



# Integrating the Monomyth in the Digital Multimedia Era to Enhance Text Production Skills: EFL Learners' Metacognitive Awareness

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## Abstract

This paper aims to describe the initial perceptions of high school students regarding integrating Joseph Campbell's (2004) monomyth as a narrative textual production in English through digital educational resources at a private Educational Institution in Colombia. An exploratory study with a qualitative approach was followed by a validated Metacognitive Awareness Writing Questionnaire (MAWQ) to investigate participants' beliefs and perceptions of their text production. After applying monomyth-based digital activities for textual production, the Higher Education Rubric "Quality Matters" was intended to guide developers in designing, testing, and optimizing their online educational formats and multimedia-supported learning environments. Monomyth was a well-tested strategy template for successful English writing production and positive integration into the complexity of English teaching and learning under educative digital resources.

**Keywords:** EFL, text production, hero's journey, education, digital resources

## Resumen

El presente estudio tiene como objetivo describir las percepciones iniciales de los estudiantes de bachillerato sobre la integración del monomito de Joseph Campbell (2004) como producción textual narrativa en inglés a través de recursos educativos digitales en una

Institución Educativa privada de Colombia. Se realizó un estudio exploratorio con un enfoque cualitativo y se aplicó un Cuestionario de Conciencia Metacognitiva de la Escritura (MAWQ) validado para investigar las creencias y percepciones de los participantes sobre su producción de Escritura. Después de aplicar las actividades digitales basadas en el monomito para la producción textual, la Rúbrica de Educación Superior "Quality Matters" tuvo como objetivo guiar a los desarrolladores en el diseño, la evaluación y la optimización de sus formatos educativos en línea y los entornos de aprendizaje con soporte multimedia para medir el uso de estrategias de escritura de los participantes. Se encontró que el monomito es una guía estratégica

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bien probada para la producción exitosa de la escritura en inglés, así como una herramienta positiva en la complejidad de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés bajo recursos digitales.

**Palabras clave:** EFL, producción textual, viaje del héroe, recursos educativos digitales

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## Introduction

Students' writing production in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms is one of the most significant challenges for language teachers in the 21st century. Unfortunately, the low levels of English production skills are an international matter—the results presented by the International English Language System (IELTS, 2019) illustrate this situation. The General Training Test results show that the lowest skill among forty countries is writing, with a mean of 45465456456. On the other hand, the results of the Academic Training Test are not that different; the lowest skill is writing, with a mean of 546546546+5. Furthermore, the lowest score in Colombia is in writing (5.8), while the highest is in reading (6.8).

In response to the challenge of how to integrate digital and multimedia educational resources that contribute to the EFL textual production development, this study describes the initial perceptions of high school students regarding the integration of Joseph Campbell's (2004) monomyth as a narrative textual production in English through digital educational resources at a private educational Institution in Boyacá.

This exploratory study also integrates theoretical postulates from Text-linguistics (VanDijk, 1992) and semiotics (Bernal, 2021; Campbel, 2004); the data compilation and

treatment were developed under the scope of the Critical discourse analysis framework proposed by Pardo Abril (2013).

## The monomyth in the text production

Narrative information flowing through mass media such as comics, manga, TV shows, films, and video games is part of a linguistic phenomenon called *discourse*. Pardo Abril (2013) refers to discourse as a linguistic unit with an expressed message in an utterance going beyond the sentence. The author also defines it as a matter of language that allows humanity to frame reality.

According to Pardo Abril (2013), the discourse has three features: (a) verbal or non- verbal character, as it attends to verbal acts such as speech and writing, and non-verbal meaning-bearing expressions that appropriate non-verbal codes such as line, color, movement, or sounds; (b) interactive-communicative character due to the collective construction and interpretation of meanings and the recognition of the interlocutor; (c) context, which is proposed as the set of spatiotemporal and socio-cognitive factors that determine the meaning of what is expressed discursively.

Campbell (2004) proposes a global narrative "superstructure" (van Dijk, 1192) called *the Hero's Journey or the Monomyth*, which has been transmitted throughout the history of humanity through narratives and symbolic images (mythemes). This narrative structure, popularized by Joseph Campbell, is printed in the collective unconscious and can be tracked in entertainment products such as video games (Galanina, 2018), animated films (Prokhorov, 2021), and comics (Curtis, 2019). Figure 1 shows an interpretation and graphic synthesis of the monomyth narrative structure.

On the other hand, (Lee y kim, 2021) explores the integration of traditional Italian narrative structure with Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey paradigm in student storytelling exercises. The author describes how students combine these frameworks to create narratives that follow classical story progression and Campbell's universal monomyth pattern, as adapted by Christopher Vogler in "The Writer's Journey" (2019). The pedagogical approach guides students through three main structural components: an introduction establishing the protagonist's ordinary world; a central conflict section incorporating key

elements of the Hero's Journey, such as the call to adventure, crossing the threshold, and facing trials; and a resolution featuring the hero's transformation.

Vogler's (2020) adaptation emphasizes the universal nature of this narrative pattern across cultures and periods while maintaining that its essence remains constant despite cultural variations. The study highlights the significance of the "ordeal" phase, where the protagonist faces their greatest challenge, creating heightened audience engagement through emotional identification with the hero's journey.



**Figure 1 The monomyth narrative structure**

*Note.* Authors' interpretation (Campbell, 2004; Curtis, 2019; Galanina, 2018; Kingsley et al., 2019; Prokhorov, 2021)

### The monomyth in teaching

The influence of the monomyth is not only present in mass media; it can also be seen as a conceptual and procedural element in actual curricular planning and didactic performances.

Kingsley et al. (2019) suggest an entire curriculum unit based on Campbell's narrative superstructure in their work called *The Hero's Journey: a year-long curriculum*. This study addressed an interdisciplinary and collaborative curriculum unit based on four main topics:

(a) self-discovery, the monomyth in the Star Wars movie saga was analyzed; (b) high school exploration, students researched the academic programs they were interested in on the internet and social media; (c) career exploration students volunteered at companies that assessed the risks of their real-life choices; (d) world exploration, students developed an exchange experience in Poland where they were able to learn about the heroes who faced fascism in World War II. This paper uses Campbell's (2004) superstructure to analyze the content and build pedagogical discourse and teaching practice.

The genre-based approach is a suitable logical guideline for the foundation of a text production strategy based on the monomyth. Dirgeyasa (2016) defines genre as "a process of communication which has a certain goal (goal-oriented) for its members in a certain event of communication due to certain social context. Genre is a matter of communication event by social context" (p. 45). This approach demands the follow-up of three steps for successfully achieving communication in social contexts. In the first stage, the teacher and the students model the text by selecting and deconstructing the genre; in the second stage, joint construction, the teacher and students reconstruct the genre and revise features such as vocabulary usage, grammatical patterns, and textual devices; and the third stage, independent construction of the text.

Based on the Villar Secanella's (2020) study, the hero's journey or monomyth structure identified by Campbell serves an essential pedagogical function in children's and young adult literature, particularly as a socializing and transformative framework. The author argues that this three-phase pattern of separation-initiation-return appears consistently across children's literature as a "basic plot," reflecting ancient initiation rites where young people were introduced to their community's cultural values.

According to McConnel's (2021) analysis, the hero's journey framework offers valuable insights into understanding teachers' professional narratives, though not necessarily in Campbell's traditional linear structure. The author proposes using the language and elements of the hero's journey (thresholds, allies,

tests, ordeals, and rewards) as metaphorical threads to weave together teachers' diverse experiences and stories. Through interviews with four teachers at different career stages, McConnel identifies common themes. All participants faced significant thresholds in their development, underwent various tests and ordeals in their practice, and found their primary reward in witnessing students' growth and authentic expression. Digital Resources in Teaching English

According to Li (2020), digital resources are crucial in TESOL teacher education through multimodal pedagogy. The study shows teachers using digital tools like PowerPoint, Prezi, and WeVideo to create projects that enhance their learning and professional development. While these resources facilitate deeper content understanding and online collaborative learning, the research also identifies challenges with technology familiarity, suggesting the need for better technological training and support for teachers implementing digital multimodal pedagogy.

Based on the meta-analytical review by Shen (2021), digital resources have shown promising effectiveness in teaching English and developing intercultural competence. The authors found that digital materials and tools significantly positively affected students' intercultural competence development (effect size = 0.38,  $p < .001$ ). These resources included educational videos like TED Talks, MOOC videos, recreational videos, and auxiliary tools such as PowerPoint slides and e-dictionaries.

Furthermore, according to Elola and Oskoz (2017), digital resources are critical in transforming L2 writing instruction and teacher education. The study demonstrates that various digital platforms like weblogs, wikis, Google Docs, digital storytelling tools, and WebQuests enable teachers to create collaborative learning environments and develop multimodal instructional materials. However, the research highlights that successfully integrating these resources requires proper training and pedagogical preparation, as many teachers still lack the digital competence to incorporate technology into writing instruction effectively. The authors emphasize that technology-assisted lesson study (LS) can facilitate teachers' professional development by promoting peer reflection, team coaching, and project-based practices, ultimately helping them adapt their writing instruction to virtual platforms and meet learners' context-specific writing needs.

As stated by Hsieh (2017), digital resources play a vital role in technology-enhanced cooperative language learning, with most studies utilizing either existing learning systems (54.5%) like Google Docs and WebQuest or custom-developed collaborative platforms (27%). Their systematic review shows that these digital resources, when properly integrated, significantly improved language learners' performance (effect size 0.86), though success depends on careful implementation, considering factors like task design and proper teacher training.

### **WebQuest**

WebQuest has evolved as a significant inquiry-based technological model that effectively supports language learning and scientific education through structured online activities. As demonstrated by Awada et al., (2020), WebQuest integration with the Student Team Achievement Division (STAD) created an environment that enabled students to focus systematically on finding and employing information, moving beyond simple information gathering to higher-order thinking skills. The model's effectiveness stems from its well-defined structure, which includes an introduction, task, resources, process, evaluation, and conclusion components, allowing students to engage with digital content in a meaningful and organized manner.

Tsybulsky (2020) further demonstrated WebQuest's value in science education, showing how it enables learners to construct personal subject ontologies and develop deeper conceptual understanding through guided online investigation. Aydın (2016) provided additional evidence of WebQuest's effectiveness in language learning contexts, revealing that WebQuest technique integration through a flipped course positively impacted learner engagement and academic performance, particularly when students were allowed to search and learn beyond what was presented by the instructor.

Studies consistently indicate that WebQuest facilitates learning by providing students with pre-selected web resources, enabling them to evaluate materials rather than search for them, thereby avoiding issues with inappropriate content or dubious sources (Awada et al., 2020; Aydın, 2016). Furthermore, research across

these studies has shown that WebQuest can increase motivation and encourage higher-order thinking by optimizing students' literacy, critical thinking, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation skills, making it particularly valuable in modern educational contexts.

### Methodology

The presented study is recognized as a sociocultural phenomenon; hence, this qualitative exploratory study was outlined in the theories, methods, and procedures recommended by the Critical Discourse Analysis (Pardo Abril, 2013). It was led in three stages: diagnosis, design, and implementation of WebQuest and evaluation. Four steps for developing a critical discourse study are listed in this paper: a. Recognition of sociocultural phenomenon; b. Corpus analysis and systematization; c. Qualitative analysis through linguistic techniques; and d. Analysis under a cultural-cognitive scope.

The diagnosis stage inquired about three dimensions of the problem: The students' digital content preferences and access to technology, their metacognitive awareness in the writing process (Farahian, 2017), and the causes of their English flaws. The survey with the Metacognitive Awareness Writing Questionnaire (MAWQ) is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1** *The framework for metacognitive awareness writing knowledge*

Cognition	Criterion
A. Knowledge of cognition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Declarative knowledge (Person)</li> <li>2. Declarative knowledge (Task)</li> <li>3. Procedural knowledge</li> <li>4. Conditional knowledge</li> </ol>
B. Regulation of cognition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning and drafting</li> <li>2. Monitoring</li> <li>3. General online strategies</li> <li>4. Revision</li> <li>5. Evaluation</li> </ol>

*Note.* Adapted from (Farahian, 2017)

In the design and application stage, writing objectives using (Dirgeyasa, 2016) genre- based approach and the monomyth narrative structure (Campbell, 2004) were integrated to create a WebQuest (Jalo & Simón, 2008). The text production classroom activities and writing tests were led to a group of 60 tenth-grade students at advanced English level with writing proficiency issues since they did not produce text at a B2 level as expected (Council of Europe, 2020) and suggested in the school's curricular proposal.

The educational content was hosted on Google Sites and included royalty-free online resources and free tutorials that could guide students in accomplishing their tasks. Table 2 illustrates the structure of WebQuest proposed in this paper.

**Table 2** *Webquest model*

Element	Learning objective	Resources	Writing product
<i>Introduction</i>	To recognize the monomyth and the comic strip medium	– Electronic device – Access to the internet	– 12-line paragraph plotting a story based on the Monomyth
<i>Task</i>	To understand the text production task	– Comic strip – WebQuest	– 12-panel comic strip illustrating the plot.
<i>Process</i>	To follow up on an organized product	– Comika (Comic strip designing app)	– Reflective paragraph
<i>Resources</i>	To download and use the resources		
<i>Evaluation</i>	To grade and assess the productions		

*Conclusion* To reflect on the process

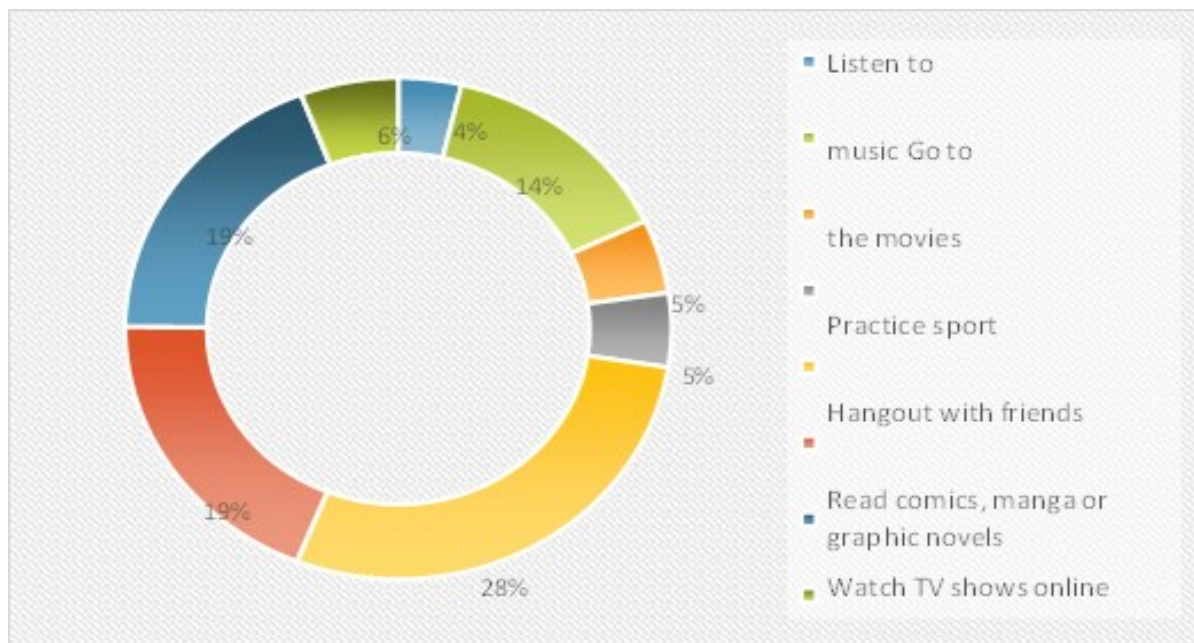
*Note.* Adapted from (Jalo & Simón, 2008) and (Dirgeyasa, 2016)

For the evaluation stage, the Higher Education Rubric (Quality Matters, 2020), designed for use with courses delivered entirely online or with a significant online component, was applied. The characteristics standardized by QM Community are listed below:

- Course Overview and Introduction
- Learning Objectives
- Assessment and Measurement
- Instructional materials
- Learning activities and student interaction
- Course Technology
- Student support
- Accessibility and usability (2020)

### Findings and discussion

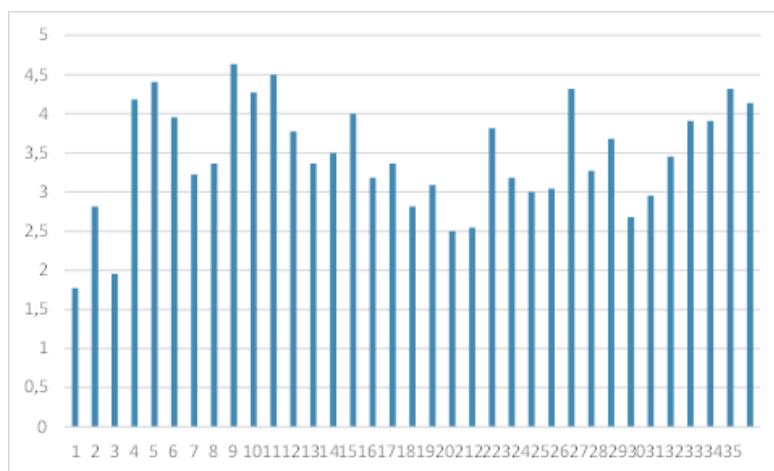
From the diagnostic stage, it was found that an average of 40.9% of the students were exposed to digital content for more than 4 four hours a day, while 36.4% spent between 2 and 4 hours, 22.7% between 1 and 2 hours, no one dedicated less than an hour to consume digital content. On the other hand, 27.3% of the surveyed participants preferred to spend their time reading manga comics or graphic novels, about 18.2% playing video games, another 18.2% watching TV on streaming platforms, and 13.6% of the questioned students preferred going to the movies. Figure 2 shows students' preferences for online activities.



**Figure 2** *Students' activities preferences*

Participants were also questioned considering a list of thirty-five statements based on Farahian's (2017) study, followed by deductive data analysis for the emergence categories. As shown in Figure 3, the results of the Metacognitive Awareness Writing Questionnaire (Farahian, 2017) suggested that the participants consider text production as a learnable skill, they understood structural and coherence matters, and they could also apply strategies such

as planning or editing. However, they did not know how to proceed when these strategies did not work. In addition, about 59.1% of the students reported their poor performance was caused by a lack of interest in English writing, 36.4% identified the lack of skills as a reason, and only 4.5% indicated their teachers' strategies were responsible.



**Figure 3 Summary of the Metacognitive Awareness Writing Questionnaire**

### Critical analysis of low writing levels

Participants wrote their reflections on the factors underlying the low levels of writing, analysis, rhetorical resources, topics, actions, and actors, which were identified as categories in constructing the participants' opinions for the critical discursive (Pardo Abril, 2013). This process led to their categorization, analysis, and the diversity of nominative codes concerning metacognition criteria, as summarized in Table 1.

The topic and the discursive theme helped identify conceptualization methods, associated elements with the metacognitive phenomenon, and the specific conceptual variations for Conditional knowledge (KC4), Planning and drafting (RC1), Evaluation (RC5), General online strategies (RC3), and Monitoring (RC2). The actions were directly associated with procedural Knowledge (KC3) and Revision (RC4). The category of the discursive actor for Declarative knowledge (Person) (KC1) and Declarative knowledge (Task) (KC2) made it possible to explain the dialogic character insofar as they are active participants in the interaction, play discursive roles, and construct an image of themselves as a social subject, the others, and reality (Pardo Abril, 2013).

Table 3 shows the discourse analysis categories and the metacognition relations.

**Table 3 Critical Discursive Analyses and Metacognitive Awareness Writing knowledge**

Input	Frequency	Categories	Metacognition
<i>Skill(s)/capabilities</i>	23	Actions	KC3
<i>Students</i>	14	Actors	KC1
<i>Interest</i>	14	Theme/topic	KC4
<i>Writing</i>	13	Actions	KC3
<i>Writing/text</i>	8	Theme/topic	RC1
<i>Level</i>	7	Theme/topic	RC5
<i>Write</i>	6	Actions	KC3
<i>Strategies</i>	5	Theme/topic	RC3
<i>Improve</i>	4	Actions	RC4
<i>Teachers</i>	4	Actors	KC2
<i>Knowledge</i>	3	Theme/topic	KC4
<i>Techniques</i>	3	Theme/topic	RC2
<i>Disinterest</i>	2	Theme/topic	KC4

Note. Procedural Knowledge (KC3) and Conditional knowledge (KC4) were the highest frequency and range

criteria.

In the design and application stage, (Dirgeyasa, 2016) genre-based approach and the monomyth narrative structure (Campbell, 2004) were integrated to create a WebQuest (Jalo & Simón, 2008), as depicted in table 2. Figure 4 shows the strategy steps, and Figure 5 shows a sample of the students' writing activities.

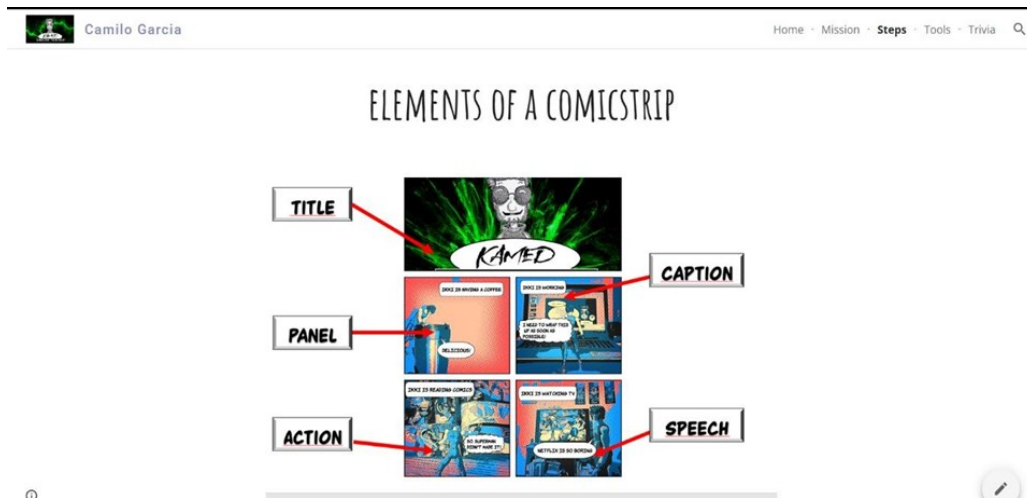


Figure 4 WebQuest page 3: steps

Note. Participants writing products: 12-panel comic strip illustrating the plot. From *Comicstrips, the Google site is* by Camilo Garcia, nd. (<https://sites.google.com/view/camilo-garcia/home>)



Figure 5 Students' text production Sample.

At the evaluation stage, students submitted a survey based on the (Quality Matters, 2020). The results are summarized in Table 3. The general perception of the exercise was perceived as positive, but items like an introduction to the activity and support provided to students need to be improved to make the experience more appealing

Table 3 Summary of the Quality Matters rubrics applied to the WebQuest

Rubric	Mean by rubric
Introduction	2,7
Objectives	4,4
Evaluation	3,2
Materials and resources	4,2

<i>Activity</i>	3
<i>Technology</i>	4
<i>Support</i>	2
<i>Accessibility</i>	4
<b>General mean</b>	<b>3,4375</b>

## Conclusions

The results have pedagogical implications for teaching and learning English with digital multimedia support, especially in monomyth-based EFL writing. Monomyth (Campbell, 2004) provides a well-tested template for successful storytelling and can also give the complexity of multimedia teaching and learning under abundant online resources. Hopefully, the contents developed here can continue to be innovative, updated, and practical and awaken in the students the necessary motivation to overcome the current TEFL challenges.

As exploratory findings are of partial criteria, the first evaluation phase revealed critical aspects that should be considered more deeply concerning metacognitive knowledge in English writing and those obtained through the quality rubric (Quality Matters, 2020) of the online resources focused on the monomyth.

The WebQuest tool's development is a continuous redesign prototype encompassing more innovative digital resources focused on improving written production skills in English. Consequently, this study will have more phases of analysis, promoting the quality of meaningful experience of the environment and the learning of English as a foreign language among users.

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