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The Effectiveness of Using Google Gemini App with the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Method in Enhancing Critical Thinking in the Development of Narrative Essays in Eighth Grade Students from Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso, El Brasil, Alajuela, During the Third Quarter 2025

Efectividad del uso de la aplicación Google Gemini con el método de aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computadora (CALL) en el desarrollo del pensamiento crítico en ensayos narrativos en estudiantes de octavo grado del Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso, El Brasil, Alajuela, durante el tercer cuatrimestre del año 2025

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ABSTRACT

This research studies the effectiveness of implementing the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) method with the Google Gemini platform to improve critical thinking in narrative essay writing among eighth-grade students at the Redemptorist School of San Alfonso (CORSA) in Alajuela, El Brasil, during the third quarter of 2025. The study involved two eighth-grade sections, with approximately 35 students per section, and included tests to assess students' prior knowledge, questionnaires, and the writing of narrative essays. Checklists were also used during the implementation of the tools to measure student participation and engagement. Following implementation, subsequent tests showed an improvement of approximately 70% in participants achieving the objective. The results demonstrate that Google Gemini, as a CALL tool, improves critical thinking in students' writing skills, promotes the generation of coherent ideas, and facilitates grammatical correction and essay structure. The research highlights the importance of interactive learning for improving writing, as it is often a crucial skill, but the way it is taught and improved is rarely modernized. Recommendations include motivating students and seeking strategies that encourage their participation and meet their individual and group needs.

Keywords: artificial intelligence (AI), computer-assisted language learning (CALL), critical thinking development, english as a second language (ESL/EFL), narrative essays

RESUMEN

Esta investigación estudia la efectividad de la implementación del método de Aprendizaje de Idiomas

Asistido por Computadora (CALL) con la plataforma Google Gemini para mejorar el pensamiento crítico en el desarrollo de ensayos narrativos en estudiantes de octavo grado del Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso (CORSa) en Alajuela, El Brasil, durante el tercer trimestre de 2025. El estudio contó con dos secciones de octavo grado, con alrededor de 35 estudiantes por sección, que incluyeron pruebas para determinar el conocimiento de los estudiantes, cuestionarios y la elaboración de ensayos narrativos. También se utilizaron listas de verificación al implementar las herramientas para medir la participación y el compromiso estudiantil. Tras la implementación, las pruebas posteriores mostraron una mejora de alrededor del 70 % en el logro del objetivo por parte de los participantes. Los resultados obtenidos demuestran que Google Gemini, como herramienta CALL, mejora el pensamiento crítico en las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes, promueve la generación de ideas coherentes y facilita la corrección gramatical y la estructura de los ensayos. La investigación destaca la importancia del aprendizaje interactivo para mejorar la escritura, ya que a menudo es una habilidad crucial, pero la forma en que se enseña y mejora, rara vez se moderniza. Las recomendaciones incluyen motivar a los estudiantes, buscar estrategias que fomenten su participación y puedan satisfacer sus necesidades individuales y grupales.

Palabras clave: inteligencia artificial (IA), aprendizaje de idiomas asistido por computadora (CALL), desarrollo del pensamiento crítico, inglés como segunda lengua (ESL/EFL), ensayos narrativos

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INTRODUCTION

For this research, we will analyze one of the main problems students have with the ability to write when they try to learn a second language. This research is going to analyze the use of the computer-assisted language learning approach with the Google Gemini AI digital platform to improve critical thinking in writing skills, including the generation of ideas, correction of sentences like grammar, and coherence in students from the Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso in Brazil, Alajuela, Costa Rica. This study aims to investigate whether the Artificial Intelligence platform is truly effective in improving eight-grade students' writing skills, focusing specifically on their ability to correctly use the platform and be able to improve the writing skills with the development of narrative essays.

One of the main challenges students face when struggling with writing development is generating new ideas; they do not develop critical thinking. Often what students write does not make much sense as they tend to repeat ideas and often use the strategy of translating from Spanish to English to write. Despite this, students show weaknesses when it comes to expressing themselves in a second language. According to ELbashir, B. (2023) "For several reasons, a foreign or second language program should include writing instruction. Writing, for instance, encourages learning. It allows students to use the language creatively and extend what they have already learned" (p. 53). In their writing skills, there are very common errors among students, such as grammatical errors, lack of coherence, and errors in sentence structures, students have a hard time writing big ideas and some lack important vocabulary. Writing is a key skill in the acquisition of a second language. This is one of the most fundamental points of this research since its main objective is to explain and experience the critical thinking of students when developing essays with the use of artificial intelligence.

Molina, L. (2024) conducted an analysis of using a digital tool with the CALL approach. In this research, the author questions the effectiveness of using the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) method with the digital platform Nearpod to see if it can improve students' knowledge. Molina, L. (2024) mentions "Computer Assisted Language Learning is a multifaceted teaching approach that has evolved significantly over decades, benefiting from diverse pedagogical approaches and technological innovations" (p. 14). Following this type of study Gutiérrez, A. (2024) validates the effectiveness of using ProWritingAid AI Software to develop coherence of ideas in writing. Gutiérrez, A. (2024) mentions, "The integration of AI in secondary education can provide the students with a positive and beneficial environment if it is used correctly". (p.50). In addition, Acevedo, P. (2023) developed a research focus on specific areas of English teaching by combining grammar skills to achieve a better cognitive process with the development of applications and the use of mobile phones. With this research, we hope to demonstrate that different technological tools can be integrated into classes. In this case, we are specifically going to evaluate the Google Gemini tool, specifically the free plan, which is accessible to students, who are acquiring English as a second language.

For this research, we are going to focus on a real situation that occurs with groups of 35 students approximately between the ages of 13, 14, and/or 15 from the Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso, located in El Brasil de Alajuela. This is a public institution that offers academic English classes and, as an option for eight-grade and eleventh-grade students, an additional conversational English course, among others. Since it is a public institution, teachers use the MEP programs and apply the corresponding activities according to the topics. The center has the possibility of using technological devices in the classrooms and the institution also provides internet service to students so they can use different tools.

Hypothesis: Using the Google Gemini app with the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) method will significantly enhance critical thinking skills in the development of narrative essays with eight-grade students from Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso during the second quarter of 2025.

General Objective: To determine the effectiveness of using the Google Gemini app with the Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) Method to enhance critical thinking in the development of narrative essays in Eight-grade students from Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso, El Brasil Alajuela, During the Third Quarter of 2025.

METHODOLOGY

This research seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of artificial intelligence with the CALL approach to improve students' critical thinking skills. It describes the analytical procedure used to investigate the impact of the tools on writing and cognitive skills. This study presents a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods to gain a more comprehensive view of the relationship between critical thinking and AI-assisted learning. This research is based on the application of the Google Gemini App to improve critical thinking and writing skills among eight-grade high school students at Redentorista San Alfonso High School.

The purpose of this research is to gather concrete evidence on the application of a specific strategy, which enables an in-depth evaluation of its effectiveness. Stewart, L. (n.d.) states "Its primary objective is not just to add to the existing knowledge base but to employ that knowledge to develop solutions, innovations, or interventions that can be directly applied in the real world. (para.9). With this in mind, our project aims to use the applied purpose to subsequently acquire a response about those strategies that can provide us with solutions to potential problems, such as writing in students.

This study type is a type of observational research analyzing data from variables which were collected in short order. This type of study is sometimes called a population-based study, cross-sectional study, cross-sectional study, and a prevalence study. The type of research used in this investigation is qualitative and quantitative since it measures variables and describes correlations between them. In this investigation, the population consists of the 1,100 students of the Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso; this represents the universe in this research. However, given the large shortage of students and the total population of the institution, a sample has been selected to facilitate the application of the methodology

in this research. For this study, the sample consists of two groups of approximately 35 students, ages ranging from 14 to 15 years, enrolled in eighth-grade English classes.

Research explains that non-probability sampling is used where a random probability sample cannot be drawn due to specific considerations. Also, the instruments used to collect the data, which were created to facilitate analysis and answer the research question. First, Questionnaire I, a 15-item, yes/no questionnaire to assess students' prior knowledge of narrative essays and critical thinking skills. Second, a Narrative Essay Pre-Test to assess prior knowledge. The essays must address a specific topic and their length. Third, checklists were used to measure how students integrate the CALL method with the use of the Google Gemini platform, evaluate structural improvements and apply critical thinking. Fourth, a Narrative Essay Post-Test to assess students after implementing AI, with improvements in their reasoning, analysis, and new learning. It will be evaluated with its respective rubric. Finally, a Questionnaire II, consisting of 10 single-choice questions and 3 open-ended questions was administered to measure acquired knowledge and students' opinions. The questionnaire sought to elicit students' reflections on their ability to generate and organize ideas after applying the CALL method using the Google Gemini platform.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results obtained and the data collected from the implementation of the five instruments: questionnaire I, pre-test narrative essay, checklist, post-test narrative essay, and questionnaire II. These were applied in different stages; questionnaire I and the pre-test narrative essay provide us with the initial knowledge of the students' performance. The checklists provide support to measure student behavior once the methodology is presented with the artificial intelligence platform. The post-test narrative essay and questionnaire II are the instruments that provide the final answer to the improvement in students' writing skills.

Questionnaire I: At the beginning of our study, a questionnaire was administered to two groups of eighth-grade students. The questionnaire I was developed using Google Forms and consisted of 15 single-choice questions. Students were asked to open the link and carefully read the questions, then select the option that best matched their knowledge. The average results of this initial questionnaire show that 56.4% were positive responses (Yes) and 43.6% were negative responses (No). Here, we can estimate that just over half of the students have a basic understanding of narrative essays, critical thinking, and technology, and are also moderately familiar with artificial intelligence. However, the lack of confidence in narrative essays is something that should be considered as a starting point for considering their improvement. There is a general understanding of critical thinking, but students lack a clear understanding of how to apply it to their assignments. Students are also familiar with digital tools but lack formal instruction in using them properly.

Narrative Essays Pre-Test: This instrument was administered so that students could reflect on their knowledge in the development of narrative essays. The average score obtained by the students' essays

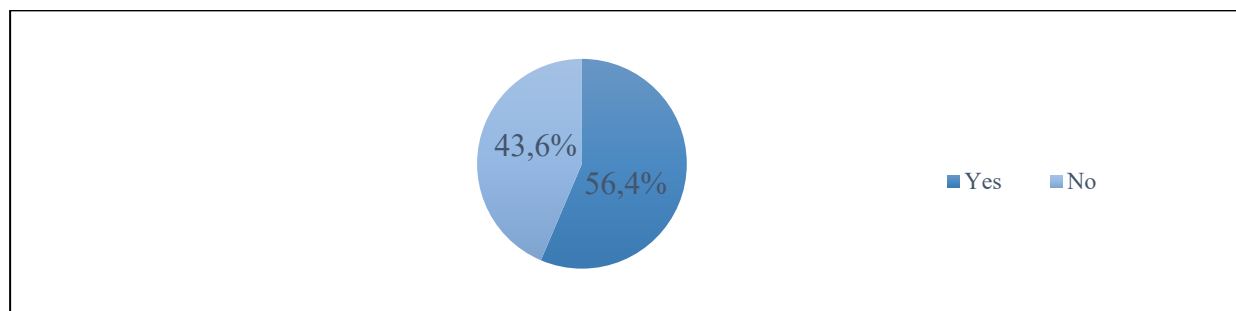
was defined with the following percentages: 2,6% received a score of 4, 37,4% received a score of 3 we have a total of 37,4%, 43,9% received a score of 2 we have a total of 43,9% and 16,1% a score of 1. These overall results indicate that, while students do possess basic writing skills, they are not fully developed. Few students demonstrate a solid command of narrative writing, suggesting a need for considerable support and confirming the necessity of writing intervention to help them improve this skill. Overall, the initial tests reveal that students have basic skills, but not all are at the same level, despite being in the same grade. Checklist: During the application of the CALL methodology with AI, checklists were used to ensure proper student participation and engagement. This was administered exclusively by the researcher.

Narrative Essays Post Test: After the application using the Google Gemini platform, the students developed the final narrative essay. Similar to the initial approach, students were required to develop the essay on the assigned topic, but this time using the strategies provided with the CALL methodology and the AI platform. The average shows the score that students obtained after the implementation of CALL with the Google Gemini tool, where 30,3% of students obtained a score of 4, a total of 45,1% of students obtained a score of 3, 20% of students obtained a score of 2, and 4,6% of students obtained a score of 1. These results show an improvement in student essays; more than half of the students obtained high scores and demonstrated a good grasp of the assessment criteria. The majority of students successfully applied the writing skills they practiced, demonstrating clarity and organization in implementing the CALL method with Google Gemini. Finally, only 4,6% of students obtained a score of 1, reinforcing the fact that very few students had difficulty developing their essays.

Questionnaire II: To finalize the strategies, the students were given a final questionnaire to evaluate their experience with the tool used. This was administered using Google Forms and included a questionnaire consisting of 10 single-choice questions evaluated on a Likert scale and three open-ended questions in which the student could express how he or she felt during the research. The average shows that 46,5% of students strongly agree, 34,6% of students agree, 12,2% of students are neutral, 4,5% of students disagree, and 2,2% of students strongly disagree. These results show a positive perception of the items, as the majority of students strongly agreed or agreed, totaling 81% favorable opinions about CALL and the use of AI (Google Gemini).

Graph 1

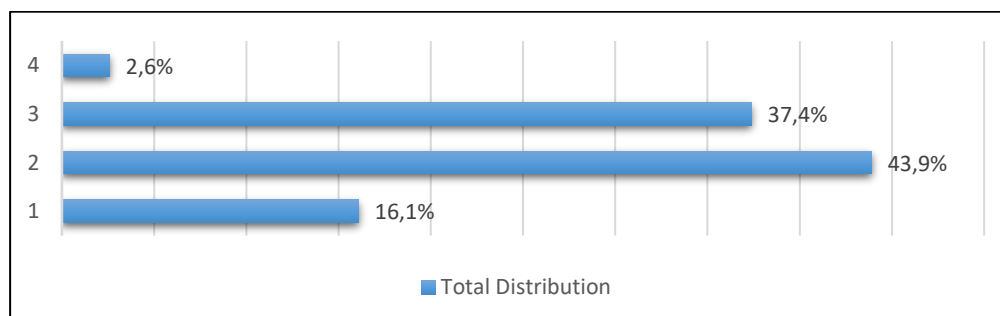
Total Distribution - Questionnaire I



Source: Instrument applied to measure narrative essays prior knowledge. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 2

Total Score Distribution - Narrative Essay Pre-Test



Source: Instrument applied to measure narrative essays prior knowledge. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Table 1

Observation Checklist 1 - Group 1

Indicator	Yes	No	Comments
Students successfully used the Google Gemini platform.	X		
Students responded to all generated questions.	X		
Students interacted with Gemini to generate ideas or expand the narrative text.	X		
Students applied technological suggestions (CALL) to improve their exercises.	X		
Students present their own original ideas, not just repeating from Gemini.	X		
Students include in the text varied vocabulary appropriate to the narrative context.		X	Students had some difficulties with diverse vocabulary and tended to use repeated phrases on some exercises.
Examples, arguments, or details are provided in the exercises.	X		
Students maintained coherence and organization of ideas.	X		

Source: Instrument to measure the CALL integration with the Google Gemini. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Table 2*Observation Checklist 1 - Group 2*

Indicator	Yes	No	Comments
Students successfully used the Google Gemini platform.	X		
Students responded to all generated questions.	X		
Students interacted with Gemini to generate ideas or expand the narrative text.	X		
Students applied technological suggestions (CALL) to improve their exercises.	X		
Students present their own original ideas, not just repeating from Gemini.	X		
Students include in the text varied vocabulary appropriate to the narrative context.	X		Most students.
Examples, arguments, or details are provided in the exercises.		X	The students needed support to share their own or original experiences.
Students maintained coherence and organization of ideas.	X		

Source: Instrument to measure the CALL integration with the Google Gemini. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Table 3*Observation Checklist 2 - Group 1*

Indicator	Yes	No	Comments
The CALL method helped students engage in meaningful exchanges with Gemini.	X		
The CALL method helped students analyze ideas rather than simply write stories.	X		
The CALL method helped students explore and revise their writing independently with minimal teacher intervention.	X		
The CALL method helped students gain greater confidence in expressing their ideas.	X		Students feel engaged with the exercises presented since haven't done any similar before
The CALL method provided corrective or guiding feedback that students used to improve their writing.	X		

Source: Instrument to measure the CALL integration with the Google Gemini. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

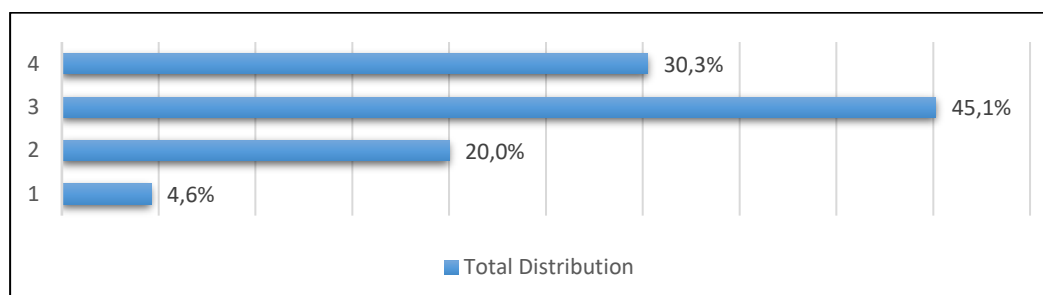
Table 4
Observation Checklist 2 - Group 1

Indicator	Yes	No	Comments
The CALL method helped students engage in meaningful exchanges with Gemini.	X		
The CALL method helped students analyze ideas rather than simply write stories.	X		
The CALL method helped students explore and revise their writing independently with minimal teacher intervention.	X		Most students.
The CALL method helped students gain greater confidence in expressing their ideas.	X		
The CALL method provided corrective or guiding feedback that students used to improve their writing.	X		Students expressed that feedback and corrections are useful for improving their mistakes and not repeating them.

Source: Instrument to measure the CALL integration with the Google Gemini. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 3

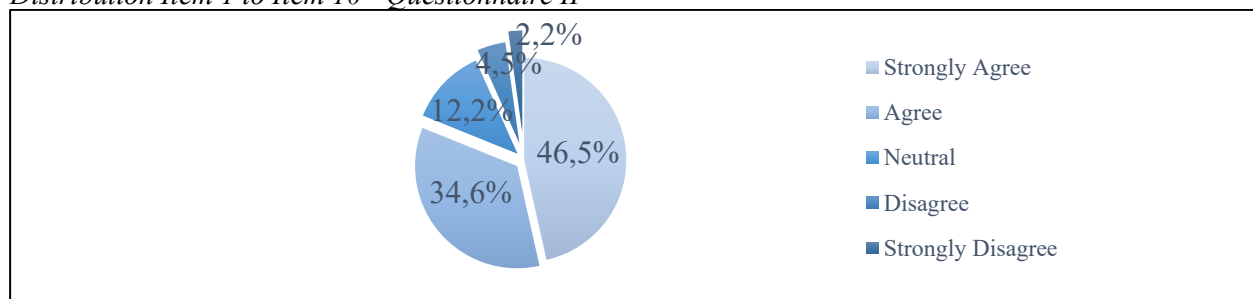
Total Score Distribution - Narrative Essay Post-Test



Source: Instrument to evaluate the acquired knowledge after applying the CALL method. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 4

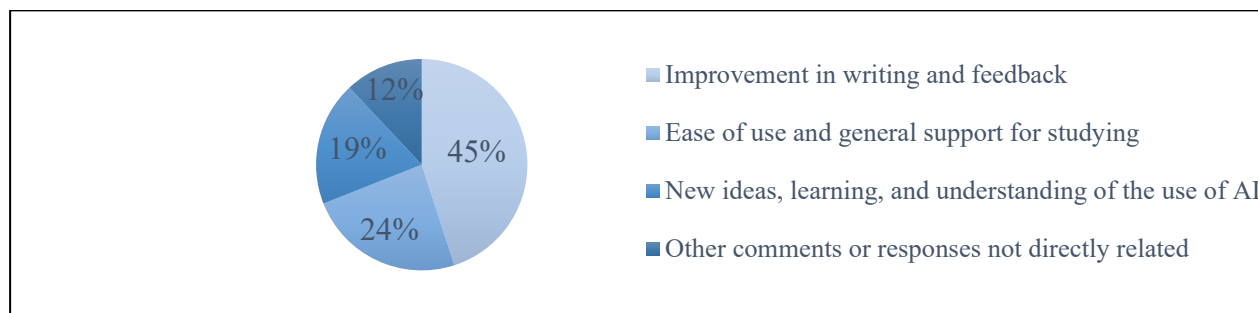
Distribution Item 1 to Item 10 - Questionnaire II



Source: Instrument to obtain students' opinions on their critical thinking skills after applying the CALL method with Gemini. Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 5

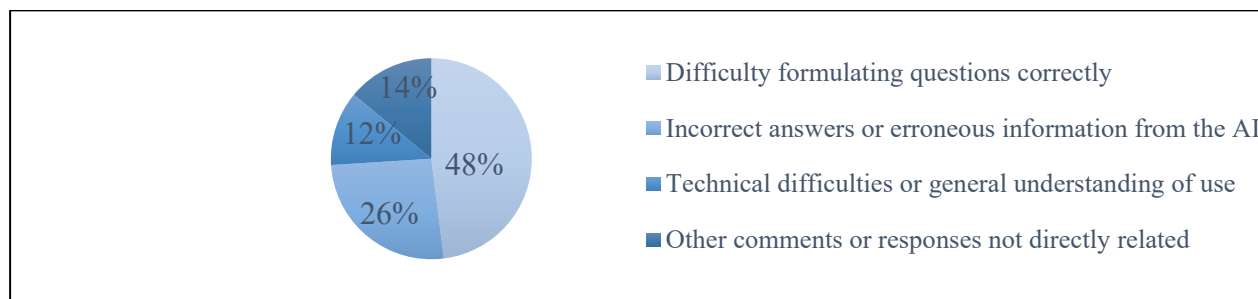
Item 11 - Questionnaire II



Source: Instrument to obtain students' opinions on their critical thinking skills after applying the CALL method with Gemini.
Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 6

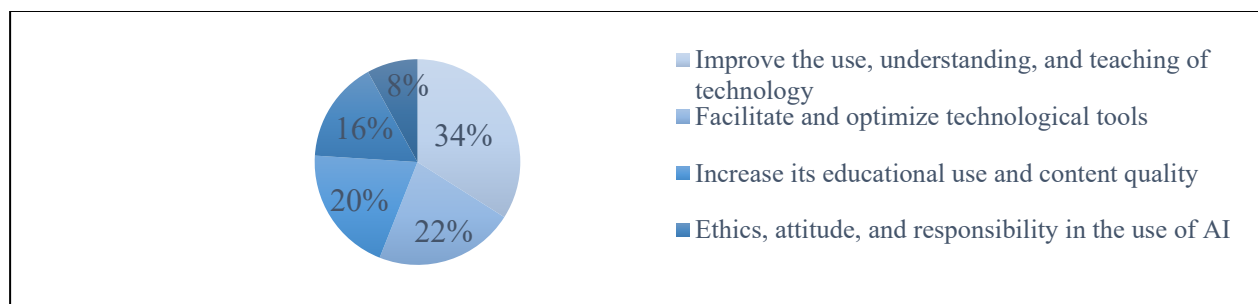
Item 12 - Questionnaire II



Source: Instrument to obtain students' opinions on their critical thinking skills after applying the CALL method with Gemini.
Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

Graph 7

Item 13 - Questionnaire II



Source: Instrument to obtain students' opinions on their critical thinking skills after applying the CALL method with Gemini.
Data collected by Daniela Castro Vargas, September 2025.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals how technology can inspire creativity and promote student development, including writing ability. In addition, the findings provide information regarding facets of the CALL method that appear to foster engagement and learning outcomes, such as feedback, collaborative writing activities, and a "live" collaborative workspace. The main objective of this research was to determine the effectiveness of using the Google Gemini Cola application with the computer-assisted language learning (CALL) method to improve critical thinking in the development of narrative essays among eighth-grade

students at the Redemptorist San Alfonso School. This was accomplished through two preliminary tests: an initial questionnaire and a final questionnaire to assess students' prior knowledge of the application. Two checklists were then used while students completed the exercises with the artificial intelligence tool. Finally, a post-test was administered to allow students to apply what they had learned, followed by a final questionnaire where they could provide feedback on the methodology used. With all the instruments used, the final results were positive, as students' knowledge improved after completing all the activities with the Google Gemini AI platform and following the CALL method.

The first specific objective was to determine the prior knowledge that eighth-grade students at the institution had regarding the Google Gemini app and the critical thinking when developing narrative essays. The pre-test results provided a clear understanding of the students' level and abilities. Overall, the findings show that the students who were familiar with the Google Gemini tool but hadn't used it much or explored its features in depth also had basic theoretical knowledge about narrative essays; their writing skills were limited, and they struggled to generate ideas. This need identified by the students reinforces the idea put forward by Rusmin, L. et al. (2024), who studied some of the challenges in improving critical thinking, state that: "one of the primary challenges is the traditional educational system, which often emphasizes rote memorization and standardized testing over critical inquiry" (p. 150). Given this, our theoretical framework reinforces the need to apply different teaching strategies to modify these skills, and, as Rusmin, L. et al. (2024) mention, educators, policymakers, and educational institutions must adopt more holistic and flexible approaches to teaching and assessment. (p.153).

The second specific objective was to validate the implementation of the CALL approach and the use of the application during English classes to teach how to write narrative essays, enhancing their writing process. The third specific objective of the research was to determine the improvement in the effective development of ideas in the essays submitted by students of the Colegio Redentorista San Alfonso after applying the CALL method with Google Gemini. This objective aimed to demonstrate whether the students showed improvements in their essays. The students had to write a final narrative essay using the same rubric that covered the same indicators as the initial essay, with the exception that the use of the CALL method and the Google Gemini tool was included to assess its implementation, this to confirms what Barrot, J. (2024) states: "Gemini has immense potential as a research writing assistance tool, offering a wide range of features and functionalities that can optimize the research writing process" (p. 6). The final specific objective seeks to determine the Artificial Intelligence effect on students' critical thinking skills and the acquisition of new knowledge in writing. Overall, we can see that 96% of the students mentioned some improvements for the future, which gives us a very positive result. Furthermore, the variable mentioned in Chapter III indicates that it is valid if the majority of students' responses show an accurate opinion about the use of artificial intelligence during their classes to improve certain skills. Analyzing the results of the three questions, we can see that 93,3% of the students indicated an accurate opinion, reflecting clear, informed opinions based on their experience; therefore, we can conclude that the variable is valid.

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