UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

AUTHOR

GABRIELA ELIZABETH MONTAÑO PONCE

THESIS ADVISOR

DRA. SILVANA ISABEL TRUJILLO OJEDA

LOJA-ECUADOR

2016

CERTIFICATION

Dra. Silvana Isabel Trujillo Ojeda

PROFESSOR OF THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

C E R T I F I E S:

That the research work entitled: **THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR,** under the responsibility of the student Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce, has been advised and monitored with scientific pertinence and rigorousness; thus as, having opportunely checked the progress reports of the research, giving them back to the applicant with the necessary observations and recommendations to ensure the quality of itself; therefore, I authorize its presentation, for its subsequent sustentation, grading, and private and public defense.

Loja, October 29 2015
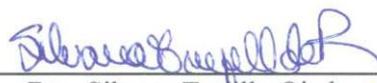
Dra. Silvana Trujillo Ojeda
THESIS ADVISOR

AUTORÍA

Yo, Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce, expreso ser la autora del presente trabajo de investigación 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.

Adicionalmente, acepto y autorizo a la Universidad Nacional de Loja, la publicación de mi tesis en el Repositorio Institucional – Biblioteca Virtual.

Autora: Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce

Firma: ....

C.I.: 1106067604

Fecha: Marzo de 2016

CARTA DE AUTORIZACIÓN DE TESIS POR PARTE DEL AUTOR, PARA LA CONSULTA, REPRODUCCIÓN PARCIAL O TOTAL, Y PUBLICACIÓN ELECTRÓNICA DEL TEXTO COMPLETO

Yo, Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce declaro ser autora de la tesis denominada: **THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR,** como requisito para optar al grado de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, mención Idioma Inglés. Autorizo al Sistema Bibliotecario de la Universidad Nacional de Loja para que con fines académicos, haga conocer a la humanidad el intelecto de los estudiantes de la Universidad por medio del Repositorio Digital Institucional. Los usuarios pueden consultar el contenido de este trabajo en el Repositorio Digital Institucional, en las redes informáticas del país y del exterior, con las cuales tenga convenio la Universidad. La Universidad Nacional de Loja, no se responsabiliza por el plagio o copia de la tesis que realice un tercero.

Para constancia de esta autorización, en la ciudad de Loja, a los quince días del mes de marzo de dos mil dieciséis.

Firma: _____

Autor: Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce
C.I: 1106067604
Dirección: Loja, Catamayo, Parroquia San José, Barrio Mirador Alto. Calles s/n.
Correo electrónico: gabby_eliza93@hotmail.com
Teléfono: 2 555 400
Celular: 0993503417
DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS
Directora de tesis: Dra. Silvana Trujillo Ojeda
Presidenta: Dra. M. Sc. Carmen Enith Dávila Vega
Primer vocal: Lcda. M. Sc. María Patricia Rodríguez Ludeña
Segundo vocal: Lcdo. M. Sc. Jhimi Bolter Vivanco Loaiza

GRATEFULNESS

DEDICATION

First, I would like to thank God who has given me the strength I need to keep going and to be able to fulfill my goals.

To my dear husband Ronald, who has supported and encouraged me in every moment, and my lovely daughter Isabella to whom I love with all my heart and is the reason to go ahead.

To my parents, Iginio and Blanca, my siblings, Natty, Elvis, Favio, and Danilo, who have supported and inspired me in every moment of my life. To Angelita Zurita and Dr. Clodoveo Chamba, to whom I express my special thankfulness for their unconditional support during my research work.

GABRIELA ELIZABETH

MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO

				ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN							
BIBLIOTECA: ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN											
TIPO DE DOCUMENTO	**AUTOR TÍTULO DE LA TESIS**	**FUENTE**	**FECHA/ AÑO**	**ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO**						**OTRAS DESAGREGACIONES**	**OTRAS OBSERVACIONES**
				NACIONAL	**REGIONAL**	**PROVINCIAL**	**CANTÓN**	**PARROQUIA**	**BARRIO O COMUNIDAD**		
TESIS	Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce **THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP"B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR**	UNL	2016	ECUADOR	ZONA 7	LOJA	LOJA	EL VALLE	MOTUPE	CD	Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, mención Idioma Inglés

MAPA GEOGRÁFICO Y CROQUIS

UBICACIÓN GEOGRÁFICA DEL CANTÓN LOJA

CROQUIS DE LA INVESTIGACIÓN UNIDAD EDUCATIVA

"MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA"
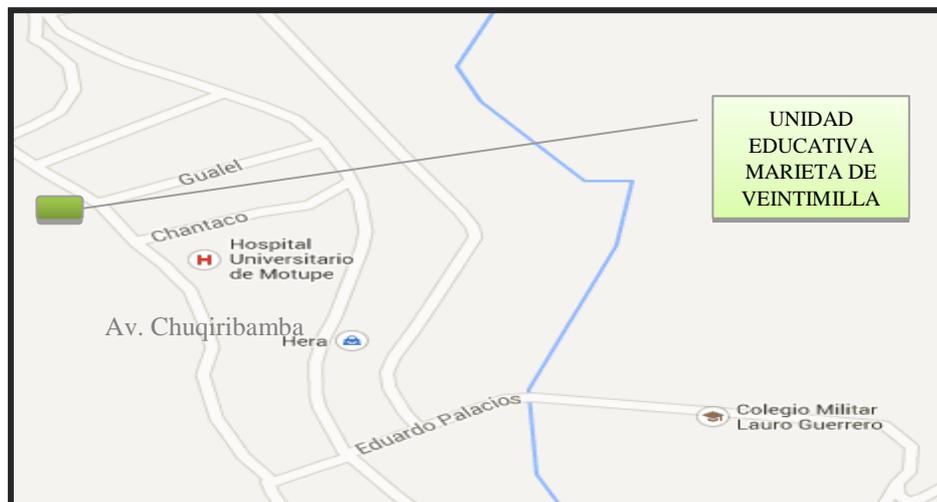
THESIS OUTLINE

i. **COVER PAGE**

ii. **CERTIFICATION**

iii. **AUTORÍA**

iv. **LETTER OF AUTORIZATION**

v. **GRATEFULNESS**

vi. **DEDICATION**

vii. **MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO**

viii. **MAPA GEOGRÁFICO Y CROQUIS**

ix. **THESIS OUTLINE**

    a. **TITLE**

    b. **RESUMEN**

       ABSTRACT

    c. **INTRODUCTION**

    d. **LITERATURE REVIEW**

    e. **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

    f. **RESULTS**

    g. **DISCUSSION**

    h. **CONCLUSIONS**

    i. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

    j. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

    k. **ANNEXES**

       • **RESEARCH PROJECT**

       • **GRADING SCALE**

       INDEX

a. TITLE

THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

b. RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de investigación se realizó con el objetivo de mejorar las destrezas de escritura en el Idioma Inglés como lengua extranjera, de los estudiantes del Décimo Año de Educación Básica, paralelo "B", de la Unidad Educativa Marieta de Veintimilla, grupo conformado por 34 estudiantes, 20 mujeres y 14 varones, entre 14 y 15 años de edad, a través de la aplicación del Tríptico como una estrategia del aprendizaje cooperativo. Se utilizaron métodos tales como el científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético y estadístico. Además se usaron técnicas e instrumentos de investigación tales como: pruebas, cuestionarios, y hojas de observación. Los resultados de la presente investigación demuestran una mejoría relevante en las destrezas de escritura de los estudiantes después de la aplicación del Tríptico, siendo un resultado positivo. Se concluye que la adecuada aplicación de esta estrategia ayuda a los estudiantes a mejorar significativamente las destrezas de escritura en el Idioma Inglés.

ABSTRACT

The present action research work was conducted with the objective of improving writing skills in English as a Foreign Language with students of Tenth Year of Basic Education, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, group consisting of 34 students, 20 girls and 14 boys, aged between 14 and 15 years old, through the application of the Tri-Fold as a strategy of cooperative learning. Methods such as the scientific, descriptive, and analytic-synthetic were used for the development of this research. The techniques and instruments applied include: a pre and posttest, a pre and post- questionnaire, and observation sheets. The results of the present investigation show a relevant improvement in student´s writing skills in English Language, being it a positive result. It is concluded that an appropriate application of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy helps students to improve significantly their writing skills in English as a Foreign Language.

c. INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most spoken and used languages at present. People use it every day and in any situation and human activity. There is technological, scientific, academic information written in English, and also learning and speaking more than one language is essential to interact in our society. As a consequence, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MinEdu) has implemented the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the different educational institutions around the country.

Due to the increasing need to learn this language, it has been important for teachers to be in constant updating activities and courses since they have to use current and appropriate strategies and techniques to be able to succeed in the teaching-learning process. The use of these strategies can help to improve students´ language skills which are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is important that students develop these four skills to be able to communicate in today´s globalized world.

Consequently, the researcher conducted the present investigation based on a problem found in a classroom after observing it, which is the lack of writing skills of tenth-grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, located in the city of Loja, in order to help them to improve these skills through the use of a cooperative learning strategy called the Tri-Fold, which was implemented using several teaching techniques.

As a consequence, the researcher formulated the following specific objectives: to research the theoretical and methodological references about the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the English Foreign Language writing skills; to diagnose the issues that limite the development of the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year; to design an intervention plan based on the Tri-Fold as a Cooperative Learning strategy in order to improve English Foreign Language writing skills amongst the target group; to apply the most suitable techniques of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy to improve students´ writing skills; to reflect upon the effectiveness that the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst the investigated group.

Furthermore, to carry out the present research work, some data collection sources were administered such as observation sheets, pre and posttests, pre and post questionnaires, being these useful to validate the proposed objectives of the present research, which sought to improve students´ writing skills.

An appropriate methodology was considered in the present research work. It included methods such as the scientific method, the descriptive method, the analytic-synthetic method, and the statistic method, which were used with relevant purposes throughout the conduction of the investigation.

The present research work includes the following parts: the preliminaries, an abstract of the investigation as well an introduction to the investigation, the Literature Review containing information based on primary sources, the materials

and methods used in the development of the investigation. In addition, it contains the results of the research, the discussion, and finally, the conclusions and recommendations.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

The present research work is based on an educational concern that is the lack of use of appropriate teaching strategies that can help students to improve their comprehension as well as their abilities and skills in a second or foreign language.

One of this strategies is known as the Tri-Fold. This is a cooperative learning strategy that can help students to improve their English Foreign Language skills, specially, the writing skills.

Being the lack of writing skills the main problem found in Tenth Grade "B" of Basic Education at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, it is necessary to mention the two variables developed in this research work which are: *The Tri Fold as a Cooperative Learning strategy* and the *Writing Skills*, which were meant to be improved through the use of the strategy previously mentioned.

Since the English Language is one of the most spoken and used languages at present, and education nowadays has the challenge to contribute with the development of students´ skills, the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador has aligned the National Curriculum Guidelines to the Common European Framework of Reference: learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), which is an international standard and provides a common basis for the elaboration of language curriculum guidelines and syllabi (MinEduc, 2014).

For this reason, the English Curriculum Guidelines are designed by the Common European Framework of Reference and its fundamental philosophy the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. This approach was proposed for

the English curriculum for eighth, ninth, and tenth year of Basic Education and first, second, and third year of Bachillerato.

The English Curriculum Guidelines describe a scale of six language proficiency levels, which go from A1, for those who are at a beginning stage, to C2, for those who can use language at high levels of discourse.

The six levels have been described as follows:

- A1-A2 (A1.1, A1.2; A2.1, A2.2): basic users of the language;

- B1-B2 (B1.1, B1.2; B2.1, B2.2): independent users of the language; and,

- C1-C2 (C1.1, C1.2: C2.1, C2.2): proficient users of the language.

The tenth year of Basic Education belongs to the level A2.1, which means that the level A2 language competence is being developed. The level A2 is accomplished when learners are able to understand phrases that are often used, such as basic information about themselves and their family, shopping, and places of interest. At this level, they are also capable to perform simple tasks and daily activities that do not require much verbal interaction and in which the information is related to habitual activities. They are also able to express ideas in simple terms related to their past activities, surroundings, and immediate needs (MinEduc, 2014).

According to the National Curriculum Guidelines (2012), within the writing skill, by the end of the tenth year of Basic Education, students should be able to produce longer, more detailed, complex transactional and expository texts (e.g. formal emails, imaginary biographies, etc.) with more variety in sentence structure and lexical range than in the 9th year of Basic Education.

According to what was previously stated, it is necessary to mention the writing skills students should develop in the tenth year of Basic Education.

Writing Skill

Writing is one of the four language skills that people should dominate to be able to communicate with others in an efficient way. These are: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Through writing we can express our personal ideas, thoughts, and beliefs as well as personal experiences, stories, tales, news, among others. For this reason, it is necessary to be aware of the different components and elements that writing involves, which are necessary to respect so that our writing is accurate. According to Harmer (2010), it is important that students practice writing because it gives them more thinking time and gives them more opportunity for language processing.

> Writing is a difficult process even in the first language. It is even more complicated to write in a foreign language. Many studies indicate for the beginning English Foreign Language (EFL) students, there tends to be interference from their first language in the process of writing in English (…). (Hourani, 2008, p.7).

Writing Issues

It is necessary to consider three separated issues to help students write successfully and enthusiastically in different styles. These are: genre, the writing process, and building the habit of writing. A genre is a type of writing which is immediately recognized by a community. The writing process involves **planning** what we are going to write, **drafting** it, **reviewing** it, **editing** what we have

written, and producing a final version. Building the habit of writing is necessary for students from early levels, in this way, students will involucrate themselves in the writing process with enthusiasm (Harmer, 2010).

Types of writing

There are some types of writing that we can do. Some of them are: argument, informational/explanatory writing, narrative writing, among others. **Arguments** are used to change the reader´s thoughts. The reader is asked to accept the writer´s explanation about concepts, issues, or problems. **Informational explanatory** writing gives information in a precise way. It has the purpose of increase readers´ knowledge of a topic. **Narrative writing** provides real or imaginary experience using time as main structure. The purposes of this type of writing are to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

Teaching writing in English Language

According to Adas, D. & Bakir, A. (2013), students do not write too often and most of the time they write only in the classroom. Students need to be involved in what they are writing to make it a valuable experience. Encouraging, refining, and expanding writing skills requires a pragmatic approach. Teacher needs to be clear on what skills he/she is trying to develop. Then, teacher has to decide the means or types of exercises that can facilitate learning. Next, teacher needs to focus on the best topic to ensure students participation. After that, teacher needs to involve the students taking into consideration the type of activities which are interesting

for them. If teacher choses a topic that involves students, he/she will provide an effective learning on the target area.

Learners´ problems in writing

Aragón, C., Baires, D., & Rodríguez, G. (2013) affirm: "The writing skill difficulties are one of the most significant problems that affect not only native English speakers, but also hundreds of students that are learning English as a second or foreign language around the world" (p.6).

There are some problems that students can present when they write. Some of them are:

- Poor handwriting or illegibly writing. It means that students does not follow lines on a paper, write too small or too large, write too light or too hard, the pencil grip is incorrect, mix of capital and lower case letters inappropriately.

- Poor spelling skills: it occurs when students spell phonetically and cannot remember patterns or spells words differently in the same document.

- Difficulty with copying or completing a work on a printed page. It can be difficult for students to copy from board. They can also have difficulty copying from a book or other printed material. They can also have problems completing fill in blank worksheets.

- Problems with grammar, syntax and organization. When students demonstrate inconsistent memory for sentences mechanics such as lack of punctuation and capitalization. Students can also have problems with sentences structure. Sentences may not be complete. Also, a paragraph may not be well organized. It may not have topic sentences and supporting sentences (Aragón et al., 2013).

Causes of writing problems

- The teaching method and the environment are causes of students´ weaknesses in writing. It can be related to the lack of students´ motivation or the teacher´s interest. Also, learners use their mother tongue. Furthermore, teacher uses Arabic in English classes or teachers proficiency in English is low. Additionally, there is lack of writing practice in educational institutions.

- English Language learners have limited vocabulary. For this reason, students tend to repeat the same words.

- Learners use only present tense when writing.

- Students compose sentences that are not well structured, what makes their writing difficult to understand.

- Students do not share their works with others and they cannot receive an appropriate feedback.

- When learners read their writing loud, they cannot make sure if their reading or writing is right or wrong (Adas, D. & Bakir, A., 2013).

Writing skills

Writing skills comprise a number of elements that students need to be aware about when writing. These are:

Grammar

It means to put a number of elements in the correct order in a sentence in order it to be successful. It is **subject** (it), **verb** (is), and **complement** (warm). The elements should go in the right order for the sentence to work. However, it is possible to make some changes in a sentence in order to give it another meaning or sense (Harmer, 2010).

In dictionaries we can find the definition of grammar as the study or use of the rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to express meaning.

Vocabulary

It is understood as the group of words a person knows and uses in his or her talking or writing to communicate ideas. According to Harmer (2010), the meaning of a word can be also defined by its relationship to other words. Using words appropriately means knowing which grammatical slots they can go into. To be able to do this, it is necessary to know what part of speech a word is.

Sentences

A sentence is a word or a group of words that make sense together and convey an idea. It consists mainly on a subject, a verb, and a predicate. It can contain different parts of speech such as: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, and article.

*A **noun*** is a word describing who or what in a sentence, it can be a person, place or thing. They can be *proper* and *common* nouns.

*A **pronoun*** can be used in place of nouns. They can be personal, possessive, reflexive reciprocal, demonstrative, and indefinite.

*A **verb*** is a word used in a sentence to explain what a noun is doing or to explain what is being done to a noun. It is an action word. It can also express emotional/psychological response or action, or a state of being.

*An **adjective*** is a descriptive word used in sentences to modify or describe nouns or pronouns, and they precede them most of the times.

*An **adverb*** is a modifier of verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or sentences. They enhance one of this types of words or sentences.

*A **preposition*** is used to join parts of sentences. For example the sentence, "I found my keys on the car," is linked by the preposition "on" and would not make sense without it. They can be prepositions of place or location and prepositions of time.

*An **article*** precedes a singular noun when it does not express a general thing. In some cases, plural forms of nouns are also preceded by an article, but when plural nouns are specific (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010).

Paragraph

Topic. Paragraphs can be viewed as groups of mini papers that form larger papers. In other words, a paragraph is the linking of ideas or sentences about the

same topic into the same whole text. It should contain at least five sentences to be a paragraph. Each one should be related to the other.

The elements of a well-structured paragraph are: an introductory or topic sentence (introduction), supporting details (body), and a concluding sentence (conclusion) (Capella University, 2008).

Mechanics

Spelling

In dictionaries, the definition of spelling can be found as the formation of words with the correct letters in the correct order. A writer must rely his or her own memory for spelling words correctly since it is difficult to remember the large amount of rules for spelling a word. When doubting, the writer should search the words on a dictionary.

Punctuation

Punctuation, in all languages, is derived from unique cultural conventions. Many languages can have similarities, but each language has its own set of rules. Punctuation helps to better organize and define language communication. Without punctuation, there can be confusion and miscunderstanding in sentences. It gives structure and foundation to language (Capella University, 2008).

Run-on sentences is the incorrect way of joining two complete thoughts, or the non-correct use of common punctuation marks (Capella University, 2008).

Common punctuation marks

The most common punctuation marks are: periods, question marks, exclamation points, comma, semicolon, colon, parentheses, dashes (hyphens), quotation marks, ellipses, apostrophes, brackets, slashes (Capella University, 2008).

The Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy

The Tri-Fold is a teaching strategy that can be creatively applied to help students understand multiple text patterns. It is designed specifically to target temporal sequence and cause effect (Herrera, S., Kavimandan S., & Holmes M. 2011). This strategy can be implemented during the development of group and pair works, which is called cooperative work.

This strategy helps students to identify main ideas and segment the text into manageable pieces. Students are asked to sequence their ideas and provide supporting details. The Tri-Fold template provides an organizational framework for students` learning by allowing them first to focus on and summarize a manageable number of ideas. Students then deepen their understanding of the topic through exploration of additional key ideas and relationship among concepts.

Throughout the process, students` understanding is further supported by interactions and dialogue with their peers and the teacher. By the end of the strategy, students have a visual to support their understanding of the entire topic.

The Tri-Fold demonstrates many learning styles among students in our classrooms, as students are able to process their text related ideas using multiple

senses. This strategy focuses on both individual and group accomplishment, supporting learning for all students.

The materials needed for this strategy are the Tri-Fold template, sticky notes, blank sheets of paper, pens/pencils (Herrera et al., 2011).

Directions of the Tri-Fold strategy

The Tri-Fold strategy directions will be developed according to the strategy-based framework for linguistic and academic development phases, which is mainly focused in students as culturally and linguistically diverse learners (CLD), in which students develop content-area vocabulary, language, and knowledge. This framework is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It describes the essential components of effective teaching rather than prescribing the details of lesson plans. It defines three phases of linguistic and academic development within the lesson: Activation, Connection, and Affirmation. These are aligned with the three general phases of the lesson: before, during, and after (Herrera et al., 2011).

In the Activation phase students will connect their prior knowledge with the new topic. The main purpose of this area is to provide students the opportunity to remember what they already know about the content of the lesson through both linguistic and non-linguistic forms of communication. Teacher´s role is that of the silent observer

In the Connection phase teacher acts as facilitator helping students to construct meaning and knowledge. For this, teacher should be transparent in teaching in order students understand the content concepts. Students need to know

the purpose of the task and what they will achieve. In this phase, teacher helps students to receive the comprehensible input by giving them multiple opportunities to talk, in this way, teachers will be able to hear how students are making sense of the content, and then confirm or disconfirm understandings and guide them to a better comprehension.

In the Affirmation phase, teacher affirms and celebrates students´ learning. Teacher assesses what students have learned from the lesson and determine what they need to reinforce. In this phase, teacher helps students to realize how they have closed the circle using what they brought to the lesson as a starting point to build new skills and knowledge. It is also useful to reinforce connections between students' understandings and their larger schemes so they can see the importance of their learning for their individual lives.

Therefore, the directions according to this strategy using the Tri-Fold would be as follow.

Activation phase:

- Divide the students into small groups. Give each student (or group) a Tri-Fold template and sticky notes.
- Ask students to individually think of concepts or images they associate with the new topic/skill.
- Have students discuss their ideas with their group.
- As students are discussing ideas, go around the classroom to gather some of the ideas that students are sharing.

- Have students individually draw or write their key ideas on three to six sticky notes, one idea by sticky note.

- Have students place their sticky notes on the middle part of the Tri-Fold under "What I Think" section of the template (Herrera et al., 2011).

In this phase of the strategy, students are encouraged to select associations to the topic that come from their individual background knowledge. For this reason, students will record under the "What I Think" section of the template ideas that may or may not be focused on the lesson. In this part of the template, teacher provides a safe opportunity for students to record what they think will be related to the topic. At this point, there are no right or wrong answers (Herrera et al., 2011).

Connection Phase:

- Teacher should continue with the lesson explaining students that they are going to focus on ideas related to the topic.

- Present students the topic to be studied.

- Students evaluate their ideas on the sticky notes.

- After students have evaluated their ideas, have them individually use what they learned to add key events/ideas to sticky notes.

- Have students share their final choices or ideas.

- Have students add details regarding those events/ideas in the "Things I Learned" part of the Tri-Fold.

- Have students individually write a short summary on their template (Herrera et al., 2011).

Affirmation Phase:

Finally, have students work in pairs or individually to write a paragraph in the "Summary of events/ideas" part of the Tri-Fold template about what they learned in the lesson (Herrera et al., 2011).

Tri-Fold template

TEMPLATE: Tri- Fold		
Topic: _____		
WHAT I THINK		
THINGS I LEARNED		
SUMMARY OF EVENTS/IDEAS		

Adapted from: Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

This strategy can be implemented through the application of several techniques such as:

Instant writing: It can help to develop writing with both children/teenagers and adults who are unwilling writers. Instant writing activities are those where

students are asked to write immediately in response to what teacher requests. Teacher can, for example, dictate half sentences for students to complete. He or she can also ask students to write two sentences about a topic, or give them three words and tell them to put them into a sentence as quickly as possible.

Instant writing is designed both to make students comfortable when writing, and also, to give them thinking time before they say aloud the sentences they have written (Harmer, 2010).

Using music and pictures: Music and pictures are excellent stimuli for both writing and speaking. Teacher can play a piece of music and students imagine and then write out the film scene they think it could accompany. Furthermore, teacher can dictate the first sentence of a story and then have the students complete the story, based on the music he/she plays them. Teacher can then dictate the first sentence again and have them write a different story. They can then read out one of their stories and the class has to guess which music excerpt inspired it.

Pictures offer numerous possibilities. Teacher can ask students to write descriptions of pictures; their classmates then have to guess which one it is.

Students can write postcards based on pictures teacher gives them. Teacher can get them to look at portraits and write the inner thoughts of the characters of their diaries, or an article about them. Through these activities students can write freely and in an engaging way (Harmer, 2010).

Jigsaw: students will read in groups a text or different texts about the same topic. This kind of jigsaw technique gives students a reason for reading and can encourage students to share ideas and opinions (Harmer, 2010).

Newspapers and magazines: teacher can get students to look at a range of different articles and ask them to analyze how headlines are constructed, and how articles are normally arranged. They can write an article about a real or imaginary story that interests them.

Teacher can show students a story and have them respond to it in a variety of different genres, and for different audiences (e.g. the report of a long traffic delay can prompt letters to the newspaper, emails, text messages, letters of apology, etc.) (Harmer, 2010).

Writing to each other: Students can write each other in several ways. For example: the email interview. They can also write emails, or any other kind of message which has to be answered. It will need teacher´s supervision. Teacher can also organize in live chat sessions on the Internet, or pen pal exchanges with students in other countries (Harmer, 2010).

Principles of Cooperative Learning

The Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy is characterized by some principles of the cooperative learning which include:

Promotive face-to-face interaction. To promote students´ interaction, they are put in teams, given a single task to complete and allowed to do whatever they need to do to complete the job. Students discuss, ask questions, and help each other in class in order to complete the given task. They need to understand that the results of the task are as important as the process to accomplish it. Promotive

interaction is an important part of establishing cooperative learning since face-to-face interaction gives the necessary feedback for group success.

Social skills are necessary for students in order them to be able to take part in a cooperative task. This includes that students should treat each other with respect, value other opinions, listen to other group members, stay focused, contribute equally, disagree agreebly, talk only to their own group, and encourage others to talk.

Individual accountability occurs when students are responsible withing the group because they want to get good scores. The work is not only made by one student. Individual accountability ensures that students learn together. but perform alone.

Equal Participation. The cooperative learning does not provide a structure to ensure an equal participation amongst group members. Participation is usually very unequal unless a structure is used. Some structures like Timed Pair Share, Round Robin, and Rally Robin ensure each learner verbalizes for about the same amount of time.

It is well known that participation will never be equal during cooperative learning because students don´t have the same gifts and so their contributions differ. The term "equitable" is better than equal with regard to what students contribute. It is not possible for teachers to control the equality of contribution of each student, but teacher can provide a structure for more equal opportunities for contributions. For example, if students are asked to share their ideas with a partner for a set time, the teacher cannot predict how equal the contribution of each will

be, but the teacher can call for a Timed Pair Share rather than a Pair Discussion, providing each student a minute to share rather than allowing one student to dominate the discussion and take most or even all of the two minutes. In other words, teachers design an structure in such a way that students participate equally.

Positive interdependence is the particular thought that states that the individual is dependent on the contributions, inclusions, and success of the others in the group in order to be succesful. It means that students or learners which have positive interdependence believe that there is a value in learning from the ideas and contributions of others and that group members should work together.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Material resources include different kinds of printed and copied materials such as Tri-Fold templates, worksheets, pictures, flash cards, etc. books and eBooks, which were used to search information about the topics of the investigation as well as for the development of the intervention plan; journals and newspapers, which were helpful for the activities carried out in the intervention; sheets of paper were used by students to develop different pair and group class activities and assignments; sticky notes, which were a necessary implement of the Tri-Fold template that students used to work in class.

The technical resources used were: computer, which was needed to type the thesis project and the final thesis, also different worksheets for students; printer, to reproduce all the typed material for the development of the different class activities, worksheets, flashcards, etc., internet connection, that was useful to make the necessary research about the variables of the topic of the thesis project as well as to search information and look for some pictures and activities to develop different worksheets; a flash memory, which was necessary to save different information such as the thesis project, worksheets, etc.

Design of the research

Action research, which is one form of classroom centered-research, was implemented in this study. This kind of research focused on a particular problem in a classroom and tried to understand and solve that problem.

The types of data collection that had been administered include Qualitative and Quantitative data collection instruments since action research is a combined design. The researcher concerns while conducting the action research include the fact of not being able to solve the found problem in the classroom.

Methods

This study described the results of the data resulting from the application of the intervention plan that allowed the use of techniques and activities with the Tri-Fold strategy to improve writing skills and achieve the goals of this research. The following general methods were applied to support its development.

The Scientific method enabled the study of the Tri-Fold applied in the development of the writing skills. It aimed to the observations done before and during the intervention. It also assisted for stating the research problem during the prediction of the possible solution. It was helpful by collecting data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

The Descriptive method was used to describe the different phases of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation.

The Analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze the results obtained through the questionnaires and the tests. It was also used to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and the conclusions.

The statistic method was used to make quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and tests.

Techniques and Instruments

Data collection

Elements of quantitative and qualitative research were selected for data collection. Quantitative research considered variables and statistics whereas qualitative research, an understanding of words or actions. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments were developed by the researcher. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods which are tests, were used to develop quantitative data collection instruments, and a questionnaire and observation sheets for the qualitative ones.

Tests

Tests allowed participants to perform cognitive tasks in relation to the writing skills. Additionally, tests produced a numerical score by which the researcher calculated the mean to compare the pre and posttest results.

Pretest and posttest

A pretest made by the researcher provided a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (Tenth-Grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution) receive a treatment through the intervention

plan designed in the thesis project. After the treatment or the development of the intervention plan, a posttest measured again the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pretest-posttest comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants that were treated.

Questionnaire

A researcher–made questionnaire was administered to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the tests, a pre and post questionnaire were administered in order to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected from the questionnaires supported the test results.

Observation

An observation was done in order to distinguish the natural environment as lived by the Tenth-Grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during their English classes. There were two types of observation:

Nonparticipant observation: in nonparticipant observation, the researcher was not involved in the situation being observed. She observed and recorded behaviors, but did not interact or participate in the situation under study. The objective of this nonparticipant observation was to identify the issue for this action research that was supported through the participant observation.

Participant observation: In this kind of observation, the researcher took part in the situation being observed. She participated actively in the problematic situation by means of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve

the writing skills amongst the Tenth-Grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution.

Observation sheet

In the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher needed an observation sheet to record the participants` behavior shown on both variables: performance of the basic writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy. This observation sheet helped to describe accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it contained the descriptors of the variables of the action research: the issue under treatment (basic writing skills), and the treatment itself (Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy).

Pilot testing the questions

Once the questions for both the test (pre and post) and the questionnaire (pre and post) were developed, the researcher tested the questions to evaluate the instruments and to make the necessary changes based on the feedback from a small number of individuals who evaluated them from the final sample of population for the study.

Population

The group of students who took part in the present investigation was the Tenth-Grade of Basic Education, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, during the 2014-2015 academic school year. It was comprised of 34 students, 20 girls and 14 boys, between 14 and 15 years old.

f. RESULTS

The following section presents the obtained results and the accomplishment of the five objectives. The first one was accomplished through the research of the literature review about the two variables of the investigation using primary sources. The second objective was achieved through the application of a pretest to determine student´s issues or weaknesses when writing. For the third objective, an intervention plan was designed based on the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy using different teaching techniques which was developed during class hours for a period of eight weeks. The objective number four was accomplished by means of the application of teaching techniques such as: instant writing, using music and pictures, jigsaw, among others. Finally, for the fifth objective a posttest was applied after the intervention of the researcher in order to determine the effectiveness of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy as a way to improve students´ writing skills.

Pretest Results

Objective Two: To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst Tenth-Grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

a. Table 1

Pretest Results on the Performance of Tenth Grade Students´ Writing Skills

STUDENTS´ CODE	T 2/2	S 3/3	M 1/1	G 1/1	V 3/3	TOTAL 10/10
MV10B01	0,50	1,75	0,25	0,25	1,50	4,25
MV10B02	1,00	1,50	0,50	0,25	1,50	4,75
MV10B03	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B04	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B05	1,00	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	3,25
MV10B06	1,00	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	3,25
MV10B07	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B08	1,50	2,25	0,25	0,50	1,50	6,00
MV10B09	0,50	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	2,50
MV10B10	1,50	2,25	0,50	0,75	1,50	6,50
MV10B11	0,50	1,50	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,25
MV10B12	1,00	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	3,25
MV10B13	1,00	2,25	0,50	0,50	2,25	6,50
MV10B14	0,50	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	2,75
MV10B15	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,50	1,50	6,50
MV10B16	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B17	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B18	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,50	1,50	6,50
MV10B19	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B20	1,00	2,25	0,50	0,50	0,75	5,00
MV10B21	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B22	1,00	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,00
MV10B23	1,00	1,50	0,50	0,50	1,50	5,00
MV10B24	0,50	0,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	2,50
MB10B25	1,00	1,50	0,50	0,50	1,50	5,00
MB10B26	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B27	0,50	1,75	0,25	0,25	0,75	3,50
MV10B28	1,50	2,25	0,50	0,50	2,25	7,00
MV10B29	0,50	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	2,75
|MV10B30	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B31	1,00	1,50	0,50	0,25	1,50	4,75
MV10B32	1,00	0,75	0,50	0,25	0,75	3,25
MV10B33	1,00	0,75	0,50	0,50	1,50	4,25
MV10B34	1,00	1,50	0,50	0,25	0,75	4,00
MEAN	1,01	1,38	0,44	0,38	1,19	4,40

Note. T = Topic; S = Sentences; M = Mechanics, G = Grammar; V = Vocabulary. MV10B01 "Marieta de Veintimilla" Educational Institution, Tenth-Grade students of Basic Education, group "B", student 01.

b. Interpretation and Analysis

According to the results presented in table 1, the writing skill Topic got the highest score (1.01/2), and the writing skill Grammar, the lowest (0.38/1). In addition, the total score mean was 4.40 out of 10, which was below average (see grading scale, page 129). Therefore, it was inferred that tenth-grade students don't have appropriate writing skills, since it was difficult for them to create a brief and simple paragraph consisting on purposeful and varied sentences with no errors and variety in length and types. Furthermore, most of ideas were not focused on the topic. Additionally, there were several punctuation and spelling errors and it was not easy to read the paragraphs created by students. Furthermore, many errors in agreement, number and tense were found in students´ writing. Finally, there was a use of limited basic vocabulary. As a result, the researcher felt concerned about this issue, for this reason she decided to carry out the present research.

Comparison of the Pre and Post Questionnaire Results

Objective Four: To apply the most suitable techniques of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.
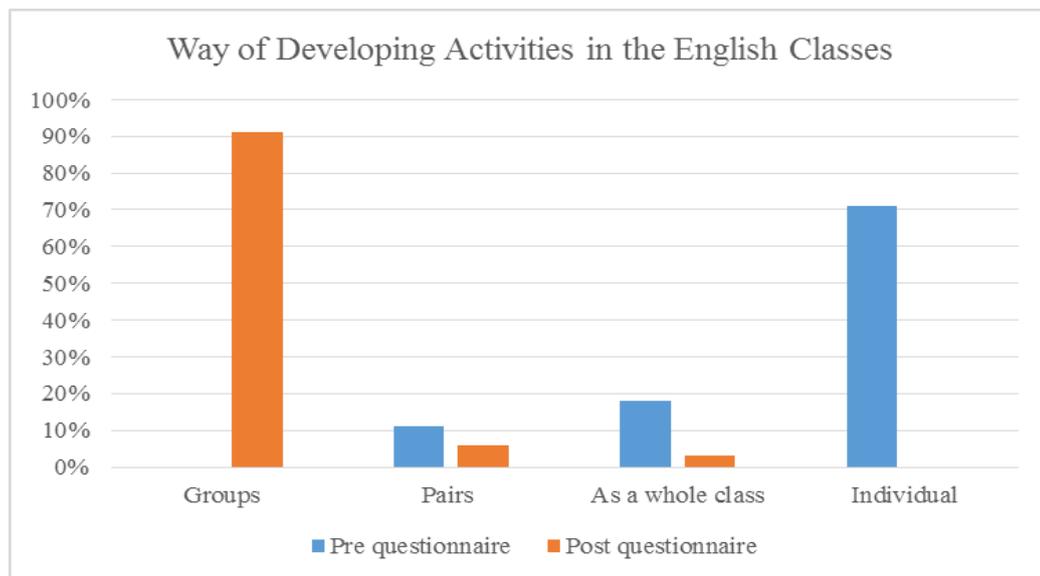
Question 1: How the activities in the English class are developed?

a. Table 2

Way of Developing Activities in the English Classes

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Groups	0	0	31	91
Pairs	4	11	2	6
As a whole class	6	18	1	3
Individual	24	71	0	0

b. Figure 2

c. Interpretation and Analysis

   Table 2 demonstrates how the English classes were developed before the intervention plan was administered. It can be seen that none of the students answered that they work in groups during English classes. This result was less than the expected level (see grading scale, page 129). On the other hand, after the intervention plan was implemented, the researcher applied the same questionnaire where 91% of students indicated that they work in groups, which was a result

above the expected level. For this reason, it can be said that the techniques applied for the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy produced relevant results on the way of working in the classroom because most of students were able to work in a cooperative way in the English classes. It is, students were able to develop different tasks in groups or pairs.

It means that students practice one of the principles of cooperative learning which is promotive face-to-face interaction. According to Jones and Jones (2008), to promote students´ interaction, they are put in teams, given a single task to complete and allowed them to do whatever they need to do to complete the job. Students discuss, ask questions, and help each other in class in order to complete the given task. They understand that the results of the task and the process to accomplish it are important. Promotive interaction is an important part of establishing cooperative learning since face-to-face interaction gives the necessary feedback for group success.

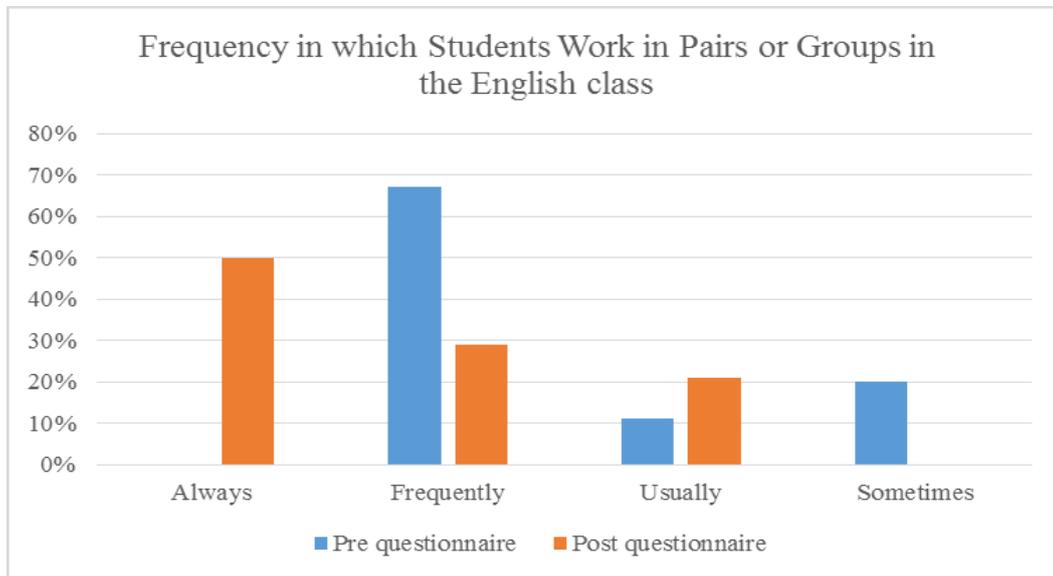**Question 2. How often do you work in pairs or groups in the English class?**

a. Table 3

Frequency in which Students Work in Pairs or Groups in the English Class

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	17	50
Frequently	4	67	10	29
Usually	23	11	7	21
Sometimes	7	20	0	0

b. Figure 3

Frequency in which Students Work in Pairs or Groups in the English class

c. Interpretation and analysis

Table 3 demonstrates the frequency in which students worked in pairs or groups in the English classes before the intervention plan was administered. As it can be seen, none of the students answered that they always work in groups or pairs in the English classes, being this a result less than the expected level. Contrary to this, after the intervention plan was carried out, 50% of students answered that they always work in groups or pairs, being this a result at the expected level. Furthermore, 29% of students responded that they frequently work in groups or pairs in the English classes.

For this reason, it can be said that most of the times, English classes were developed in groups or pairs, which means that the techniques used to work in the English classes through the Tri-Fold strategy, helped students to promote face-to-face interaction which is one of the principles of cooperative learning that, according to Jones and Jones (2008), occurs when students are put in teams to

complete a task and allowed to do whatever they need to do to accomplish it. For instance, they can discuss, ask questions, and help each other in the group in order to complete the task.

Question 3. Are the group or pair activities in the English class developed in a positive and respectful environment?

a. Table 4

Development of Activities in the English Class in a Positive and Respectful Environment

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	13	38	18	53
Often	9	26	6	18
Sometimes	8	24	9	26
Rarely	4	12	1	3

b. Figure 4

Development of Activities in the English Class in a Positive and Respectful Environment
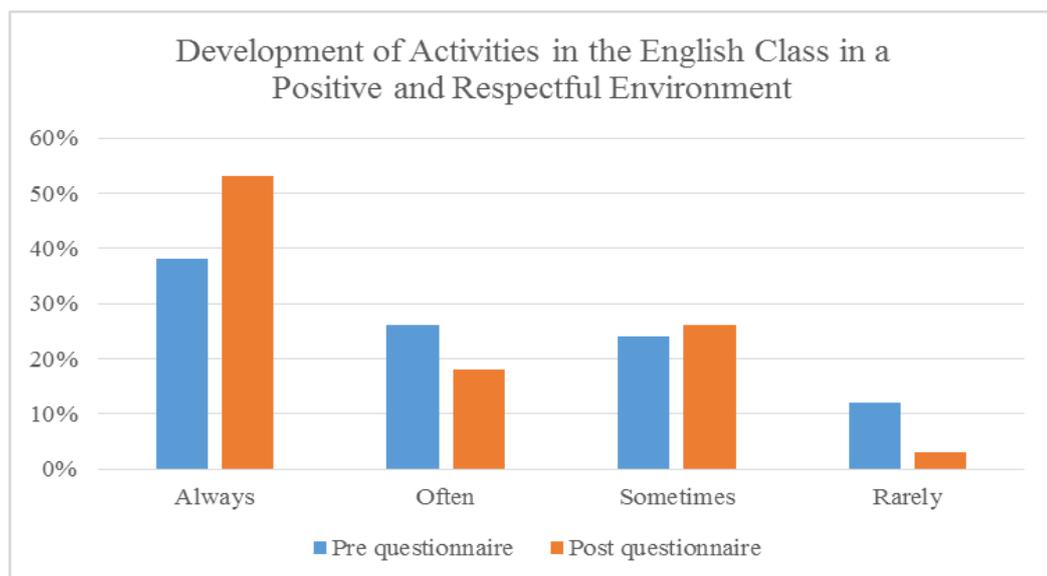
c. Interpretation and Analysis

Table 4 refers to the environment in which the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy was developed. Before the intervention, few students indicated that English classes were always developed in a positive and respectful way. This percentage was below the expected level (38%). Contrary to this, after the intervention plan was implemented, more than half of students stated that English classes were always developed in a positive and respectful way. This percentage was at the expected level (53%). As a consequence, it can be observed that the techniques used to implement the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy were very useful since most of students were able to participate in a positive and respectful way in the given tasks applying the cooperative learning principle of social skills that are necessary to carry out a good cooperative work.

Social skills are necessary for students to be able to take part in a cooperative task. Students treat each other with respect, value other opinions, listen to other group members, stay focused, contribute equally, disagree agreebly, talk only to their own group, and encourage others to talk (Jones and Jones, 2008).
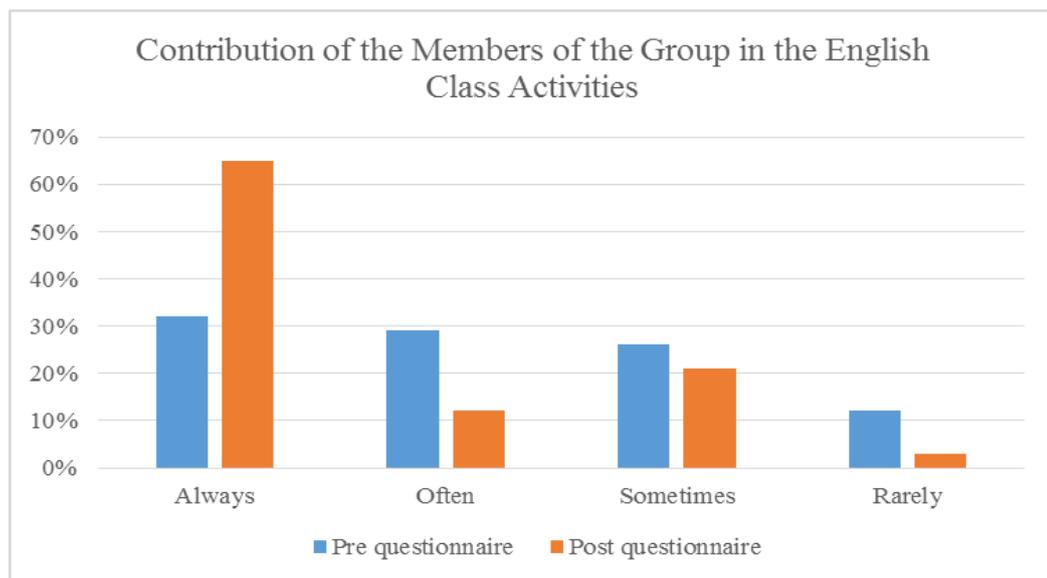
Question 4. In the group activities in the English class. All the members contribute in the development of a collective work?

a. **Table 5**

Contribution of the members of the group in the English class activities

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	11	32	22	65
Often	10	29	4	12
Sometimes	9	26	7	21
Rarely	4	12	0	3

b. **Figure 5**

c. **Interpretation and Analysis**

Table 5 represents the contribution of the members of the group during the development of cooperative tasks in English classes. Before the intervention, 32% of students indicated that during a group activity all members contributed for the development of the assigned work or task. It was a result below the expected level. Otherwise, once the intervention plan was administered 65% of

students responded that each integrant of the group contributed to the accomplishment of the task. It was a result at the expected level. It indicated that the techniques for applying the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy produced a helpful impact because many more students contributed to the development of the given task as a group, allowing the individual accountability principle of cooperative leaning to take place.

According to Jones and Jones (2008), individual accountability occurs when students are responsible within the group because they want to get good scores. The work is not only made by one student. Individual accountability ensures that students learn together but perform alone. It means that students feel responsible to contribute during a cooperative work in order the group succeed.

**Question 5. When you work in pairs or groups in the English class the participation is equal?**

a. **Table 6**

Equality of Participation in Groups or Pairs in English Class Activities

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	10	29	15	44
Often	8	24	9	26
Sometimes	15	44	10	29
Rarely	1	3	0	0

b. Figure 6

Equality of Participation in Groups or Pairs in English Class Activities
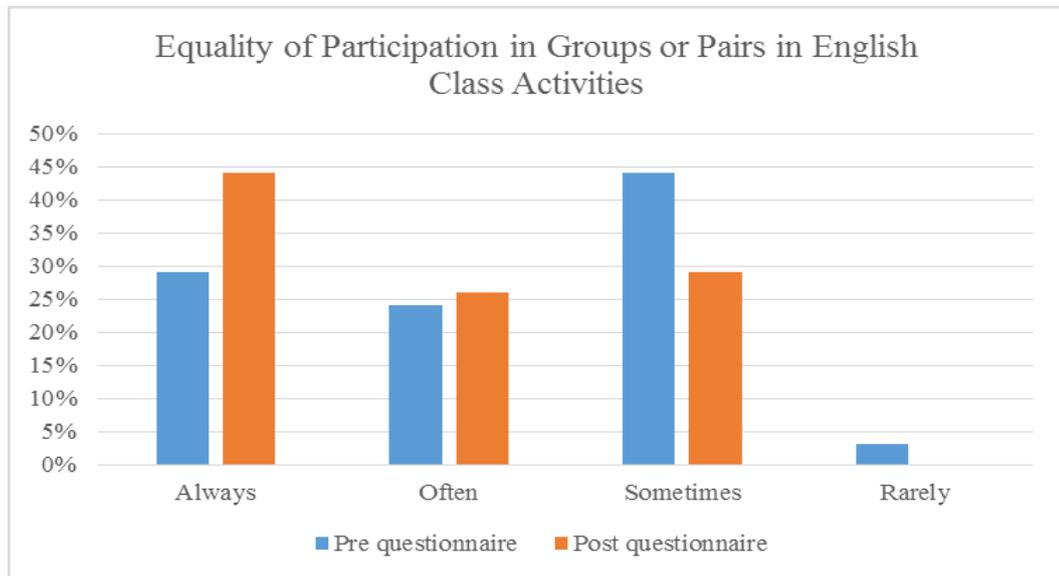
c. Interpretation and Analysis

In table 6 it can be seen a representation of equality of participation during a group or pair work in the English classes. Some students responded that the participation was always equal before the intervention (29%). This result was below the expected level. On the other hand, it was administered a post questionnaire where 44% of students indicated that the participation was always equal during group or pair works in the English classes. It was a result at the expected level. Also, 26% of students indicated that they often participate equally. It means that students started to contribute equally after the intervention plan was carried out. In consequence, the techniques used to apply the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy produced a noticeable change in the group and work activities in the classroom because many more of the students started to participate equally during a cooperative work, which allowed Equal Participation principle of cooperative learning to occur.

According to Kagan (2011), teachers can provide a structure for more equal opportunities for contributions. In other words, teachers design a plan in such a way that students participate equally during class activities.

Question 6. When you work in groups or pairs in the English class do you learn more than when you work individually?

a. Table 7

Students Learn more Working in Groups than Individually

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	12	35	17	50
Often	7	21	10	29
Sometimes	12	35	7	21
Rarely	3	9	0	0

b. Figure 7
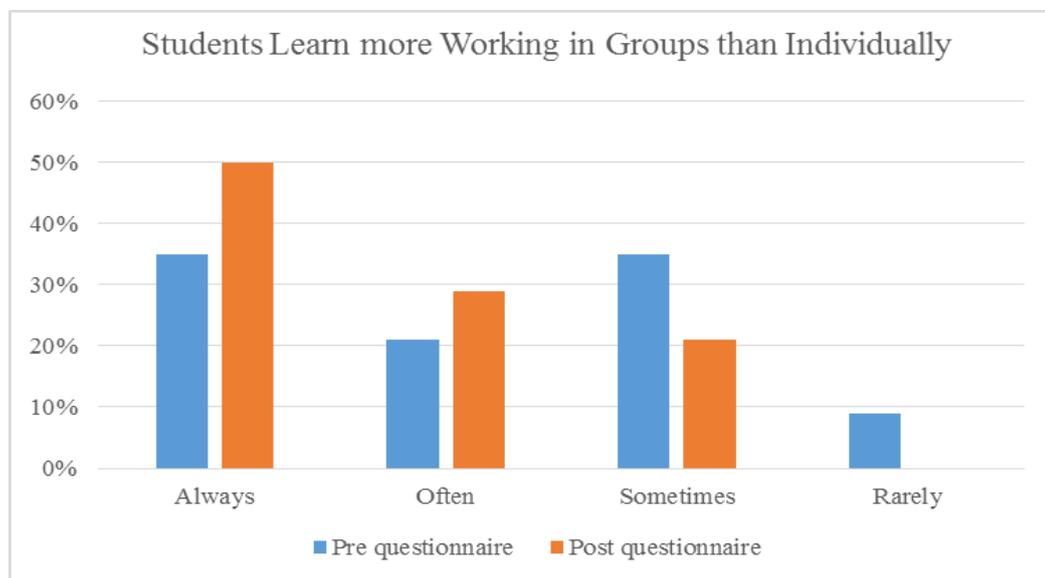
c. Interpretation and Analysis

Table 7 clearly represents the level of learning of students when working in groups or pairs. Before the intervention, 35% of students answered that they

always learn more when working in groups than when working individually. This result was below the expected level. On the other hand, after the intervention took place, 50% of students said that they more when they work in groups than when they work individually. It indicates a result at the expected level. It means that the techniques applied during the intervention were very useful since they allowed students to learn more during group activities than when they worked alone. It indicates that one of the principles of cooperative learning, positive interdependence, took place in the course of the intervention phase.

Positive interdependence is when the individual is dependent on the contributions, inclusions, and success of the others in the group in order to be succesful in the task that teacher assigns. It means that students or learners which have positive interdependence believe that there is a value in learning from the ideas and contributions of others and that group members should work together (Jones and Jones, 2008).

Posttest Results

Objective Five: To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

a. Table 8

Posttest Results on the Performance of Tenth Grade Students´ Writing Skills

STUDENTS´ CODE	T 2/2	S 3/3	M 1/1	G 1/1	V 3/3	TOTAL 10/10
MV10B01	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B02	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B03	2,00	3,00	0,50	0,75	2,25	8,50
MV10B04	2,00	2,25	0,50	0,50	1,50	6,75
MV10B05	2,00	3,00	0,75	0,75	3,00	9,50
MV10B06	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B07	2,00	2,25	0,75	1,00	2,25	8,25
MV10B08	2,00	2,25	0,75	1,00	2,25	8,25
MV10B09	2,00	3,00	0,75	1,00	3,00	9,75
MV10B10	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B11	2,00	3,00	0,75	1,00	3,00	9,75
MV10B12	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B13	2,00	3,00	0,75	0,75	2,25	8,75
MV10B14	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B15	2,00	3,00	1,00	0,75	3,00	9,75
MV10B16	2,00	3,00	0,75	1,00	3,00	9,75
MV10B17	2,00	2,25	0,75	0,75	1,50	7,25
MV10B18	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B19	2,00	3,00	1,00	0,75	3,00	9,75
MV10B20	2,00	3,00	0,75	1,00	2,00	8,75
MV10B21	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B22	2,00	2,25	0,50	0,75	1,50	7,00
MV10B23	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B24	2,00	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	8,00
MV10B25	1,50	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	7,50
MV10B26	2,00	3,00	1,00	0,75	3,00	9,75
MV10B27	2,00	3,00	1,00	0,75	3,00	9,75
MV10B28	2,00	3,00	1,00	0,75	3,00	9,75
MV10B29	2,00	2,25	0,75	0,75	2,25	8,00
MV10B30	2,00	3,00	0,75	0,75	3,00	9,50
MV10B31	2,00	3,00	0,75	0,75	3,00	9,50
MV10B32	2,00	3,00	1,00	1,00	3,00	10,00
MV10B33	2,00	3,00	0,75	0,75	3,00	9,50
MV10B34	2,00	2,25	0,75	1,00	3,00	9,00
MEAN	1,94	2,74	0,82	0,85	2,62	8,96

Note. T = Topic; S = Sentences; M = Mechanics, G = Grammar; V = Vocabulary. MV10B01 "Marieta de Veintimilla" Educational Institution, Tenth-Grade students of Basic Education, group "B", student 01.

b. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is shown in table 8, the mean of the performance of the writing skill Topic got the highest score (1.94/2), and the writing skill Vocabulary, the lowest (2.62/3). In addition, the total score mean was 8.96/10, being it above the average (see grading scale, page 129). This result strongly indicated that students were able to accomplish the task including ideas mostly related to the writing subject of the paragraph (Topic). Additionally, there were variety in sentences structures, length and type, as well as few sentences errors. There were few run-on sentences (Sentences). In addition, there were minor errors in punctuation and spelling of words, which were well-formed (Mechanics). There were minor errors in agreement, number and tense (Grammar), and students used new related words correctly most of the time in their writing (Vocabulary).

**Comparing Pre and Posttest Means**

a. Table 9

Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of Tenth Grade Students´ Writing Skills

	Pretest	Posttest
Topic	1,01	1,94
Sentences	1,38	2,74
Mechanics	0,44	0,82
Grammar	0,38	0,85
Vocabulary	1,19	2,62
Total Means	4,40	8,96

b. Figure 9

Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of Tenth Grade Students´ Writing Skills
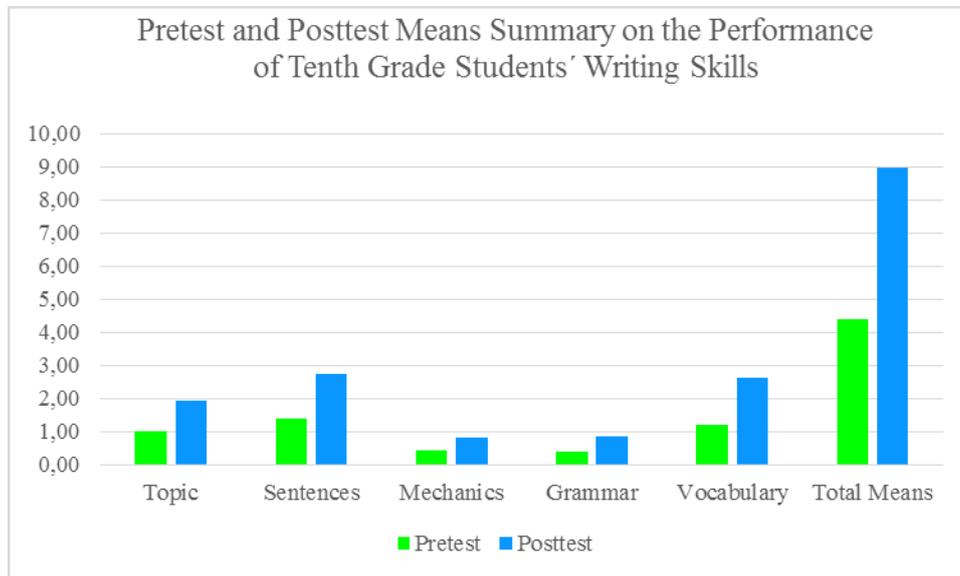
c. Interpretation and Analysis

As seen in table 9, Topic obtained the highest score (1.94/2). On the other hand, Vocabulary got the lowest score (2.62/3). The total score mean increased from 4.40 to 8.96, which demonstrated a high improvement in the students´ performance of writing skills conferred to the implementation of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy during the intervention plan. It is noticeable that the posttest mean is above the expected level. According to Gillies & Boyle (2010), cooperative learning is a pedagogical practice in which students gain both academically and socially when they have opportunities to interact with others to accomplish shared goals.

It is necessary that students realize the importance of the cooperative work as a way to improve language skills, such as writing skills, through the implementation of different strategies such as the Tri-Fold, which was implemented in this study

in order to improve students' writing skills, which had a positive impact since students improved significantly their ability to use these skills.

g. DISCUSSION

This study was based on the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English foreign language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year. According to the obtained data from the pre and posttest and pre and post questionnaire data collection instruments used in this research, one of the most significant findings to emerge from this study is that using the Tri-Fold strategy can significantly improve students´ writing skills as well as their writing proficiency level.

The appropriate application of the intervention plan helped students to improve their writing skills demonstrating a remarkable improvement which means in the pre and posttest increased from 4.40/10 to 8.96/10, being this above the expected level, where students were able to create well-structured paragraphs. According to Harmer (2010), writing is one of the four language skills that people should dominate to communicate with others in an efficient way. Students should practice writing because it gives them more thinking time and gives them more opportunities for language processing.

The intervention that was based on the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy influenced meaningfully on students. The pretest demonstrated that students had problems when trying to create a paragraph, it is, when using appropriately the writing skills. It is demonstrated throughout the means obtained in the pretest (4.40) and the posttest (8.96). This result indicated the researcher

that students were able to accomplish the task including in their paragraphs ideas mostly related to the writing subject (Topic). A paragraph is the linking of ideas or sentences about the same topic into the same whole text.

In addition, the attitude of students toward the application of a cooperative learning strategy like the Tri-Fold was not acceptable before the intervention. On the other hand, during the intervention phase their attitude was significant and they had a good behavior during and at the end of the development of the different class activities.

One of the strengths observed during the intervention phase was the determination of students to learn a new language and that they felt motivated about working in groups as well as in pairs during English class.

A noticeable limitation of this study was the number of students which was not the appropriate according to the size of the classroom, being it too small. Additionally, some students did not have a good relationship with others, which was a problem at the time of group or pair activities. Furthermore, certain students used to talk to others during the development of the different class activities.

The application of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy facilitated the improvement of the writing skills of students through the development of different activities during English classes. At the beginning of the intervention, the lack of writing skills was noticeable. Once the intervention concluded, the researcher applied a posttest to students, from what the researcher was able to determine the positive influence of the Tri-Fold as a way to improve writing skills.

The researcher who took part in the present research had a positive experience throughout the development of this research, trying to find a solution for an existing problem within the classrooms. At this time, she feels more comfortable and qualified for working with a big number of students in groups or pairs configuration.

Action research has been useful during this investigation work since it was beneficial for the researcher as well as for the target group of students, solving a real problem existing in the classroom and opening new opportunities for new investigations.

h. CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the results, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Students had difficulties when writing a simple paragraph in which they had to use writing skills such as: Topic, Sentences, Mechanics, Grammar, and Vocabulary. These problems were considered as issues that limited students´ development of writing skills.

- Activities based on cooperative work can have a positive impact on students´ performance of writing skills, and applying the principles of cooperative learning is essential to help students to get better results in the tasks.

- Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy meaningfully reduced the difficulty to improve the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, since it was implemented through the use of different teaching techniques. It was also developed through cooperative work in the form of group and pair class activities.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should increase and improve students writing skills, practicing on writing simple paragraphs that have to include: Topic, Sentence, Mechanics, Grammar, and Vocabulary, in order students have less difficulty when writing a paragraph. It can be done through cooperative work, applying teaching strategies such as the Tri-Fold that can help students to improve their writing skills.

- Working in groups or pairs in the English classes is helpful to improve students' writing skills, and applying the principles of cooperative learning helps students to achieve better results during cooperative work. For this reason, teachers should continue working in groups or pairs during English classes.

- Teachers should use the Tri-Fold and other strategies to help students to improve their language skills since it can be used for working in groups and pairs and can have a positive influence on students´ performance of language skills such as writing.

j. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adas, D. & Bakir, A. (Mayo de 2013). *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Writing Difficulties and New Solutions: Blended Learning as an Approach to improve Writing Abilities.* Retrieved from http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_3_No_9_May_2013/28.pdf

Aragón, C., Baires, D., & Rodríguez, G. (2013). *An Analysis of the Writing Skill Difficulties of the English Composition I Students at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.* Retrieved from:http://ri.ues.edu.sv/5519/1/An%20analysis%20of%20the%20writing%20skill%20difficulties%20of%20the%20English%20Composition%20I%20students%20at%20the%20Foreign%20Language%20Department%20of%20the%20University%20of%20El%20Salvador.pdf

Capella University, (2008). *Grammar Handbook.* Mineapolis. Retrieved from http://www.capella.edu/interactivemedia/onlinewritingcenter/downloads/grammar.pdf

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE, (2010). *Common Core State Standards For English Language Arts and Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Appendix A: Research supporting Key Elements of the Standards.* United States. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

Coulmas, F. (2003). *Writing Systems: An Introduction to their Linguistic Anaysis.* Cambridge Unversity Press. Retrieved from http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/82173/excerpt/9780521782173_excerpt.pdf

Gillies, R. M. (28 de Octubre de 2010). *Teaching and Teacher Education.* doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.034

Harmer, J. (2010). *How to Teach English.* Ocelot Publishing. Retrieved from http://vk.com/doc10095699_163571302?hash=d2ddb709722a73e956&dl=28aabb49a7217e1962

Herrera, S., Kavimandan, S., & Holmes, M., (2011). *Crossing the Vocabulary Bridge.* Teacher College Press.

Hourani, T. (June 2008). *An Analysis of the Common Grammatical Errors in the English Writing made by 3rd Secondary Male Students in the Eastern Coast of th UAE.* Retrieved from: http://bspace.buid.ac.ae/bitstream/1234/225/1/20050055.pdf

Jones, K. & Jones, J., (2008). *The Journal of Effective Teaching. Making Cooperative Learning Work in the College Classroom: An Application of the 'Five Pillars' of Cooperative Learning to Post-Secondary Instruction:* https://niagara.edu/assets/assets/cctl/documents/JET.pdf

Kagan, S. (2011). *The "P" and "I" of PIES: Powerful Principles for Success.* San Clemente: Kagan publishing. Kagan Online Magazine. Retrieved from www.KaganOnline. com

MinEdu. (2014). *National Curiculum Guidelines. English as a Foreign Language. Quito, Ecuador. Retrived from http://educacion.gob.ec/wp-*content/uploads/downloads/2014/09/01-National-Curriculum-Guidelines-EFL-Agosto-2014.pdf

k. ANNEXXES

ANNEX 1

- **Research Project**

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE EDUCACIÓN, ARTE Y COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME:

THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING
STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN
LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-
GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE
VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING
THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

AUTHOR: Gabriela Montaño

Loja-Ecuador
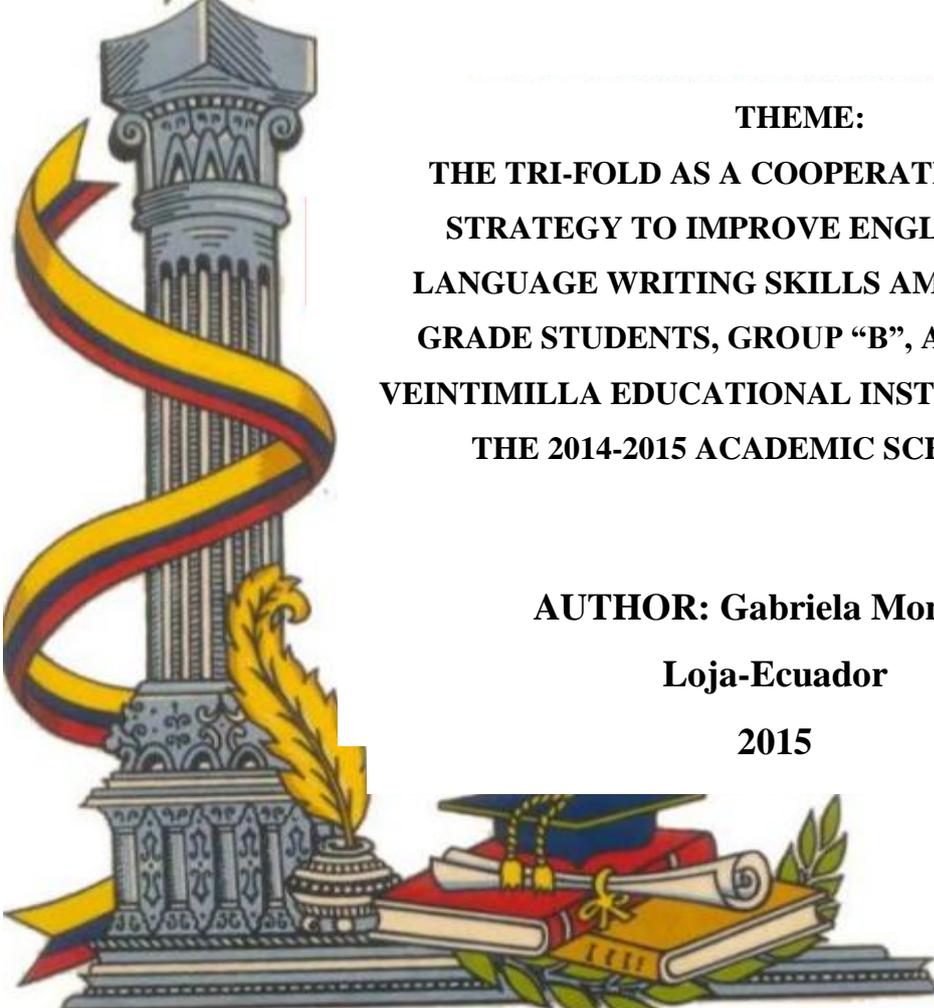
2015

a. THEME

THE TRI-FOLD AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO IMPROVE ENGLISH FOREIGN LANGUAGE WRITING SKILLS AMONGST TENTH-GRADE STUDENTS, GROUP "B", AT MARIETA DE VEINTIMILLA EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, DURING THE 2014-2015 ACADEMIC SCHOOL YEAR

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

The following research work will be carried out at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, which was founded in 1947 by Dr. Vicente Atilio Granda, who was its main authority when it was created. It is located in Motupe neighborhood in the city of Loja.

On July 2014 it became Educational Institution due to the "Manuel Cabrera Lozano" High School, before annexed to the Universidad Nacional de Loja, stopped belonging to the University and became part of the Institution; which offers its services in the morning as well as in the evening. One of the objectives of the Institution is the importance of supporting children from the beginner level to the tenth year of basic education and to teenagers from the first to the third year of Bachillerato.

Currently, this Institution has a number of approximately fifty educators, four of them are English teachers. The headmaster is Dr. Arturo Armijos Cabrera. In each class there are a number of about thirty to thirty seven students. There are nearly 1109 students in the Institution.

The main purpose of the headmaster Dr. Arturo Armijos Cabrera, the vice-headmaster, the general inspector, the teaching and administrative staff, is to continue working to educate people in an efficient way, considering the changes that modern society demands.Current situation of the researched problem.

At the present time, the teaching-learning process of English as a Foreign Language has been facing several concerns in the educational institutions in our country. Some of these problems are: the non-application of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques, the absence of didactic material, the learning difficulties that some students can present, among others.

The present research work focuses on one of the problems previously mentioned. It is the non-application of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques which can help to develop and improve students' language skills.

Therefore, in order to determine the influence on the use of teaching strategies and techniques, the researcher carried out an observation to the group of students chosen to develop the present research. This observation allowed to identify that there is a lack of use of appropriate teaching strategies and techniques to develop basic writing skills.

Research Problem

How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B" at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

Delimitation of the research

Timing

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

Location

This research work will be developed at the Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution which is a public institution located in the city of Loja.

Participants

The participants of this research work are the tenth-grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, which is comprised by 34 students, 20 girls and 15 boys; and the candidate teacher of this study who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Sub Problems

The sub problems stated of the general problem are:

a. What theoretical and methodological references about the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

b. What are the issues that limit the development of the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de

Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

c. What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

d. Which Tri-fold techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

e. How does the Tri-fold as a cooperative Learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?

c. JUSTIFICATION

English is one of the most spoken and used languages at present. People use it every day and in any situation and human activity. There is technological, scientific, academic information written in English, and also learning and speaking more than one language is essential to interact in the society. For this reason, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (MinEdu) has implemented the teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the different educational institutions around the country.

Due to the increasing need to learn this language, it has been important for teachers to be in constant updating activities and courses for the reason that, teachers have to use current and appropriate strategies and techniques to be able to succeed in the teaching-learning process. This can help to improve students´ basic language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is important that students develop these four skills to be able to communicate in today´s globalized world.

This research work is justified because it is talking about an important issue in the learning of the English language due to, with the application of good strategies and techniques, students are able to increase their knowledge of the English Language, which will help them to improve the motivation to learn this language.

For these reasons, the present research work is basically focused on a teaching strategy called Tri-Fold, which is a cooperative learning strategy that can be used

to improve students' basic writing skills and can be implemented through the use

of several techniques.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

- To improve the English Foreign Language writing skills through the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

Specific

- To research the theoretical and methodological references about the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the English Foreign Language writing skills.

- To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

- To design an intervention plan based on the Tri-Fold as a Cooperative Learning strategy in order to improve the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

- To apply the most suitable techniques of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English Foreign Language writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

- To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

e. LITERATURE REVIEW

The present research work is based on an educational concern that is the lack of use of appropriate teaching strategies that can help students to improve their comprehension as well as their abilities and skills to learn a second or foreign language.

One of the strategies that can help students to improve their skills is known as the Tri-Fold. This is a cooperative learning strategy that can help students to improve their English Foreign Language skills, specially, the writing skill.

Being the lack of writing skills one of the problems found in the Educational Institution, it is necessary to mention that the two variables that will be developed in the present research work which are: The Tri Fold as a Cooperative Learning strategy and the Writing skills, which are meant to be improved through the use of the strategy previously mentioned.

It is necessary to mention that the group who is going to be investigated is the Tenth Grade "B" of Basic Education, at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, during the 2014, 2015 academic school year.

Since the English language is one of the most spoken and used languages at present, and education nowadays has the challenge to contribute with the development of students´ skills, the Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador has aligned the National Curriculum Guidelines to the Common European Framework of Reference: learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR), which is an international

standard an provides a common basis for the elaboration of language curriculum guidelines and syllabi. '(MinEduc, 2012)

For this reason, the English Curriculum Guidelines are designed by the Common European Framework of Reference and its fundamental philosophy the Communicative Language Teaching Approach. This approach was proposed for the English curriculum for eighth, ninth, and tenth year of Basic Education and first, second, and third year of Bachillerato.

The English Curriculum Guidelines describe a scale of six language proficiency levels, which go from A1, for those who are at a beginning stage, to C2, for those who can use language at high levels of discourse.

The six levels have been described as follows:

· A1-A2 (A1.1, A1.2; A2.1, A2.2): basic users of the language;

· B1-B2 (B1.1, B1.2; B2.1, B2.2): independent users of the language; and

· C1-C2 (C1.1, C1.2: C2.1, C2.2): proficient users of the language.

The tenth year of Basic Education belongs to the level A2.1, which means that the level A2 language competence is being developed. The level A2 is accomplished when learners are able to understand phrases that are often used, such as basic information about themselves and their family, shopping, and places of interest. At this level, they are also capable to perform simple tasks and daily activities that do not require much verbal interaction and in which the information is related to habitual activities. They are also able to express ideas in simple terms related to their past activities, surroundings, and immediate needs. (MinEduc, 2012)

According to the National Curriculum Guidelines (2012), within the writing skill, by the end of the tenth year of Basic Education, students should be able to produce longer, more detailed, complex transactional and expository texts (e.g. formal emails, imaginary biographies, etc.) with more variety in sentence structure and lexical range than in the 9th year of Basic Education.

According to what was previously stated, it is necessary to mention the writing skills students should develop in the tenth year of Basic Education.

Writing Skills

Writing is one of the four language skills that people should dominate to be able to communicate with others in an efficient way. These are: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Through writing we can express our personal ideas, thoughts and beliefs as well as personal experiences, stories, tales, news, among others. For this reason, it is necessary to be aware of the different components and elements that writing involves, which are necessary to respect so that our writing is accurate.

According to Harmer (2010), it is important that students practice writing because it gives them more thinking time and gives them more opportunity for language processing. It is necessary to make a distinction between writing-for-learning and writing-for-writing. Writing-for-learning is an enabling activity. It is used to give reinforcement to students and to help them practice and work with the language they have been studying. Writing-for-writing, on the other hand,

helps students to develop their skills as writers. The kind of writing that students will do will depend on their age, level, learning style, and interests.

Coulmas (2003) argues that writing has been with us since long ago, and is now more important than ever. It has evolved progressively over the time. From clay tablets to computer chips. Although a great number of people are still unable to read and write, humanity relies on writing to an unprecedented extent. It is possible that today, more communication is carried out in the written than in the oral way.

Writing issues

It is necessary to consider three individual issues in order to help students write successfully and enthusiastically in different styles. These are: genre, the writing process, and building the habit of writing.

A genre is a type of writing which is immediately recognized by a community. The genre of writing will depend on what genres teacher think their students need to write. It should be useful to them.

The writing process typically involves **planning** what we are going to write, **drafting** it, **reviewing** it and **editing** what we have written, and then producing a final version. Students will become better writers by practicing the activities that involve the process of writing.

Building the habit of writing is necessary for students. Teacher should engage them, from early levels, through activities which are easy and enjoyable to participate and present opportunities for students to succeed. In this way, students

will involucrate themselves in the writing process with enthusiasm. (Harmer, 2010)

Types of writing

There are some types of writing that we can do. Some of them are: argument, informational/explanatory writing, narrative writing, among others.

Arguments are used to change the reader´s thoughts. The reader is asked to accept the writer´s explanation about concepts, issues, or problems. An argument is a reasoned and logical way of presenting writers position, belief or conclusion. Arguments are made with specific evidence or real facts.

Informational explanatory writing gives information in a precise way. It has the purposes of increase readers´ knowledge of a topic and help readers to understand a procedure or process, or to help readers understand a concept. Explanations start with the assumptions of truthfulness and answer questions about why or how.

Narrative writing provides real or imaginary experience using time as main structure. The purposes of this type of writing are to inform, instruct, persuade, or entertain. Narratives can take the form of creative fictional stories, memoirs, anecdotes, and autobiographies. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d.)

Learners´ problems in writing

Learners´ writing may be difficult to understand due to several reasons. Some of them are:

- Punctuation in sentences may not be clear. There can be, for example, some commas and full stops in places where they are not appropriate, or there can be no punctuation where there should be some.

- The ideas presented may not have a correct order in order it to be understandable.

- Relation between ideas cannot be clear when there is absence or inappropriate use of linking words and phrases such as *for example*, *lastly, on the other hand*.

- The attitude of the writer toward what they are writing cannot be clear: is he or she describing, suggesting, or criticizing something?

- The ideas may not be grouped together into distinct paragraphs, or the learner may write sentences in different lines. Paragraphs or long texts may not begin with an introduction, or it may not end appropriately.

- A text may contain irrelevant ideas to what the writer wants to express, or the writer, or it can be difficult for the writer to find ideas relate to the topic.

Writing descriptors

Writing skills comprise a number of elements that students need to be aware about when writing.

Grammar.

It means to put a number of elements in the correct order in a sentence in order it to be successful. It is **subject** (it), **verb** (is), and **complement** (warm). The elements should go in the right order for the sentence to work.

However, it is possible to make some changes in a sentence in order to give it another meaning or sense, for instance, the basic order of elements in an affirmative sentence subject + verb can be reversed to verb + subject to form an interrogative sentence. (Harmer, 2010)

In dictionaries we can find the definition of grammar as the study or use of the rules about how words change their form and combine with other words to express meaning.

Vocabulary

The sentence "It is warm in here" is formed with the words "It" "is" "warm" "in" "here". These are words chosen by a speaker to express a particular meaning. He or she could have chosen "cold" or "hot" instead of "warm" to mean something different.

The meaning of a word can be also defined by its relationship to other words. Using words appropriately means knowing which grammatical slots they can go into. To be able to do this, it is necessary to know what part of speech a word is. (Harmer, 2010)

Sentence structure

Sentence construction. A sentence is a complete thought or idea. It consist on a subject and a predicate.

Sentence basics

Parts of speech are sentence elements that work together to form sentence. The basic parts of speech include: noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, and article.

A noun is a word describing who or what in a sentence, it can be a person, place or thing. They can be *proper* and *common* nouns.

A pronoun can be used in place of nouns. They can be personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, reflexive pronouns, reciprocal pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and indefinite pronouns.

A verb is a word used in a sentence to explain what a noun is doing or to explain what is being done to a noun. It is an action word. It can also express emotional/psychological response or action, or a state of being.

An adjective is a descriptive word used in sentences to modify or describe nouns or pronouns, and they precede them most of the times.

An adverb is a modifier of verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or sentences they enhance one of this types of words or sentences.

A preposition is used to join parts of sentences. For example the sentence, "I found my keys on the car," is linked by the preposition "on" and would not make sense without it. They can be prepositions of place or location and prepositions of time.

An article it precedes a singular noun when it doesn´t express a general thing. In some cases, plural forms of nouns are also preceded by an article, but when plural nouns are specific.

Paragraph

Topic. Paragraphs can be viewed as groups of mini papers that form larger papers. In other words, a paragraph is the linking of ideas or sentences about the same topic into the same whole text. It should contain at least five sentences to be a paragraph. Each one should be related to the other.

The elements of a well-structured paragraph are: an introductory or topic sentence (introduction), supporting details (body), and a concluding sentence (conclusion).

An introductory or topic sentence states the topic of the paragraph. It is the main idea of the paragraph. It is usually placed at the very beginning of the paragraph, but it can also be in the middle or even at the end of it. The supporting details are ideas that support the topic sentence. They can be opinions, examples, facts, explanations, etc. the concluding sentence summarizes what has been said in the previous points of the paragraph. (Capella University, n.d.)

Mechanics

Spelling

In dictionaries, the definition of spelling can be found as the formation of words with the correct letters in the correct order. A writer must rely his or her own memory for spelling words correctly since it is difficult to remember the large amount of rules for spelling a word. When doubting, the writer should search the words on a dictionary.

Punctuation

Punctuation, in all languages, is derived from unique cultural conventions. Many languages can have similarities, but each language has its own set of rules. Punctuation helps to better organize and define language communication. Without punctuation, there can be confusion and misconstrued in sentences. It gives structure and foundation to language. (Capella University, n.d.)

Run-on sentences is the incorrect way of joining two complete thoughts, or the non-correct use of common punctuation marks. (Capella University, n.d.)

Common punctuation marks

The most common punctuation marks are: periods, question marks, exclamation points, comma, semicolon, colon, parentheses, dashes (hyphens), quotation marks, ellipses, apostrophes, brackets, slashes. (Capella University, n.d.)

This strategy can help to develop productive and receptive English Language skills which are listening, speaking reading and writing. (Harmer, 2010)

The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy.

Cooperative learning is a pedagogical practice that, over the last years, has called attention due to the big number of research that indicates students gain both academically and socially when they have opportunities to interact with others to accomplish shared goals. (Gillies & Boyle, 2010)

Cooperative learning is defined by Johnson, Jhonson and Smith as students working together in order to increment their own and each other´s learning. They

established five indispensable elements to construct effective cooperative learning. These are positive interdependence, promotive face-to-face interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing. (Jones & Jones, 2008)

Positive interdependence is the particular thought that states that the individual is dependent on the contributions, inclusions, and success of the others in the group in order to be succesful. It means that students or learners which have positive interdependence believe that there is a value in learning from the ideas and contributions of others and that group members should work together.

Promotive face-to-face interaction is the result of positive interdependence. It happens when students discuss, ask questions, and help each other in class in order to complete a given task. Students need to understand that the resuts of the task are as important as the process to accomplish it. Promotive interaction is an important part of establishing cooperative learning since face-to-face interaction gives the necessary feedback for group success.

Individual accountability occurs when students are responsible within the group because they want to get good scores. The work is not only made by one student. Individual accountability ensures that students learn together. but perform alone.

Social skills are necessary for students in order them to be able to take part in a cooperative task. This includes that students should treat each other with respect, value other opinions, listen to other group members, stay focused, contribute

equally, disagree agreebly, talk only to their own group, and encourage others to talk.

Group processing is to provide students time for individual and group reflection, which will increase the quality of cooperative learning teams. It is important to allow students give constructive feedback to their peers because it promotes metacognitive awareness, reinforces group interaction, and allow constant improvement. (Jones & Jones, 2008)

Cooperative learning can be applied through several strategies. Some of them are:

Linking language: this strategy helps teacher to take advantage of student´s perceptions. The teacher stimulates student´s thinking by selecting visuals as they begin to connect their own language and culture to the content. This strategy initiates from student´s insights related to the selected visuals and gradually links their insights to the new language of the content, involving peer interaction throughout this strategy. (Herrera, Kavimandan, Holmes, 2011)

Since Linking Language strategy focuses on visuals and students´ perceptions, it becomes perfect for any content area or grade level. Students from any level can take participate. (Herrera, et. al., 2011)

It´s All on My Clipboard. This is a strategy that permits students see the constructivist process of the learning in action. With this strategy, students start by using the front of a file folder as a canvas for drawing pictures and recording words they individually link to the topic. This storage of thoughts provides the foundation upon which students will build their new understanding.

In their small groups, students will have to become experts on two of the academic words of the vocabulary. They first make predictions about the meaning of the words, then they take notes throughout the lesson to confirm/disconfirm their predictions. Students use visuals as a memory aid, and they collaboratively decide on a visual for each of the target term. After students have discussed their new learning, they use the back of the folder to document with pictures and words their new understanding of the topic. (Herrera et al., 2011)

Topics in pictures and words. It encourages students to figure out their own mental images as they work to understand the literature or content. This strategy starts with the teacher previewing the key vocabulary, revealing the topic, and asking students to make predictions about the text or lesson. Students will have opportunities to confirm or disconfirm their predictions throughout the lesson. Students work on retelling, synthesizing, and summarizing as they work in groups to discuss their understanding and comprehension of the text. (Herrera et al., 2011)

The Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy

Herrera et al., (2011), states that although the Tri-Fold strategy can be creatively applied to help students understand multiple text patterns, it is designed specifically to target temporal sequence and cause effect.

Using the Tri-Fold with content-area texts is a great way to incorporate scaffolding both as a structure and as a process. The very nature of the strategy helps students identify main ideas and segment the text into manageable pieces.

Students brainstorm initial connections to the topic and then later re-evaluate their selection of key ideas, given what they have read. Students also are asked to sequence their ideas and provide supporting details. The Tri-Fold template provides an organizational scaffold for students` learning by allowing them first to focus on and summarize a manageable number of ideas. Students then deepen their understanding of the topic through exploration of additional key ideas and relationship among concepts.

Throughout the process, students` understanding is further scaffolded by interactions and dialogue with their peers and the teacher. By the end of the strategy students have a visual to support their understanding of the entire topic.

This strategy can be used across content areas and grade levels. The Tri-Fold speaks to the many learning styles among students in our classrooms, as the students are able to process their text related ideas using multiple senses. This strategy`s balanced emphasis on both individual and group accomplishment supports learning for all students.

The materials needed for this strategy are the Tri-Fold template, sticky notes, blank sheets of paper, pens/pencils. (Herrera et al., 2011)

Directions

The Tri-Fold strategy directions will be developed according to the strategy-based framework for linguistic and academic development phases.

The strategy-based framework for linguistic and academic development is a strategy that is mainly focused in students as Culturally and Linguistically Diverse

learners (CLD), in which students develop content-area vocabulary, language, and knowledge. This framework is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It describes the essential components of effective teaching rather than prescribing the details of lesson plans. It defines three phases of linguistic and academic development within the lesson: Activation, Connection, and Affirmation. These are aligned with the three general phases of the lesson: before, during, and after.

In the Activation phase students will connect their prior knowledge with the new or content-area or topic. The main purpose of this area is to provide students the opportunity to remember what they already know about the content of the lesson through both linguistic ad non-linguistic forms of communication. Teacher´s role is that of the silent observer

In the Connection phase teacher acts as facilitator. They help students to construct meaning and knowledge. For this, teacher should be transparent in their teaching if they want students understand the content concepts. Students need to know the purpose of the task and what they will achieve. In this phase, teacher helps students to receive the comprehensible input by giving them multiple opportunities to talk, in this way, teachers will be able to hear how students are making sense of the content, and then confirm or disconfirm understandings and guide them to a better comprehension.

In the Affirmation phase teachers affirm and celebrate students learning. Teachers assess what students have learned from the lesson and determine what they need to reinforce. In this phase teacher helps students to realize how they have closed the circle using what they brought to the lesson as a starting point to

build new skills and knowledge. It is also useful to reinforce connections between students' understandings and their larger schemas so they can see the importance of their learning for their individual lifes.

Activation phase:

- Divide the students into small groups. Give each student a Tri-Fold template.

- Ask students to individually think of any concepts or images they associate with the topic/skill.

- Have students discuss their ideas with their group.

- As students are discussing ideas, go around the room to gather some of the ideas the students are sharing.

- Have students individually draw or write their key ideas on three to six sticky notes, one idea by sticky note.

- Have students place their sticky notes on the middle part of the Tri-Fold under "What I Think" (Herrera et al., 2011)

In this phase of the strategy, students are encouraged to select associations to the topic that come from their individual background knowledge. Therefore, students will record under the "What I Think" section of the template ideas that may or may not be a focus in the lesson. This part of the template asks what we as teachers truly provide a safe opportunity for students to record what they think will be related to the topic-at this point, there are no right or wrong answers. (Herrera et al., 2011)

Connection Phase:

- Continue with the lesson explaining students that they are going to focus on ideas related to the topic.

- Present students the topic to be studied.

- Students evaluate their ideas on the sticky notes.

- After students have evaluated their ideas, have them individually use what they learned to add key events/ideas to sticky notes.

- Have students share their final choices of ideas

- Have students add details regarding those events/ideas in the "Things I Learned" part of the Tri-Fold.

- Have students individually write a short summary on their template. (Herrera et al., 2011)

Affirmation Phase:

- Finally, have students work in pairs or individually to make a summary about what they learned in the lesson. (Herrera et al., 2011)

This strategy can be implemented through the application of several techniques such as:

Instant writing: It can help to develop the writing with both children/teenagers and adults who are reluctant writers. Instant writing activities are those where students are asked to write immediately in response to a teacher request. We can, for example, dictate half sentences for students to complete. We can ask students to write two sentences about a topic. We can give them three words and tell them to put them into a sentence as quickly as possible.

Instant writing is designed both to make students comfortable when writing, and also to give them thinking time before they say the sentences they have written aloud. (Harmer, 2010)

Using music and pictures: Music and pictures are excellent stimuli for both writing and speaking. We can play a piece of music and the students imagine and then write out the film scene they think it could accompany. We can dictate the first sentence of a story and then have the students complete the story, based on the music we play them. We can then dictate the first sentence again and have them write a different story. They can then read out one of their stories and the class have to guess which music excerpt inspired it.

Pictures offer numerous possibilities. We can ask students to write descriptions of pictures; their classmates then have to guess which one it is.

They can write postcards based on pictures we give them. We can get them to look at portraits and write the inner thoughts of the characters or their diaries, or an article about them. Through these activities students can write freely and in an engaging way. (Harmer, 2010)

Jigsaw: students will read in groups a text or different texts about the same topic. This kind of jigsaw technique gives students a reason for reading and can encourage students to share ideas and opinions.

Newspapers and magazines: We can get students to look at a range of different articles and ask them to analyze how headlines are constructed, and how articles are normally arranged. They can write an article about a real or imaginary news story that interests them.

We can show students a story and have them respond to it in a variety of different genres, and for different audiences (e.g. the report of a long traffic delay can prompt letters to the newspaper, emails, text messages, letters of apology, etc.) (Harmer, 2010)

Writing to each other. Students can write each other in several ways. For example: the email interview. They can also write emails, or any other kind of message which has to be answered. It will need teacher´s supervision. Teacher can also organize in live chat sessions on the Internet, or organize pen pal exchanges with students in other countries.

To conclude, the present research work is based on a national concern which refers to the lack of appropriate use of teaching techniques. The Tri-Fold is a Cooperative Learning strategy which can help to improve students´ writing skills and, therefore, is the main issue of the present educational research.

f. METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN

Design of the Research

Action research in education involves finding out immediate solutions in the teaching-learning environments. The main aim of action research is to identify a problematic situation or issue that the participants- who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators, and even parents- consider worth looking more deeply and systematically. Additionally, Action research can be undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students, assisted or guided by professional researchers with the aim of improving their strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within which they practice.

The selection for the action research design is to help to promote cooperative learning in English as a foreign language classes. Furthermore, action research will allow the candidate teacher become a participant in the research because he/she is going to intervene in in the problematic situation by means of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

Action research assists the candidate teacher, who is the researcher conducting this investigation, to find immediate solution to the issue of writing skills in which students, who are the participants for this research, have experimented and showed some trouble due specially to the lack of implementation of cooperative learning strategies such as the Tri Fold.

Methods, techniques, and instruments

Methods

This study will describe the results of the data resulting from the application of an intervention plan that will allow the application of strategies and activities with the Tri-Fold strategy to improve writing skills and achieve the goals of this research project. The following general methods will be applied to support its development.

The Scientific method will facilitate the study of the Tri-Fold applied in the development of the writing skills. It will help the observations done before and during the intervention. It also will assist during the prediction of the possible solution. It will be helpful by gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

The Descriptive method will be useful to describe the different phases 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 that will be used to analyze the results obtained through the questionnaires and the tests. It will also be used to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and the conclusion.

The statistic method will be used to make quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and tests.

Techniques and instruments

Data collection

Elements of quantitative and qualitative research will be selected for data collection. Quantitative research considers variables and statistics whereas qualitative research considers an understanding of words or actions. Both qualitative and quantitative instruments are self-developed by the results by the researcher taking into account the principles of question construction. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods which are tests, will be used to develop quantitative data collection instruments, and observations and interviews such as questionnaire and observation sheet for the qualitative ones.

Tests

Test will allow participants to perform cognitive tasks in relation to the writing skills. Additionally, tests will produce a numerical score by which the researcher will calculate the mean to compare the pre and posttest results.

Pretest and posttest.

A pretest made by the researcher will provide a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (tenth-grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution) receive a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or the intervention plan, a posttest will measure again the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pretest-posttest comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaire

A researcher–made questionnaire will be administered to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the tests, a pre and post questionnaire will be administered in order to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires will support the test results.

Observation

An observation will be applied to understand the natural environment as lived by the tenth-grade students at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during their English classes. There will be two types of observation:

Nonparticipant observation

In nonparticipant observation, the researcher is not involved in the situation being observed. He observes and records behaviors, but does not interact or participate in the situation 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.

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 Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst the tenth-grade students, group "B",

at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher will need an observation sheet to record the participants` behavior shown on both variables: performance of the basic writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the Tri-Fold as a cooperative-based 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 (basic writing skills), and the treatment itself (Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy).

Pilot testing the questions

Once the questions for both the test (pre and post) have been developed under the principles of questions construction, the researcher will test the questions in order to evaluate the instruments and to make the necessary changes based on the feedback from a small number of individuals who will evaluate them from the final sample of population for the study.

Procedures

The following action research work will consist on the next stages:

It will start and end with a non-participant observation in order to determine students' level of knowledge as well as their working style and behavior. This will help teacher trainees to have a previous knowledge of the group.

After the non-participant observation, teacher trainees will start to develop their intervention plan. While the planned lessons are being developed, the instruments will be applied to collect the necessary data for the present research work. These are: the test, which will be applied at the very beginning of the research work and at the end of it; the questionnaire which will be also applied at the beginning and at the end; the observation sheet which will be used during each day of the intervention. In the same way, several activities will be carried out to practice and improve students´ writing skills.

The results before and after the intervention plan will be compared and analyzed to draw up conclusions about the research work.

Tabulation

The results obtained in the test and questionnaire will be tabulated and a logical analysis will be done with the information obtained.

Organization

The present research work will be organized based on the information obtained through the use of the necessary methods to compare and analyze the influence of the intervention plan. A report of the intervention will be presented with the findings and ideas among teachers, partners, and the school.

Description

The obtained data after the intervention will be represented through graphics which will help to have an overview of the results. The questions will be logically analyzed and described to facilitate the interpretation of the information presented.

Population sample

The students of tenth grade parallel "B" of the Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, will participate in the development of this action research. The participants of the study in parallel "B" are 34 students between boys and girls. They are between fourteen and fifteen years old. The parallel receives five hours per week with a certified teacher.

Intervention and observation plan

INTERVENTION PLAN - WEEK ONE

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	**Getting started**
LEARNING OUTC OMES	**Listening** Students will listen to their teacher and partners` introductions. Students will listen to their classmates during the participations. **Speaking** Students will speak and interact each other when they interview one of their classmates. Students will practice speaking and pronunciation presenting their classmate to the class. **Reading** Students will read their biography cards to complete them. **Writing** Students will individually complete a sheet of paper with their personal information. Students will write their personal data on the biography cards. **Key vocabulary** Name, last name, age, hobby, favorite food.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • First, the teacher will introduce to the students. • Next, students will introduce themselves through a warm up activity called "Looking for the pair". For this, the teacher will give students small pictures which will be mixed. Each picture will be repeated

once. Students will have to look for the partner who has the same picture. Students who have the same two pictures will have to join in pairs.

- Once they are joined in pairs, teacher will give each one a separate sheet of paper.

- Teacher will activate students' prior knowledge by asking them to interview their partner, and using the **instant writing** technique, students will answer some questions. They will ask and write on the sheet of paper: *What is your name? What is your last name? How old are you? What is your hobby? What is your favorite food*? *What Is your favorite sport?* This activity will last 8 or 10 minutes.

- During this warm up stage, teacher will assess students' prior knowledge which will allow knowing students' diverse linguistic background.

Connection
- Teacher will start with a warm up activity. It is called "Mystery person".

- After the warm up activity, teacher will ask students to introduce their partners to the class. For this, students will use the information they already have in the sheets of paper. Teacher will ask students to take it out and present the partner they worked with.

- Students will take turns to introduce their partners. The student will say: I would like to introduce you to "Miguel", or He is "Miguel"; He is 14 years old. He likes…

	• Once all students have presented their classmate, they will go back to their own seats. • Teacher will apply students the Pre-Test data collection source. **Affirming** • For affirming phase, students will need a separate sheet of paper. They will develop an activity.it is called "Liar liar". • After that, teacher will take time to apply the Pre- questionnaire data collection source. • Teacher will monitor students while they are completing the Pre-questionnaire. • Students will give the teacher the Pre-questionnaire.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Small pictures Separate sheets of paper Biography card templates
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Pre-test Data source: Pre-questionnaire
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 TWO

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	***How often do you go rock climbing? (Dialogue, useful expressions)***
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to a dialogue which contains the topics that will be covered in this unit. **Speaking** Students will speak and interact each other while practicing a dialogue in pairs. **Reading** Students will read aloud a dialogue. Students will read and share their answers. **Writing** Students will write sentences using new useful expressions. Students will write what they learnt in the Tri-Fold template. Students will write a summary about what they learnt. **Key Vocabulary** Useful expressions: nothing much, sure you do, at least, guess.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher will introduce the content and language objectives for the lesson. • To activate student's prior knowledge, students will listen to the dialogue they have in their books, page 34. Then, students will join in pairs and will practice the dialogue. Next, students will read the dialogue in pairs in front of the class.

	• After that, teacher will ask students to write on the board the expression that are new for them. Once all expressions are written, teacher will ask students to make a foldable card in which they will have to write all the expressions they have on the board. Then, students will have to join in pairs to write one example for each expression. • Teacher will ask students to read their examples and will check them. Then, teacher will ask students to keep their cards and revise it as often as they can. **Connection** • To connect students with the topic, teacher will remember students the meaning and use of each one of the expressions they have in their foldable cards. • Teacher will use the technique of the **interview**. For this, students will join in groups of three. Teacher will give students a Tri-Fold template, one by group. Students will choose three expressions and will write them on each of the "What I think" sections. There will be three expressions. • Teacher will ask students to delegate a person to write on the template. This person will interview the other members of the group and will write the answers on it. • Next, teacher will check students´ answers. • Then, students will read out loud their answers.

94

	Affirming
	• Students will have to work with a new partner who is next to them.
	• Teacher will give students a small dialogue. Students will have to practice it and read it in front of the class. It will contain some expressions they already learned.
	• Then, using the **collaborative writing** technique, students will have to join in groups to write a dialogue different from the one they have been given. Students will use different expressions to change the sense of the dialogue.
	• Teacher will be monitoring students during the activity to provide support.
	• According to the number of groups, teacher will make a ruffle in order to choose pairs to read aloud their dialogues.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Foldable cards Tri-Fold templates Copies of a small dialogue Separate sheets of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet Data source: Sub-test
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

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	***Sports and leisure activities***
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to new vocabulary about sports and leisure activities. **Speaking** Students will speak and interact each other while sharing their works. **Reading** Students will read aloud a sentences using sports and activities. Students will read and share their answers. **Writing** Students will write sentences using new vocabulary about sports and leisure activities. Students will write what they learnt in the Tri-Fold template. **Key Vocabulary** Different sports and activities.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher will introduce the content and language objectives for the lesson. • To activate student's prior knowledge, teacher will start with a warm up activity. This is called "Hangman". For this activity, teacher will use sports and leisure activities. • Once the warm up activity is concluded, teacher will ask students

to make groups of three. Teacher will give students one Tri-Fold template and three sticky notes per group.

- Teacher will use the technique of **music and pictures**. Teacher will give each group three pictures about the new vocabulary. Pictures will be numbered. (1. bowling, 2. figure skating, 3. wall climbing) but they will not have their names. Each group will glue the pictures on each sticky note. Then put them on the "What I think" sections of the template".

- Once students are done with this task, teacher will ask them to write the name of the sport or leisure activity they think each one is.

- Then, students will read out loud their answers.

- Once they have agreed on the name of each sport and leisure activity, they will have to write the correct answers in the "What I learned" section of their templates.

- After that, students will write sentences using the new terms they learned in the "Summary of contents" section of the template.

Connection

- Students will join in pairs. Teacher will explain students that some sports and activities go with certain verbs. These are the verbs go, do, and play. Teacher will write on the board the three verbs and the sports they go with. (Baseball, basketball, football, hockey, soccer, table tennis, volleyball, tennis, golf, etc.)

	• Teacher will give each pair a Tri-Fold template. Students will have to write on the "What I think" sections the three verbs. Then, they will have to write the sports and activities they think they go with.
	• After that, teacher will check with the whole class the correct answers by asking students to read them out loud.
	Affirming
	• First, teacher will show students flash cards about the vocabulary they have in their books, page 34. Teacher will stick them on the board. Students will take turns to write the name they think each sport or activity is.
	• Then, teacher will check student's answers with the whole class.
	• After that, students will work in pairs to complete the activity 4. B. page 34 of their book.
	• Students will write sentences using the new vocabulary. This activity will be developed on a separate sheet of paper.
	• Teacher will be monitoring students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• According to the number of groups, teacher will make a ruffle in order to choose pairs to read aloud their sentences.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM	Tri-Fold templates Sticky notes

RESOURCES	Pictures about sports Sheets of paper Flash cards of sports Students´ book
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet Data source: Sub-test
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 FOUR

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B" at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	*Adverbs and expressions of frequency*
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to their classmates while they read out loud their works using adverbs and expressions of frequency to talk about how often they do things. **Speaking** Students will interact each other talking about how often they do things. **Reading** Students will read out loud their works in which they will include ways to express frequency of doing things. **Writing** Students will write sentences using adverbs and expressions of frequency to talk about how often they do things. Students will make questions and will give them short and long answers using adverb and expressions of frequency. Students will complete a Tri-Fold template. **Key Vocabulary** Adverbs of frequency: always, usually, often, sometimes, never. Expressions of frequency: once a day/week/month/year, twice a day/week/month/year, three times a day/week/month/year, all the time, every day/week/month/year. Questions with *how often...?* Short and long

	answers.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • The lesson will start with a warm up activity. It is called… "Find someone who…" • After the warm up activity, teacher will ask students to make groups of four. Teacher will give students a Tri-Fold template, one by group. • Teacher will use the technique of **collaborative writing**. Teacher will ask students to write on the "What I Think" sections, three sentences using adverbs of frequency. They will write the sentence the way they think should be written. • Teacher will present students the new topic using a chart. Then, teacher will write examples on the board to explain the new topic. • Students will check their sentences according to the explanation teacher gave. Students will correct the sentences and will write them on the "What I learned section". • Next, students will read out loud their sentences. • Finally, students will make a summary about the topic in which they will include the rule to form sentences using adverbs of frequency and examples. **Connection** • To connect students with the topic, teacher will explain the use of expressions of frequency writing examples on the board. Student will take turns to write their own examples on the board.

	• Students will form groups of three. Then, teacher will use the technique of **music and pictures** to connect students with the new topic. Teacher will give each group pictures of people doing different things.
	• Next, students will write sentences using different expressions of frequency to write sentences about the pictures.
	• Then, teacher will ask students to read out loud their sentences in order to check them and compare them with the rest of the class.
	• Teacher will explain students how to make and answer questions using *how often..?* Students will have to write additional examples on the board. Students will also write short and long answers to the questions.
	Affirming
	• To affirm students understanding on the topic, teacher will ask students to form groups of three students. Teacher will give each group a separate sheet of paper with several pictures of people doing things, one by group.
	• Students will have to write sentences using both adverbs and expressions of frequency. Then, students will write questions with short and long answers about the pictures they have.
	• Then students will write their sentences on the board. One sentence for group.
	• Teacher will check student´s work.

	Tri-Fold template
	Charts
	Pictures
	Sheets of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet
	Data source: Subtest
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 FIVE

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	*Gerunds after verbs. Like, love, hate, (don't) mind, prefer.*
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to a song and will complete it. Students will listen to the teacher and classmates while they share their answers and works. **Speaking** Students will talk about their preferences using gerunds after verbs. **Reading** Students will read their works in order to share their ideas and opinions. **Writing** Students will write sentences, yes/no questions, short answers, and information questions using gerunds after verbs. **Key Vocabulary** Gerunds after verbs, like, love, hate, don´t mind, prefer. Yes/no questions, short answers. Information questions.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • First, students will make a warm up activity. It will consist on a song that they will listen and complete. Then, teacher will check students´ answers. Once the song is correctly completed, they will sing it. • Then, teacher will ask students to join in pairs. Teacher will give each pair a "Tri-Fold" template. Students will have to write the verbs they think go with a gerund. • Teacher will explain students the rules to write sentences using

gerunds after verbs. Teacher will write on the board the verbs that go with gerunds and examples with each one. Then, students will have to write additional examples on the board.

- Then, on the "What I Learned" section, students will write sentences using gerunds after verbs.

- Students will write on the "Summary" section the rules to form sentences using gerunds after verbs and examples.

Connection

- Teacher will use the technique **of newspapers and magazines** to connect students with the topic**.**

- Teacher will explain the rules to write questions and give short answers using gerunds after verbs.

- Students will make groups of four. Teacher will provide each group sticky notes, a sheet of paper, and copies of an article from a magazine or newspaper.

- Students will choose and write seven verbs in the sticky note from the advertisement.

- Students will stick the note in the up side of the paper. Then, they will write as a title: Yes/no questions, short answers using gerunds after verbs.

- Students will use the verbs they chose from the articles to write yes/no questions. Students will answer the questions they wrote.

	• Students will read out loud their sentences to check it.
	• Students will deliver their papers to the teacher in order them to be checked
	Affirming
	• Teacher will present students how to make information questions using gerunds after verbs and writing examples on the board. Teacher will also explain how to answer these questions.
	• Students will join in pairs. Teacher will give each pair a separate sheet of paper and a list of illustrated verbs. Students will have to write several questions using gerunds after verbs. Students will ask these questions to the partner they are working with. Students will have to write the answers on the paper.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Copies of a song Tri-Fold template Sticky notes Sheet of paper Copies of an article from a newspaper or magazine Copies of illustrated verbs
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet
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.

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	***Express preferences using "Would rather"***
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to their classmates while they express their preferences using would rather. **Speaking** Students talk about their preferences using would rather **Reading** Students will scan a text in order to answer questions. Students will read their works in order to share their ideas and opinions. **Writing** Students will answer some questions after scanning it on the Tri-Fold templates. **Key Vocabulary** Would rather.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • To get started, teacher will make a warm up activity. It is called "The telephone". It will help students to remember the previous topic. • Then, teacher will ask students to brainstorm the expression "would rather" writing on the board what they think it refers to. • Next, teacher will ask students to make groups of three. Teacher will give each member of the group a Tri-Fold template. Students will

	write on the "What I Think" section all the ideas that were given about "Would rather".
	• Then, teacher will explain the meaning and use of "Would Rather" to express preferences. Students will write additional examples on the board.
	• Then, in the "What I learned section", students will have to write more examples using different activities.
	• Finally, in the "Summary" section of the template, students will write the rule to form sentences using "would rather".
	Connection
	• Teacher will explain students how to make sentences using "Would rather". Teacher will write examples on the board. Students will have to write additional examples.
	• Students will write on it "Questions with *would rather*" as a title. Then, teacher will ask students to write seven questions using would rather.
	• Then, students will have to join in pairs. Teacher will give each student a sheet of paper. Students will ask the questions to the partners they joined with.
	• Teacher will ask students to read out loud their answers to check them.
	Affirming
	• Students will join in pairs. Teacher will give them a sheet of paper,

	one by pair.
	• To affirm students understanding about the topic, teacher will ask students to write 10 sentences with would rather and 5 questions with the corresponding answers. • Students will also develop the activities N° 11 and 12, page 39 of their books.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Tri-Fold templates Sheets of paper Students' book
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet Data source: Subtest
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 SEVEN

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	*Sports for boys and girls.*
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to their classmates. **Speaking** Students will interact each other. **Reading** Students will read their works in order to share their ideas and opinions. **Writing** Students will write their favorite place in the house on the Tri-Fold templates. **Key Vocabulary** Different kind of sports that are for boys and girls. (Rollerblading, skating, wall climbing, soccer, tennis, basketball, bowling, camping, etc.)
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • The lesson will start with a warm up activity. It is called "Word chains". This activity will help students to practice writing skill. • Then, teacher will ask students to make groups of four. • Teacher will give each group a Tri –Fold template. And one sticky note. Then, teacher will ask students to write on the "What I Think" section of the template what sports they think are for girls. They can include sports different form the ones they have in the book. For this, teacher will stick on the board some flash cards about sports in order

students remember them.

- Teacher will ask students to write the sports they think are for girls on the board. Each group will write at least three. Then, they will decide what sports are really better for girls.

- Then, in the "What I Learned" section, students will write the sports that according to the class are for girls.

- Finally, in the "Summary of the contents" section, students will write a short paragraph talking about sports that are for girls.

Connection
- To connect students with the topic, teacher will ask them to write on the board as many sports as they remember.

- Then, teacher will ask students to make groups of four.

- Teacher will give each group a Tri –Fold template. And one sticky note. Then, teacher will ask students to write on the "What I Think" section of the template what sports they think are for boys. They can include sports different form the ones they have in the book. For this, teacher will stick on the board some flash cards about sports in order students remember them.

- Teacher will ask students to write the sports they think are for boys on the board. Each group will write at least three. Then, they will decide what sports are really better for girls.

- Then, in the "What I Learned" section, students will write the sports that according to the class are for boys.

	• Finally, in the "Summary of the contents" section, students will write a short paragraph talking about sports that are for boys. **Affirming** • To affirm students understanding about the new topic, first students will join in pairs. Teacher will use the technique of **writing to each other.** Students will write on a separate piece of paper a small paragraph about what sports they think are for boys and what sports they think are for girls. • Then, students will give this paper to his/her partner. Each pair will read and compare their paragraphs. • Then, students will work in their books, activities 14, 15, and 16, page 40.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Tri-Fold templates Sticky notes Flash cards Sheets of paper Students´ book.
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet
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

RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?*
TOPIC	***Reviewing learned contents***
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will listen to their classmates. **Speaking** Students will interact each other. **Reading** Students will read their works in order to share their ideas and opinions. **Writing** Students will write on the Tri-Fold templates. **Key Vocabulary** Adverbs and expressions of frequency, sports, ways to express preference, etc.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • The lesson will start with a warm up activity. It is called "Bananas". • Then, teacher will write on the board some questions about the viewed topics. Then, students will join in pairs to answer the given questions. For this, teacher will give each pair a Tri-fold template. • Students will write in the "What I think" section of the template

	the questions with the corresponding answers.
	• After that, teacher will remember students each topic they talked about. For this, teacher will use several charts to explain the viewed contents.
	• Then, students will check their answers and write them in a correct way in the "What I Learned" section.
	• Students will write on the "Summary of the contents" section of the template the rules to the make questions and answers they did.
	Connection • Teacher will write on the board some questions about the viewed topics. Then, students will join in pairs to answer the given questions. For this, teacher will give each pair a Tri-fold template.
	• Students will write in the "What I think" section of the template the questions with the corresponding answers.
	• After that, teacher will remember students each topic they talked about. For this, teacher will use several charts to explain the viewed contents.
	• Then, students will check their answers and write them in a correct way in the "What I Learned" section.
	• Students will write on the "Summary of the contents" section of the template the rules to make the questions and answers they

	did.
	• Teacher will ask students to make groups of three. Teacher will give each group a Tri –Fold template, and one sticky note.
	• Students will have to write on the "What I think" section the names of the three other classmates that are in the group. Then. They will write the sport they think each person likes the most.
	• Teacher will use the technique of **writing to each other.** Students will have to write what are their favorite sports at home on the sticky note. This sticky note will be delivered to all the classmates in the group.
	• Then, each student will write on the "What I learnt" section the favorite sport each classmate really likes.
	• Next, students will write complete sentences using the information they obtained from their classmates.
	• Teacher will ask students to read out loud their answers in order to make the corresponding feedback.
	• Students will deliver their templates to the teacher in order them to be checked
	Affirming
	• Teacher will explain students how to write a short paragraph. The paragraph will include all the aspects and topics they learned.

	• Then, students will write a short paragraph and will give it to the teacher in order it to be checked. • After that, teacher will take time to apply the post test and the post questionnaire data collection sources.
MATERIALS AND CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Tri-Fold templates Sticky notes Charts Separate sheets of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source: Observation sheet Data source: Posttest Data source: Post-questionnaire Data source: Subtest
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.

g. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH

Resources

Human

- The researcher authoress Gabriela Elizabeth Montaño Ponce.

- Students of 10th year of Basic Education at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution, 2014-2015 academic period.

Material

- Printed materials (worksheets, pictures)

- Books and ebooks

- Journals and newspapers

- Sheets of paper

- Sticky notes

Technical

- Computer

- Printer

- Internet connection

- Flash

Budget

Resources	Cost
Printing of the projects	$ 20.00
Internet connection	$ 60.00
Print and copies of materials	$ 30.00
Print of final report and thesis	$ 50.00
Transportation	$ 120.00
Unexpected expenses	$ 40.00
TOTAL	$ 320.00

Financing

All expenses related to the following research work will entirely be assumed by the researcher conduction the present investigation.

h. TIME LINE

PHASES	ACTIVITIES	2015										2016		
		FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	SEP	OCT	NOV	DIC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Project	Presentation	x x												
	Project Approval		x											
	Appointment of the Thesis Advisor		x											
Intervention Plan	Revision of Instruments		x											
	Aplication of the instruments			x										
	Act and Observe			x x x x	x x x x									
Thesis Process	Data Organization and Tabulation					x x								
	Interpreting and Reflecting						x x							
	Writing up and Reporting						x X							

119

Task																																																			
Thesis Report to the Advisor																				x																																	
Thesis Revision																					x																																
Graduation Application Procedures																						x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x																				
Thesis Presentation																																		x	x	x	x																
Private Review and Thesis approval																																								x	x	x	x										
Corrections																																													x	x	x	x					
Public Thesis Defense and Graduation																																																		x	x	x	x

i. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Capella University. (s.f.). *Grammar Handbook.* Mineapolis. Retrieved from http://www.capella.edu/interactivemedia/onlinewritingcenter/downloads/grammar.pdf.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS INITIATIVE. (s.f.). *COMMON CORE STEATE STANDARDS FOR English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects Appendix A: Research supporting Key Elements of the Standards.* United States. Retrieved from http://www.corestandards.org/assets/Appendix_A.pdf

Coulmas, F. (2003). Writing systems: An Introduction to their Linguistic Anaysis. Cambridge UnIversity Press. Retrieved from http://assets.cambridge.org/97805217/82173/excerpt/9780521782173_excerpt.pdf

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.

Gillies, R. M. (October 28th 2010). *Teaching and Teacher Education.* doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.034

Harmer, J. (2007). *How to teach English.* (2. Pearson Education, Ed.) Edimburg, England: Pearson, Longman. Retrieved from http://vk.com/doc10095699_163571302?hash=d2ddb709722a73e956&dl=28aa

Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

Karrie A. Jones, J. L. (2008). *The Journal of Effective Teaching.* Retrieved from Making Cooperative Learning Work in the College Classroom: An Application of the 'Five Pillars' of Cooperative Learning to Post-Secondary Instruction:https://niagara.edu/assets/assets/cctl/documents/JET.pdf

MinEdu. (2014). *National Curiculum Guidelines. English as a Foreign Language.* Quito, Ecuador. Retrieved from http://educacion.gob.ec/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2014/09/01-National-Curriculum-Guidelines-EFL-Agosto-2014.pd

j. ANNEXES

Annex 1. Observation sheet

Date: _____

Nª_____

Check according to students` performance during the lesson.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE. Basic Writing Skills	Always	Once in a while	Rarely or Never
The elements of sentences students write are put in correct word order, using appropriately the rules to combine words.			
Words chosen in sentences are used appropriately to mean something.			
Sentences express a complete thought or idea and consist on a subject and a predicate.			
Sentences contain basic parts of speech) noun, pronoun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition, article) and are correctly distributed and used in sentences.			
Paragraphs contain the basic elements (topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion), and link ideas about the same topic.			
Students use common punctuation marks according to the rules of punctuation to have well-constructed and non-confusing sentences. There are not run-on sentences.			
Words are formed with the correct letters and in the correct order.			
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE. The Tri fold as a cooperative learning strategy.			
Members of the groups work together and contribute for the success of the group.			
Students interact, discuss, ask questions, and help each other in the group to be able to complete a given task.			
All students contribute in the task.			
Students respect each other, value other opinions, listen to other group members, stay focused, contribute equally, disagree politely, talk only to their own group and encourage others to talk.			

Annex 2. Pre and Posttest

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN
ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE TEST / POST TEST

Student's code: …………………………………………………………………

Date: ………………………………………………………………………….

Instructions:

Write a brief paragraph including the main idea, supporting sentences and concluding sentences about sports and activities. Answer yourself the following questions to include in your paragraph. Which one is your favorite sport or activity? How often do you practice your favorite sport or activity? What sports are you good at? Do you prefer playing or watching sports? Why? Do you prefer team sports or action sports? Why? What sports do you think are for girls or boys?
Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

ACTIVITIES AND SPORTS

…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………………

Thanks

Annex 3. Rubric

RUBRIC TO 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	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 and Post Questionnaire

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA
DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear students, I request your cooperation in order to complete the following questionnaire being the most sincere, related to the English subject. Your answers will be anonymous and confidential.

Student's code: …………………………………………………………………

Date:……………………………………………………………………………

1. **¿How the activities in the English class are developed?**
   4 Groups
   3 Pairs
   2 As a whole class
   1 Individual

2. **¿How often do you work in pairs or groups in the English class?**
   4 Always
   3 Frequently
   2 Usually
   1 Sometimes

3. **The group or pair activities in the English class. Are developed in a positive and a respectful environment?**
   4 Always
   3 Frequently
   2 Usually
   1   Sometimes

4. **In the group activities in the English class. All the members contribute in the development of a collective work?**
   4 Always
   3 Frequently
   2 Ususally
   1 Sometimes

5. **When do you work in pairs or groups in the English class the participation is equal?**
   4 Always
   3 Frequently

2 Usually
1 Sometimes

6. **When you work in group or pairs in the English class do you learn more than when do you work individually?**
    4 Always
    3 Frequently
    2 Ususally
    1 Sometimes

THANKS FOR YOUR COLLABORATION

Annex 5. Research Matrix

THEME: The Tri fold as a cooperative learning strategy to improve EFL Writing Skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (Action Research)	Techniques and Instruments
General How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?	**General** To improve the EFL writing skills through the Tri-fold as a cooperative learning strategy amongst tenth-grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.	**Basic Writing Skills** Types of writing Writing issues. Writing descriptors. **The Tri-Fold as a Cooperative Learning Strategy** Cooperative Learning descriptors	**Preliminary investigation** - Observing the English classes - Stating the background of the problem - Describing current situation - Locating and reviewing the literature	- Observation sheet (Participant and Nonparticipant observation) - Pre and posttest - Pre and Post Questionnaire
Specific • What theoretical and methodological references about the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla	**Specific** • To research the theoretical and methodological references about the Tri—Fold as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the EFL writing skills. • To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the	Positive interdependence Promotive face-to-face interaction. Individual accountability. Social skills. Group processing.	- Creating a methodological framework for research - Designing an intervention plan **Intervention and observation** - Administering tests and questionnaires - Observing and monitoring students´ performance according to the	

Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year? • What are the issues that limit the development of the EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year? • What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the EFL writing skills? • Which Tri-Fold techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?	EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year. • To design an intervention plan based on the Tri-Fold as a Cooperative Learning strategy in order to improve the EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year. • To apply the most suitable techniques of the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.		intervention plan - **Presentation of research findings** - Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquires - Organizing the final report

• How does the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop the EFL writing skills amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year?	• To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Tri-Fold as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst tenth grade students, group "B", at Marieta de Veintimilla Educational Institution during the 2014-2015 academic school year.			

ANNEX 2

- **Grading scale**

Writing Skills

Quantitative score range	Qualitative score range
10	Superior
9	Excellent
7-8	Average
6	Below average

The Tri-Fold as a Cooperative Learning Strategy

Quantitative score range	Qualitative score range
100-80%	Above the expected level
80-60%	Between the expected level
60-40%	At the expected level
40-20%	Below the expected level
20-0%	Less than the expected level

INDEX