

The impact of applying the multisensory approach to enhance the writing process in 7th-grade students

El impacto de aplicar el enfoque multisensorial para mejorar el proceso de escritura en estudiantes de 7° EGB

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of the application of a multisensory approach in the writing process in EFL. Adopting a quantitative research approach using a random selection design, a single group was chosen via random draw from three established parallel groups. The way the research was conducted followed three steps: the diagnostic phase, using a pre-test, the pedagogical intervention applying the multisensory activities to enhance writing performance, and the last stage, the post-test after the intervention. A pre-test and post-test were applied using the sample Breakthrough test, just the writing section (2 tasks: task 5 filling the gaps and task 6: description of a picture) to 33 students of the seventh grade in Ecuador who participated in the research. Drawing on this idea, the objective is to enhance students' motivation, idea development, and the building of meaningful texts. It means that writing is not just a group of words; it allows learners to construct meaning in written form, linking ideas or opinions (Parra, 2021). The data reveal that the use of the multisensory approach has a favorable impact on the writing process, thereby serving as a cornerstone for the achievement of the learning process. The main conclusion states that the integration of multi-channel sensory experiences works as a transformative pedagogical practice that overcomes the traditional methods of text-based learning, serving as a model to reduce writing mistakes in the EFL context.

Resumen

El propósito del presente estudio es investigar la efectividad de la aplicación de un enfoque multisensorial en el proceso de escritura en inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL). Adoptando un enfoque de investigación cuantitativa con un diseño de selección aleatoria, se seleccionó un solo grupo mediante sorteo aleatorio de entre tres grupos paralelos establecidos. La investigación se llevó a cabo en tres etapas: la fase diagnóstica, mediante una prueba previa; la intervención pedagógica, aplicando actividades multisensoriales para mejorar el desempeño en la escritura; y la etapa final, la prueba posterior a la intervención. Se aplicó una prueba previa y una posterior utilizando la prueba Breakthrough, específicamente la sección de escritura (dos tareas: tarea 5: completar espacios en blanco y tarea 6: descripción de una imagen), a 33 estudiantes de séptimo grado en Ecuador que

participaron en la investigación. Partiendo de esta idea, el objetivo es potenciar la motivación de los estudiantes, el desarrollo de ideas y la construcción de textos significativos. Esto significa que la escritura no es solo un conjunto de palabras; permite a los estudiantes construir significado en forma escrita, vinculando ideas u opiniones (Parra, 2021). Los datos revelan que el uso del enfoque multisensorial tiene un impacto positivo en el proceso de escritura, constituyendo así un pilar fundamental para el éxito del aprendizaje. La principal conclusión afirma que la integración de experiencias sensoriales multicanal funciona como una práctica pedagógica transformadora que supera los métodos tradicionales de aprendizaje basados en textos, sirviendo como modelo para reducir los errores de escritura en el contexto de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

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INTRODUCTION

The English language has gained greater relevance in education over the years, enhancing the training of core language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Among these, writing maintains an essential role in developing productive skills, as it fosters vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, language accuracy, and creativity. This production skill requires the simultaneous incorporation of cognitive, linguistic, and motor functions (Myhill, 2023). Enhancing writing in the EFL context becomes a meaningful challenge in actual classrooms, where the content and interaction are limited; as a result, the activities promoted are repetitive, monotonous, and do not represent a real use of the language. These limitations are affected by barriers that involve cognitive and emotional aspects, where learners struggle with encoding and developing ideas, structuring sentences, or even producing a single paragraph. It highlights the perspective to search for different approaches, strategies, or techniques that trigger sensory channels to foster information processing.

On a worldwide scale, the CEFR outlines writing at the A1 and A2 levels as a fundamental part of language proficiency in real-life contexts to enhance communicative competence. The Common European Framework in its companion volume (2020) indicated the term of differentiated profiles, which aims to use different strategies in their path to master the English language.

Regarding Ecuadorian education, this situation is considered quite critical. Despite the numerous changes concerning the curricular reforms to improve the communicative competences in EFL (Ministry of Education, 2022), some trials, such as the number of students per classroom or the number of class hours, limit the linguistic development. At the same time, 7th-grade teachers focused only on isolated grammar topics instead of creative and authentic writing production, which is a common characteristic in educational contexts with restricted resources (Soto et al., 2020; Castillo & Novoa, 2026).

Early studies in Ecuador highlight issues related to a lack of resources or materials that can lead to decreased motivation and poor lexical retention among learners (Sinergia Académica, 2025; Roman Camacho, 2025); therefore, they encourage the implementation of innovative pedagogical practices aimed at facilitating the writing process. Likewise, the Ministry of Education in Ecuador (2016) stated that, based on its curricular guidelines, students must develop the core language skills (productive and receptive) since level A1;

however, learning outcomes expect learners to produce short texts using vocabulary and grammar structures. In contrast, the traditional methods are not enough to achieve the main goals because writing requires more copying, repetition, and isolated words or phrases.

The multisensory approach aims to promote emotional engagement, vocabulary retention, learner independence or autonomy, and great coherence in writing (Baehaqi et al., 2025). This method helps 7th-grade students understand and process grammar structures and vocabulary flexibly, aligned with neuroeducation principles that foster a multisensorial experience, thereby supporting better brain learning (Prystauka et al., 2023; Seidl et al., 2022). Integrating the body with the 5 senses in the writing process can facilitate reducing anxiety and the fear of making a mistake, the main factors that influence low performance in writing tasks (Tai et al., 2020; Miller, 2023).

On the other hand, in Latin America, there is some evidence of the success of pedagogical practices that apply a multisensory approach, and this evidence continues to grow. Regional studies of sensory scaffolding improve spelling and give learners autonomy in limited-resource contexts (Zamora, 2025; Obando, 2020). It is not necessary to invest a lot in sensorial materials that enhance daily and meaningful practice for beginning levels (Smith, 2025; JPSE, 2024). In view of this, VAKT comes as a favorable idea and solution to reduce the gap between curricular learning goals and real communicative competence (Mora, 2024; UNESCO, 2023).

The application of multisensory strategies has its own foundation in the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and the Neuroeducation background. This recent research demonstrates that the natural communication system works well when the five senses are used, which influences long-term retention (Prystauka et al., 2023; Seidl et al., 2022). Additionally, Parra (2021) carried out research that demonstrates how the multisensory approach is effective in developing a skill as an effective motivational way for students. This research responds to the gap by applying the approach in writing instruction with young students to register results based on the action research design to practice and get outcomes.

This pedagogical instruction fits well with the reality of a government-subsidized private school, since it is not essential to use technological tools or sophisticated software. It means that multisensory methodology provides a sensory experience through students' autonomy to learn by touching, moving, and visualizing the language to show, as a result, support for the automatization of writing instead of the limited literacy development in traditional methodologies or strategies applied in the EFL (Soto et al., 2020; Roman Camacho, 2025). All the research was a guide to reinforce the idea of changing teaching practices since the actual society requires training students' skills in different areas where they can perform activities autonomously and efficiently to express their ideas and opinions. However, this starts with the young learners' learning process and extends to adults. Consequently, the curiosity of discovering new trends in teaching helps us to understand that each student is different and can work based on their context or background.

Therefore, this study addresses a pedagogical need where elements like innovation and engagement are keys to applying strategies in kids for EFL writing instruction, and applying a multisensory approach from level A2. Besides, this research aims to determine the impact of the multisensory approach on the writing sub-skills by taking into account the assembly of sensorial stimuli in an interactive class with natural systems of learning in the learner's brain (Mayer, 2021; Hattie, 2023). By transforming the writing process into a concrete sensorial experience, teachers manage to boost the performance of 7th graders in the Ecuadorian system (Paredes, 2021; Frontiers in Education, 2024).

Finally, the present study aims to examine the efficacy of the multisensory approach in the students' writing performance. Therefore, the main objective is to analyze the effect of

a multisensory approach on the development of writing fluency in 7th-grade students. Meanwhile, the specific objectives are: 1- To diagnose students' initial writing skill fluency to have a detailed understanding of their abilities. 2-To apply multisensory activities in the regular English classes. 3-To evaluate writing skill improvements after the intervention with multisensory activities.

Multisensory approach

A multisensory approach is considered an evidence-based instructional methodology that entails senses such as tactile, visual, kinesthetic, and auditory as the main key for learning and memory retention (Birsh & C, 2019). Besides, these authors stated that learning processes do not have only a channel of input since it can give students a chance to acquire new knowledge through seeing, hearing, and moving the material. To illustrate, learners can write letters using sand while they can pronounce words or entire phrases.

This method is effective for students with diverse learning needs. It allows them to use and explore different ways of understanding new information or content. The multisensory methodology is relevant to English language teaching. It shows how skills such as writing, speaking, reading, and listening can be acquired. Furthermore, its strategies relate to constructivist principles. These focus on making learning meaningful through experiences that reinforce cognitive skills. This approach was once called a multimodal strategy. It helps students explore knowledge acquisition beyond reading or a single audio activity.

On the other hand, it provides instructional strategies that integrate all senses as a stimulus by a simultaneous linking between eye, ear, voice, and hand to boost learning, especially in children. This feature is advantageous to activate different pathways in the brain (Birsh & C, 2019). The consciousness of the multisensory approach came from the idea of experiential learning from another perspective from the traditional, so educational psychologists in the late 19th century fostered a theory related to combining all senses to get a meaningful learning experience. To sum up, the multisensory method focuses on providing an active learning experience for students, emphasizing dynamism and exploration through different senses, resulting in instruction that is directly focused on the student and making it effective and practical for use across various subjects, including English language instruction.

Writing Skill

Language is considered a fundamental tool for communication. There are several ways we can communicate in different languages, including English. In the English language, we have four fundamental skills: speaking, listening, writing, and reading. Writing is considered a production skill. Production skills are responsible for creating the message we want to convey so that another person can receive and understand it. Therefore, writing is an essential skill in English that must be learned for effective communication through words, phrases, or large texts (Sa'adah, 2020).

For producing an excellent or understandable text in the English language, it is necessary to know a variety of vocabulary and recognize the different grammatical tenses in order to express ourselves correctly within the context and ultimately be understandable to others (Sa'adah, 2020).

There are several ways to write, but within the English language teaching-learning process, writing has certain steps that help students, in one way or another, create a concise and correctly written text. Regardless of whether the learner is a child or an adult, steps are always needed to gradually improve their writing skills, from short descriptions to academic

texts. Therefore, the following steps should be taken into account and adapted according to the student's English level. The steps for writing are planning, drafting, editing, and final version (Sa'adah, 2020).

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On the other hand, it is important to mention that within writing, there are several types based on the context and purpose of the text. Among them are:

1. Free writing: As its name suggests, this type of writing is free, in which the student expresses their own ideas about a particular topic, usually chosen by each student. In this type of writing, aspects such as spelling, grammar, and others are not given much importance.
2. Controlled writing: This type of writing has its own purpose. In this type of writing, students receive instruction or guidance to create a paragraph based on a template predetermined by the teacher. In this case, the focus is on students using resources such as vocabulary and grammar to write. This type of writing serves to reinforce the knowledge learned during class, whether it is a grammar topic, a tense, or a specific vocabulary topic.
3. Guided writing: In this type of writing, the teacher guides the student to complete a piece of writing through discussions, text construction, and generally assessing the student's writing more independently. In this case, the teacher simply provides a short sentence in which the student must continue using different resources or previously learned content (Sa'adah, 2020).

Multisensory approach and writing skills

The multisensory methodology brings several benefits to different areas of language skills, and three important factors must be taken into account for its application: mechanics, composition, and spelling knowledge. From an early age, we can guide children with aspects of writing, starting with letter recognition, associating them with images, then with words, and finally with phrases. When children begin to write, they show 6 stages: Drawing, Wavy Scribbles, Letter-Like Scribbles, Random Letters in a Line, Patterned Letter Strings, and Conventional Writing. Each stage of learning represents a sequence, so it is highly dependent on the teacher's role for the student to develop their writing from expression with drawings to short descriptions. Once they practice going through each stage, they acquire knowledge of the language, and little by little, they relate it to the content around them (Birsh & C, 2019). Therefore, the teacher must provide materials and apply multisensory strategies in the writing process. Writing materials shouldn't be limited to a pencil and paper, so students should be provided with both technological and non-technological materials so they understand that a written message doesn't just require a sheet of paper (Birsh & C, 2019).

Different materials can be used, always depending on the students' level, the topic being covered, and what's available. There are specific ways to encourage writing from an early age. We describe the following here.

- Foster Developing Writing Skills by Encouraging Children to Write Messages or Descriptions.

- Enhance Developing Writing Skills by Setting Up Mailboxes.
- Boost Up-and-coming Writing Skills by creating Lists.
- Strengthen Up-and-coming Writing Skills by Creating a Word Wall or a Collection of Words.
- Flashcards
- Encourage Developing Writing Skills through Journals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study focuses on a quantitative approach, which is uniquely suitable for examining the empirical effect of the multisensory approach methodology on EFL writing skills among seventh-grade students. Instead of offering a simple account of the phenomenon, a quantitative framework allows for the objective, organized, and measurable evaluation of causal mechanics between specific teaching practices and student performance. Based on Creswell and Creswell (2022), a quantitative approach is essential when the research aim is to examine how an independent variable (the multisensory approach) impacts a dependent variable (writing skills). Through standardized assessment tools like pre- and post-test scores, using structured rubrics, student achievement is converted into quantifiable data. These results can be analyzed to reduce researcher bias and secure the replication of these findings.

This approach will help the researcher test the hypothesis regarding the application of the multisensory methodology on which we will base our research. Moreover, it will allow for systematic interpretation of the collected numerical data and statistical analyses, ultimately leading to robust, evidence-based conclusions that enhance the credibility of this study.

On the other hand, the study's design is pre-experimental. It is named this way because its degree of control is minimal. In this design, a pre-test and post-test are applied to a single group. The group receives treatment and is evaluated both before and after the treatment. This helps to determine the group's initial and final levels. Additionally, this design aims to provide a first realistic approach to the problem posed in the research (Lim, W., 2024).

In this way, the pre-experimental design by applying a pre-test and post-test helps us understand the effects of multi-sensory methodologies on learning English writing skills. An initial test will first be administered to determine the level of English proficiency in writing. We will then apply all the multi-sensory strategies. Finally, we will administer a post-test to determine whether these strategies had a positive or negative effect on learning or practicing English writing.

When selecting the sample for this research, several aspects were taken into account to help achieve better results. The sample type chosen is probabilistic cluster sampling, which Thompson (2021) stated is one in which the population is naturally divided into clusters (such as school classrooms). In order to maintain the random nature of the research, one specific 7th-grade course was designated from the available groups through a simple random draw, guaranteeing that each course had an equal chance of being selected. After the course had been chosen, all students within that specific class were involved in the sample.

In this section, the population is defined based on the elements of the study, which are focused on seventh-grade groups of basic general education (EGB). To determine the sample, a single cohort was chosen from the three groups or parallels existing at this grade. This approach helps to ensure that all three groups have an identical likelihood of being selected, as they share a standardized English level regarding the curriculum.

RESULTS

The following section presents the results from pre- and post-tests randomly assigned to 33 7th-grade EGB students in Ecuador. The first section emphasizes the results of the pretest of the writing section of the standardized Pearson exam "Breakthrough," suitable for Level A2, which is scored over 30 points.

Table 1.

Results from the pre-test over 30

N. of students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Score	23	21	20	23	24	20	23	20	23	21	27	26	28	21	20	26	23	28
N. of students	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33			
Score	19	21	20	22	22	19	22	23	20	18	17	22	21	24	25			

Note. Source: own elaboration based on the seventh-grade students' scores.

On the other hand, Table 2 presents the post-test results after applying the multisensory approach using tasks 5 and 6, as well as Pearson's Breakthrough test, which is suitable for level A2.

Table 2.

Results from post-test task six over 30

N. of students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Score	25	24	21	23	26	22	27	23	24	25	28	29	28	23	24	27	24	29
N. of students	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33			
Score	24	25	22	23	25	22	24	25	21	26	25	22	27	26	28			

Note. Source: own elaboration based on the seventh-grade students' scores.

After obtaining results from the pre- and post-tests, a normality test was conducted to determine whether the data followed a normal distribution. The results shown in Table 3 demonstrate that both the pre-test and post-test scores conformed to a normal distribution, as the p-value was greater than 0.05.

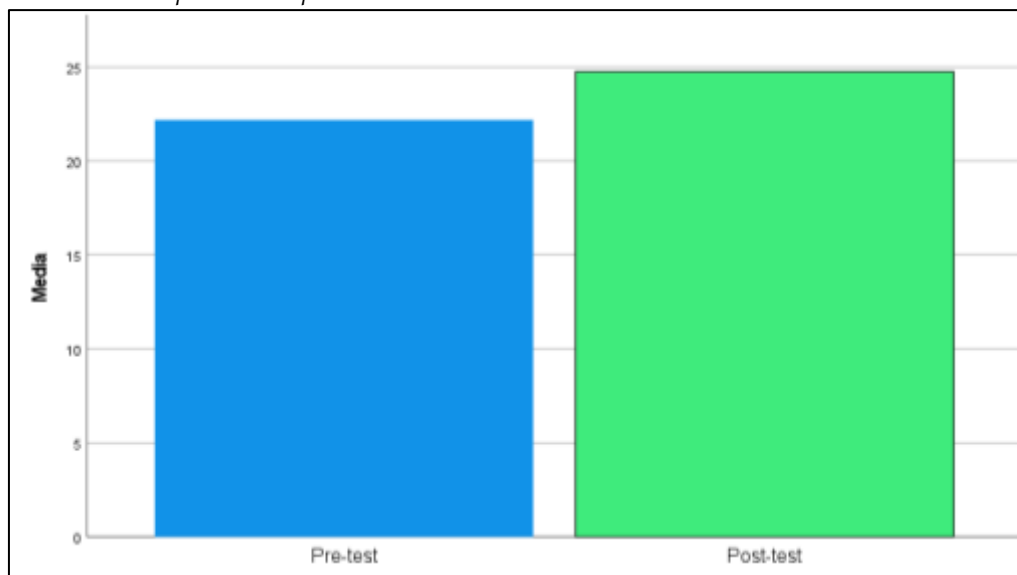
Table 3.

Normality test of the pre-test and post-test scores

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Estadístico	Gl	Sig.	Estadístico	Gl	Sig.
Pre-test	,140	33	,100	,957	33	,209
Post-test	,124	33	,200*	,958	33	,224

Note: The table shows the results of the pretest and post-test subjected to the normality test

To illustrate the differences in the scores of the pre-test and post-test, Figure 1 presents the mean scores obtained from the results of the participants. Additionally, the figure demonstrates how learners' performance changed after the intervention using the multisensory approach, evidencing an improvement.

Figure 1*Mean between pretest and posttest scores**Note. Source: Own elaboration based on pre-test and post-test results*

Overall, the findings demonstrated that the learners' writing performance improved after the application of the multisensory approach. The post-test scores were even higher than the pre-test results, indicating gains in vocabulary use. These data imply that the multisensory strategies and activities benefited learners' writing skills, which sets the stage for the discussion section presented in the next part.

DISCUSSION

In this present study, the effect of the multisensory approach on improving EFL students' writing skills in 7th-grade students was analyzed. The findings revealed in Table 2 show that learners show an improvement in their writing skill performance after the application of the multisensory approach, so these results are aligned with Baehaqi (2025), who concluded that the combination of activities using different senses enhances a deep practice of writing, making students autonomous when they write a simple text or paragraph. Additionally, the primary objective of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the multisensory approach on EFL writing skills among seventh graders. The findings demonstrated a significant increase in students' grades after the approach was implemented. This significant increase in post-test scores demonstrates that moving from conventional instruction to a multimodal approach contributes to reducing learning gaps in EFL writing.

Likewise, in accordance with the objective of this research to examine the efficacy of the Multisensory approach in improving writing performance, the main goal was achieved by identifying noteworthy improvements across all evaluated sections of the Breakthrough test of Pearson. The findings revealed that the use of multisensory activities exposed students to language models and guided them through various writing activities. The empirical data gathered collected by the pre-test and post-test instruments disclose a notable and statistically significant increase in students' scores following the pedagogical intervention. This remarkable improvement aligns with the discoveries of Al-Malki (2022), who claimed that traditional text-bound methods could cause cognitive tiredness in young learners, although engaging multiple sensory channels (visual, auditory and kinesthetic) can facilitate the internalization of complex language structures. The significant rise in 7th-grade students' final

scores confirms AI-Malki's background concerning the power of cognitive scaffolding in the EFL classroom.

Besides, the primary grammar and punctuation mistakes found in this 7th-grade group are in line with the reference point assessment of Khassanov (2021), whose research established that young learners sometimes treat English writing as a mechanical replication of isolated rules rather than a meaningful communicative performance. By identifying these precise gaps in the first stage, a solid starting point was built, confirming that the classroom requires a change from traditional learning strategies.

On the other hand, the noteworthy growth between the two testing stages reflects the outcome mentioned by Nguyen and Tran (2023). In their study about the multisensory teaching practice immersed in primary and secondary levels, they reported a parallel trend in which students were exposed to tactile and visual inputs and showed a clear improvement in post-intervention scores compared to their initial tests. According to the context of the research, the combination of interactive sensory tools and visual cues or graphic organizers clearly provided the students with tangible tools to organize their ideas. As a result, this reduced the common mechanical errors and enhanced their confidence, which is directly translated into the higher grades recorded in the post-test. Additionally, through the stage of pedagogical intervention, applying the multisensory activities, some aspects such as grammatical structures, concepts, and spelling rules were converted into classroom activities that enhance constant interaction by using visual, auditory, and kinesthetic items or resources. This change in teaching method connects perfectly with the foundational principles underlined by Al-Malki (2022), who argued that simultaneous multisensory stimulation prevents cognitive overload.

On the other hand, the post-evaluation after the pedagogical intervention showed a significant improvement in writing performance across all evaluated aspects. These results related to the post-test are connected with the findings of Nguyen and Tran (2023), who applied a pre-test and post-test after the application of the approach in an English language learning context and recorded a notable increase in students' level of writing, concluding that the inclusion of sensory activities in a classroom environment enriches the teaching-learning process more than traditional teaching instruction. Additionally, these improvements in writing performance align with Parra's Multisensory approach to reading comprehension (2021), which demonstrates enhanced literacy-related processes such as visualizing and paraphrasing, which are foundational to writing skills. Overall, the results suggest that a multisensory approach is a valued didactic strategy for enhancing different areas of writing as a meaningful pathway for encouraging more active, memorable, and effective language learning experiences.

Nevertheless, there is an important aspect when comparing the results of this study with the research of Smith and Jones (2021), where they stated that the multisensory approach only shows a basic scratch, short-term benefits that can be limited to recognizing vocabulary, instead of the production of phrases, sentences, or complex writing structures. Besides, in this study, the aspects to be evaluated go beyond a simple lexical unit since it evaluates the production of a sentence or paragraphs based on students' level. Therefore, the present study shows that multisensory activities/strategies enhance writing skills in areas such as forming paragraphs or sentences to generate a complete idea.

CONCLUSIONS

As revealed by the findings of this research, there are sustained results regarding the analysis of the effect of the multisensory approach to strengthen writing instruction in EFL students.

Besides, a pre-test and post-test were applied to determine, based on the Breakthrough test, just the writing section suitable for level A2. An experimental group of 33 students was the aim of the present study to obtain the data. Therefore, the implementation of a multisensory methodology had a positive effect and was statistically meaningful in the 7th-grade students' writing performance. The increase in the academic flow demonstrates that traditional methodologies can be changed with multimodal approaches in order to boost English language production. By activating visual, auditory, and kinesthetic channels, learners reduce their cognitive barriers, showing that this approach is suitable to foster long-term writing abilities in EFL classrooms.

It is essential to highlight that, notwithstanding the value of the outcomes, this research has some limitations that must be taken into account. Firstly, the research was conducted on a sample of 33 students from a single classroom, which could be considered an extrapolation of the results to a teaching environment with different aspects or characteristics from others. Moreover, the pre-experimental design without a control group can restrict the opportunity for direct comparisons with the regular teaching methods in the same context. In the diagnostic evaluation stage, it was established that before the intervention, the seventh-grade group revealed deficiencies in basic writing skills. The pre-test results show some problems related to limited vocabulary and difficulty with structuring/building sentences to generate a single paragraph. Consequently, this diagnosis stated that the conventional approaches were not enough to reinforce writing skills, and it established a starting point that justifies the need to try an innovative pedagogical approach.

Although the sample had some limitations, the results show a significant improvement for every student who took the pre-test and post-test, demonstrating that multisensory activities help develop writing skills. For learners with different learning styles, a multisensory approach contributes to their performance since it brings multiple coordinated channels of processing rather than single-mode teaching. (Mayer, 2021; Hattie, 2023). The final evaluation stage after the intervention confirmed significant progress in learners' writing abilities. The aspects evaluated in the post-test section reveal that students had an improvement in identifying vocabulary, structuring sentences, generating a single paragraph, organization, and even in grammatical precision. As a result, comparing the final scores with the initial ones confirms that multisensory activities are the direct cause of the students' academic growth, validating the benefit of the research design.

The bottom line is that learning through the use of the five senses becomes valuable and productive to enhance English learning because learners can achieve long-term retention by identifying words and phrases through visual, kinesthetic, and auditory input (Prystauka et al., 2023; Seidl et al., 2022). Ultimately, by integrating the diagnostic, instructional, and assessment points, it is concluded that a multisensory approach works as an integrative pedagogical practice instead of isolated activities. The empirical evidence throughout this study demonstrates that visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimuli integrated systematically in a lesson plan or curriculum can change the way learners process and produce the language in written form. It shows that a multisensory approach is essential to surpass the traditional learning barriers, establishing a new background for developing literacy skills in young learners.

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