (see appendix H). According to this criteria four aspects are evaluated on a 0-10 scale: grammar, vocabulary, text/paragraph

building and maturity. Grammar represents 25% of the mark, the correctness and the range of the structures used are aspects considered in this section. The richness of vocabulary together with the range and correct spelling of the words represent also 25% of the mark. Another 25% of the grade is for the way the sentences and paragraphs are organised. The last 25% of the composition grade evaluates the way the student handles the topic, if it is well-reasoned, with clear ideas etc.

To ensure inter-rater reliability 10% of the compositions were corrected by a colleague from my school after one session together in which we adjusted possible differences in marking the different aspects evaluated.

<sup>1</sup> Writing a great number of compositions during the last term of their last year at High School is very common because the *Selectivity* exam is very near and teachers pay especial emphasis on the writing part of the test.

#### 3.4.4.1. MEASURES OF FLUENCY AND ACCURACY USED IN JOURNALS.

Apart from evaluating aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, organisation of the text or maturity of the compositions selected, I was also interested in two other aspects: fluency and accuracy for which purpose I used Wolf-Quintero's method of analysis. Wolfe-Quintero (1998) affirms that underlying all the studies that he analysed, more than 50, there was the assumption that "second language learners write more fluently, or write more in the same amount of time, as they become more proficient", likewise "second language learners write more accurately, or produce fewer errors in their writing, as they become more proficient". Therefore, the development of these two language characteristics, fluency and accuracy is an evidence of the improvement of the learner's current level of language knowledge. He claims also that these characteristics "progress in tandem" though it can also happen that due to individual variability, at certain points any of these characteristic may progress not in unison but "one at expense of another". For example, a student may improve his level of fluency but not his level of accuracy, as it could be expected, at a certain point of time because of individual differences. This student may take more risks writing longer units that, on the other hand, may contain more grammar errors. Casanave (1994) saw this deviation in her journal case study over time.

For the purpose of my study, if the compositions done by group A1 and A2 showed any significant change in the evolution of fluency and accuracy in comparison with the ones done by group B1 and B2, which did not receive the treatment of the journal writing, this could be significant for the results.

Wolf-Quintero affirms that "the primary way to measure fluency is to count the number, length, or rate of production units. Production units include sentences, T-units, clauses, and phrases". For this study I chose the T-unit as the production unit of the compositions.

A T-unit can be defined as "one main clause plus the subordinate clauses attached to or embedded within it".

According to Wolfe-Quintero (1998) two of the best fluency and accuracy complexity measures for language 'development' so far are words per T-units (W/T) and error-free

T-units per T-unit (EFT/T).

When analysing the compositions, the first task was to separate the T-units. Once the T-units were selected the next step was to count the words that every T-unit had in order to observe if the fluency of the students suffered any change in time. After this, I identified the T-units that contained no grammar errors, error free T-units (EFT-units) and proceeded to obtain the percentage of correct T-units among the total number of T-units that the student had written (EFT/T). Another measure that I used was to count the words that the error-free T-units contained, length of error-free T-unit.

To summarise, in order to measure the evolution of my students' fluency and accuracy in their compositions I used Wolf-Quintero method. I first identified the production unit, in this case the T-unit. And then I proceeded first to count the words in every T-unit (W/T-unit) and then to see the number of T-units that contained no error compared to the total number of T-units (EFT/T). In addition, I also counted the number of words that the error free T-units contained to have more information and thus detect any case of individual variability, length of error free T-units (Length of EFTs).

In the next section the other writing tool used by the students of group A in this study is presented.

#### 3.4.5. THE JOURNALS

During the first term of the school year 2000-01 the students of group A were asked to keep a notebook in which they would write about anything that they wanted related to school or to their everyday life twice a week. They had class with me on Thursdays and Mondays. On Thursdays they had to bring their journals to class and in silence they had to write non-stop during the last ten or fifteen minutes. Most students understood that the main objective of this activity was to keep writing. As the year progressed students began to feel more comfortable with their writing. However, I noticed that many of them complained about the fact that they did not know what to write in their journals, it was as if they had run out of ideas and began to get bored with the journal.

For this reason, a mid-term survey was undertaken to get some feedback from my students that could help me to improve the way I was using the journals. The survey included some questions that suggested some changes in the way this students wrote their journals. These suggestions were accepted by most of the students so I decided to adopt them as soon as possible.

The first change was that I started writing a journal myself. I did so once a week and I shared it with the students on Thursdays (I made photocopies of my week entry for all of them). They began to see me with different eyes after this change. I usually wrote some comments to their entries, but a whole page of my writing explaining everyday things was quite shocking for them.

In addition, I began to suggest some topics that usually had been worked in class in order to offer them other options apart from the usual ones. They continued writing and many of them seemed to like these changes. At the end of the year they were very surprised when I did what I had promised to do, that is, to give them a mark for their work based on the following criteria: if they had done all the entries required with certain interest and effort on their part they obtained 1 point (10% of the final mark). Some students did not complete all the work and then, depending on the number of entries they had, I punctuated their work as 0.75, 0.50 or 0.25 points. The truth is that I did not have any complain about the mark that they had obtained. They perceived the mark as a clear reflection of their work during the year.

When I began to teach them English the following year, I decided to continue with the journal, but changing some things. First of all, I gave them a piece of paper with the instructions and the objectives of writing a journal. There were new students, students who were repeating and others who needed some reminders from last year (see appendix J). I also wrote the suggestions for the entries of their journals on

a separate piece of paper (see appendix K). I noticed that some students forgot the themes suggested easily and when they arrived home they always wrote about the same things.

Another important change was asking students to increase from 2 times a week (as in the previous school year) to 3 times. I was going to take advantage of the fact that I was their tutor and we had one hour of class to speak about the problems that they had among many other school matters. They complained at the beginning, but they soon understood that it was another way of explaining things that affected them and at the same time an extra practice for their English subject. Furthermore, I decided to be more organised and write the things that most of the time I explained orally and that very frequently were easily forgotten.

Another change was that I wrote my journal in class and before the class had finished I rushed to make photocopies and distributed them. I had had problems with writing at home (some days I forgot, others I did not ask for the photocopies etc.). They always read my entry before leaving the class, I noticed that they were more receptive if I did it that way. They were reading what I had just been writing in front of them and this represented an extra-reading that they did willingly.

I continued collecting the journals the day that they had to write in class. I read their entries and I always wrote some comments back. They had to write in silence and another change that I introduced was that they could listen to music while they were writing in class.

In order to carry out the research I decided not only to analyse the compositions, but also the journals. They were a very rich source of information that I had to explore in order to find evidences of the process to which my students had been exposed to. I determined to do a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of the journals. The qualitative analysis involved the reading of the whole journal of the four persons chosen for this study (A1 and A2) and the selection of the most outstanding passages for discussion. On the other hand, I considered that a quantitative analysis was also necessary for the reliability of the study. Therefore, I selected the entries of four weeks: November 2000, February 2001, May 2001 and March 2002. I wanted to analyse if the students' writing fluency had increased in these two years and these four moments represented the beginning, middle and end of all this process.

#### 3.4.5.1. MEASURES OF FLUENCY USED WITH JOURNALS.

Following again Wolf-Quintero's method of analysis I measured fluency in journals. The reason for analysing this tool was that I also wanted to have some results based on reliable measures, not only personal impressions about the evolution of my students' writing in their journals. First of all, I identified

the T-units in the entries selected for the study and then counted the words that every T-unit contained (W/T). Moreover, I counted the total number of words that they had written in the entries.

Accuracy was not measured in the case of the journals because I considered that during all the process my main concern had always been on content not on grammar accuracy. A characteristic which, on the other hand, I consider more important for an academic composition that serves as a practice for the final *Selectivity* exam.

To finish this section the following chart summarises the instruments used in the study:

GROUP A	GROUP B
Humanistic group N = 35  3 essays  8 entries in their journals corresponding to four weeks.  Mid-term survey.  Overall evaluation survey.	Scientific group N = 21  3 essays  Mid-term survey.  Overall evaluation survey.

## **CHAPTER 4**

## **ANALYSIS OF THE DATA**

## 4.1. TEST RESULTS

In September 2000 all the High School students did a test. The results showed that 85.7% of the Humanistic group had failed the exam and only 14.2% had passed. Whereas in the Scientific group 66.6% of the students had failed and 33.3% had passed.

## 4.2. SURVEY RESULTS

#### 4.2.1. MID-TERM RESULTS.

31 High School students of the Humanistic group (A) out of 35 answered this survey in February 2001. 83% considered that the task of writing in their journals was difficult for them. However, 70% of them also recognised that they did not always write twice a week as they should have.

74% of the students did not want that I said what they had to write in their journals. Only 8 students were for this change. Grammar correction was one point in which most students coincided. 84% wanted that the teacher corrected their journals. Concerning evaluation, 29 out of 31, did not want that the teacher gave them any mark for their work in the journals.

## 4.2.2. OVERALL EVALUATION SURVEY

In June 2002 I administered the last survey of the study (see appendix D). 19 students from group A answered the survey. This survey included two types of questions. The first part had 18 Yes/No questions and the second part 25 open-ended questions. The next chart shows the results of the first part of the survey:

## Overall evaluation survey: Yes/No questions results

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. There is nothing to be gained from writing in a journal.	32%	68%
2. I learn more about writing by practising writing.	90%	10%
3. Because of journal writing , I have more confidence in my writing ability.	58%	42%
4. I am now able to write longer entries in my journal.	74%	26%
5. Writing in my journal has improved my writing skills.	63%	37%
6. I enjoy expressing my ideas in writing.	47%	53%
7. I am better able to write "formal" essays because of journal writing.		47%
8. I like discussing my writings with others.	22%	78%
9. I would enjoy seeing my writing published.	5%	95%
10. It takes me a long time to finish a writing assignment	58%	42%
11. I enjoy getting feedback on my writing.	84%	16%
12. I put a lot of time and effort into a writing assignment.	61%	39%
13. I have trouble filling the page when given a writing assignment.	53%	47%
14. I wish I were a better writer.	74%	26%
15. Writing in a journal made me feel less nervous about writing.	53%	47%
16. I have come up with some good writing ideas this year.	63%	37%
17. I am proud of the writing I have accomplished in my journal.	90%	10%
18. I am proud of the writing assignment I have completed this year.	95%	5%

In the second part of the survey, 83% of the students considered that writing in their journals helped them to improve their level of English. More precisely they affirmed that their vocabulary, their verb tenses and their fluency had improved thanks to the practice in their diaries. Only two students did not consider this practice helpful and added that it was because they had not done the writings regularly.

Among the 15 students who considered that writing in their diaries had helped them to improve their English, 12 affirmed that this had also helped them to organise their ideas in more formal compositions and had given them more confidence. 5 students thought that journals did not help them to do further writings and one continued thinking that although journal writing did not give him more confidence it helped him to have more fluency.

The fact that I suggested some topics to the students was well accepted among the students. 10 out of 18 thought that in this way the writing was not so monotonous. 3 students found this practice helpful only some days, and the rest ,4 did not mind at all.

83% of the students found it fair that I, the teacher, also wrote a diary and shared it with them. Whereas 3 students found it difficult to understand and even long to read.

83% wrote regularly their diaries (15), although 38.8% of them (7) complained that sometimes it was hard for them to write because of lack of time. As for the evaluation of the diaries 15 students found that their mark was fair and in accordance with their work, 1 student considered it unfair and 2 did not know their mark when they answered the survey. The following chart summarises the answers of the students:

## 4.3. COMPOSITION RESULTS

## 4.3.1. COMPOSITION RESULTS: SELECTIVITY CRITERIA (0-10)

Following a 0-10 scale based on the *selectivity* marking criteria (see appendix H), the results of the compositions analysed in the two groups were:

GROUP A ( HUMANISTIC )	letter)	02	2
NAME TEST RESULT	FEB.01 (letter)	MARCH 02 (story)	APRIL 02 (speech)
MIRIAM ROMERO 8,5	5,5	7	8
RAQUEL ENACHE 5,5	5,5	8	6
TAMARA DIAZ 4,2	4,5	5	7
ANA PALMA 2,2	4	4	4,5

GROUP B ( SCIENTIFIC )		letter)	H 02 Against)	2
NAME TEST RESULT	FEB.01 (letter)	MARCH 02 (For & Agair	APRIL 02 (speech)	
VERONICA CATENA 9		7,5	8,5	9
M. LAZARO 5,75		5	5	6
ANTONIO MARTIN 3,6		4	3,5	3
MONICA AMADO 3		7	3	4

#### 4.3.2. COMPOSITION RESULTS: FLUENCY AND ACCURACY.

Fluency and accuracy were also measured in the compositions done by the students. In the following pages I will present the results of this analysis, but first I will indicate how I will present the data:

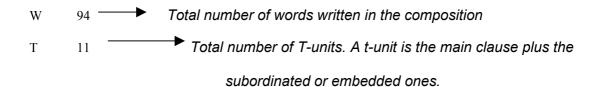
#### Example:

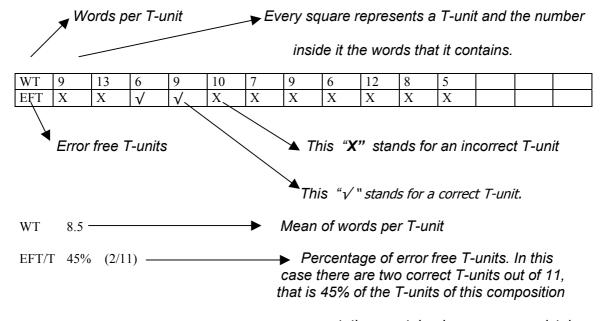
1) A detailed chart of every student with all the results of the analysis is displayed:

ANA PALMA A2 ——— Name of the student selected and the group to which he belongs

Title of the composition, when it was written and the mark.\_\_\_\_\_

#### **INFORMAL LETTER** FEB-01 MARK 4/



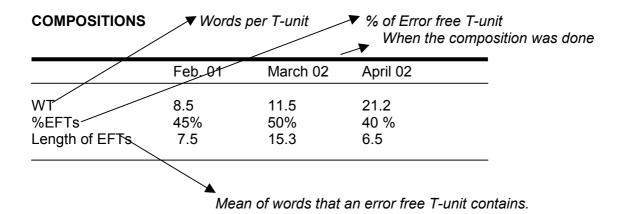


were correct, they contained no grammar mistake.

Length of EFTs 7.5 \_\_\_\_\_ Mean of words contained in the error free *T-units*.

2) Another chart summarises the data:

## Summary of the data (compositions):

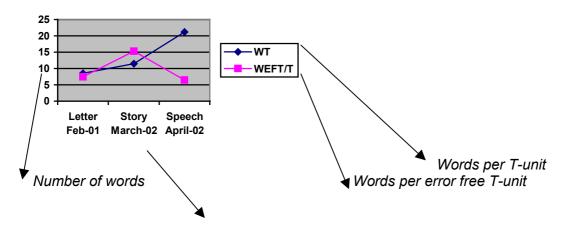


3) And finally a graphic showing how the items analysed, both in the journals and in the composition, are changing in time.

## **Graphic (compositions):**

Graphic showing the number of words per T-unit and the number of words per error free T-unit written in every composition analysed.

## ANA PALMA 2,2



Title of the composition and when it was done.

## 4.3.2.1. GROUP A1

Two students form group A1: Miriam Romero and Rakel Enache. The results of the data analysed are the following:

## MIRIAM ROMERO TEST MARK: 8,5

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## **INFORMAL LETTER FEB-01 MARK 5,5**

W 160 T 11

W	T	4	6	4	10	9	9	22	35	17	18	26		
EF		$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X		

WT 14.5 EFT/T 63.6% (7/11)

Length of EFTs 8.4

#### STORY MARCH-02 MARK 7

W 180 T 11

	11												
WT	11	6	10	12	32	19	20	20	13	24	13		
EFT	$\checkmark$	<b>√</b>	$\checkmark$	√	X	X			$\sqrt{}$	$\checkmark$			

WT 16.36

EFT/T 81% (9/11)

Length of EFTs 14.3

## SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 8

W 238 T 12

WT	13	16	18	15	29	20	28	21	33	12	24	9	
EFT	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	

WT 19.8

EFT/T 66.6% (8/12)

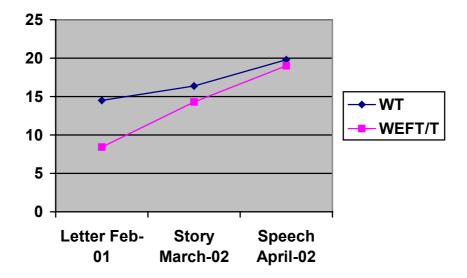
Length of EFTs 19

## Summary of the data:

## COMPOSITIONS

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT %EFTs	14.5 63.6%	16.36 81%	19.8 66.6%
Length of EFTs	8.4	14.3	19

## **MIRIAM ROMERO**



## **RAKEL ENACHE** PLACEMENT TEST MARK: 5,5

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## INFORMAL LETTER FEB-01 MARK 5,5/

W 130 T 11

WT	13	21	7	15	7	13	4	18	15	11	6		
EFT	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		

WT 11.8 EFT/T 45% (5/11) Length of EFTs 7

## STORY MARCH-02 MARK 8/

W 209 T 15

WT	8	19	20	23	8	17	15	20	9	9	12	15	12	5	17
	X	X	$\sqrt{}$	X	$\sqrt{}$	X	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	$\sqrt{}$	X	X	$\checkmark$

WT 13.9 EFT/T 60% (9/15) Length of EFTs 13.88

## SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 6/

W 220 T 14

	WT	12	32	22	23	17	9	8	15	6	11	11	16	15	22	5	7
ſ		X	X	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$

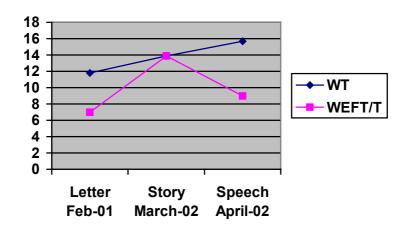
WT 15.7 EFT/T 30% (4/14) Length of EFTs 9

## Summary of the data

## **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	11.8	13.9	15.7	
%EFTs	45%	60%	30 %	
Length of EFTs	7	13.88	9	

## **RAKEL ENACHE**



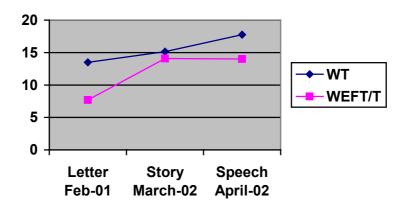
I will now present the mean of the data of these two students that form group A1.

## **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	13.15	15.13	17.75	
%EFTs	54.3%	70.5%	48.3%	
Length of EFTs	7 .7	14.09	14	

The following graphic represents the mean of the results of the two students that form group A1. Fluency has increased considerably from 13.15 words per T-unit to 17.75. However, although accuracy experimented an increase from 8 to 14.09, it remains almost the same in the last two compositions, 14.09 and 14.

## FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP A1



## 4.3.2.2. GROUP A2

Two students form group A2: Tamara Díaz and Ana Palma. The results of the data analysed are the following:

## TAMARA DIAZ TEST MARK: 4,2

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## INFORMAL LETTER FEB-01 MARK 4,5/

W 115 T 14

ĺ	WT	6	4	4	3	8	8	9	11	6	7	6	18	10	5
	EFT		X		$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	

WT 8.2 EFT/T 50% (7/14) Length of EFTs 6.7

## STORY MARCH-02 MARK 5/

W 101 T 10

WT	11	6	15	22	7	10	7	14	6	3		
EFT	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		

WT 10.1 EFT/T 60% (6/10) Length of EFTs 6.66

#### SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 7

W 201 T 10

WT	13	10	24	37	22	23	12	18	18	24		
EFT	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$		

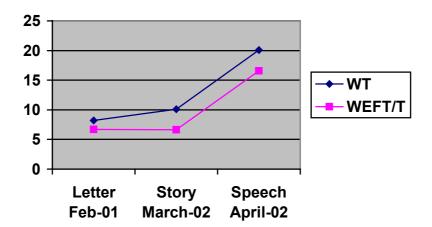
WT 20.1 EFT/T 50% (5/10) Length of EFTs 16.6

## Summary of the data:

## COMPOSITIONS

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT	8.2	10.1	20.1
%EFTs	50%	60%	50 %
Length of EFTs	6.7	6.6	16.6

## **TAMARA DIAZ**



## ANA PALMA TEST MARK: 2,2

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## **INFORMAL LETTER** FEB-01 MARK 4/

W 94 T 11

	WT	9	13	6	9	10	7	9	6	12	8	5		
ĺ	EFT	X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

WT 8.5

EFT/T 45% (2/11)

Length of EFTs 7.5

## STORY MARCH-02 MARK 4/

W 69 T 6

WT	14	6	14	12	5	18					
	$\checkmark$	X	$\sqrt{}$	X	X	$\checkmark$					

WT 11.5

EFT/T 50% (3/6)

Length of EFTs 15.3

## SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 4,5

W 212 T 10

WT	5	5	9	7	14	10	12	27	8	7		
		$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	X	X	$\checkmark$		

WT 21.2

EFT/T 40% (4/10)

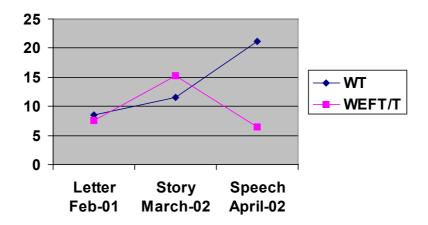
Length of EFTs 6.5

## Summary of the data:

## COMPOSITIONS

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	8.5	11.5	21.2	
%EFTs	45%	50%	40 %	
Length of EFTs	7.5	15.3	6.5	

## ANA PALMA 2,2



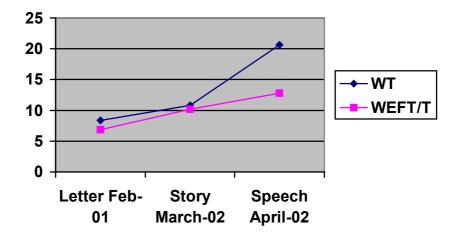
I will now present the mean of the data of these two students that form group A2.

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	8.35	10.8	20.65	
%EFTs	47.5%	55%	45%	
Length of EFTs	6.85	10.2	12.8	

The following graphic represents the mean of the results of the two students that form group A2. Fluency has increased considerably from 8.35 words per T-unit to 20.65. Likewise, accuracy has experimented an increase of almost 50%, from 6.85 to 12.8 words per error free T-unit.

# FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP A2



4.3.2.3. GROUP B1

The results of the data analysed are the following:

## **VERONICA CATENA** TEST MARK: 9

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## **INFORMAL LETTER** FEB-01 MARK 7,5

W 217 T 14

WT	6	6	6	15	21	32	14	21	19	19	21	14	9	14
EFT	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$						

WT 15.5

EFT/T 71.4% (10/14)

Length of EFTs 14.9

## FOR AND AGAINST MARCH-02 MARK 8,5

W 301 T 12

WT	11	17	30	20	48	35	20	30	27	15	27	21		
EFT				X	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X		

WT 25.08

EFT/T 41.6% (5/12)

Length of EFTs 18.4

## SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 9/

W 191 T 8

WT	16	22	30	14	33	38	38	14				
EFT	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$			X	$\checkmark$		$^{\wedge}$				

WT 23.87

EFT/T 87.5% (7/8)

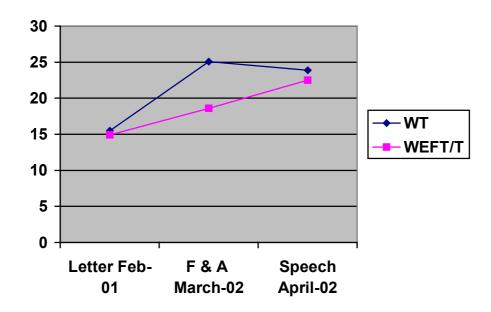
Length of EFTs 22.5

## Summary of the data:

## COMPOSITIONS

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT	15.5	25.08	23.87
%EFTs	71.4%	41.6%	87.5%
Length of EFTs	14.9	18.4	22.5

## **VERONICA CATENA**



## JEZABEL POVEDA TEST MARK: 5

## **COMPOSITIONS**

## **INFORMAL LETTER** FEB-01 MARK 4

W 114 T 9

WT	6	14	24	5	24	14	5	12	10			
EFT	$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X			

WT 12.66 EFT/T 44.4% (4/9) Length of EFTs 10

## FOR AND AGAINST MARCH-02 MARK 4,5

W 183 T 11

WT	14	10	12	28	11	24	13	15	14	31	11		
EFT	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

WT 16.63 EFT/T 9.09% (1/11) Length of EFTs 12

## SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 4/

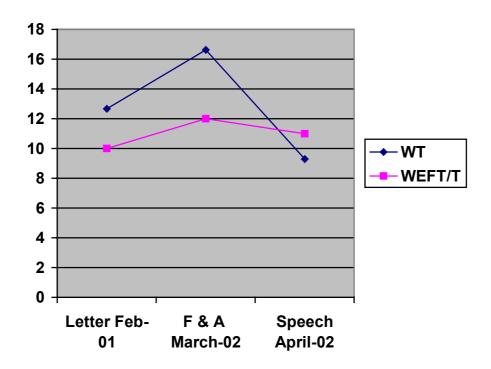
W 84 T 9

WT	11	8	13	17	19	9	7					
EFT		X	X	X	X	X	X					

WT 9.3 EFT/T 11.11% (1/9) Length of EFTs 11

Summary of the data:

#### **COMPOSITIONS**



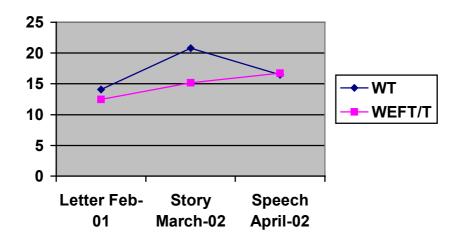
I will now present the mean of the data of these two students that form group B1.

#### COMPOSITIONS

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	14.08	20.8	16.5	
%EFTs	57.9%	25.3%	49.3%	

The following graphic represents the mean of the results of the two students that form group B1. Accuracy increased from 12.45 words per error free T-unit to 16.75. Fluency, with a peak of 20.8 words per T-unit improved as well.

## FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP B1



#### 4.3.2.4. GROUP B2

Two students from the Scientific class form group B2: Antonio Martin and Mónica Amado.

The results of the data analysed are the following:

ANTONIO MARTIN TEST MARK: 3,6

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

**INFORMAL LETTER FEB-01 MARK 4** 

W 142

T 11

WT	11	14	18	8	21	19	17	7	8	11	8		
EFT	$\checkmark$		X	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

WT 12.9 EFT/T 27% (3/11) Length of EFTs 11

#### FOR AND AGAINST MARCH-02 MARK 3,5

W 229 T 13

W	Γ	15	32	6	15	11	7	21	28	23	18	14	26		
EF	T	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		

WT 17.6 EFT/T 7.69% (1/13) Length of EFTs 6

#### SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 3/

W 168 T 8

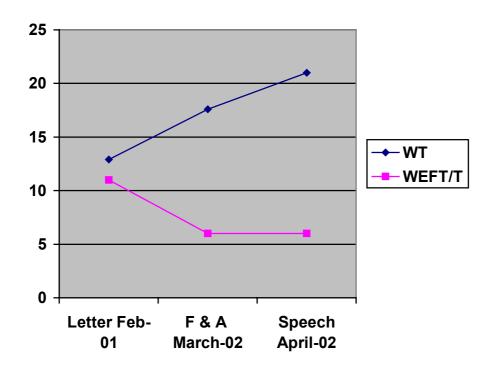
WT	22	21	12	6	36	30	17	24				
EFT	X	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	X	X				

WT 21 EFT/T 12.5% (1/8) Length of EFTs 6

#### Summary of the data:

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT	12.9	17.6	21
%EFTs	27%	7.69%	12.5%
Length of EFTs	11	6	6



#### MONICA AMADO TEST MARK: 3

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

#### **INFORMAL LETTER FEB-01 MARK 7**

W 129 T 11

WT	7	12	9	12	21	8	3	11	22	11	13		
EFT		X	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$	X		$\checkmark$	X	$\checkmark$	$\checkmark$		

WT 11.7 EFT/T 63% (7/11)

#### Length of EFTs 11.1

#### FOR AND AGAINST MARCH-02 MARK 3/

W 104 T 7

	WT	7	18	12	11	18	20	18				
]	EFT	$\checkmark$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X	X	X				

WT 14.85 EFT/T 28.5% (2/7) Length of EFTs 9

#### SPEECH APRIL-02 MARK 4/

W 117 T 7

WT	19	28	19	15	11	16	9					
EFT	X	X	$\sqrt{}$	X	X	$\checkmark$	X					

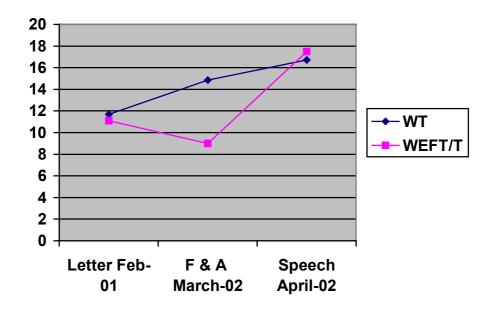
WT 16.71 EFT/T 28.5% (2/7) Length of EFTs 17.5

#### Summary of the data:

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT	11.7	14.85	16.71
%EFTs	63%	28.5%	28.5%
Length of EFTs	11.1	9	17.5

#### **MONICA AMADO 3**



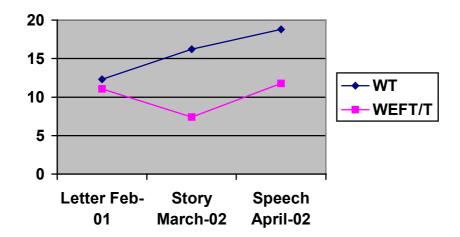
I will now present the mean of the data of these two students that form group B2.

#### **COMPOSITIONS**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	12.3	16.2	18.8	
%EFTs	45%	18%	20.5%	
Length of EFTs	11.05	7.4	11.75	

The following graphic represents the mean of the results of the two students that form group B2. Accuracy did not increased considerable and fluency improved from 12.3 words per T-unit to 18.8 words in one of the last compositions of the study.

# FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP B2



#### **Summary of the four groups results:**

#### **COMPOSITIONS GROUP A1**

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	13.15	15.13	17.75	
%EFTs	54.3%	70.5%	48.3%	
Length of EFTs	7 .7	14.09	14	

#### COMPOSITIONS GROUP A2.

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02
WT	8.35	10.8	20.65
%EFTs	47.5%	55%	45%
Length of EFTs	6.85	10.2	12.8

#### COMPOSITIONS GROUP B1.

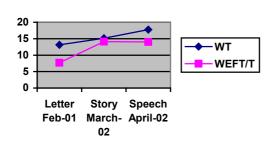
	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	14.08	20.8	16.5	
%EFTs	57.9%	25.3%	49.3%	
Length of EFTs	12.45	15.2	16.75	

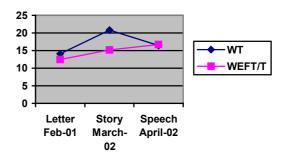
#### COMPOSITIONS GROUP B2.

	Feb. 01	March 02	April 02	
WT	12.3	16.2	18.8	
%EFTs	45%	18%	20.5%	
Length of EFTs	11.05	7.4	11.75	

## FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP A1

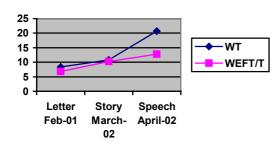
## FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP B1

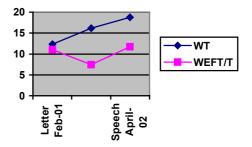




## FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP A2

FLUENCY AND ACCURACY IN THE COMPOSITIONS OF GROUP B2



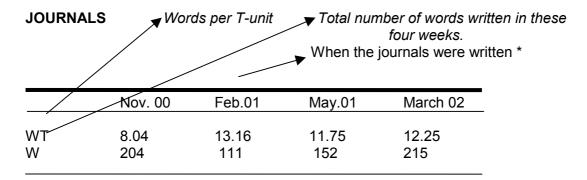


#### 4.4. JOURNALS RESULTS.

Fluency was also analysed in journals following Wolf-Quintero's method of analysis. The number of words per T-unit were counted and also the total number of words written in the four moments chosen for the study: November 2000, February 2001, May 2001 and March 2002. In the following sections I will present the data from groups A1 and A2.

#### Example:

#### Summary of the data (journals):

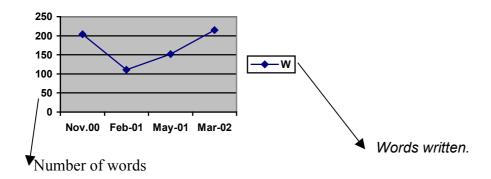


<sup>\*</sup> The data analysed correspond to four weeks done in November 2000, February 2001, May 2001 and March 2002. The students wrote two entries every week.

#### **Graphic (journal):**

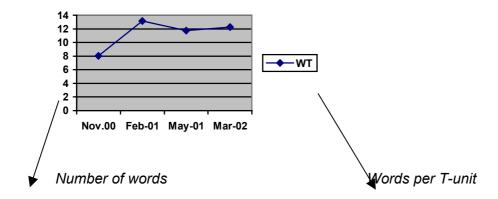
Graphic showing the number of words that this student, Ana Palma, has written in her journal during the four moments analysed: November 2000, February 2001, May 2001 and March 2002.

#### **ANA PALMA**



Graphic showing the number of words per T-unit that this student, Ana Palma, has written in her journal during the four moments analysed: November 2000, February 2001, May 2001 and March 2002.

#### **ANA PALMA**



#### 4.4.1. JOURNAL RESULTS: GROUP A1

The students Miriam Romero and Rakel Enache for the group A1. The results of the

analysis of their data is the following:

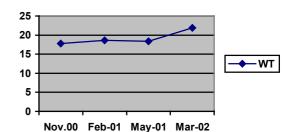
#### MIRIAM ROMERO

The number of words per T-unit that this student wrote in her journals increased from 17.75 to 21.92 as it is shown in the next chart and graphic.

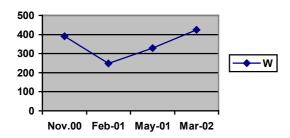
#### **JOURNALS**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	17.75	18.65	18.36	21.92
W	391	248	329	425

#### **MIRIAM ROMERO**



#### **MIRIAM ROMERO**



#### RAKEL ENACHE

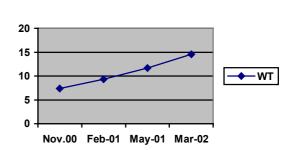
This student doubles the number of words per T-unit written at the beginning and the end of the study, from 7.4 to 14.59. In addition, the number of words that she writes in her journals goes from 88 to 378 in March 2002.

#### **DIARIES**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	7.4	9.35	11.65	14.59
W	88	210	414	378

#### 500 400 300 200 100 Nov.00 Feb-01 May-01 Mar-02

**RAKEL ENACHE** 



**RAKEL ENACHE** 

#### 4.4.1. JOURNAL RESULTS: GROUP A2

This group is formed by Tamara Díaz and Ana Palma.

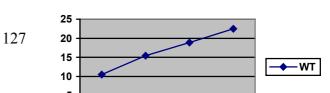
#### TAMARA DIAZ

This student also increments both the number of words written per T-unit, from 10.5 to 22.5 and the total number of words written in the four moments, from 60 to 180.5.

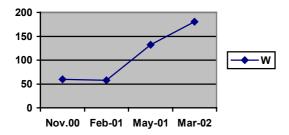
#### **JOURNALS**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	10.5	15.45	18.85	22.5
W	60	58	132	180.5

#### **TAMARA DIAZ**



#### **TAMARA DIAZ**



#### **ANA PALMA**

Whereas the number of words written by this student did not change considerably, the number of words written per T-unit changed from 8.04 to 12.25.

#### **JOURNALS**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	8.04	13.16	11.75	12.25
W	204	111	152	215

#### **ANA PALMA** 250 12 200 10 150 8 6 100 50 2 0 Nov.00 Feb-01 May-01 Mar-02 Nov.00 Feb-01 May-01 Mar-02

# -WT

**ANA PALMA** 

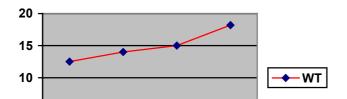
I will now present the mean of the data of these two students that form group A1.

#### **JOURNALS**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	12.5	14	15	18.2
W	239	229	371.5	401

This graphic represents the mean of the number of words per T-unit that the two students from group A1 wrote. Fluency has increased from 12.5 to 18.2 words per T-unit

#### **FLUENCY IN THE JOURNALS OF GROUP A1**



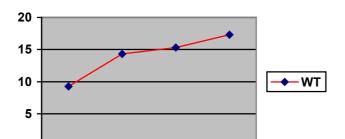
The following charts presents the mean of the data of the two students that form group A2.

#### **JOURNALS**

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	9.27	14.3	15.3	17.3
W	132	84.5	142	197.75

This graphic represents the mean of the number of words per T-unit that the two students from group A2 wrote. Fluency has increased from 9.27 to 17.3 words per T-unit

## FLUENCY IN THE JOURNALS OF GROUP A2



#### Summary of the two groups results:

#### JOURNALS GROUP A1

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	12.5	14	15	18.2
W	239	229	371.5	401

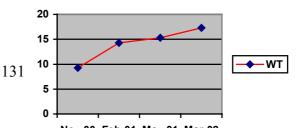
#### JOURNALS GROUP A2

	Nov. 00	Feb.01	May.01	March 02
WT	9.27	14.3	15.3	17.3
W	132	84.5	142	197.75

## FLUENCY IN THE JOURNALS OF GROUP A1

### 20 15 10 5

## FLUENCY IN THE JOURNALS OF GROUP A2



#### APPENDIX A

#### INITIAL SURVEY

#### WRITING DIARIES

Please answer the following questions

1) Have you ever written a diary before now?  YES /	NC	)
---	----	---

- 2) Do you think that you have received instruction on how to write compositions in English up to now (how to organise a paragraph, how to link ideas, etc)? YES / NO
- 3) Do you think that you have received instruction on how to write compositions in another language,
  Catalan, Spanish, French...?

  YES / NO
- 4) If your answer to question 3 is YES say in which language.
- 5) How many compositions would you say that you
  a) 0-5
  have written up to now in English (for example
  a letter, a dialogue, a narration...)
  b) 5-10
  c) 10-15
  d) MORE...
- 6) How many compositions would you say that you have written up to now in Spanish (for example a letter, a dialogue, a narration...)
- 7) How many compositions would you say that you have written up to now in Catalan (for example a letter, a dialogue, a narration...)
- 8) Do you think that writing in English is more difficult than for example reading, listening or speaking? Why?

- a) 0-5 b) 5-10
- c) 10-15 d) MORE...
- a) 0-5 b) 5-10 c) 10-15 d) MORE...

#### **APPENDIX B**

SUMMER REVIEW TEST Name: 1rst Batxillerat Group:

My friend, Sharon, and I walked past the old house every day on our way home from school. People said it was haunted but we didn't believe it. One day, we were feeling more adventurous than usual. We decided we had to go into that house. It was the biggest mistake of our lives!

Our parents didn't allow us to go near the house, but we told them that we were going to the cinema. We walked quickly down the street to the house. We decided not to go in the front door because we wanted to look at the outside of the house first. Sharon went to the left and I went to the right. We planned to meet at the back door. I got to the back door and waited and waited. But Sharon didn't come. I decided to go inside the house. I opened the door slowly and went inside. The house was dark and dirty. I called Sharon's name loudly. She didn't answer. I looked everywhere, but I couldn't find her. Finally I ran, crying, to Sharon's house. I told Sharon's parents the story. Sharon's mother stared at me angrily. She said that if Sharon wasn't safe, she was going to put a curse on me –on my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

We never found Sharon and her family moved away three years ago. I try not to think about the curse, but it's becoming more difficult not to think about it. You see, tomorrow is my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Completa les frases.

1.	Many people believed that the house			
	a.	was big	b. was old	was haunted
2.	Sh	aron and the writer ag	reed that the house	
	a.	wasn't haunted	b. was haunted	c. had ghosts
3.	Th	e writer		
	a.	met Sharon at	b. went into the	c. didn't go into
		the back door	house alone	the house

4.	Now the writer is atraid of		
	a. Sharon	b. ghosts	c. the curse
5.	The story happened		
	a. two years ago	b. almost six years ago	c. more than three years ago
			/5
	Troba aquestes paraule	s a la història. Pots esbrinar e	el seu significat?
	1. curse		
	2.haunted		
	3. loudly		
	4.mistake		
	5.moved		
	6.outside		
	7.angrily		
	8. stared		
			/3,5
SUMMER REVIEW TEST 1rst Batxillerat		Nan	ne: <b>Group</b>
1.	Completa les frases am	o la forma de <i>Present Perfect</i>	dels verbs entre parèntesis.
a.	I <i>have spoken</i> (speak	) to him many times.	
	b. He(	clean) his room.	
	c. We(t	oe) to London three times.	
	d. She(	give) us three tests this week	

e.	He	(discover) the truth.	
f.	She	. (pass) her driving test.	
g.	They	.(call) you many times.	
h.	It	(happen) many times recently.	
i.	She	(hear) that song before.	
j.	The pupils	(write) a lot of exams lately.	
			/4'5
Tri	a el verb correcte a c	ada frase.	
Lis	ten! The crowd chee	Is cheering	
He	rarely passes/ is pas	ssing his exams	
Th	ey travel/ are travellir	ng abroad every summer.	
Th	ey don't rehearse / a	aren't rehearsing for the show now.	
Ch	ildren often fight / are	e fighting	
Ро	licemen don't direct /	aren't directing traffic now.	
Th	e actor has / is havin	g a drama class every Tuesday.	
Th	e photographer photo	ographs / is photographing today's race.	

2.

a.

b.

C.

d.

e.

f.

g.

h.

i. The Torres family frequently has / is having visitors.

3.	/4'5 Tria la paraula correcta.
b. c. d.	The children are playing <i>quietly</i> (quiet/quietly)  She will read the story
h.	My father hates music. (loud/loudly)
i.	Ted plays the organ very (good/well)
j.	My grandmother has a garden. (beautiful/beautifully)/4'5
	MMER REVIEW TEST Name: st Batxillerat Group
4.	Omple els espais en blanc amb els verbs entre parèntesis. Fes servir el <i>Past</i> Continuous o el <i>Past Simple</i> .

j. Listen! The weatherman forecasts / is forecasting more rain.

Cha	arles 1. Was (be) happy racing cars. There was one thing he 2 (not
like	e). He 3 (want) to race in a British car, but there 4 (not be)
any	good racing cars.
On	e day, when Charles 5 (race) in France, he 6 (hear) about
Fre	ederick. He 7 (not plan) a trip home to England, but he
8	(decide) to go and try to talk to Frederick. He found out that Frederick
10.	(not plan) to build a racing car. Charles 11
(co	nvince) him to try. Frederick and Charles 12 (begin) to work
tog	ether and the rest is history.
	/5'5
5.	Writing (80-100 words)
a.	Explain something funny that has happened to you this summer.
b.	Talk about you.
C.	Free writing.
	/10'5

#### APPENDIX C

#### MID-TERM SURVEY

#### WRITING DIARIES

Please answer the following questions

<ol> <li>You have been writing in your diaries for a few months, did you find it difficult?</li> </ol>	YES / NO
2) Did you write it regularly (twice a week)?	YES / NO
3) Any reason for not doing it?	
4) Do you think it is boring writing in it?	YES / NO

5) Do you think that me, the teacher, should specify the topic about which you have to write? Why?	YES /NO
6) Do you think that I should correct the grammar in your diaries?	YES / NO
7) Do you think that I should give you a mark for it?	YES / NO
8) Do you think that writing your diary helps you to improve your English? Why?	YES / NO
9) Do you think that I should also write a diary?	YES / NO

COMMENTS.

#### APPENDIX D

#### OVERALL EVALUATION SURVEY (YES/NO QUESTIONS)

Below are a series of statements about writing and journaling. There are no right or wrong answers, but please be as honest as possible. Check the answer to the statement as it best applies to you.

Agree/Disagree Statements:

Yes/No1. There is nothing to be gained from writing in a journal.

Yes/No2. I learn more about writing by practising writing.

Yes/No3. Because of journal writing, I have more confidence in my writing ability.

Yes/No4. I am now able to write longer entries in my journal.

Yes/No5. Writing in my journal has improved my writing skills.

Yes/No6. I enjoy expressing my ideas in writing.

Yes/No7. I am better able to write "formal" essays because of journal writing.

- Yes/No8. I like discussing my writings with others.
- Yes/No9. I would enjoy seeing my writing published.
- Yes/No10. It takes me a long time to finish a writing assignment.
- Yes/No11. I enjoy getting feedback on my writing.
- Yes/No12. I put a lot of time and effort into a writing assignment.
- Yes/No13. I have trouble filling the page when given a writing assignment.
- Yes/No14. I wish I were a better writer.
- Yes/No15. Writing in a journal made me feel less nervous about writing.
- Yes/No16. I have come up with some good writing ideas this year.
- Yes/No17. I am proud of the writing I have accomplished in my journal.
- Yes/No18. I am proud of the writing assignment I have completed this year.

#### OVERALL EVALUATION SURVEY (OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS)

- 1) ¿Crees que después de estar escribiendo todo este tiempo en el diario tu nivel de inglés ha mejorado?
- 2) ¿Crees que el escribir en el diario te ha ayudado a tener más confianza en ti mismo/a a la hora de escribir una redacción?
- 3) Este año he sugerido unos temas cada día para escoger, a diferencia del año pasado,. ¿Qué opinas sobre esto, te ha ayudado, no ha sido tan monótono, no te ha ayudado...
- 4) ¿Qué opinas sobre los comentarios que te escribía yo en el diario? Te han ayudado, eran apropiados, cortos, los entendías, no los leías...
- ¿Cuál es vuestra opinión sobre vuestra nota del diario, es justa, injusta... ¿Por qué?.
- 6) ¿Piensas que el diario te ha ayudado a explicarme cosas que te influían o afectaban como persona y como alumna mía que no hubieses compartido de forma oral? ¿Por qué?
- 7) ¿Ha sido "pesado" escribir en el diario o le has encontrado el "gustillo" al final? ¿Lo echarás de menos?
- 8) Si no te ha gustado escribir explícame las razones por las que no has escrito regularmente o si has escrito sólo por obligación o por la nota final.

- 9) ¿Qué opinas del hecho de que yo también escribiese en la hora de tutoría y compartiese también mis ideas con vosotros / as?
- 10) ¿Qué ha sido lo mejor y lo peor de escribir en el diario?

#### **APPENDIX E**

#### **SELECTIVITAT MAKING CRITERIA**

#### **B.** Composition: 4 points

The following aspects will be evaluated separately on a scale of 0 to 10 points. After each aspect has been corrected, it will be given a value of 25% of the total composition grade.

b.1 Grammar (25 % of the composition grade)
Two different aspects will be contemplated under this heading:

- the correct and appropriate use of morphological and syntactic structures
- the range (variety and complexity) of structures used.

b.2 Vocabulary (25 % of the composition grade) Two main aspects will be considered:

- the range and appropriate use of vocabulary (variety of semantic fields, richness, phrasal verbs, collocations, idiomatic expressions, linking words,...).
- the correct spelling of words.

b.3 Text / Paragraph building (25 % of the composition grade) Two main aspects will be examined:

- The clarity of organization of ideas within the sentence, the paragraph and the text
- The clear and correct use of punctuation and text markers.

b.4 Maturity (25 % of the composition grade) Aspects contemplated in this category:

• The skillful handling of the topic (clear thinking, good outline, well-reasoned ideas, creativity, ...)

#### Reminders

- Wrong format: If a composition does not follow the format (letter, dialogue, news report, diary, for and against argumentation, description, narrative, ...) of the chosen option, it will be penalized up to 1 point.
- Wrong topic: No points will be given to a composition written on a topic not included in the two given options.

#### APPENDIX F



Objectives: 1. practice writing – keeping your pencil moving across the page.

- 2. practice expressing your thoughts on many topics in writing.
- 3. create a source for topics for "formal" essays.

Guidelines: 1. Use a separate single-subject notebook as your journal.

- 2. Your journal should only contain entries for credit in this class.
- 4. Each entry needs a heading in the upper right corner (date, time, and location).
- 5. For full credit, each entry must be one page in length (some entries will be longer) and show reasonable effort.
- 6. During in-class writing, we will write silently for 15 minutes.

You must reserve your questions/comments for before or after the writing time. If you are stumped, write your questions in your journal as part of our entry. Do not stop writing until time is called. If you don't know any word in English write it in Spanish or Catalan. You cannot finish early. It is obligatory to bring the diary to class this day.

7. Spelling does not count, but neatness and effort do.

- 8. I will suggest some tittles for your entries, you are free to choose one or do a free writing in your diary.
- 9. This is part of your final mark. Use it to your advantage.

#### **APPENDIX G**

#### **JOURNALS**

Here are some of the suggestions for the entries of your journals. Please write regularly and bring your journal every thursday. Your mark will reflect your everyday work.

18-3-2002	<ul> <li>a) Read some of your last entries. Choose one and comment it.</li> <li>b) What do you think about writing (again/for the first time) in a journal?</li> <li>c) Freewriting.</li> </ul>
20-3-2001	<ul><li>a) Easter Holidays. At least!</li><li>b) My exam results this term.</li><li>c) Freewriting.</li></ul>
21-3-2002	<ul><li>a) I have finished my research work. At least!</li><li>b) My favourite music.</li><li>c)Freewriting.</li></ul>
25-3-2002	a)Was this weekend different from the rest? Why or why not? b)How do you feel when you are on holidays? c) Freewriting.
27-3-2002	<ul><li>a)Explain three things that have changed in your life with the holidays.</li><li>b)Have you gone to the cinema? What did you see? Do you recommend it to me?</li></ul>

c) Freewriting

28-3-2002 a)What are your plans for this weekend?

b)Homework. Should we have them on holidays?

c) Freewriting

1-4-2002 a) Do you normally celebrate "La Mona"? Why or Why not?

b) How do you feel about starting school again?

c) Freewriting.

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