



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

**ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

TITLE

**RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY
TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE
GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ
CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC
PERIOD.**

Research work as a previous requirement to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education English Language Specialization.

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LOJA – ECUADOR

2016

CERTIFICATION

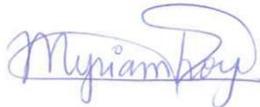
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CERTIFIES

To have directed and thoroughly revised this thesis work entitled: **RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.**, under the responsibility of Jenny María Girón Rimacuna, undergraduate student pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Science of Education: English Language Specialization. This work complies with the norms and requirements of Universidad Nacional de Loja, therefore I authorize its presentation for the corresponding legal purposes.

Loja, October, 2015

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Miriam Troya', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lic. Miriam Eucevia Troya Sánchez M. Sc.

THESIS ADVISOR

AUTORÍA

Yo, Jenny María Girón Rímacuna, declaro ser autora del presente trabajo de tesis y eximo expresamente a la Universidad Nacional de Loja y sus representantes jurídicos de posibles reclamos o acciones legales por el contenido de las mismas.

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Fecha: 02 de Marzo del 2016

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank to all those people who made this thesis possible and an unforgettable experience for me.

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Universidad Nacional de Loja for giving the opportunity to study in this prestigious educational institution.

Besides that, I want to express my gratitude to all administrative and staff members of the English language department who have been kind enough to advise and help in their respective roles, especially all those who were my professors for sharing their knowledge, patience, motivation and encouragement during the time I studied.

Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest thank to my thesis advisor Lic. Miriam Eucevia Troya Sánchez M.Sc., for the support, patience, motivation. Her willingness and guidance helped me all the time of the research and development of this thesis.

Finally, I express my sincere gratitude to Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High school, which allowed me to undertake this thesis, and also for giving me the opportunity to meet so many interesting people.

THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis work to my dear parents, whom always love me unconditionally. Also, they support me spiritually and economically. Additionally, they are my motivation and inspiration to reach my dreams, because they have taught me to work hard for the things that I wish to achieve.

JENNY MARÍA

MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO

ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO DE LA INVESTIGACION											
BIBLIOTECA: ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN											
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a. TITLE

RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.

b. RESUMEN

Esta investigación se enfocó en la estrategia llamada Rally Table como aprendizaje cooperativo para mejorar las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes del décimo año. El investigador utilizó algunos métodos, tales como: científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético, y estadístico. Adicionalmente el investigador implementó 15 planes durante la intervención. También se aplicó evaluaciones y cuestionarios que se utilizaron para medir el desarrollo de habilidades de escritura y comportamiento de los estudiantes. Hojas de observación también se utilizaron durante la intervención. Los resultados del post-test indican un gran progreso en las habilidades de escritura utilizando la estrategia Rally Table y las respuestas recibidas de los cuestionarios demostraron que los estudiantes trabajaron en cooperación porque la mayoría de ellos contribuyeron en el trabajo de equipo. Basándose en estos resultados, se concluye que tanto las habilidades de escritura y el aprendizaje cooperativo aumentaron al mismo tiempo. Es recomendable utilizar la estrategia Rally Table en las clases, ya que ayuda a los estudiantes a desarrollar las habilidades de escritura de forma entretenida.

ABSTRACT

This action research was focused on “Rally Table” as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade students. The researcher used methods, such as: scientific, descriptive, analytic-synthetic, and statistic. Additionally, the researcher implemented 15 lesson plans during the intervention plan. Tests and questionnaires were applied to measure both the students’ development in writing skills and their behavior. An observation sheet was also used throughout the intervention plan. After the intervention phase the results of the post-test showed great progress in writing skills with the use of “Rally Table” strategy. Also, this strategy was essential to improve the cooperative learning because the answers received from the post-questionnaire demonstrated an excellent progress where the students worked cooperatively as most of them contributed to the teamwork. Based on these results, it can be concluded that both writing skills and cooperative learning increased at the same time.

c. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this study was to improve students' writing skills. The researcher used a specific strategy which helped to improve students' motivation and changed their routine activities, thus allowing students improve and enjoy practicing their writing skills. The issue focused on "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade.

Additionally, the researcher conducted this research for the following reasons: to help students to improve writing skills through the use of "Rally Table" strategy in class; to engage students enabling them to have fun whilst learning to improve their writing skills ; and to be able to communicate in today's global world. Moreover, students benefitted because they worked cooperatively in small groups in order to increase their own and each other's writing skills. Furthermore, the researcher also benefitted because increased her experience on how to use the activities of "Rally Table strategy".

This research work was focused on the following objectives; first, the teacher candidate researched the theoretical and methodological references concerning "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy and its application for writing skills. Next, the researcher diagnosed the issues that limit the improvement of writing skills amongst the tenth-grade group. The teacher candidate designed an intervention plan based on "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade. Moreover, the researcher applied the most suitable techniques of "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade. Finally, the

researcher reflected upon the effectiveness that the Rally Table techniques as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst the tenth-grade group.

The researcher used the following methods. Firstly, the scientific method facilitated the study of the Rally Table strategy intended to improve writing skills, and helped in the observations done both before and during the intervention. It also facilitated the prediction of the possible solution, as well as assisting the collection of data to make the relevant predictions and analysis. The second method was the descriptive which facilitated the description of the different stages of the study and the type of resources used by the researcher. This method served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation. The third method was analytic-synthetic, which was used to analyze the results through both the questionnaire, and observation sheet. It also was used to interpret the data, develop the analysis, and draw up the conclusions. Finally, statistic method was used to make both the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data obtained during the observations.

The population at the public institution of Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School was 30 students of the tenth-grade afternoon section. The group of student consists of 8 boys and 22 girls who were between 14 and 15 years old and the researcher of this study who took part in the intervention plan.

The major findings for writing skills in the pretest were that students achieved 3,98 as a the total mean score out of 10. While, in the post test the total mean score was 9.46 which indicated that there was a huge progress after the

intervention plan. However, the major findings of cooperative learning according to the answers given in the post questionnaire showed that the highest indicator was simultaneous interaction with a percentage of 3% while in the post questionnaire students got 97%. This indicates that there was an increase of a cooperative learning where students grew in active engagement for improving their knowledge. It is worth noting that the researcher had some limitations such as the bad behavior of students. Also, the researcher was not yet an expert in classroom management and the period of time to apply the intervention plan was too short to reach superior results.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has a fundamental responsibility to offer a relevant learning that allows students to become successful in the future to accomplish all the challenges in education: such as in the English language. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) offers a scale for language proficiency levels. After students finish the school year with level A2.1 they are expected to produce longer, more detailed complex and brief texts with a specific purpose to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade. They are expected to be able to produce everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs, to perform and respond simple to language functions (MiniEduc, 2014).

Additionally, writing skills are a key asset at every stage of learning which CEFR focuses on to increase the ability to communicate in today's global world. Writing skills was an issue that the teacher candidate observed in tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school. The researcher wished to improve students writing skills by introducing "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy, because it is an excellent way to bring students together into a group to share information, develop ideas and encourage individuals to work independently and with confidence to achieve a common aim and purpose.

Writing skills

Writing skill is defined as the ability to convey ideas and feelings as written material from one person to another in the most effective manner. Also, it can be defined as an ability to communicate ideas or imagination in the form of a

structured pattern others to understand what the writers mean in their writing (Queen, 2014).

Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, and explain what we feel. Specifically, writing is one kind of expression in language which is created by a set of symbols, having conventional values for representing the words of a particular language and drawn up visually (Brown & Susan Hood, 2003).

Furthermore, proficiency in writing is a powerful tool for communicating or expressing ideas, opinions, and knowledge in different fields and daily activities. Through the written form one can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, infuriate, and expresses how we feel (Norman Coe & Robin Ricroft, 2005).

Moreover, writing is complex skill to learn, requiring mastery of not only grammatical patterns, but it is necessary to include in the rules of writing a high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information. Also, the appropriate vocabulary and sentence structure is required to create a style which is appropriate to the subject matter. In addition, to write clearly it is essential to understand the basic system of a language: in English this includes knowledge of grammar, topic, punctuation and sentence structure. Vocabulary is also necessary as are correct spelling and formatting (Nation, Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing, 2008).

Additionally, writing is an act of communication and it is one of the four main skills in English language learning. In it writing, it is important to show ones characteristic as educated people. Learning to write is whereby students can be

active in expressing their ideas in the form of sentence, text or paragraph structure in order to develop their language skills (Harmer, 2004).

As an additional challenge, writing skills is essential to students to learn in the school, because writing forces them to confront issues, to define their own feeling and positions, and enables them to express themselves to others in more effective ways. Therefore, good writing reflects good thinking, and good thinking needs to be put in precise, concise, and lucid prose (Wright, 2010).

Also, students should focus on the most important micro-skills in order to achieve good results.

Grammatical skill: The ability to write correct sentences.

Stylistic skill: The ability to manipulate sentences and use language effectively.

Mechanical skill: The ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language e.g. punctuation, and spelling.

Judgment skill: The ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with an ability to select, organize and relevant information (Yesi Mayangsar E. D., 2013).

Similarly, writing is one of the language skills which is important in the life of students. Through it, they can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, and tell others what they feel. Thus, students have to consider types of writing they are using and the manner and register in which it is used.

Types of Writing

The various types of writing help people express who they are. It also is how the writer chooses to express themselves through writing. There are four main

types of writing: expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative, and each one has a specific style.

- **Narrative Writing:** Narrative writing is a type of writing in which the author places himself as the character and narrates the story; also the story could be fact or fiction. A narrative style uses a storyline as a base for the content. The writer presents different characters and a setting to the reader, and the writer is careful not to include their own voice in the story (Harmer, 2004).
- **Persuasive Writing:** Persuasive writing states the opinion of the writer and attempts to influence the reader or it is a type of writing which contains justifications and reasons to make someone believe the point the writer is talking about. Persuasive writing is for persuading and convincing ones point of view (Queen, 2014).
- **Expository Writing:** The purpose of expository writing is to define and explain an idea. Writers often use expository essays to report an idea they have investigated. They evaluate evidence, expand on the original idea and state a position based on their findings. This category of writing includes definitions, instructions, directions and other basic comparisons and clarifications (Queen, 2014).
- **Descriptive Writing:** Descriptive writing is a style of writing which focuses on describing a character, an event or a place in great details. It is sometimes poetic in nature in which the author is specifying the details of the event rather than just the information of that happened and the writer

includes very detailed information to submerge the reader in the text, allowing them to create an intense mental picture (Lakshmi, 2004).

Also, writers take into account the various types of writing to develop their writing skills, but it is necessary to include the sub-skills of writing to ensure a good writing result.

Sub-skills of writing

- Spelling – is a difficult sub-skill for learners because it is the act of forming words from letters.
- Punctuation – in English is completely different from other languages because of the use of special symbols that one adds to writing to separate phrases and sentences to make the meaning clear.
- Orthography – observing orthographical rules is very important in writing, whenever one teaches a new language structure one is supposed to teach the necessary orthographical rules simultaneously with it.
- Linguistic competence – which means ‘knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology.
- Vocabulary.- it is fundamental in learning English because without sufficient vocabulary, students are unable to understand others or express their own ideas and to communicating successfully with other people (Sárosdy, Bencze, & Poór, 2006).
- Topic sentence - the topic sentence is the main idea of each paragraph. It contains the focus of the paragraph and tells readers what the paragraph is going to be about. Although the topic sentence can be located anywhere in

a paragraph, in academic essays, it is usually located at the beginning of each paragraph (Rebecca Stott & Peter Chapman, 2001).

- Grammar - constitutes the rules and framework, changing the form of words and combining them into sentences. It is an important factor in learning a new language, because it is the study of the way words are used to make sentences (Rebecca Stott & Peter Chapman, 2001).
- Sentence structure - is one or more words that are grammatically linked. Also, it is defined as a word or group of words that expresses a complete idea and that includes a subject and a verb or it is a set of words that in principle tells a complete thought (Peder Jones & Jay Farness, 2002)

There are many problems faced by students at the moment of writing. The individual with writing difficulties may have one or more of the following problems:

Students' Difficulties with Writing

Learning to write in a second language is not easy for students. They face many difficulties, such as how to start writing, how to generate ideas, how to produce unified paragraphs, how to organize ideas logically, how to make grammatical sentences, how to produce good spelling and punctuation, difficulty in taking notes from oral presentation, organizing ideas, lack of vocabulary, grammar accuracy (Nunan, 2003).

Additionally, writing skills in a foreign language are difficult to learn not only because of the ability to use structures but also how to make the writing process because writing is more precise than others skills.

The writing Process

The writing process is a procedure whereby the writer begins to write down their ideas on paper making it a valuable aid to the whole learning process.

- **Pre-writing:** This is the planning phase, when students brainstorm to create a list of things and get their ideas together. Students often use diagrams for mapping out their thoughts, closing their eyes to visualize what they want to write about (Sárosdy, Bencze, & Poór, 2006).
- **Drafting:** Students write their initial text in an organized manner that conveys a particular idea or presents an argument. Students also focus on getting their ideas on paper as quickly as possible, but students should be taught not spend time worrying about spelling or grammar because the first draft is evaluated by how consistent the content is with its purpose for the target audiences (Wright, 2010).
- **Revising:** The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft. Students review, modify, and reorganize their work and they decide to add more details to support their main idea or remove some sentences. At this process, students always the help of their teacher or peers (Alhosani & Najwa M., 2008).
- **Editing:** In this phase of the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity. Requesting another writer's feedback in this stage is beneficial. When students have a strong draft in which the main idea and supporting details are presented and well organized, ones that meets its purpose they focus on

ending for correct spelling, mechanics and grammar (Alhosani & Najwa M., 2008).

- Publishing: In this final step of the writing process, once students have edited their work by making their own corrections and corrections from their teacher and peers the finished product is shared with others. Student can also add illustrations and cover and for sharing can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and texts can be printed or published online (Wright, 2010).

The processes of writing are a useful guide to follow in order to write clearly a brief paragraph, but it is necessary to use “Rally Table” as a cooperative learning strategy because both of them work better together to obtain good results.

Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy

When implement the Rally Table strategy as a cooperative learning in the classroom, teachers often find it helpful to ensure that students work together as a group in which everyone contributes to the learning and outcomes.

“Rally Table” is a strategy designed for students to work in pairs or in small groups of 4 students. Also, Rally Table activities promote small groups and peer interaction which helps towards the development of language and the learning of writing, because students learn to express themselves with greater confidence when working in small teams. Also, it is important to assign students to different teams so that they can interact with whole class (Julie High, 2009).

Moreover, Rally Table is one of the co-operative activities described in Spencer Kagan’s ‘structures’ approach to co-operative learning. This activity is

versatile and adaptable, and is used to bring two pairs together into a larger group of four. The results are a high degree of interaction between students at all times.

Purpose: Sharing information, developing ideas, practice of writing.

Relevant Skills: writing, listening, reading (Kagan, 1994).

In addition, this strategy encourages students to develop their task while enjoying together. It is also generally defined as a teaching arrangement in which groups of students work together to achieve a common goal. Students encourage and support each other (Virginia Pauline Rojas, 2007).

Through the utilization of Rally Table strategy, students work in small groups or in pairs to actively engage in writing skills and improve their understanding of the content. Each member of the team is not only responsible for their own learning, but also for helping teammates learn. Rally Table as a cooperative learning promotes desire and motivation, and improves written text with their work groups' experience (Philip C. Abrami, 1995).

Rally Table as a cooperative learning also requires that students work together in pairs and small groups to support each other in order to improve their learning and the resources used for it. These are sheet of paper, pencil, and eraser. These resources allow students to write some ideas or answers and edit some mistakes. Additionally, a watch is used to control the time during this activity. Finally, the topic or question in which students focus to answers is also necessary (Wendy Jolliffe, 2007).

Steps of Rally Table (in pairs or in groups of 4 members)

First of all, students should be placed in pairs or groups of four. The teacher will then give each group a sheet of paper with a topic or question written on it. Next, the teacher gives students “think time”. Also, the teacher sets a timer and the first student who has the paper will write an answer or response to the topic or question given. Then, the student will pass the paper to the next student who will also write a response or answer. The paper will get passed around the table to each student until the timer goes off. Furthermore, each student must read all responses/answers before he/she responds, because repeated responses or answers will not be helpful. Students are not allowed to talk or discuss anything during Rally Table. Once the timer goes off, the student with the paper will tally the number of responses, check for any repeats, and check for inaccurate answers and teams then compare their list with other teams. Finally, teacher will then use this list to review the topic or question (Wendy Jolliffe, 2007).

Rally Table strategy applied some techniques to promote desire and motivation in writing skills. They are: who I am? colored words, damaged cellphone, what am I doing? spider, sentence charades, brainstorm race. These techniques help the strategy become more dynamic and avoid the routine during the class.

The principles of cooperative learning which characterize Rally Table strategy constitute the following: the first principle is social skills, based on the belief that the ability to work effectively in a group in which students are encouraged to develop trust-building, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills enhances the learning process (Rico, 2008). The second

principle, it is positive interdependence through it students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task (Benner, 2009). The third principle, it is individual accountability in this principle each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual (Jolliffe, 2007). Equal participation is the fourth principle. It creates turn allocation or division of labor. Turn allocation establishes a norm or expectation of participation and all students are given an opportunity to participate and are expected to contribute during their turn. Also division of labor ensured that each e student was responsible for part of the task and equalized participation because every member had a task (Jolliffe, 2007). Simultaneous interaction was the final principle whereby a class interacted simultaneously; students have a great deal more opportunity to express themselves creating a democratic classroom. Simultaneous interaction is one the most powerful tool teachers have for increasing active engagement (Kagan, 1994).

Additionally, "Got in Pairs" is one example when researcher applies this strategy. The teacher announces the topic about classroom activities and then gives students "think time". Also, in pairs, partner A writes an answer to the topic then passes the paper and pencil to Partner B. Following this partner B writes an answer and passes it back to Partner A. Students continue until the teacher calls "time". Finally, the pairs compare their list with other team pair.

The use of Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in the classroom has positive effects, because students work together toward a common goal, academic work becomes valued by peers. Also, students are motivated to help one another

learn. Students also take responsibility for their own learning and learn to see situations from another's viewpoint, justify their own viewpoints, and analyze ideas. Students have fun learning in improving their writing skills thus being able to communicate in a global society.

Cooperative learning has some important principles that helps students to work in teams or groups enjoying the class activities.

Principles of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning offers teachers a way to perform the group experience to reduce the potential pitfalls of group activities cooperative learning includes several different structural approaches for group activities, all intended to get students actively involved in learning opportunities (Benner, 2009).

- Positive interdependence.- Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals (learn and make sure all other group members learn). Students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task (Benner, 2009).

Team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve the goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences, because all team members (Jolliffe, 2007).

Team members understand that must rely on one another to accomplish the assigned goal. The learners need each other for support, clarification and guidance. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone will experience the consequences (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998)

Moreover, the success of each team member is likely to contribute to success of others. The success of teams is likely to be facilitated by success of individual members (Holubec, 2008).

- Face to face interaction. – Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students work in proximity to one another teaching and encouraging between them and (Jolliffe, 2007).

Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee-to-knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment (Holubec, 2008).

- Individual accountability.- Each group member bears full responsibility for the work performed by the group. All students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned (Jolliffe, 2007).

The performance of each group member is evaluated. Therefore, each member is responsible for doing his or her share of the work, achieving the group goals, and mastering of all of the material to be learned (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998)

Students can be made individually accountable by having each student receive a grade on his/her portion of the team project .Each student is responsible for a unique portion of a team learning product. (McCafferty, Idding, & Jacobs, 2006).

Each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. Teachers may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each student or randomly selecting one group member to give the answer (Holubec, 2008).

- **Social skills.**- Cooperative learning is based on the belief that the ability to work effectively in a group. Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills (Rico, 2008).

Skills that are necessary for effective group functioning are taught and practiced. These interpersonal skills include: get to know and trust each other; communicate accurately and unambiguously; accept and support each other ; and resolve conflict constructively (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

Groups cannot function effectively if students do not have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Collaborative skills include leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills (Holubec, 2008).

- **Equal Participation.**-In a traditional classroom, only one student out of the entire class will be participating at any one time. By working in teams, students are encouraged to contribute allowing students the chance growth (Kagan, 1994).

Equal participation may be created by using turn allocation or division of labor. Turn allocation establishes a norm or expectation of participation—all students are given an opportunity to participate and are expected to contribute during their turn. Also division of labor makes each student responsible for part of the task and equalizes participation because every member has a task (Jolliffe, 2007).

- Simultaneous Interaction.- When a class interacts simultaneously, students have a great deal more opportunity to express themselves. This right of expression lays a key part of the foundation for a democratic classroom. Also Simultaneous interaction is one the most powerful tool we have for increasing active engagement. Additionally, Cooperative Learning is fundamentally a simultaneous approach seemed to be taking place if we assume that while our three friends were talking to one another, similar discussions were taking place in other groups. Thus, several or perhaps many discussions were going on simultaneously in that classroom (Kagan, 1994).
- Group processing.- The teacher makes time for reflection on how the group is working together and helps the group for improvement. Team members established group goals, periodically assess what they are doing well as a team, and identify changes they will make to function more effectively in the future (Rico, 2008).

Groups are required to periodically assess and reflect on their ability to function as a team and identify changes they will make to operate more

effectively in the future (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions that helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group even more successful tomorrow. Teachers also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together to the groups and the class as a whole (Holubec, 2008).

Some benefits that cooperative learning requires students to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning.

Benefits for cooperative learning

There are many benefits for cooperative learning. Some benefits that may be observed implementation included.

- Cooperative learning is enjoyable, so students enjoy it and are more motivated.
- Cooperative learning is interactive, so students are engaged.
- Cooperative learning allows discussion and critical thinking, so students learn and retain more information for a longer period of time.
- Cooperative learning requires students to learn to work together, which is an important its skill (Robyn, Adrian, & Jan, 2007).

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

The human resources which helped to accomplish the investigation were the researcher and also the students of tenth- grade at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora. To make reports or obtain information the teacher candidate used a computer, internet, and a flash drive. Additional, the didactic materials were utilized in order to carry out the intervention, such as, flashcards, charts, and worksheets. The budget was covered by the researcher.

Design of the research

Action research is a practical approach to a professional inquiry in any social situation and uses data collection based on quantitative or qualitative methods or both. Moreover, it addresses a specific, practical issue and seeks to obtain solutions to a problem. The purpose of action research is to learn through action that then leads to personal or professional development (John W. Creswell, 2012).

Action research provides teachers and students with multiple benefits. First of all, it focuses on school issues or areas of collective interest. The use of action research influences teachers to develop their thinking skills, sense of efficiency, communication skills and attitudes toward the process of change. Finally, students take advantage of the improvements that action research can offer them.

Methods

The following methods were applied along with the descriptive research: The first method was the scientific, it facilitated the study of the Rally Table strategy which was intended to improve writing skills, and helped in the

observations undertaken both before and during the intervention. This method facilitated the prediction of the possible solution, as well as assisting the collection of data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it. The second method was the descriptive, it facilitated the description of the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation. The third method was the analytic-synthetic, which was used to analyze the results through both the questionnaire and the observation sheet. It also was used to interpret the data, to develop the analysis, and to draw up the conclusions. The final method was the statistic method, which was used to make both the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data obtained during the observations.

Techniques and instruments

Action research combines qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. The researcher created a pre and post- test questionnaire as quantitative instruments to measure writing skills. Also, pre and post questionnaires were designed as qualitative instrument to measure the cooperative learning. Additionally, an observation sheet was created to register students' performance.

Observation Sheet

The researcher used an observation sheet to obtain the participants' performance shown on both variables: performance of the writing skills and the attitudes, and feelings toward Rally Table as a cooperative strategy. This

observation sheet was a self-developed instrument which described accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects of the situation.

Nonparticipant observation

Nonparticipant observation in nonparticipant observation, the researcher was not involved in the situation being observed. The researcher observed behaviors but did not interact or participate in the setting under study. The objective of this nonparticipant observation was to identify the issue for this action research project which was supported through the participant observation. (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012).

Participant observation

In participant observation, the researcher became a part and a participant in the situation being observed. The researcher participated deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School 20014-2015 academic period.

Tests

Tests: The test allowed students to perform cognitive tasks in relation to writing skills. Therefore, tests yielded a numerical score by which the researcher calculated the mean to compare the pre and post-test result.

Pre –post test

Initially pre-test was applied. The pre-test provided a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants received a treatment through the intervention plan designed for this research. Also, a post-test was applied after

the intervention plan. The post-test measured the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pre-test and post-test comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires were given to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy. A pre and post- questionnaire were given to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires supported the test results.

Pre-post questionnaires

The questionnaire was applied to collect students' answers with regard to cooperative learning in tenth grade at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. This allowed the students to provide a wide range of responses. All questionnaires were conducted in class. The researcher gave a clear explanation to students and clarified all questions raised.

Population

The research participants were students of tenth grade at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school. The research participants consisted of: 30 students, boys and girls aged between 14 and 15 years old; they had five English classes per week, each lesson was 40 minutes. In addition, the development of this research is a requirement for the researcher to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Specialization established in the regulations of the Education, Área de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación at Universidad Nacional de Loja.

f. RESULTS

This section indicates how the researcher accomplished the five objectives.

Objective 1. To research the theoretical and methodological references about Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on writing skills.

The researcher accomplished this objective by using the literature review section which was focused in two variables writing skills and Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy which enabled the researcher to know how to improve writing skills and how to make that the students enjoy learning English as a second language in the classroom.

Objective 3. To design an intervention plan based on Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

The researcher achieved this objective by dividing the intervention plan into 8 macro plans with 15 lesson plans (see annex pgs. 89-105). During this time the researcher became a teacher. When administering the action plan the teacher candidate observed and monitored students' performance. Finally, the research findings were analyzed and reported. It was noted that after the intervention phase the students improved their writing skills.

Additionally, a pretest and posttest were applied to measure the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills consisting of the following sub-skills: topic, sentence production, mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary. Also, the

teacher candidate applied pre and post questionnaires to measure the student's behavior, attitudes, participation, contribution, and motivation, toward "Rally Table" as a cooperative learning strategy.

Objective 2. To diagnose the issues that limit the development of writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

Table 1**a. Pretest Results on the Performance of Tenth- Grade Students' Writing Skills**

Students' code	T /2	SS /3	M /1	G /1	V /3	TOTAL / 10
BBCA10A901	0.50	1.50	0.25	0.25	0.75	3.25
BBCA10A902	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A903	1.00	0.75	0.50	0.50	1.50	4.25
BBCA10A904	0.50	0.75	0.50	0.50	1.50	3.75
BBCA10A905	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.25	1.50	4.75
BBCA10A906	1.00	1.75	0.25	0.50	0.75	4.25
BBCA10A907	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	5.00
BBCA10A908	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	4.25
BBCA10A909	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A910	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A911	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A912	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.75	1.50	5.25
BBCA10A913	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	4.50
BBCA10A914	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	5.00
BBCA10A915	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A916	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.25	0.75	4.00
BBCA10A917	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A918	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A919	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.25	1.50	4.75
BBCA10A920	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	5.00
BBCA10A921	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A922	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A923	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	5.00
BBCA10A924	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.50	1.50	4.50
BBCA10A925	1.00	1.50	0.50	0.50	2.25	5.75
BBCA10A926	1.00	2.25	0.75	0.75	2.25	7.00
BBCA10A927	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.25	0.75	3.00
BBCA10A928	1.50	2.25	0.75	0.75	2.25	7.50
BBCA10A929	0.50	0.75	0.25	0.25	0.75	2.50
BBCA10A930	0.50	1.50	0.50	0.50	0.75	3.75
Mean	0.75	1.26	0.41	0.40	1.18	3.98

Note: writing sub-skills. T= Topic, SS= Sentences Structure, M= Mechanics, G= Grammar, V= Vocabulary, BBCA10A901: Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School Tenth Grade A9 First Student.

b. Analysis and Interpretation

A pre-test was administered in order to have a starting point concerning the amount of pre-existing knowledge of writing skills. As seen in Table 1, the sentence structures which obtained the highest mean score (1, 26/3); and the lowest mean score was 0.75/2 for topic. The total mean score was 3, 98 out of 10, which was below the average level (see grading scale p 121). Therefore, it was noted that there was an evident problem for tenth-grade students to produce or create a brief paragraph consisting of expressing a complete thought, through one or more words that are grammatically linked (Peder Jones & Jay Farness, 2002). Additionally, a paragraph consisting of a focus on the main idea telling readers what the paragraph is going to discuss (Rebecca Stott & Peter Chapman, 2001).

Objective 4. To apply the most suitable techniques of Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

Pre & Post Questionnaire results. The questions were directly addressed to the principles of the cooperative learning.

Table 2

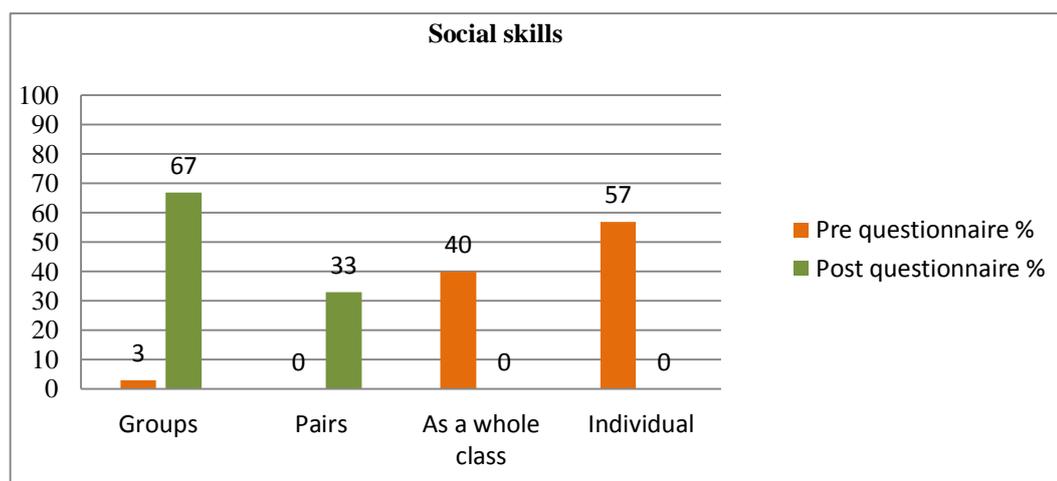
Questions 1. How do the classroom activities develop in the English class?

a. Practice of Social Skills in the Classroom as a Cooperative Learning

Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Groups	1	3	20	67
Pairs	0	0	10	33
As a whole class	12	40	0	0
Individual	17	57	0	0

b. Figure 2



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As shown in Table 2, it was reflected on the environment in which cooperative learning strategies were practiced during the pre-intervention phase, only 3% of students responded that the classroom activities in the English class were always developed in groups. This percentage was low (see grading scale p 121). On the other hand, after the intervention plan, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and 67% of students said that they always developed in groups the

English class activities, which was at the expected level. Consequently, the techniques for applying Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy produced a positive impact in the classroom environment as most of the students could develop the classroom activities in groups cooperatively.

Whilst working and learning in groups the class activities indicated that learners were developing social skills, which is one of the principles of cooperative learning which helps students to enjoy learning together. Additionally, students noted a greater ability to work effectively in a group to accept and to support each other (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998) .

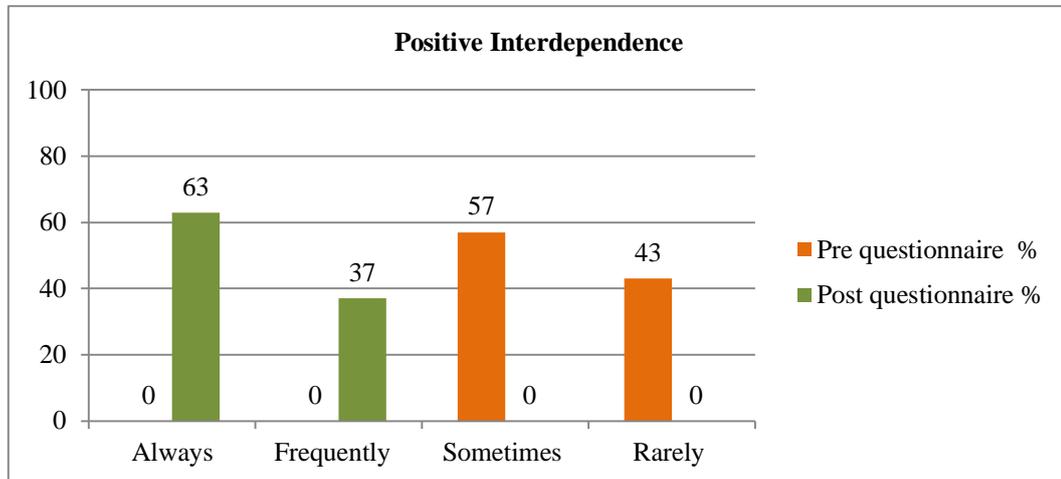
Table 3

Questions 3. The Group or pair activities in the English class are developed in a positive and respectful environment?

a. Frequency of Positive Interdependence as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	19	63
Frequently	0	0	11	37
Sometimes	17	57	0	0
Rarely	13	43	0	0

b. Figure 3



Analysis and Interpretation

Table three referred to the environment in which cooperative learning strategies were developed before intervention, it was not noticed that group and pair activities in the English class were always conducted in a positive and respectful environment. After the intervention, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and 63% of students stated that they always worked in groups or pairs in a positive and respectful environment, which was at the expected level. Consequently the techniques for applying Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy produced a positive impact in the classroom environment because most of the students were able to participate positively and respectfully during the development of the classroom activities.

Working and learning in pairs or groups in a positive and respectful environment allows for the development of positive interdependence which is one of the principles of cooperative learning. Moreover, students perceive that they

need each other in order to complete the group's task (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

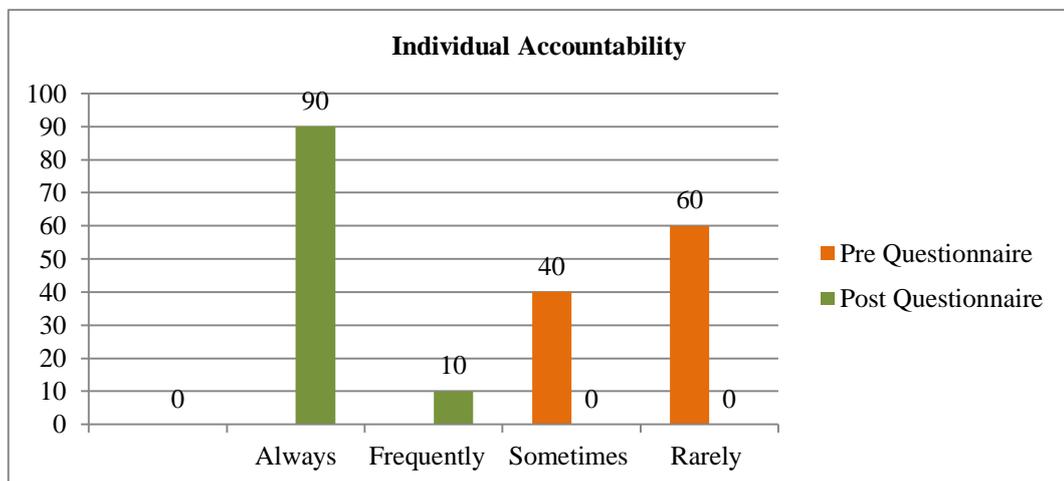
Table 4

Questions 4. In the group activities in the English class do all the members contribute to develop the teamwork?

a. Frequency of Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	27	90
Frequently	0	0	3	10
Sometimes	12	40	0	0
Rarely	18	60	0	0

b. Figure 4



c. Analysis and Interpretation

Table 4 showed students' responses to the pre and post-questionnaires. Before the intervention, the group activities in the English class, all the members did not contribute to develop the teamwork. This percentage was at a low level. However,

after the intervention plan 90% of students stated that they worked cooperatively because most of them contributed to teamwork.

Contributing and learning in group generally indicates that learners are developing individual accountability, which is one of the principles of cooperative learning. This is also related with the performance of each group member and each one is assessed (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

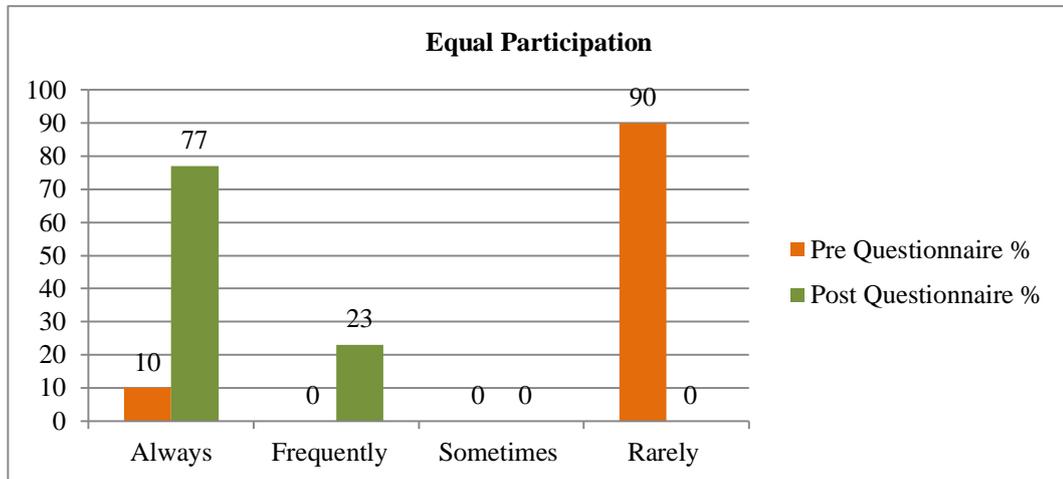
Table 5

Questions 5. When you work in group or in pairs in the English class is the participation is equitable?

a. Frequency of Equal Participation as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	3	10	23	77
Frequently	0	0	7	23
Sometimes	0	0	0	0
Rarely	27	90	0	0

b. Figure 5



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As shown in Table 5, before the intervention only 10% of students perceived that pair and group activities were always equitable this was the low level. On the other hand, after the intervention plan in the post questionnaire 77% of students said that pair and groups the participation is equitable, which was at the expected level. Consequently the techniques for applying rally table as a cooperative learning strategy produced a positive impact in the classroom environment because many more students could participate equitably.

Working and learning in pair and group work with fair participation shows that learners are developing equal participation which is one of the principles of cooperative learning in which students make turn allocation or make division of labor to develop the tasks (Jolliffe, 2007).

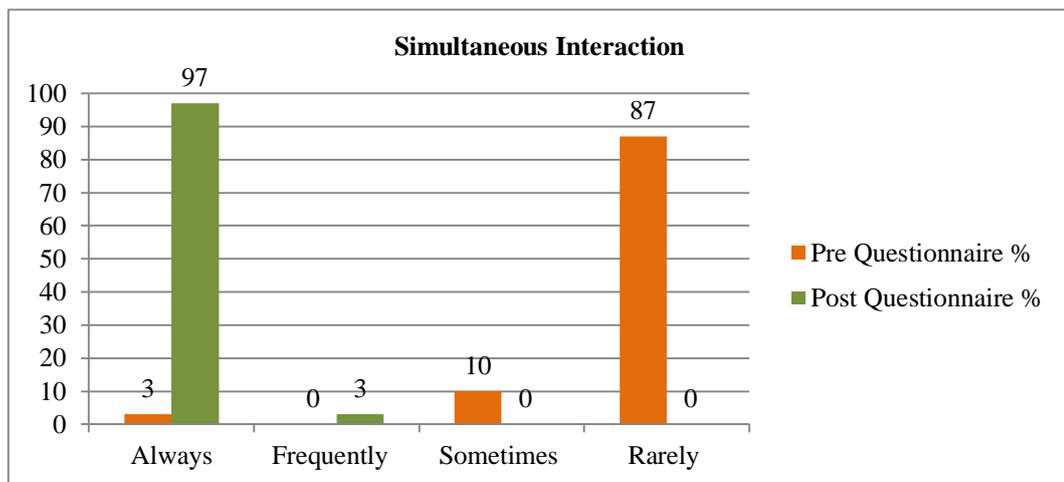
Table 6

Questions 6. When you work in group or in pairs do you learn more than when you work individually?

a. Frequency of Simultaneous Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	1	3	29	97
Frequently	0	0	1	3
Sometimes	3	10	0	0
Rarely	26	87	0	0

b. Figure 6



c. Interpretation and Analysis

As can be seen in Table 6, in the pre-questionnaire 3% of students perceived that pair and group activities were always adequate to learn more than when working individually this percentage was at a low level. On the other hand, after the intervention 97% of students claimed that when they worked in groups or in pairs they learned more than when they worked individually, which was at a high

level. Consequently, the use of Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in the classroom produced a positive effect because many more students could learn more easily when they work in groups or pairs than when they work individually.

When a class interacted simultaneously, students had a great deal more opportunity to express themselves thereby creating a democratic classroom. Simultaneous interaction is one the most powerful tool teachers have for increasing active engagement (Kagan, 1994).

Objective 5. To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

Table 7

a. Posttest Results on the Performance of Tenth–Grade Students’ Writing Skills

Students' code	T	SS	M	G	V	TOTAL
	/2	/3	/1	/1	/3	/10
BBCA10A901	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.7
BBCA10A902	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A903	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A904	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.75
BBCA10A905	1.50	3.00	0.75	0.75	2.25	8.25
BBCA10A906	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A907	2.00	3.00	0.75	0.75	3.00	9.50
BBCA10A908	2.00	3.00	0.75	0.75	2.25	8.75
BBCA10A909	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A910	2.00	2.25	1.00	1.00	3.00	9.25
BBCA10A911	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A912	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.75
BBCA10A913	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A914	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A915	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	2.25	9.00
BBCA10A916	1.50	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.25
BBCA10A917	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A918	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A919	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A920	2.00	3.00	1.00	0.75	3.00	9.75
BBCA10A921	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.25	9.25
BBCA10A922	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	9.00
BBCA10A923	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A924	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	2.25	9.00
BBCA10A925	2.00	3.00	1.00	0.75	3.00	9.75
BBCA10A926	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A927	1.50	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.25
BBCA10A928	2.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	10.00
BBCA10A929	2.00	3.00	0.75	1.00	3.00	9.75
BBCA10A930	2.00	2.25	1.00	1.00	3.00	9.25
Mean	1.95	2.95	0.91	0.96	2.69	9.46

Note: writing sub-skills. T= Topic, SS= Sentences structure, M= Mechanics, G= Grammar, V= Vocabulary, BBCA10A901: Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School Tenth Grade A9 First Student.

b. Analysis and Interpretation

According to the results display in Table 7, the mean for writing skill sentences production achieved the highest score (2.95/3) , and writing skill vocabulary got the lowest mean (2.69/3). In addition, the total mean score was 9.46 out of 10. Therefore, the post-test means gave a strong indication that tenth-grade students were able to write with their ideas focused on the main idea (Topic). Additionally, they were able to express a complete thought without errors, linking one or more words grammatically and with varied structures (Sentences structure). Consequently, students could produce correctly; punctuation and spelling in a clear way and understandable way (Mechanics). Moreover, they were able to change the form of words and join them into sentences without errors of agreement, number, or tense (Grammar). Finally, in the use of vocabulary students did not use new key words easily or new related words correctly but this did not adversely affect the message because most of the words were related to the topic.

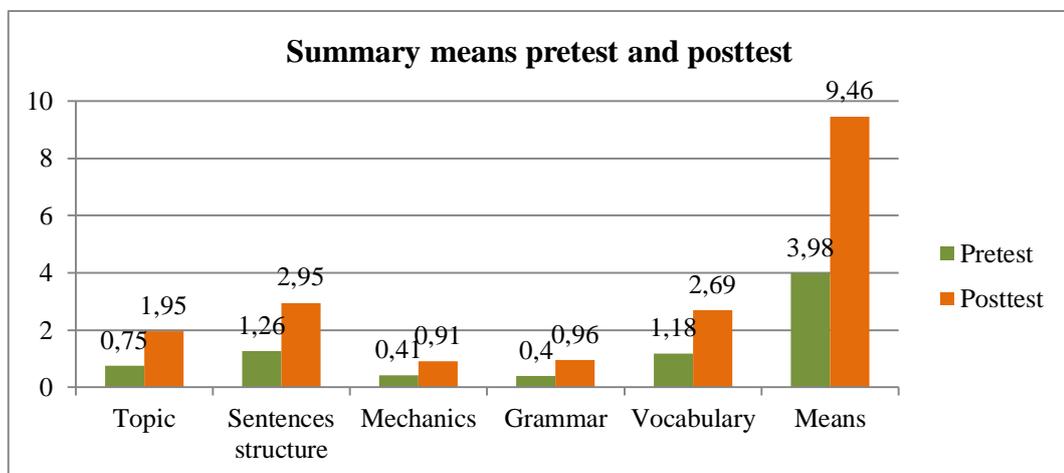
Writing skill is not only grammatical patterns. It also requires of organization in the development of ideas, use of the appropriate vocabulary, the ability to produce mechanics and sentence structure to create good understanding and style (Harmer, 2004).

Table 8

a. Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of Tenth- Grade Students' Writing Skills

	Pretest	Posttest
Topic (2/2)	0.75	1.95
Sentence Structure(3/3)	1.26	2.95
Mechanics(1/1)	0.41	0.91
Grammar (1/1)	0.40	0.96
Vocabulary (3/3)	1.18	2.69
Means	3.98	9.46

b. Figure 8



c. Analysis and Interpretation

Table 8 shows that, Topic, Sentences structure, Mechanics and Grammar writing skills achieved the highest means score (1.95/2, 2.95/3, 0.91/1, 0.96/1). However, Vocabulary attained the lowest score (2.69/3). The total mean score changed from 3.98 to 9.46 which showed a significant progress in the students'

achievement, which was attributed to the implementation of “Rally Table” as a cooperative learning strategy during the intervention plan. It is worth noting that the post-test mean (9.46) is excellent. The research had some limitations such as the bad behavior of students, the fact that the researcher was not yet an expert in classroom management, and the period of time to apply the intervention plan was too short to obtain better results.

Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups where students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Additionally, it includes different principles and techniques to bring students together into a group to share information, develop ideas and encourage individuals to work independently and with confidence to get a common purpose (Robyn M. Gillies & Adrian F. Ashman, 2003).

Learning to write in a second or foreign language is not easy for students. They should focus on the most important sub-skills to obtain a good standard of proficiency in order to communicate in today’s global society (Norman Coe & Robin Ricroft, 2005). The influence of cooperative learning strategies to improve students’ writing skills had a positive impact through the application of the intervention plan.

g. DISCUSSION

This study was conducted with the purpose of answering the research problem concerning Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students. The data showed that students' knowledge on writing skills increased after the intervention plan of cooperative learning. The findings in the pre and post-test and pre and post questionnaires showed a significant increase in the students' writing ability.

In addition, the major findings concerning writing skills changed: in the pretest students achieved 3,98 as the total mean score out of 10 in the following indicators: topic, sentence structure, mechanics, grammar, and vocabulary while in the post test the total mean score was 9.46 which seems to indicate that there was a huge progress after the intervention plan.

The major findings of cooperative learning according to the answers given in the post questionnaire showed that the highest indicator was simultaneous interaction which in the pre questionnaire achieved a percentage of 3% while in the post questionnaire students attained 97% which indicated that there was an increase of cooperative learning in which students grew actively in improving their knowledge.

At the beginning of the intervention plan phase the students failed to work cooperatively and their knowledge of writing skills was below average. Then, the researcher applied Rally Table strategy during the intervention plan section, which helped students to work in groups cooperatively. It allowed them to share their knowledge among each other and participate with the whole class to improve

writing skills. After the intervention plan, the researcher achieved excellent results from students. They changed their working method and each member of a team became responsible, not only for learning what was being taught, but also for helping his or her team mates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement.

Furthermore, Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy was helpful in encouraging students to work together cooperatively in small groups toward a common goal. Also, this strategy helped students to improve their writing skills in the best way to achieve good communication.

h. CONCLUSIONS

- After analyzing the results, the researcher draws the followings conclusions. The issues which limited writing skills were the lack of knowledge about the sub-skills required to produce a single paragraph, these were; topic, sentence production, mechanics, grammar and vocabulary. Students did not use these sub-skills to produce a single paragraph focused on the topic. Then, Rally Table was implemented in the intervention plan to improve writing skills, its techniques help students to change their routine class activities and to become more motivated to work in groups to write sentences, and short paragraphs focusing on a single topic, sentences structure, mechanics, grammar, vocabulary.
- Using Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy during the intervention reduced the difficulty of developing writing skills and its techniques such as who am I?, colored words, damaged cellphone, what am I doing?, spider, sentence charades, and brainstorm race, helped students to be motivated to produce writing skills.
- Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy was effective because it ensured that students worked together as a team in which everyone contributed to improve writing skills. Similarly, the use of Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy during the intervention plan in the classroom had a positive effect because students were motivated to help one another. Also, students had fun learning to improve their writing skills in order to be able to communicate in a global society.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

- English teachers should use the sub-skills in their writing English classes because these skills help students to make a good writing result which is the ability to communicate all their ideas or imagination into a form of structured patterns that the readers may understand what the writers are trying to communicate in their writing.
- In the English classes teachers should use Rally Table strategy because its activities and strategies promote active groups and peer interaction, good motivation and improves the written text with their work groups' experience. Also, the techniques of this strategy help teachers to change the routine activities to make their classes funny and to get students' attention in practicing their writing skills.
- It is recommended for English teachers use Rally Table strategy in their classes to ensure students working together as a team in which everyone contribute. In addition, the use of this strategy as a cooperative learning in the classroom has positive effects because students feel more motivated to learn and to develop their writing skills.

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k. ANNEXES

Annex 1 Research Project



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

**ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

THEME

**RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY
TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE
GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ
CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC
PERIOD.**

Research work as a previous requirement to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education English Language Specialization.

AUTHOR

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Loja – Ecuador

2015

a. THEME

RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

The Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School was founded on December 6th, 1954, due to the need in Loja for an educational institute for women. The institute was first called “Liceo Primero de Mayo”. Then, it got its name from Matrona Beatriz Cueva. Ms. de Ayora, who was among the most famous and respectable Loja women, and brought prestige and glory to Loja. This school was established to educate Loja women.

The Ministry of Education and Culture would later authorize the operation of the Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School, but its purpose in this time was to educate men and women.

This educational institution is located between 10 de Agosto street and Zomora Huico avenue in Loja.

Current situation of the research object

English is the most spoken language in today’s global world, and it is the only language that links the whole world together. Indeed, proficiency with this language has become almost a necessity.

English teaching -as -a -foreign- language is a topic of great difficulty because it involves a variety of elements. It is essential to emphasize good writing skills , such as correct grammar, punctuation and spelling since these are essential to written and tools for communication across the language barrier. Nowadays, students are not being taught to develop their writing skills. Indeed many readers have an immediate negative reaction to spelling or grammatical mistakes in

writing. Students simply do not feel comfortable with the technique that teachers use in the classroom which affects the development of writing skills. The development of writing skill requires effective techniques and Rally Table is one versatile and adaptable approach to co-operative learning, which give students a chance to actively engage with the content and to provide a variety of methods used to help students learn the desired course contents and be able to develop achievable goals in the future.

Research problem

HOW DOES RALLY TABLE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE GROUP A9 STUDENTS AT BACHILLERATO BEATRIZ CUEVA DE AYORA HIGH SCHOOL 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD?

Delimitation of the research

Timing

This present research work will be carried out during the 2014 - 2015 academic school year.

Location

This research work will be done at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School which is a public institution located in Loja city.

Participants

The participants of this research work are the tenth-grade students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High school. They are 30 students 8 boys and 22 girls

who are between 14 and 15 years old and the teacher candidate of this study who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Subproblems

- What theoretical and methodological references about Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
- What are the issues that limit the development writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
- What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
- Which Rally Table techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
- How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?

c. JUSTIFICATION

The present research work is justified because Rally Table as cooperative learning strategy develops writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

From the scientific point of view, it is important to carry out this project because enough information can be gathered to give some theoretical elements in order to establish some alternatives of the solution to the problems found around Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade students in the English language teaching learning process.

From the educational point of view, it is so important to develop the present project because Rally Table is an essential strategy that helps to teach writing because writing skills are necessary to communicate.

The present research is also pertinent, because it is a proposal that can help the English teachers to solve many problems around teaching writing skills through an introduction of different techniques and instruments.

Finally, it is also a requirement to get a Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Specialization.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

To improve writing skills through Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School during the 2014-2015 school year.

Specifics

- To study the theoretical and methodological references about Rally Table as a cooperative- learning strategy and its application in writing skills.
- To identify the issues that limit development of writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.
- To design an intervention plan based on the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.
- To apply the most suitable techniques of Rally Table as a cooperative- leaning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.
- To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.

e. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The National Curriculum Guidelines are shaped by Common European Framework with an underlying philosophy of effective communicative language teaching. It was designed to provide a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of foreign language proficiency.

Moreover, The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has a fundamental responsibility to offer a relevant learning that allow students to become successful in a future to accomplish all the challenges in the education such as in the English language the CEFR fundamentally offers a scale for language proficiency levels that goes from A1.1, A1.2, A2.1, A2.2, B1.1 and B1.2 that have been implemented in the system of Education. After students finish the school year with level A2.1 students are expected to produce longer, more detailed, complex and brief text with a specific purpose to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade, will be able to produce everyday expressions in order to satisfy simple needs of concrete types, to perform and respond simple language functions, and to memorize phrases to particular situations (MiniEduc, 2014).

The declared purpose of the CEFR is to provide a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. It also provides a transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis for the creation of language syllabi and curriculum guidelines, the design of teaching and learning materials, and the assessment of language proficiency. It is

founded on the conviction that language-learning outcomes are likely to benefit internationally if syllabi and curricula, textbooks and examinations are shaped by a common understanding (Council of Europe, 2001).

The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems through an effective cooperative learning (Council of Europe, 2001).

Writing skills are a key asset at every stage of the students that the Common European Framework focuses to increase a good ability to communicate in today's global world, for this reason to develop the tenth-grade group A students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period, it is first important to provide the rally table strategy, because this strategy is an excellent way to bring students together into a group to share information, develop ideas and encourage individuals to work independently and with confidence to get a common aim and purpose.

Writing skills

Writing skill can be defined as an ability to communicate all the ideas or imaginations into the form of structured pattern so that the readers may understand what the writers mean in their writing.

Proficiency in writing confers a powerful tool to communicate ideas and express opinions and knowledge in different fields of knowledge and daily activities. Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, infuriate, and expresses how we feel (Norman Coe & Robin Ricroft, 2005).

Writing is one of the language skills which is important in our life. Through writing, we can inform others, carry out transactions, and tell what we feel. Specifically, writing is one kind of expression in language which is created by particular set of symbol, having conventional values for representing the wordings of particular language which is drawn up visually (Brown & Susan Hood, 2003).

Moreover, writing skill is complex to learn. Requiring mastery is not only grammatical patterns but also the rule of writing such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter. To write clearly it is essential to understand the basic system of a language. In English this includes knowledge of grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. Vocabulary is also necessary, as is correct spelling and formatting (Harmer, 2004).

Writing is an act of communication and it is the fourth skill in English learning language that helps us in solving and improving other skills in learning language. As students, writing is also important to show our characteristic as educated people. It makes learning writing become an activity that students be active in expressing their ideas into a form of a good sentence, text or paragraph with good structure to develop their language skills (Harmer, 2004).

An additional challenge, writing skills is essential for students to learn in the school, because writing forces them to confront issues, to define their own feeling and positions, and enables them to express themselves to others in more effective

ways. Therefore, good writing reflects good thinking, and good thinking needs to be put in precise, concise, and lucid prose (Wright, 2010).

Students should focus on the most important writing skills to get good results.

Grammatical skill: The ability to write correct sentences.

Stylistic skill: The ability to manipulate sentence and use language effectively.

Mechanical skill: The ability to use correctly those conventions peculiar to the written language e.g. punctuation, and spelling.

Judgment skill: (The ability to write in an appropriate manner for a particular purpose with an ability to select, organize and relevant information) (Yesi Mayangsar English Department, 2013).

Writing is one of the language skills which is important in our life. Through it, we can inform others, carry out transactions, persuade, and tell what we feel. However, students have to consider writing sub-skills to make a good writing result.

Sub-skills of writing

- Spelling – is a difficult sub-skill for learners because it is the act of forming of words from letters.
- Punctuation – in English is completely different from other language because the use of special symbols that you add to writing to separate phrases and sentences to make the meaning clear.
- Orthography – observing orthographical rules is very important in writing, whenever we teach a new language structure we are supposed to teach the necessary orthographical rules simultaneously with it.

- Linguistic competence – which means ‘knowledge of lexical items and rules of morphology, syntax, sentence grammar, semantics and phonology.
- Vocabulary.- it is fundamental to learn English language because without sufficient vocabulary students cannot understand others or express their own ideas and to communicating successfully with other people (Sárosdy, Bencze, & Poór, 2006).
- Topic sentence.- the topic sentence is the main idea of each paragraph. It contains the focus of the paragraph and tells readers what the paragraph is going to be about. Although the topic sentence can be located anywhere in a paragraph, in academic essays, it is usually located at the beginning of each paragraph (Rebecca Stott & Peter Chapman, 2001).
- Grammar.- it constitutes the rules and framework, changing the form of words and joining them into sentences. Also it is an important factor to learn a new language, because it is the study of the way words are used to make sentences (Rebecca Stott & Peter Chapman, 2001).
- Sentence production.- it is one or more words that are grammatically linked. Also, it is defined as a word or group of words that expresses a complete idea and that includes a subject and a verb or it is a set of words that in principle tells a complete thought (Peder Jones & Jay Farness, 2002)

On the other hand, there are many problems that students present at the moment of writing. The individual with writing difficulties may have one or more of the following problems:

The Students' Difficulties in Writing

Learning to write in second and foreign language is not easy for students. They face some difficulties, such as, how to start writing, how to generate ideas, how to produce unified paragraphs, how to organize ideas logically, how to make grammatical sentences, how to produce a good spelling and punctuation, difficulty taking notes from oral presentation, organizing idea, lack of vocabulary, grammar accuracy (Nunan, 2003).

Writing skill in a foreign language are difficult to learn not only the ability to use structures but also how to make the writing process because writing is more precise than others skills.

Writing Process

Writing process is a process which writer begins to write down their ideas on paper which is valuable aid to the whole learning process.

- Pre-writing: This is the planning phase, when students brainstorm to create a list of things and get their ideas together. Students often use diagrams for mapping out their thoughts, closing their eyes to visualize what they want to write about (Sárosdy, Bencze, & Poór, 2006).
- Drafting: Students write their initial text in an organized manner that conveys a particular idea or presents an argument. Students also focus on getting their ideas on paper as quickly as possible, but students should be taught not spend time worrying about spelling or grammar because the first draft is evaluated by how consistent the content is with its purpose for the target audiences (Wright, 2010).

- **Revising:** The goal of this phase of the writing process is to improve the draft. Students review, modify, and reorganize their work and they decide to add more details to support their main idea or remove some sentences. At this process, students always the help of their teacher or peers (Alhosani & Najwa M., 2008).
- **Editing:** In this phase of the writing process, writers proofread and correct errors in grammar and mechanics, and edit to improve style and clarity. Requesting another writer's feedback in this stage is beneficial. When students have a strong draft in which the main idea and supporting details are presented and well organized, ones that meets its purpose they focus on ending for correct spelling, mechanics and grammar (Alhosani & Najwa M., 2008).
- **Publishing:** In this final step of the writing process, once students have edited their work by making their own corrections and corrections from their teacher and peers the finished product is shared with others. Student can also add illustrations and cover and for sharing can be accomplished in a variety of ways, and texts can be printed or published online (Wright, 2010).

Writers improve their writing skills through all of the steps in the writing process, but it is necessary to take into account the types of writing because they are about the manner in which an author chooses to write for his or her audience.

Types of Writing

These types help us express who we are. It is how the writer chooses to express himself or herself through writing. There are four main types of writing - expository, persuasive, descriptive, and narrative - and each one has a specific style.

- Narrative writing is a type of writing in which the author places himself as the character and narrates you to the story; also the story could be fact or fiction. A narrative style has a storyline as a base for the content. The writer presents different characters and a setting to the reader, and the writer is careful not to include their own voice in the story (Harmer, 2004)
- Persuasive writing states the opinion of the writer and attempts to influence the reader or it is a type of writing which contains justifications and reasons to make someone believe on the point the writer is talking about. Persuasive writing is for persuading and convincing on your point of view (Queen, 2014).
- The purpose of expository writing is to define and explain an idea. Writers often use expository essays to report on an idea they investigated. They evaluate evidence, expand on the original idea and state a position based on their findings. This category of writing includes definitions, instructions, directions and other basic comparisons and clarifications (Queen, 2014).
- Descriptive writing is a style of writing which focuses on describing a character, an event or a place in great details. It is sometimes poetic in

nature in which the author is specifying the details of the event rather than just the information of that event happened and the writer includes very detailed information to submerge the reader in the text, allowing them to create an intense mental picture (Lakshmi, 2004).

Types of writing are what sets his or her writing and makes it unique, but is necessary the cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy because both of them together work better to have a good communication.

The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy

Cooperative learning (CL) facilitates academic achievement and creates positive social development among a wide variety of students. It also obtains academic and social success at school and it enables students to become successful adults.

Cooperative learning offers a view of learning which is socially based. In the broadest sense, cooperative learning involves working together on some task or issue in a way that promotes individual learning through process of collaboration in groups (Reena Agarwal & Nandita Nagar, 2010).

Cooperative learning is an educational situation where learning occurs while two or more students are working together to complete a common goal. It is also an instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the same group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal (Jolliffe, 2007).

Cooperative learning has been found to be a successful teaching strategy at all levels, from pre-school to post-secondary. The developmental characteristics of middle school students make cooperative learning a good fit of teaching strategy for the needs of the students. Young adolescents need to socialize, be a part of a group, share feelings, receive emotional support, and learn to see things from other perspectives. Cooperative learning groups do not separate students on the basis of class, race, or gender and the goals of middle schools are consistent with the goals of cooperative learning theories. It is a peer-centered pedagogy that promotes academic achievement and builds positive social relationships (Sapon-Shevin, 2010).

Cooperative learning is a successful teaching strategy in which small teams composed of students of different levels of ability use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement. Students work through the assignment cooperatively until all group members successfully understand and complete it (Goyak, 2009).

Cooperative learning is the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning. Although the preceding brief definition of cooperative learning may provide an intriguing starting point, faculty members might require more depth to think about how they might introduce cooperative learning into their classes (Robyn M. Gillies & Adrian F. Ashman, 2003).

The term cooperative learning (CL) refers to students working in teams on an assignment or project under conditions in which certain criteria are satisfied, including that the team members be held individually accountable for the complete content of the assignment or project. This section summarizes the defining criteria of cooperative learning, surveys CL applications, summarizes the research base that attests to the effectiveness of the method, and outlines proven methods for implementing CL and overcoming common obstacles to its success (Brown & Susan Hood, 2003).

Cooperative Learning.- Learning is a social activity. In fact, this social dimension is a critical aspect in the learning process for people of any age. People learn in communities, and both accomplish more than as individuals and they have more fun in the process. Research shows that opportunity for cognitive rehearsal, clarification, and teaching a positive effect on academic achievement (Goyak, 2009).

Cooperative learning is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that result from working on a high-performance team. Two very important aspects of implementing cooperative learning are to provide group rewards and to reinforce individual accountability (Millis, 2012).

Cooperative Learning involves structuring classes around small groups that work together in such a way that each group member's success is dependent on the group's success (M, Adrian, & Jan, 2007).

Cooperative learning not only enhances the building of knowledge, but also student motivation. Getting students to want to learn is the hardest job for most teachers. Many students have predetermined ideas about school that hinder their educational process. To help students enjoy the process of learning we need to look at the factors that drive their interests. We need to help the students who are satisfied with lower achievement find the motivation to work harder and attain higher grades. “The principal idea behind cooperative learning is that by rewarding groups as well as individuals for their academic achievement, peer norms will come to favor rather than oppose high achievement (Jack c. Richards, Willy a., & Willy A. Renandya, 2002).

When students collaborate, they have an opportunity to discuss new concepts with someone close to their own level of understanding. They try out new ideas and ask questions in a small group before speaking to the whole class or completing a written product. When students discuss and defend their ideas or solutions with teammates, they learn to think problems through, support their own opinions, and critically consider the opinions of others before coming to a conclusion. Most importantly they learn that, in the end, the responsibility for learning still rests with them (Slavin, 2011).

Using cooperative learning has increased opportunities to students to verify their comprehension by receiving explanations from their peers and sharing prior knowledge. This helps them clarify and familiarize the-selves with the lesson content (Rico, 2008).

Cooperative learning is instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following elements.

Principles of Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning offers teachers a way to performance the group experience to reduce the potential pitfalls of group activities cooperative learning includes several different structural approaches for group activities, all intended to get students actively involved in learning opportunities (Benner, 2009).

- Positive interdependence.- Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals (learn and make sure all other group members learn). Students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task (Benner, 2009).

Team members are obliged to rely on one another to achieve the goal. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone suffers consequences, because all team members (Jolliffe, 2007).

Team members understand that must rely on one another to accomplish the assigned goal. The learners need each other for support, clarification, and guidance. If any team members fail to do their part, everyone will experience the consequences (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998)

Moreover, the success of each team member is likely to contribute to success of others. The success of teams is likely to be facilitated by success of individual members (Holubec, 2008).

- Face to face interaction. – Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students work in proximity to one another teaching and encouraging between them and (Jolliffe, 2007).

Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee-to-knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment (Holubec, 2008).

- Individual accountability.- Each group member bears full responsibility for the work performed by the group. All students in a group are held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of all of the material to be learned (Jolliffe, 2007).

The performance of each group member is evaluated. Therefore, each member is responsible for doing his or her share of the work, achieving the group goals, and mastering of all of the material to be learned (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998)

Students can be made individually accountable by having each student receive a grade on his/her portion of the team project .Each student is responsible for a unique portion of a team learning product. (McCafferty, Idding, & Jacobs, 2006).

Each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. Teachers may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each student or randomly selecting one group member to give the answer (Holubec, 2008).

- **Social skills.**- Cooperative learning is based on the belief that the ability to work effectively in a group. Students are encouraged and helped to develop and practice trust-building, leadership, decision-making, communication, and conflict management skills (Rico, 2008).

Skills that are necessary for effective group functioning are taught and practiced. These interpersonal skills include: get to know and trust each other; communicate accurately and unambiguously; accept and support each other ; and resolve conflict constructively (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

Groups cannot function effectively if students do not have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Collaborative skills include leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills (Holubec, 2008).

- **Equal Participation.**-In a traditional classroom, only one student out of the entire class will be participating at any one time. By working in teams, students are encouraged to contribute allowing students the chance for growth (Kagan, 1994).

Equal participation may be created by using turn allocation or division of labor. Turn allocation establishes a norm or expectation of participation—all students are given an opportunity to participate and are expected to contribute during their turn. Also division of labor makes

each student responsible for part of the task and equalizes participation because every member has a task (Jolliffe, 2007).

- Simultaneous Interaction.- When a class interacts simultaneously, students have a great deal more opportunity to express themselves. This right of expression lays a key part of the foundation for a democratic classroom. Also Simultaneous interaction is one the most powerful tool we have for increasing active engagement. Additionally, Cooperative Learning is fundamentally a simultaneous approach seemed to be taking place if we assume that while our three friends were talking to one another, similar discussions were taking place in other groups. Thus, several or perhaps many discussions were going on simultaneously in that classroom (Kagan, 1994).
- Group processing.- The teacher makes time for reflection on how the group is working together and helps the group for improvement. Team members established group goals, periodically assess what they are doing well as a team, and identify changes they will make to function more effectively in the future (Rico, 2008).

Groups are required to periodically assess and reflect on their ability to function as a team and identify changes they will make to operate more effectively in the future (Johnson & Johnson, Cooperative Learning in the Classroom, 1998).

Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members.

Teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions that helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group even more successful tomorrow. Teachers also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together to the groups and the class as a whole (Holubec, 2008).

Some benefits that cooperative learning requires students to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning.

Benefits for cooperative learning

There are many benefits for cooperative learning. Some benefits that may be observed implementation included.

- Cooperative learning is enjoyable, so students enjoy it and are more motivated.
- Cooperative learning is interactive, so students are engaged.
- Cooperative learning allows discussion and critical thinking, so students learn and retain more information for a longer period of time.
- Cooperative learning requires students to learn to work together, which is an important skill (Robyn, Adrian, & Jan, 2007).

Cooperative learning is a powerful teaching strategy that more than just a passing fad. The key is to know how to implement the strategies to foster interaction while making sure all students are held accountable, which are listed below.

Cooperative learning strategies

Cooperative learning can be used in for any type of assignment that can be given to students in lecture classes, laboratories, or project-based courses. Following are some of the structures that have been used, with some recommendations for how they may be effectively implemented (Jolliffe, 2007).

Various strategies exist for cooperative learning and can be used whenever appropriate. Listed below with a brief description are some of the more common strategies.

Three-Step Interview

It is a strategy that is most effective when students are solving problems with no specific right answers. Three problem-solving steps are involved in this process. In step one, the teacher presents an issue about which varying opinions exist and poses several questions for the class to address. In step two, pairs of students assume the role of interviewer and interviewee. In the final step the students' roles are switched.

After each student has had a turn, the pairs read their interviews to the class, following the completion of this activity, the class writes a summary report of the interview results (Kagan, 1994).

Round Table

It is a simple cooperative learning strategic that covers extensive content, builds team spirit, and incorporates writing. This activity consists of three steps. The teacher poses a question that has multiple answers and ach students in the group writes one response on a paper in a counterclockwise order the team with

the greatest number of correct responses is declared victorious. This type of cooperative-learning activity can easily be used in the science classroom. For example, the students may be asked to write as many reptile names as they can (Kagan, 1994).

Round Robin

It is an activity that divides a class into small groups of 4 to 6 students, per group with one person appointed as the recorder. A question is posed by the teacher with many possible answers and students are given time to discover answers. A period on "think time," members of the team share responses with one another, round-robin style, as the recorder writes down all the answers of the group members. This strategy is very similar to round table. The main difference is that in round robin one student does all the recording for all members of his/her group (Jones & MEYERS, 1993).

Extension wheel

The extension wheel is an effective tool in the classroom because it allows for students to practice analysis and synthesis. It is also a strategy that guides learners to expand upon information gained in a prior lesson. Students are provided with a visual framework for both the categorization of information and the progression of discussion as they move towards the applications of the content in the real world. The extension wheel lends itself to exploration of numerous text structures, including cause/effect, problem /solution, description /and point of view. The process and resulting products which result from this strategy depend on students' ideas and connections (Socorro G.Herrera, 2011).

Rally Table

When implementing rally table strategy as a cooperative learning in the classroom, teachers often find it helpful to ensure the students will work together as a group in which everyone contributes to the learning and outcomes.

Rally table is a strategy to work in pairs or into small groups of 4 students per group. Also, rally table activities promote small groups and peer interaction which helps the development of language and the learning of writing, because students learn to express themselves with greater confidence when working in small teams. Also, it is important to assign students to different teams so that they can interact with whole class. (Julie High, 2009)

Rally Table is one of the co-operative activities described in Spencer Kagan's 'structures' approach to co-operative learning. This activity is versatile and adaptable, and is used to bring two pairs together into a larger group of four. The results are a high degree of interaction between students at all times.

Purpose: Sharing information, developing ideas, practice of writing.

Relevant Skills: writing, listening, reading (Kagan, 1994).

In addition, this strategy encourages students to develop their task enjoying together. It also is generally defined as a teaching arrangement in which groups of students work together to achieve a common goal. Students encourage and support each other (Virginia Pauline Rojas, 2007).

Through rally table strategy, students work in small groups or in pairs to actively engage writing skills and improve their understanding of the content. Each member of the team is not only responsible for their own learning, but also

for helping teammates learn. Rally table as a cooperative learning promotes desire and motivation, and improves written text with their work groups' experience. (Philip C. Abrami, 1995)

Rally table as a cooperative learning requires that students to work together in pairs and small groups to support each other to improve their learning and the resources used on it. These are sheet of paper, pencil, and eraser. These resources allow students to write some ideas or answers and edit some mistakes. Additionally, watch is used to control the time during this activity. Finally, the topic or question in which students focus to answers. On the other hand, this strategy also follows the some steps (Wendy Jolliffe, 2007)

Steps of rally table (in pairs or in groups of 4 members)

- Students will be in pairs or groups of four.
- The teacher will give each group a sheet of paper with a topic or question written on it.
- Teacher gives students “think time”.
- The teacher will set a timer and the first student who has the paper will write an answer or response to the topic or question given.
- Then, that student will pass the paper to the next student who will also write a response or answer.
- The paper will get passed around the table to each student until the timer goes off.
- Each student must read all responses/answers before he/she responds, because we don't want repeated answers or responses.

- The students are not allowed to talk or discuss anything during Rally Table.
- Once the timer goes off, the student with the paper will tally the number of responses, check for any repeats, and check for inaccurate answers.
- Teams compare their list with other team.
- The teacher will then use this list to review the topic or question (Wendy Jolliffe, 2007).

To sum up, teaching through rally table strategy is interesting both for the teacher and the students. The students work with partners, they ask each other for help and improve their attitude towards writing. They show a high level of enthusiasm, curiosity and involvement through cooperative learning tasks. Thus, the incorporation of these activities is a great benefit to the students and helps them enhance their writing skill for being able to communicate in a global society.

f. METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN

Design of the research

Action research is a practical approach to professional inquiry and especially useful for making advancements in the field of education. Action research designed for education incorporates active participation in a charge situation while simultaneously conducting research.

Research is undertaken by teachers trying to see the effects of planned change in their practice, and can be assisted by undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as professional researchers. The aim of this research is to improve their strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within which they practice.

Methods, techniques and instruments

Methods

This study will make a description of the data that result from an intervention plan. The following general methods will be applied along the descriptive research:

The Scientific method will facilitate the study of the Rally Table strategy intended to improve writing skills, and will help in the observations done both before and during the intervention. This method will facilitate the prediction of the possible solution, as well as assisting the collection of data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

The Descriptive method will facilitate description of the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It will serve to explain and analyze the object of the investigation.

The Analytic-Synthetic method will be used to analyze the obtained results through both the questioners, observation. It will also be used to interpret the data, develop logical analysis, and draw up the conclusions.

The Statistic method will be used to make both the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data obtained during the observations.

Techniques and instruments

Data Collection

Like this work is based on action research. The quantitative and qualitative elements will be used for data collection. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments are self-developed by the researcher taking into account the principles of question construction. In order to gather the necessary information to carry out this research work, the researcher will apply the following research techniques for collecting data:

Observation Sheet

The researcher will need an observation sheet to record the participants' behaviors shown on both variables: performance writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy. This observation sheet is a self-developed instrument that describes accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it

contains the descriptors of the variables of the action research; the issue under treatment (writing skills), and the treatment itself (Rally Table as cooperative learning strategy).

Nonparticipant observation

Nonparticipant observation in nonparticipant observation, the researcher is not involved in the situation being observed. The researcher observes behaviors but does not interact or participate in the setting under study. The objective of this nonparticipant observation is to identify the issue for this action research project which will be supported through the participant observation. (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012).

Participant observation

Participant observation in participant observation, the researcher will become a part and a participant in the situation being observed. The researcher will participate deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School 20014-2015 academic period.

Tests

Tests: The test will allow students to perform cognitive tasks in relation to the basic writing skills. Therefore, tests will yield a numerical score by which the researcher will calculate the mean to compare the pre and post-test result.

Pre –post test

Initially pre-test was applied. The pre-test provided a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants received a treatment through the intervention plan designed for this research. Also, a post-test was applied after the intervention plan. The post-test measured the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pre-test and post-test comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaires

Questionnaires will be given to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy. A pre and post-questionnaire will be given to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires will support the test results.

Pre-post questionnaire

The questionnaire was applied to collect students' answers with regard to cooperative learning in tenth grade at the beginning and at the end of the intervention. This allowed the students to provide a wide range of responses. All questionnaires were conducted in class. The researcher gave a clear explanation to students and clarified all questions raised.

Procedures

The action-research work process will begin and end with questionnaires, one at the beginning of the study to collect data on students and the second to demonstrate following the conclusion of plan. During the study, a variety of

activities will be introduced to improve the classroom discipline of tenth grade students.

After the intervention, the researcher will analyze the data collected, and draw conclusions from the intervention. Finally, the report of researcher intervention will be disseminated among the teachers, the partners and the school.

Tabulation

The tabulation of data will be done through a logical analysis of the information collected through the tests applied at the beginning and at the end for the intervention plan. And also the two questionnaires conducted.

Organization

The researcher will organize the research work with the information received in all the stages applied in order to compare and analyze the impact of the intervention. The information will be organized in tables in order to show more reliable results and to facilitate their reading.

Description

The description of the collected data and graphics will be described considering the information of the pre and post intervention. The description of each questionnaire's data will be completed to facilitate the interpretation of the information shown and also do the logical analysis of the data received.

Population Sample

The population is 30 students of the tenth- grade afternoon section at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora High School. They are 8 boys and 22 girls

who are between 14 and 15 years old and the teacher candidate of this study who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Intervention Plan

Week One

RESEARCH PROBLEM	How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
TOPIC	Applications of instruments and getting to now
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to teacher instructions. Students will be able to listen to teacher explications.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to ask teacher some doubts.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually develop the pre-test and pre questionnaire. Students will be able to write a biographical card.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: Biographical card Instructions Individually</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on the applications of instruments and getting to now. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson on the board. ◆ Teacher introduces herself by giving little information. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to applications of instruments and getting to now. To do this the teacher applies the game who am I in which begin by asking the students to write three questions that they would like to ask the teacher. The questions can be about anything they want to know about the teacher. While the students are writing the questions, write up the students' names on the board. When the students are ready with their questions, ask a student to come to the front of the class. Tell the student and class that the student will now play the role of you as the teacher. The student will then guess the answers to three questions asked by a classmate. So, the student at the front of the class is attempting to answer the questions as the teacher. ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess

	<p>the students' prior knowledge.</p> <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will apply the pretest which is about the classroom activities. ◆ After the pretest students are going to work creating a biography card in which they have to include name, age, favorite sports, useful expressions, favorite food. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have created the biography card they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with a partner, they are going to share their information from on the class. ◆ As homework, students will write few sentences about a biography card of their best classmate.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Visual : biography card Student's notebook Student's textbook (Pearson Education,Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubic</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Pre test Data source 2: Pre questionnaire Data source 3: Observation checklist Data source 4: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Week Two

RESEARCH PROBLEM	How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?
TOPIC	UNIT 5 Useful expressions
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining specific useful expressions. Students will be able to listen to their peers when they describe pictures related to useful expressions.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe useful expressions in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner in order to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually create flash cards useful expressions. Students will be able to write a dialogue to express which useful expressions they would like to try.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of course I am. • What’s wrong with . . . ? • I’m tired of . . . • She’s running late. • Is he around? • Wait up!
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on the most popular useful expressions. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson on the board. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to useful expressions. To do this the teacher applies the game Colored words which before the class he /she assigns a color for each function of sentence phrase. Then to start the activity he/she says to students that they have to form groups of 5 members .when the groups are formed the teacher give students a mix the words and say them to make sentences according to colors they have. While the students are making sentences the teacher is monitoring the class to avoid cheating. When the groups are ready with their sentences or phrases. They have to read it. So, the first group that make it they will be the winners.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ During this warm up stage, Teacher will also assess the students' knowledge about useful expressions and help them acquire how to form a sentence. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards to explain the meaning of the new vocabulary. <p>-Of course I am. -What's wrong with . . . ? -I'm tired of . . . -She's running late. -Is he around? -Wait up!.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Then teacher ask students some questions and make sentences using the useful expressions. ◆ After the teacher 'explanation, the students are going to work in pairs making a conversation in which they have to include useful expressions. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made a conversation they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ Then students make sentences using the useful expressions. ◆ As homework, Students will remember some useful expressions and write few sentences about it.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Visual : Flash cards. Student's notebook Student's textbook (Pearson Education,Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubic
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Week three

<p>RESEARCH PROBLEM</p>	<p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?</p>
<p>TOPIC</p>	<p>Everybody’s waiting for us</p>
<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining a specific everybody’s waiting for us that he or she use. Students will be able to listen to our peers when they describe pictures related to everybody’s waiting for us.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe about the topic everybody’s waiting for us in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually makes a dialogue using everybody’s waiting for us. Students will be able to write a paragraph using the vocabulary in everybody’s waiting for us.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: All the time Let’s go Wait up! Show up!</p>
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</p>	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on the topic everybody’s waiting for us. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson on the board. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to everybody’s waiting for us. To do this the teacher applies the game Damaged cellphone in which begin by teacher makes two groups and says to each group a phrase related to the topic, and the group who say almost the correct phrase is the winner. ◆ During this warm up stage, Teacher will also assess the students’ prior knowledge. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards and a chart which will allow the teacher to explain the meaning of the new vocabulary through board.

	<p>-All the time -Let's go -Wait up! -Show up!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the teacher 'explanation, he/she makes a dialogue using words from the vocabulary. ◆ Ss are going to work in pairs making a conversation in which they have to include using words from the vocabulary. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made a conversation they are going to share their information with classmate. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ As homework, students will write five sentences using the new vocabulary related everybody's waiting for us.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Student's notebook Student's textbook (Pearson Education, Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: subtest Data source 3: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL. Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards which will allow the teacher to explain the meaning of the new vocabulary. <p>play volleyball play Monopoly relax at the park jog together take pictures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the teacher ‘explanation, the students are going to work in pairs making a conversation in which they have to include the new vocabulary making sentence with the present continuous. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made a conversation they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ As homework, Students will remember the new vocabulary that they already learned and write few sentences about it.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Visual : Flash cards and vocabulary Student’s notebook Student’s textbook (Pearson Education,Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students’ writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D’Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Week Five

<p>RESEARCH PROBLEM</p>	<p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?</p>
<p>Topic</p>	<p>UNIT 5 The simple present contrasted with the present Continuous</p>
<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining a specific the simple present contrasted with the present continuous. Students will be able to listen to their peers when they describe pictures related to the simple present contrasted with the present continuous.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe the simple present contrasted with the present continuous in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner in order to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually create cards about the simple present contrasted with the present continuous. Students will be able to write sentences to express which the simple present contrasted with the present continuous they would like to try.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: -play volleyball - play Monopoly -relax at the park - jog together -take pictures</p>
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</p>	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will building a lesson based on the simple present contrasted with the present continuous. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson on the board and through flashcards. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to the simple present contrasted with the present continuous. To do this the teacher applies the game What am I doing? in which begin by explaining how it works . Then the students make mime different actions you can do with one object. Their partners describe each activity they are doing until they guess what the object is. ◆ During this warm-up stage, teacher will determine

	<p>pre-existing knowledge about the subject, and teacher observe if students use (or consider) some of the ideas, vocabulary, or grammar important to the lesson.</p> <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards which will allow the teacher to make a feedback the meaning of the new vocabulary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -play volleyball -play Monopoly -relax at the park -jog together -take pictures ◆ After the teacher ‘explanation, the students are going to work in pairs making a conversation in which they have to include the new vocabulary making sentence with the simple present contrasted with the present continuous <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made a conversation they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ As homework, Students will remember the new vocabulary that they already learned and write few sentences about it.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Visual : Flash cards and vocabulary Student’s notebook Student’s textbook (Pearson Education,Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: subtest Data source 3: Students’ writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D’Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Week Six

<p>RESEARCH PROBLEM</p>	<p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?</p>
<p>Topic</p>	<p>UNIT 5 classroom activities</p>
<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining specific classroom activities. Students will be able to listen to their peers when they describe pictures related classroom activities.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe classroom activities in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner in order to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually create vocabulary cards about classroom activities. Students will be able to write sentences to express which classroom activities they would like to try.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: paying attention, daydreaming in class, sleeping in class getting into trouble, taking notes, arguing, erasing the board, discussing something, spelling a word, writing on the board, doing research on the Internet, writing on the board.</p>
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</p>	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on classroom activities. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson through a chart. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to classroom activities. To do this the teacher applies the games Spider in which begin by explaining how it works and divide the class in two groups. Then, Teacher draws a circle for the body and asks the students some questions related to the topic. The class has 8 chances to guess his/her word. Every incorrect response means I draw a spider's leg. The group winner is which has fewer mistakes. ◆ During this warm-up stage, teacher will determine pre-existing knowledge about the subject, and teacher observe if students use (or consider) some of

	<p>the ideas, vocabulary, or grammar important to the lesson.</p> <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards which will allow the teacher to explain the paying attention, daydreaming in class, sleeping in class getting into trouble, taking notes, arguing, erasing the board, discussing something, spelling a word, writing on the board, doing research on the Internet, writing on the board. ◆ After the teacher ‘explanation, Have students play a memory game. Give the class a few minutes to study the picture and try to memorize the activity vocabulary in the picture. Then have students form pairs. Tell Student A to ask questions about the people and actions in the picture. Have Student B cover the Exercise A vocabulary and answer. After a few minutes, have students change roles. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made the activity they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ As homework, Students will remember the new vocabulary that they already learned and write few sentences about it.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Visual : Flash cards and vocabulary Student’s notebook Student’s textbook (Pearson Education,Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students’ writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D’Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Week Seven

<p>RESEARCH PROBLEM</p>	<p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?</p>
<p>Topic</p>	<p>UNIT 5 Talk about what’s going on now</p>
<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining a specific talk about what’s going on now. Students will be able to listen to their peers when they describe pictures related talk about what’s going on now.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe talk about what’s going on now in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner in order to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually snapshot of a special interest introducing the vocabulary about what’s going on now. Students will be able to write a biographical card to express which talk about what’s going on now they would like to try.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sleep • student • Stacy • spell • school
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</p>	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on talk about what’s going on now. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson on the board. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to talk about what’s going on now. ◆ To do this the teacher applies the game Sentence charades in which begin by dividing the class into A teams and B teams. There should be between three and five players in each team. Teacher will give the A teams and the B teams some slips of paper. On each slip there is a sentence. One player from each A team picks a slip of paper from the B team’s pile. The player has ten seconds to think about the

	<p>sentence. Then the player acts out the sentence for his or her team. Useful language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -It's your turn. -Our team gets a point! -It's our turn because you spoke/pointed at something. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To act out each word, the player can use hand gestures or body movements, and the special gestures illustrated below. But the player cannot speak and cannot point to objects in the room. If the player's team guesses the sentence within 30 seconds, the team gets a point. A player from each B team then chooses a slip of paper from the A team's pile. The game continues as each player on each team acts out a sentence. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins. ◆ During this warm-up stage, teacher will determine pre-existing knowledge about the subject, and teacher observe if students use (or consider) some of the ideas, vocabulary, or grammar important to the lesson. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present flash cards which will allow the teacher to explain the meaning of the new vocabulary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sleep • student • Stacy • spell • school ◆ After the teacher 'explanation, The students make A snapshot of a special interest introducing the new vocabulary and they have to write a speech about something you find interesting and enjoy spending time on, give more information about it. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made the activity they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class the teacher will give a feedback. ◆ As homework, Students will remember the new vocabulary that they already learned and write few sentences about it.
<p>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</p>	<p>Rally Table Visual: Flash cards and vocabulary Student's notebook Student's textbook (Pearson Education, Inc. Copyright, 2008)</p>

	Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Subtest Data source 3: Students' writing samples, weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL. Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press

Week Eight

<p>RESEARCH PROBLEM</p>	<p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period?</p>
<p>Topic</p>	<p>UNIT 5 Useful language</p>
<p>LEARNING OUTCOMES</p>	<p>Listening Students will be able to listen to a partner while he or she is explaining a specific useful language. Students will be able to listen to their peers when they describe pictures related useful language.</p> <p>Speaking Students will be able to describe useful language in partners. Students will be able to read aloud to a partner in order to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will be able to individually create vocabulary cards about useful language. Students will be able to write a paragraph to express which useful language they would like to try.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's your turn. • Our team gets a point! • It's our turn because you spoke / pointed at something.
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</p>	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher will build a lesson based on useful language. ◆ Teacher will introduce the learning outcomes for the lesson through a flashcards. ◆ To get started, teacher has students activate their prior knowledge related to useful language. To do this the teacher applies the game Brainstorm Race in which it starts. First, the teacher gives students a flip charts .Then, the teacher has to divide the group into teams of five and explain that he /she will give them a topic. The students will have 1 minute to brainstorm and list as many ideas as they can come up with. They cannot speak with other group. Each student must write his or her ideas on the paper teacher provided. The team with the most ideas after the prescribed time wins that round. Teacher asks the winning team to present their ideas and he/she also asks remaining teams to add any ideas the

	<p>winning team missed and to correct any mistakes the winning team may have made. Proceed with the next challenge. Keep a running score on the front board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ During this warm-up stage, teacher will determine pre-existing knowledge about the subject, and teacher observe if students use (or consider) some of the ideas, vocabulary, or grammar important to the lesson. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will apply the pos- test which is about the classroom activities. ◆ After the post-test students are going to work creating a snapshot of a special interest introducing the all the vocabulary that they learned and they have to write a speech about something you find interesting. <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have made the activity they are going to share their information with classmates. ◆ After the students have shared their information with the class.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Visual: Flash cards and vocabulary Student's notebook Student's textbook (Pearson Education, Inc. Copyright, 2008) Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Pos test Data source 2: Pos questionnaire Data source 3: Observation checklist Data source 4: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL. Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

g. TIMELINE

PHASES	ACTIVITIES	2015												2016			
		FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH		
Project	Presentation	■															
	Correction	■	■														
	Approval		■	■													
	Appointment of the Thesis Advisor			■	■												
Intervention Plan	Validation of Data Collection Instruments			■													
	Act and Observe			■	■	■	■	■	■								
	Data Organization and Tabulation							■	■								
	Interpreting and Reflecting							■	■								
Thesis Process	Writing up and Reporting							■	■								
	Thesis Review and Certification							■	■								
	Graduation Application Procedures								■	■	■	■	■	■			
	Private Review of the Thesis									■	■	■	■	■			
	Corrections												■	■			
	Public Presentation													■	■	■	■
														■	■	■	■
														■	■	■	■

h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

Resources

Human

- The researcher: Jenny Maria Girón Rimacuna
- Students of tenth grade of Basic Education at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora , academic period 2014-2015

Material

- Printed materials
- Books
- Notebooks
- Laptop

Technical

- Computer
- Printer
- Internet connection

Budget

Resources	Cost
Internet connection	\$150.00
Books	\$100
Print materials	\$80.00
Print of the project	\$30.00
Copies	\$60.00
Unforeseen	\$70.00
TOTAL	\$490.00

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Observation Sheet

OBSERVATION SHEET		
Observation #: Topic : Objective of the session (what will students be able to do/know at the end of this session)	Date /Time: Class size: Participants: Tenth- grade students	Location: Duration of the observation start/end time: Observer involvement: participant/ not participant

Dependent variable: writing Skills					
Rating scale 4=always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 =rarely 0 = not observed					
Descriptors	4	3	2	1	0
The students consistently use standard spelling and grammar.					
The students use appropriated vocabulary in written work is age/grade.					
The students show evidence of standard punctuation.					
The students' handwriting is legible to most readers.					
The students apply rules that govern use of capital letters.					
The students consistently use standard spelling and grammar.					
The students use appropriated vocabulary in written work is age/grade.					

Independent variable: Rally Table as a Cooperative Learning Strategy					
Rating scale 4=always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 =rarely 0 = not observed					
Descriptors	4	3	2	1	0
All students clearly understand which groups they belong to for both parts of the rally table.					
All students have opportunities to learn with and from their peers.					
All students take advantage of the given time to make or prepare their responses/ report for the group's.					
Students ask their teacher for clarification to assist their pairs during the performance during the academic activities.					
Student listening to one another.					
Students question to one another.					
Assume personal responsibility being involved in the group.					

Annex 2. Pre Test and Postest



**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE TEST / POST TEST**

Student's code:.....

Date:.....

Instructions:

Write a brief paragraph about classroom activities. Answer yourself the following questions to include in your paragraph. What are you doing in class? Are you always reading in your free time? What else are you doing in class? What other activities are your classmates doing in class? etc.

Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

..... Thanks

Annex 3. Rubric



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: RUBRIC

Student's code:Date:.....

EVALUATE WRITING					
CRITERIA	Advanced 4	Developing 3	Competent 2	Beginning 1	POINTS
Topic	All ideas are consistently focused on the topic.	Some ideas are focused on the topic.	Most of the ideas loss of focus on the topic.	Several ideas unfocused on the topic	
Sentences Structure	No sentences errors, variety in length and type. Uses purposeful and varied sentence structures	Complete sentences, no run-ons or fragments some variety in length and type. Uses correct and varied sentence structures	Complete sentences; few run-on sentences. Uses some correct but repetitive sentence structures	Mostly complete sentences; some fragments or run-on. Uses little to no correct sentence structure	
Mechanics	Correct punctuation and spelling, throughout variety used. Easy to read.	Minor errors in punctuation and spelling. Well-formed letters.	Few punctuation, and spelling errors. Mostly legible.	Several punctuation, spelling errors. Hard to read.	
Grammar	No errors in agreement, number, tense.	Few errors in agreement, number, tense.	Some errors in agreement, number, tense.	Many errors in agreement, number, tense.	
Vocabulary	Uses new key words easily, and the right vocabulary for the topic.	Uses new related words correctly.	Attempts to use new key words in the paragraph	Limited basic vocabulary	
				Total	

Annex 4. Pre Questionnaire and Post Questionnaire



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE TEST / POST QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student, answer the following questionnaire with sincerity about the English subject. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code:

.....

Date:

.....

1. How do the classroom activities develop in English class?
 4. Groups ()
 3. Pairs ()
 2. As a whole class ()
 1. Individually ()

2. The group or pair activities in the English class are developed in a positive and respectful environment?
 4. Always ()
 3. Frequently ()
 2. Sometimes ()
 1. Rarely ()

3. In the group activities in the English class all the members contribute to develop the teamwork?
 4. Always ()
 3. Frequently ()
 2. Sometimes ()
 1. Rarely ()

4. When you work in group or in pairs in the English class the participation is equitable?

- 4. Always ()
- 3. Frequently ()
- 2. Sometimes ()
- 1. Rarely ()

5. When you work in group or in pairs do you learn more than when you work individually?

- 4. Always ()
- 3. Frequently ()
- 2. Sometimes ()
- 1. Rarely ()

THANKS FOR YOUR COLABORATION

Annex 5. Research Matrix

Research Matrix

Theme: Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (action research)	Techniques and instruments
<p>General</p> <p>How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy to improve writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.</p> <p>Specifics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What theoretical and methodological references about Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate 	<p>General</p> <p>To improve writing skills through Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.</p> <p>Specifics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To research the theoretical and methodological references about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Writing skills -Styles of writing -Difficulties in writing skills -The Rally table as a cooperative learning. -The Rally Table as a cooperative based strategy. -Base groups -Experts group 	<p>Preliminary investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Observing the ingles classes -Stating the background of the problem -Describing current situation -Locating and reviewing the literature -Creating a methodological framework for research -Designing and interjection plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Observation sheet (participant and non-participant observation) -Pre and post test -Pre and post questionnaire

<p>for improving writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the issues that limit the development of writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. • What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. • Which Rally Table techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. 	<p>Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on writing skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To diagnose the issues that limit the development of writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. • To design an intervention plan based on Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. 		<p>Intervention and Observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Administering test and questionnaires -Observing and monitoring students' performance according to the intervention plan <p>Presentation of research findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquires -Organized the final report. 	
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop writing skills amongst tenth-grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To apply the most suitable techniques of Rally Table techniques as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. • To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Rally Table as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth- grade group A9 students at Bachillerato Beatriz Cueva de Ayora high school 2014 – 2015 academic period. 			
---	--	--	--	--

Annex 2 Grading Scales

National grading scale

Test	
10	Superior
9	Excellent
8-7	Average
6-1	Below average

Questionnaire	
81-100	High level of cooperative learning practice
61-80	Expected level of cooperative learning practice
41-60	Moderate level of cooperative learning practice
21-40	Unexpected level of cooperative learning practice
01-20	Low level of cooperative learning practice

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