



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

**THE UNCOVER- CONCENTRATE-MONITOR- EVALUATE AS A
COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASIC WRITING SKILLS
AMONGST NINTH-GRADE GROUP F STUDENTS AT 27 DE
FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD**

Thesis requirement to obtain the
Bachelor's Degree in Science of
Education English Language
Specialization.

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CERTIFICATION

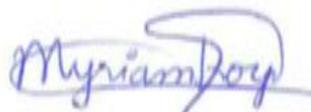
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CERTIFIES

To have directed and thoroughly revised this thesis work entitled: THE UNCOVER – CONCENTRATE – MONITOR – EVALUATE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE GROUP F STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD, under the responsibility of Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño, undergraduate student pursuing her Bachelor's degree in Science of Education: English Language Specialization. This work complies with the norms and requirements of Universidad Nacional de Loja, therefore I authorize its presentation and defense

Loja, Marzo, 2016.



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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

With great affection, I dedicate this thesis to my family specially to my parents, Medardo Castillo and Matilde Abendaño who have supported me unconditionally, through all the years of my career in all aspects to become a great professional, as well as my best friend, Mayra who has been there in every moment, seeing what is right or wrong for me.

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a. TITLE

THE UNCOVER – CONCENTRATE – MONITOR - EVALUATE AS A
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– 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

b. RESUMEN

El presente trabajo intitulado, La Estrategia Descubrir – Concentrarse – Monitorear y Evaluar como un Aprendizaje Cooperativo para Desarrollar las Habilidades Básicas de Escritura en el Inglés como Idioma Extranjero entre los Estudiantes de 9^{no} Grado Paralelo F en el Colegio 27 de Febrero. Periodo Académico 2014-2015, fue desarrollado con el propósito de mejorar las habilidades básicas de escritura, a través de la estrategia “U-C-ME” en los estudiantes de noveno grado, para ésto algunos métodos fueron usados y aplicados, tales como el científico, descriptivo, analítico y método estadístico. Los resultados obtenidos a través de las pruebas y cuestionarios pre y post, mostraron que los estudiantes claramente mejoraron su habilidades de escritura así como también su actitud, impresión y comportamiento hacia el U-C-ME como una estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo. Por lo tanto, la implementación de una estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo influenció en el desarrollo de las habilidades de escritura en los estudiantes de noveno grado grupo F, debido al uso de algunas técnicas y principio propios del aprendizaje cooperativo.

ABSTRACT

The present work entitled, **THE UNCOVER – CONCENTRATE – MONITOR - EVALUATE AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS GROUP F AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014 - 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD**, was developed with the purpose to improve the students' basic writing skills through the U-C-ME strategy with ninth group students, for that some methods were used and applied, such us the scientific, the descriptive, the analytic and the statistic method. The findings obtained through the pre –test and post-test and as well as pre and post questionnaires, showed that students clearly improved their basic writing skills as well as their attitudes , feelings and behaviors toward the U-C-ME as a cooperative learning strategy. Therefore, the implementation of a cooperative learning strategy influenced in the ninth-grade group F students' development of basic writing skills, due to the use of some techniques and principles inner in the cooperative learning.

c. INTRODUCTION

This action research work was focused on the use of the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy to improve the basic writing skills, being these so important to communicate more freely and without fear. This work was developed with a population of 21 students at 27 de Febrero public High School, who had five periods of English classes weekly; though they did not practice a specific strategy that inspires and make them easier the development of the writing skill. Also their English book did not have a system in which students could write compositions following structures.

The reasons why to carry out this action research was to focus on the use of Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor and Evaluate strategy to improve the basic writing skills in ninth-grade students. This study helped to communicate and interact positively between teacher- students and students –students, promoting the learning in an active way. Additionally, this action contributed to the improvement of the learning process among the students, because it acted as an intervening step to have students write their ideas from the very simple ones to complex ones. Similarly, the researcher was benefited because she gained experience in teaching.

Also, the main goal of that study was to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills through the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) as a cooperative learning strategy. To complete this goal the researcher investigated the theoretical and methodological references about basic writing skills and cooperative learning. After that, the researcher detected the issues that

limited the development of writing skills and planned the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy to improve them. Subsequently, the researcher applied the strategy with the most suitable techniques and cooperative learning principles as part of the classroom activities to solve the limitations and the attitudes and behaviors students have toward working cooperatively.

The methods used in this action research were four. The scientific method helped in the observations done before and during the prediction of the possible solution for the current study. In the Descriptive method the researcher described the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used. The analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze the obtained results, also to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and to draw up the conclusions. Finally, the statistic method was used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data received from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data received from the observations.

This study was based in two variables. The first one was about the basic writing skills that is the ability to use written language in a way that enables students to function within the academic world (Maupin, 2007). The second one was about the cooperative learning in which according to Spencer Kagan (1998), quoted by Jane Joritz (2002) argues that cooperative learning is a type of structured peer interaction emphasizing positive human relationships, collaboration between peers, active learning, academic achievement, equal participation, and equal status of students in the classroom.

The action research work was sustained with an intervention plan of eight weeks which contains 24 lesson plans. It involved pre and posttests assessed with writing indicators rubric taking into account five parameters: Purpose, Organization, Vocabulary, Tense, Word Order and Punctuation Marks. A pre and post questionnaires helped to know the attitudes and behavior students have toward the cooperative learning. During the intervention, the researcher to gather evidence used writing assignments, templates and observations, also took photographs with all the important events and advances of the students.

Finally, it was noticeable that, the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate strategy significantly reduced some problems students had in developing basic writing skills through the application of all the strategy components and also its principles and techniques, mastering in that way the basic writing skills. Consequently, teacher should continue applying the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate cooperative learning strategy.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

Basic Writing Skills

Defining basic writing can be difficult. For some people, basic writing is the ability to use written language in a way that enables them to function within the academic world. For others, it is the mastery of grammar, form, or any number of other technical features of writing that one might perceive as desirable. Still, for others it can simply be a new form of communication (Maupin, 2007).

The development of writing skills and processes as well as trust in those processes is what makes basic writing so important. When the enormous pressure of perfection and correctness is taken away from students they will ultimately find a writing process that works for them and begin to develop into a more confident writer. In a sense, they will feel as though they have been invited into the conversation of education because they now possess the most basic ability to use written communication in a way which allows them to function academically (Maupin, 2007).

Therefore, basic writing is the easy way students have to express their own ideas in an easy way, and then each student feels confident writing in any setting of their lives, with the help or without the help of the teachers.

In order to know what the target group of this research ,the ninth grade group F students whose corresponds to A1.2 level need to know, the researcher takes into account the National Curriculum Guidelines, that takes the Common European Framework as a model to standardize the English Language Teaching. There are

some specifications for writing and also some indicators to assess writing depending on the level of the students (MinEduc, 2014)

Specifications for Writing : Level A1.2

In this level Students are expected to produce informational texts, transactional and expository texts consisting of a sequence of simple sentences that have more detail and show more variety in lexical range and sentence structure.

Writing Assessment Indicators

Level A1.2 learners will be able to:

- ✓ Copy familiar words and short phrases (e.g. simple signs, instructions, names of everyday objects, shops, and set phrases used regularly).
- ✓ Take simple notes from a dictated or recorded message within the limits of their vocabulary for the level.
- ✓ Write sequences of simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do for short *informational*, *transactional* and *expository* texts (e.g. flyers, posters, personal letters, autobiographies, etc.) by using basic appropriate punctuation marks (MinEduc, 2014).

Conduct correspondence (e.g. personal letter) with a partner, giving and eliciting information and advice on personal, educational, and public issues.

Writing in English as Foreign Language learning

Compared to other skills, writing is the most difficult skill to learn and perform. Contemporary research theories on how to effectively teach English

Foreign Language writing such as those of cognitivists and social constructionists based their approaches mainly on the first language writing. Some people view writing as an activity controlled in the mind of each individual as the person is writing particularly the activity which involves thinking and problem-solving process.

The social constructionists on the other hand, claim that learning to write does not confine to just what is happening in the writer's state of mind, but social interaction is also a key to learn how to write successfully.

Thus, teaching writing in classes of English as a foreign language, encourage students to think more freely and go a little bit beyond, because a student has not to have a face to face interaction, so the student has the chance to express himself or herself with pressures and subsequently the student finds the writing process easier to develop (Raimmes, 1982).

With the purpose students to improve their writing skills, the teacher has to introduce to them some macro and micro skills. These help each student to improve the English as Foreign Language as well as their way to write basic things in English.

The writing skills that Brown, (2007) states are outlined below.

Writing Skills

Macro skills of Writing

- ✓ Use cohesive devices in writing discourse.
- ✓ Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.

- ✓ Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations, as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification..
- ✓ Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
- ✓ Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing (Brown, 2007).

Micro Skills

- ✓ Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
- ✓ Use acceptable grammatical systems.
- ✓ Use cohesive devices and punctuation in written discourse.
- ✓ Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.
- ✓ Appropriately accomplish the communicative function of written texts according to form and purpose.
- ✓ Convey links and connections between events and communicate relations such as main idea, supporting details, new and given information, generalizations, and exemplification.
- ✓ Distinguish between literal and implied meanings. (Brown, 2007)

Stages of the Teaching Learning Process of EFL writing

In 2010, Wright's research establishes that process writing involves guiding the students through the writing process in stages, helping them to focus first on ideas and to take care of correction related to grammar, spelling and mechanics toward the end, to finally have a good final product or result, which little by little is being polished through practice. There are generally five stages of writing. Wright's (2010) five stages are outlined below.

Prewriting

Students get their ideas together, identify the purpose of the writing and identify who the audience will be. They decide on the main idea and the supporting details, they can use the following strategies to prepare write:

- ✓ Talking over their ideas with peers or with the teacher.
- ✓ Drawing pictures.
- ✓ Brainstorming to create list of things they can write about or a list of supporting details. Including the main idea.
- ✓ Closing their ideas to visualize what they want to write about.
- ✓ Using graphic organizers
- ✓ Creating an outline for organizing the text.

The teacher can also provide some form of shared experience for students to write about.

Drafting

Students focus on getting their ideas down on paper as quickly as possible. The ideas and materials generated during prewriting are an important source in this

stage. Teacher have to teach students not to spend time worrying about spelling or grammar due to the first draft is only evaluated by how consistent is the content (Wright, 2010).

Revising

After reading over the first draft, students may want to rewrite some sentences and move thing around to better organize their arguments or supporting details. They may want to decide adding more details to support the main idea (Wright, 2010).

At this stage, students often need the help of their peers and the teacher, in order to give and receive feedback. They ask questions and receive suggestions for improvement.

Editing

At this stage, students focus on editing to correct spelling, mechanics and grammar. The students first do their best to find errors and correct them on their own. If further help is needed, they can get corrections in peer response, and , finally, from the teacher.

Also Wright (2010), says that correcting students writing at this stage raises two issues: how to correct and how much to correct.

- ✓ How to correct: Teacher could merely underline the errors . Other, can be circle the error and give students some clue, and finally the teacher can indicate where the error is and write the correction.

- ✓ How much to correct: Teacher should focus on errors to students are ready to learn how to correct and errors that interfere with meaning. The teacher's goal is to help students to move their writing to the publishing stage.

These two essential issues, the teacher has in mind every time, because knowing how to correct and how much do it, helps students to go beyond into their writing skills without feeling ashamed or frustrating when they see the corrections in their sheets or grades about their mistakes.

Publishing

Once students have edited their work by making the appropriate correction, their either rewrite their final draft in clear handwriting on high quality paper or type it.

Publishing means making the final draft available for others. In this stage students read their writing to the class. The class and the teacher can ask the author questions pointing out the parts they like and, if appropriate giving constructing feedback to help students in future writing process. (Wright, 2010).

After students follow and complete all these stages, each one of them is able to make good writing compositions, using the appropriate form and structures, so the teacher easy asses them, and if necessary as in every English language skill, teacher gives a feedback to students for them to master they basic skills in writing.

To conclude, basic writing is the skill that students improved, after the application and practice of some micro and macro skills as well as some steps in

order to produce well-structured compositions, turning themselves into a more confident writers.

The Uncover –Concentrate- Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) as a Cooperative Learning Strategy

The Uncover – Concentrate – Monitor - Evaluate (U-C-ME) is a tool that allows students to demonstrate their prior knowledge and connections to the particular topic or concept by writing down everything they know or have experienced that is related to the topic or concept before the lesson. During the lesson, students' attention is focused on specific information, and growth is monitored at the end of the lesson (Herrera, 2010)

In other words this strategy helps teachers, to see how students are progressing as they move from the known (existing background information) to the unknown (new material), encouraging in that way the students' critical thinking and integration of ideas an information as they interact with text (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, Crossing the Vocabulary Bridge, Differentiated Strategies for Diverse Secondary Classrooms, 2011)

Also this strategy involves a graphic organizer in order teacher to activate students' background knowledge about the vocabulary or concepts and generate questions about the new words , forms or structures.

This strategy has three phases to be developed, these phases better explain what activities are going to be carried out in each phase. The phases are described as follows.

Before the lesson, U (Uncover): this phase is also called activation in which there are some directions that teachers have students do. The directions are outlined below.

- ✓ Give students a blank Uncover –Concentrate- Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) template before the lesson.
- ✓ Have students write the name of the topic/concept that is the focus of the lesson around the outside of the center oval.
- ✓ Ask students to write down everything they “bring to the table” or know about the topic/concept inside the center oval.
- ✓ Encourage students to write down information in their native language if they prefer.
- ✓ Allow only 2–3 minutes for students to write.

This phase Uncovers what students already know, enabling them to build from the known to the unknown.

During the lesson, C (Concentrate): This phase is also called connecting, here the role is to identify students’ misunderstandings as well as focus entire in the topic. It also has some direction which are outlined below.

- ✓ Students have to think of specific questions they may have about the topic.
- ✓ Generate questions that require students’ higher order thinking skills.
- ✓ Have students pose their own questions on the remaining spokes. These questions will become the guide for student learning.

✓ During instruction, make sure to concentrate on information that can be used to answer students' questions.

✓ To guide students, it may be helpful to create a whole class U-C-ME template

This phase helps students to learn how to focus on critical concepts during the lesson.

After the lesson, M E (Monitor-Evaluate): This phase is also called affirming, here can be seen how the students' experience is, and what results it leads. The directions for this phase are the following.

✓ Have students monitor their learning by placing response to each of the questions posed in the corresponding ovals.

✓ Final evaluation of student understanding can be done by having students use what was in the ovals to summarize what they learned about the topic or concept:

✓ In written form (persuasive or narrative paragraph).

✓ In oral conversations with a peer (discussing what was learned and where or how it was learned).

Finally, this provides students with a scaffold they can use to document and summarize key learning.

In order to work with the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy, some techniques are taken into account which helps students to work in an individually way, pairs and groups depending on what phase of the strategy

they are, and the most useful techniques to find partners to share ideas inside the groups are the following.

- ✓ **Focused Listing:** It is a technique to work individually, in which students list ideas or words about any topic.
- ✓ **Think – Pair - Share:** It is useful to work in pairs. Here students share and compare interpretations with a partner, before discussing the terms.
- ✓ **Wisdom of another:** It is a good technique to work in small groups. After listing words, students move into small groups to share ideas about, a topic or question.
- ✓ **Discussion:** In pairs or according how they are grouped , students discuss their interpretations about the answers.
- ✓ **Number Off:** It is a good technique for grouping students, by counting them.
- ✓ **Simon Says:** It a good technique for get students to actively participate in some activities, and group together.
- ✓ **Pass the Chalk:** Teacher provides a chalk or a soft toy to students; whoever has it must answer a question. It's a good technique to have students answers some question after they have agreed on a meaning or discuss questions.
- ✓ **Team Shake:** Teacher asks students to walk around the class while they are listening a song, and when the song stops they have to shake hands with the partner in front. It's a good technique to group students (Connell, 2013).
- ✓ **Clock Partners:** Students have to find their partner in 30 seconds when the clock rings. So in that way students will group with a different partner every time (Connell, 2013).

- ✓ **Numbered Heads:** Students number off in teams. In this technique students literally put their heads together and make sure everyone knows and can explain the answer (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
- ✓ **Bingo:** Students work alone or in pairs. In this technique students listen carefully and match, what they listen, or they write what they listen , then they can compare among themselves their answers (Connell, 2013).
- ✓ **Roundtable:** Students work in teams. One student makes contributions about any topic, and pass to the rest of the group members. Then they report to rest of the class (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

To have a good development of the work with the strategy jointly with the techniques already mentioned, it is important to have the resources or materials, which are Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) template, papers, pencils board to carry out the activities in a normal way.

The principles of the cooperative learning that characterized the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy, are five due to students in every moment work collaboratively assigned roles to each other, show a feeling of leadership, share their knowledge and always communicate with each other. Hence for a deeper understanding they are briefly described below.

Positive Interdependence: Students realize that they need each other in order to complete the group's task Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals, joint rewards, shared resources, and assigned roles.

Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction: Students promoted each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn, while they were working in groups.

Individual Accountability: Each student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual.

Interpersonal And Small Group Skills: Collaborative skills include leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills.

Group Processing: Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members (Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, & Edythe Johnson Hubelec,1991).

To show all the things described before , it is better to explain through a real life teaching experience in the classroom. So a situation in the classroom was when teacher ask students to work with affirmative sentences, using what they already know (parts of the house vocabulary), first students individually brainstorm their ideas in the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) template , then with a technique students got in groups and share what they already had with their classmates, interchanges opinions, correct among themselves and create affirmative sentences, for a good communication they named a leader who makes all the members worked well. Finally when the final report is done students present it in front of the class and they got their scores in individually and group form.

To conclude, all those techniques described above, applied with the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy are very useful to accomplish

the researcher proposal, because they help maximize students' interaction and facilitate students' contributions, to each other's learning, due to the work is in groups . Additionally to that, they can easily improve their skills in writing by applying all the items described along this document.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

There were some resources that helped the researcher to accomplish the investigation, those are briefly described below. Firstly, the human resources were the most important because the principal of the high school was who allowed the researcher to enter to the institution. Also the teacher of the English classes who was conscious that with the researcher's intervention, the students of the ninth-grade group F would improve their own learning performance.

Another important aspect was the materials that the researcher used during all the action research process, and among the most important was the Uncover – Concentrate – Monitor – Evaluate template, due to it was basically the strategy the researcher used in the action research work, as well as handouts, printed materials, flash memory, computer, etc., which facilitate students learning and researcher good development.

Research Design

This is an action research design because as McNiff (2013) states that, it is a common methodology employed by researchers in which they use their expertise and knowledge to conduct systematic inquiry that helps improve conditions and solve problems in the classroom. Also action research is known as reflective practice, because some issues can be searched through actions, in order to seek solutions to them.

The action research brings out many benefits for researcher and for students during its process. Talking about the researcher, at the moment of interacting in

that environment carrying out the research, gains experience, and develop himself or herself as professional, improving the practices of taking action and to do so by participating in research, making professional decisions to improve any specific issue. In other hand, to talk about students, they are directly benefited with the action research, due to the researcher, implemented some techniques and strategies to improve their knowledge and increase the skills' levels, subsequently they feel free to expresses and develop themselves (Valcarcel Craig, 2009).

This action research was implemented in an individual way, because the researcher was studying and addressing a practical problem within a single classroom and in that way focus only in a specific educational setting or grade. Another important reason is because the University encourages the researcher to individually get involved in real life teaching practices and acquire good experience

Methods

This study described the data gotten from the application of an intervention plan. The following general methods were applied along the descriptive research:

The Scientific method facilitated the study of the use of Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) applied in the developing of basic writing skills. It helped in the observations done before and during the identification of the possible solution; it was assisted with gathering date to make relevant predictions in the analysis of it.

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

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

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

Techniques and Instruments

Tests

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

Pretest – Posttest

A researcher-made pretest provided a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (ninth-grade students group F at 27 de Febrero High School) received a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this thesis project. After the treatment or 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 being treated.

Questionnaires

A researcher-made questionnaire was administered to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the tests a pre and posttest questionnaire were administered in order to make a comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires supported the tests results.

Observation

The emphasis during the observation was on understanding the natural environment as lived by the ninth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School group F during their English classes. There was two types of observations as detailed below.

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 setting under study. The objective of this nonparticipant observation was to identify the issue for this action research project which was supported through the participant observation (Gay, Mills, & Airasian , 2012) .

Participant observation

In participant observation, the researcher became a part and a participant in the situation being searched. The researcher participated deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst

the ninth -grade students at 27 de Febrero High School group F during 2014-2015 school year.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher needed an observation sheet to record the participants' behaviors shown on both variables: performance of the basic writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative-based strategy. This observation sheet was a self-developed instrument that described accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects. 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 (Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy).

Population

The research participants were the candidate teacher, and a group of students of that institution, that were selected after observing some classes in which the candidate teacher found they had problems in writing skills. They are the ninth-grade students group F, whose are 21 students, nine girls and twelve boys, that are around 13 and 15 years old who according the Common European Framework are in A1.2 proficiency level of English.

The ninth-grade students, use their English book which is very basic and does not allow student to well-develop their skills, for that reason the researcher applied the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy and their English notebooks, to take notes about the given explanations or exercises.

f. RESULTS

This section presents the results obtained from the following data collection sources: Pretest and post test to measure the cognitive dimension about the performance of the students in basic writing skills consisting in the following indicators: purpose, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order and punctuation, and to see how much the students improved their basic writing skills; and also the Pre and post questionnaire to measure the students' behaviors, attitudes and feelings, responses and acceptance toward the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) as a cooperative learning strategy. The data was supported by associated results gotten throughout the statistical method which includes the means and percentage calculation of the total scores. As a final point, all the objectives were achieved, but the data was analyzed in accordance with 3 of the 5 research objectives of the investigation because they supported and revealed categorically the investigation.

Objective 1. To research the theoretical and methodological references about the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills.

This objective was accomplished throughout the research of the literature review about the two variables about cooperative learning strategy and basic writing skills, which served as basis to design and develop some intervention plans.

Objective 3. To design an intervention plan based on the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order

to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

An eight-week intervention plan, composed of 24 lesson plans (see annex page. 82) were addressed to the ninth-grade group F students, they were planned to have students problems decrease and with the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate strategy help them to improve their basic writing skills, through the application of some activities that were also based in the principles of the cooperative learning.

Objective 2. To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

A pretest that include five descriptors, was applied to the ninth-grade group F students to measure and diagnose the cognitive issues that limited the development of the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills. Which is described and detailed in the table that follows

Table 1***a. Pretest Results on the Performance of 9th Grade Students' Writing Skills***

Students' Code	P	O	V	T	WO	PM	TOTAL
	2/2	2/2	2/2	1/1	2/2	1/1	
27F9F01	0.50	0.50	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	3.25
27F9F02	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F03	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F04	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F05	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F06	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	3.50
27F9F07	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F08	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F09	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F10	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F11	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F12	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.50	2.50
27F9F13	0.50	0.25	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.75
27F9F14	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F15	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
27F9F16	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F17	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F18	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.00
27F9F19	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
27F9F20	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.25	2.25
27F9F21	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	1.50
Mean	0.43	0.42	0.46	0.25	0.39	0.27	2.23

NOTE: These are the descriptors evaluated through the writing rubric. P=Purpose/Task, O= Organization, V= Vocabulary, T=Tense, WO= Word Order, PM= Punctuation Marks. 27F9F01= 27 de Febrero High School Ninth Grade F First Student.

b. Analysis and Interpretation

In table 1 there are five descriptors that the administered pretest had to measure students' knowledge about basic writing skills, the highest score mean was in Punctuation (**0.27/1**) their strength. However, they also had weaknesses at the moment of writing and the lowest score mean was in Word Order (**0.39/2**), students were not able to keep the same word order when they elaborated sentences. The total mean of the ninth-grade group F students was **2.23** which is a

score below the average (see annex on page 142). Therefore, it was noticeable that students had problems in the development of their abilities in writing some compositions using punctuation, tense, word order, which need to be improved. As a result of that the researcher conducted this action research in this single classroom.

Writing well is not just write words in English, as an starting point for ninth-grade group F students, they need to produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns as well as use cohesive devices and punctuation in written discourse (Brown, 2007)

Objective 4. To apply the most suitable techniques of the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

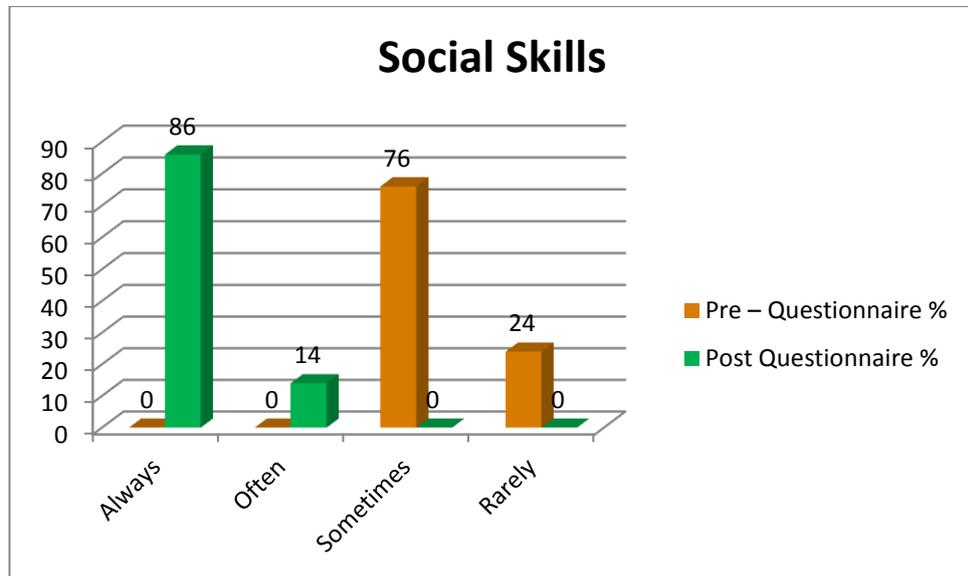
Table 2

Statement 1. English class activities are developed in groups and pairs.

a. Social Skills as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre – Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	18	86
Often	0	0	3	14
Sometimes	16	76	0	0
Rarely	5	24	0	0

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

In table 2, while applying the pre-questionnaire, the researcher knew that no one of the students answered that they always used to work in groups or pairs. This percentage is below the average. Then, the researcher supposed she needed to seek a cooperative-based strategy such as the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) with the purpose to improve students' behaviors and attitudes toward the cooperative work. Indeed, the researcher planned an eight-week intervention plan through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students played a part and were able to work cooperatively, in pairs or groups. Once finished the intervention-plan phase, students answered to a posttest questionnaire, and the same indicator (always) increased from 0% to 86% of students, which means they were at the expected level. As a result of that, the techniques for applying the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME)

strategy, gave good results in students due to they were able and found interesting working and learning cooperatively, it means in pairs and groups.

Working in pairs and groups function effectively when students have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skills, including collaboratively leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management (Johnson, Johnson , & Holubec, 1991).

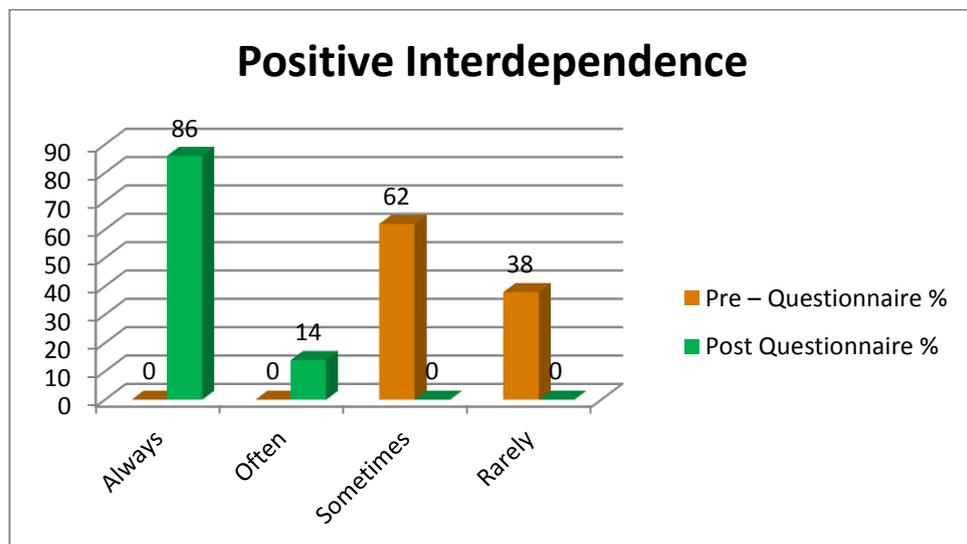
Table 3

Statement 3. The group or pair activities are conducted in a positive and respectful environment.

a. Positive Interdependence as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre – Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	18	86
Often	0	0	3	14
Sometimes	13	62	0	0
Rarely	8	38	0	0

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As it can be seen in table 3, it indicates the environment in which cooperative learning strategies were carried out. Throughout the pre-intervention step, any of the students (0%) mentioned that the group and pair activities are developed in a positive and respectful environment. That was why the researcher planned an eight-week intervention plan through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students were able to work cooperatively. Consequently, after finished the intervention-plan phase, students answered to a posttest questionnaire and the indicator (always) increased from 0% to 86% of students, which was at the expected level. Thus, it was noticeable that the techniques for applying the U-C-ME strategy worked well, because they caused a great impact in the classroom environment, student worked in pairs or groups in a positive and respectful manner.

When students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task, teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals, joint rewards shared resources, and assigned roles (Johnson, Johnson, & Holubec, 1991).

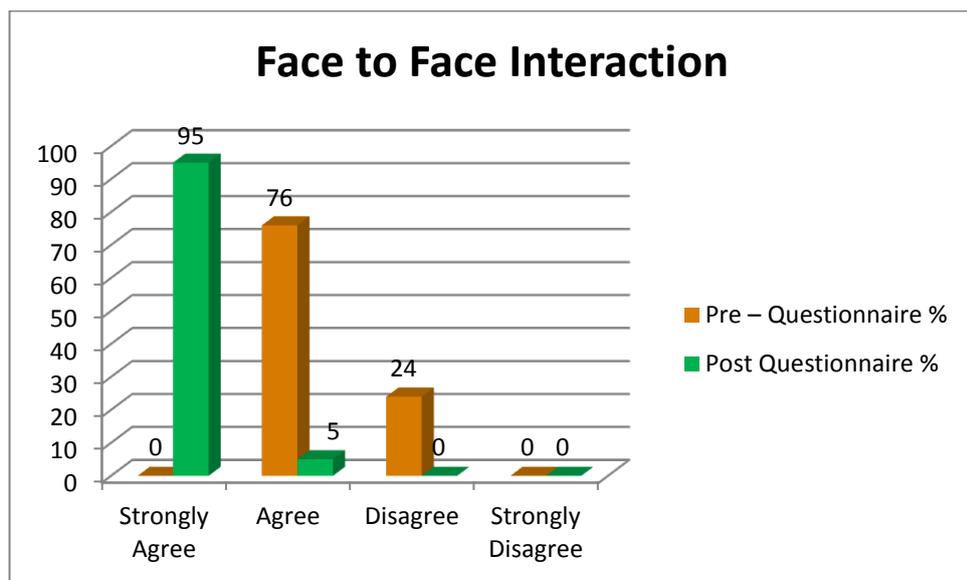
Table 4

Statement 4. Having good relationships and positive interactions are essential for group work.

a. Agreement in Face to Face Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre – Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly Agree	0	0	20	95
Agree	14	76	1	5
Disagree	7	24	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As it was shown in table 6, it reflected on the relationships and interaction in which cooperative learning strategies were applied. Certainly, the pre-questionnaire helped the researcher to identify that students did not find essential at all to have good relationships and positive interactions for group work, which means 0%. This percentage is below the average. For that reason, the researcher

intended an eight-week intervention plan through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students were involved and were able to have a good relationship and positive interactions among themselves when they work in groups. Hence, when intervention-plan phase was done, the pre-questionnaire increased from 0% to 95% of students, which was above the expected level. Obviously, the techniques applied for U-C-ME strategy were useful because improve the relationships and interactions when students work in groups and cooperatively.

When students promote each other's learning by interacting face to face, helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates (Johnson, Johnson , & Holubec, 1991).

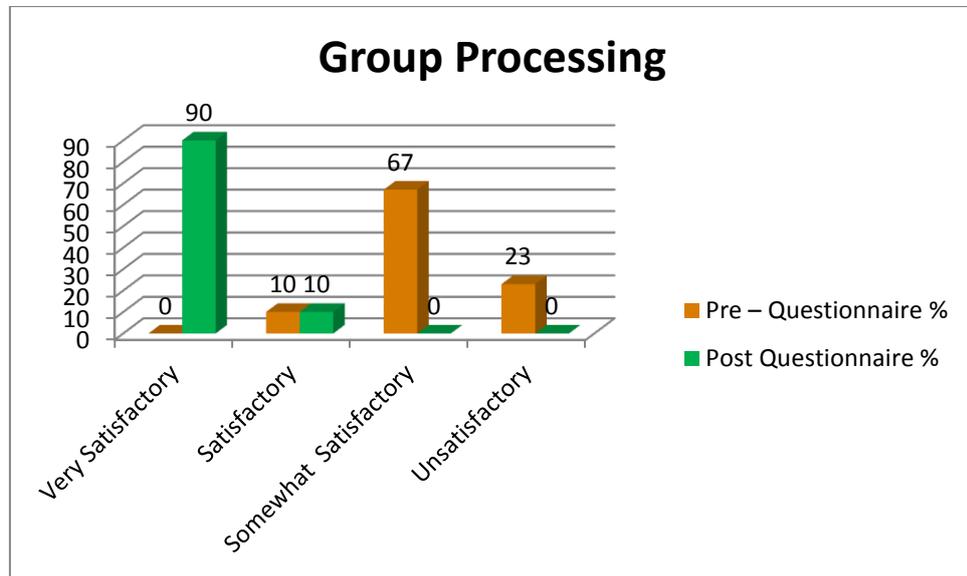
Table 5

Question 5. How satisfying is it for you to work in groups?

a. Pleasant in Group Processing as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre – Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Very Satisfactory	0	0	19	90
Satisfactory	2	10	2	10
Somewhat Satisfactory	14	67	0	0
Unsatisfactory	5	23	0	0

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As it is expressed in table 5, it revealed the way in which cooperative learning strategies were developed. Undoubtedly, the pre- questionnaire facilitated to the researcher to identify that any student (0%) did not find very satisfying working in groups, which means below the average score. Being those results, the researcher used to implement the cooperative-based strategy, that is the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME), in means of lesson plans with the intention of improving students' behaviors and attitudes for working cooperatively. Consequently, when intervention-plan stage was finished, the results were better, from 0% to 90% of students, which was above the expected level. As a result, it can be inferred that the techniques for Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) cooperative learning strategy influenced in a positive way.

Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members and teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions that helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group even more successful tomorrow (Johnson, Johnson , & Holubec, 1991).

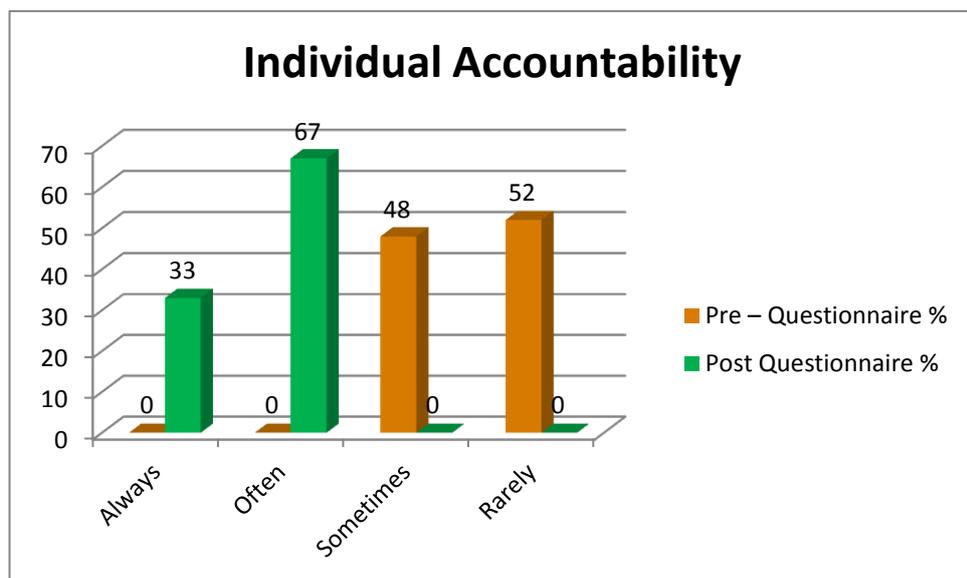
Table 6

Statement 6. In group activities, all members contribute to the development of collective work.

a. Frequency in Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre – Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	8	33
Often	0	0	13	67
Sometimes	11	48	0	0
Rarely	10	52	0	0

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

Table 6 demonstrates the group members' contribution in which cooperative learning strategies were used. Unquestionably, the pre- questionnaire enabled the researcher to identify that no one of the students (0%) mentioned that they often contribute to the development of collective work, and this percentage is below the average score. At that time, the researcher designed an eight-week intervention plan through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students were involved and were able to work cooperatively. As a result, the pre-questionnaire increased from 0% to 67% in the same indicator in which students were almost at the expected level. As a result, the techniques implemented for the Uncover –Concentrate – Monitor –Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy functioned because there was an obvious improvement, with some limitations because of students behavior but they still were increased in comparison with the pre questionnaire.

Student's performance is frequently assessed and the results are given to the group and the individual. Teachers may structure individual accountability by giving an individual test to each student or randomly selecting one group member to give the answer (Johnson, Johnson , & Holubec, 1991).

Objective 5. To reflect upon the effectiveness that the uncover- concentrate- monitor -evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period .

Table 7

a. Posttest Results: Performance of Ninth-Grade Students' Writing Skills

Students' Code	P	O	V	T	WO	PM	TOTAL
	2/2	2/2	2/2	1/1	2/2	1/1	
27F9F01	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
27F9F02	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.75	1.50	1.00	7.75
27F9F03	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.00
27F9F04	2.00	1.50	1.75	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.25
27F9F05	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.00	2.00	1.00	8.50
27F9F06	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
27F9F07	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.75	1.00	1.00	5.75
27F9F08	0.50	0.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.00
27F9F09	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.50
27F9F10	1.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	6.00
27F9F11	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
27F9F12	1.50	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	8.50
27F9F13	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
27F9F14	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
27F9F15	1.50	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.00
27F9F16	1.50	1.50	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.00
27F9F17	1.50	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.00	1.00	7.00
27F9F18	0.50	0.50	1.00	0.50	1.00	1.00	4.50
27F9F19	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
27F9F20	0.50	1.00	2.50	1.00	2.00	0.50	7.50
27F9F21	1.50	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.50
Mean	1.48	1.31	1.68	0.95	1.62	0.98	8.01

NOTE: These are the descriptors evaluated through the writing rubric. P=Purpose/Task, O= Organization, V= Vocabulary, T=Tense, WO= Word Order, PM= Punctuation Marks. 27F9F01= 27 de Febrero High School Ninth Grade F First Student.

b. Analysis and Interpretation

Seeing the result showed in table 7, the mean for the indicator Punctuation Mark in writing skills obtained the highest score (0.98/1), and the Organization indicator in writing skills was 1.31/2 which was the lowest mean score. In addition to that, the total score mean was 8.01 out of 10, which was an average score. Thus, the posttest means showed a strong result that ninth grade group F students accomplished in the given task with some irrelevancies (Purpose). Also,

students were able to introduce the topic in a fairly way. Additionally, they used a variety of vocabulary in a correct way. Moreover, there were not disagreements neither in tense nor word order, and the facts were presented in a sequential and logical order, for that reason the message was not affected and to finish with the punctuation marks were well located, making easy to understand what students write.

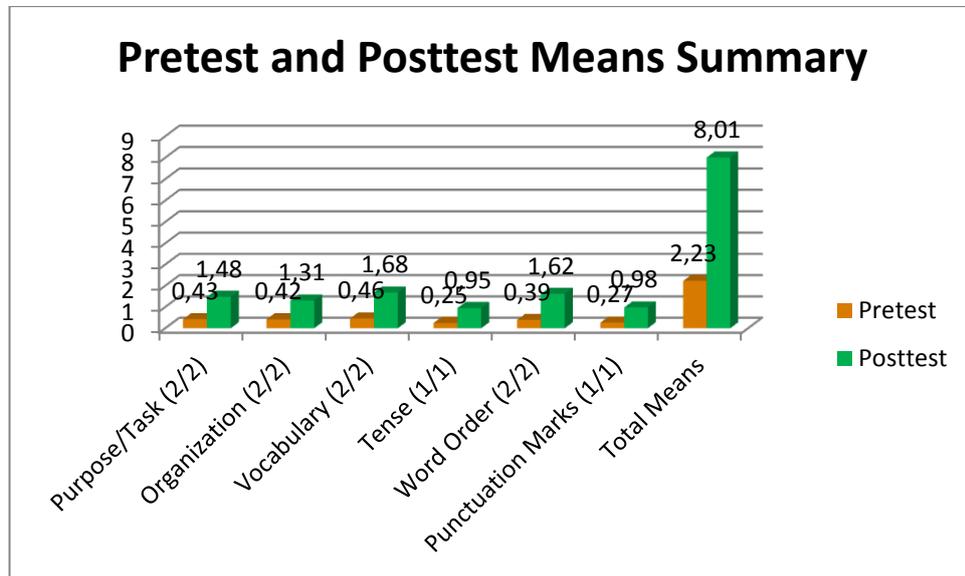
Basic writing is the ability to use written language in a way that enables them to function within the academic world. Also, it is the mastery of grammar, form, or any number of other technical features of writing that one might perceive as desirable. Still, for others it can simply be a new form of communication (Maupin, 2007).

Table 8

a. Pretest and Posttest Means Summary. Performance of Ninth-grade Students' Writing Skills

	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/Task (2/2)	0.43	1.48
Organization (2/2)	0.42	1.31
Vocabulary (2/2)	0.46	1.68
Tense (1/1)	0.25	0.95
Word Order (2/2)	0.39	1.62
Punctuation Marks (1/1)	0.27	0.98
Total Means	2.23	8.01

b. Figure



c. Analysis and Interpretation

As presented in Table 8, the Punctuation Marks writing skills had gotten the highest score mean (0.98). While, Organization got the lowest score (1.31) . Also, the total mean changed from 2.23 to 8.01, there was an obvious improvement in the students' accomplishments, that was because some cooperative-based learning activities were implemented during the all 24 lesson plans. Though, the posttest mean (8.01) is average, due to there were few limitations in the research that inhibited ninth-grade group F students to get a higher score. Certain limitations in this research would have been that the researcher had some problems in managing the students. Besides that, students had academic problems which interfere in the normal performance and development of the English basic writing skills. Finally some students did not assist to class regularly, which inhibited to reach better scores.

According to Spencer Kagan (1998), quoted by Jane Joritz (2002) argues that cooperative learning is a type of structured peer interaction emphasizing positive human relationships, collaboration between peers, active learning, academic achievement, equal participation, and equal status of students in the classroom. It can be used to teach any subject matter.

The students' level of importance in writing skills is what limited them to become better writers, as well as the lack of motivation. So teachers have to make students aware of the importance of writing and they will feel as though they have been invited into the conversation of education because they now possess the most basic ability to use written communication in a way which allows them to function academically (Maupin, 2007) . To conclude, the cooperative learning strategy had a great impact in writing skills in order students incorporate and improve their writing skills.

g. DISCUSSION

This study was developed at 27 de Febrero High School with ninth-grade group F students, in which the obtained data revealed that their performance increased after eight weeks that an intervention plan was applied, using the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) cooperative learning strategy . The results in the pre and post tests and pre and post questionnaire respectively, presented the significant progress that students had during this time. Therefore, based on the findings means, the researcher noticed that the strategy used had a great impact in students because their writing proficiency improved.

The findings in the pretest and posttest showed a significant change on students' knowledge about basic writing skills. The pretest revealed that the majority of students had weaknesses with the Punctuation Mark indicator. Their writing compositions were not clear and were difficult to understand due to the lack of punctuation. However, in the posttest after the intervention, the results demonstrated that the students' performance about the punctuation uses improved, it means they used the appropriate punctuation, and it is explained in the total means going up from the pretest (0.27) to the posttest (0.98) which is a superior score.

The results in the pre and post questionnaire demonstrated an important variation in students' behaviors and attitudes toward the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) cooperative learning strategy. In the pre questionnaire no one agreed that having good relationships and positive interactions were essential for group work activities. In the pre-questionnaire, the

responses indicated that 95% of students are strongly agreed that having good relationships and positive interactions were essential for group work. It means that behaviors and attitudes toward this strategy have improved.

Despite these, during this action research there were some constraints and limitations the researcher faced and the most obvious limitation to this study was students' level of importance in writing, being this what limited them to become better writers. Another constraint was students' bad behavior, which disturbed the normal development of the English classes. For that teacher had to make them be aware of the importance of acquiring writing skills and also why they need to behave to have a good classroom environment.

h. CONCLUSIONS

The issues that limited the development of basic writing skills of ninth-grade group F students were the lack of practice of writing elements such as vocabulary, tense, word order, punctuation being these diagnosed with the pretest results, which mean was 2.23, as well of a good strategy that was the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) which helped to master the basic writing skills in that classroom.

The type of techniques, within the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy that the researcher implemented for ninth-grade group F students were: pair and group work, positive interdependence which consisted in assigning roles and fulfill mutual goals, interactions face to face among themselves, having and individual participation and be supported by classmates were excellent and suitable because they clearly improved the basic writing skills.

With regard to the research results, the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) strategy significantly reduced some limitations students had in writing, through the application of all the strategy components, and techniques incrementing the test results from 2.23 to 8.01, as well as their disposition to work in groups, have a face to face interaction, share ideas among themselves, etc., which means that this strategy was effective because the ninth-grade group F students, changed their mind about the cooperative work and also mastered their basic writing skills.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should make students practice the basic writing skills by giving them tasks in which they use all the micro and macro skills components of writing to have good compositions. Additionally, they should implement a good strategy like the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) in order students find interesting work cooperatively and so feel encouraged and improve the basic writing skills.

Teacher should continue using the techniques implemented for the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) cooperative learning strategy and takes advantage of it, due to them allow students interact among themselves, support each other and accomplish mutual goals in order to continue mastering the students' basic writing skills and the cooperatively work.

Teacher should continue applying all the components of the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate (U-C-ME) cooperative learning strategy. Nowadays students like dynamic classes . Therefore, teacher should bring something new, in function of the strategy and students feel motivated and enthusiastic in working to improve the basic writing skills and the work cooperatively.

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k. ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME

**THE UNCOVER- CONCENTRATE-MONITOR- EVALUATE AS A
COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP THE
ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASIC WRITING SKILLS
AMONGST NINTH-GRADE GROUP F STUDENTS AT 27 DE
FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.**

AUTHOR

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Loja – Ecuador

2015

a) THEME

THE UNCOVER – CONCENTRATE – MONITOR - EVALUATE
AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP
THE ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE BASIC WRITING
SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS GROUP F AT
27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014 - 2015 ACADEMIC
PERIOD

b) PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

This research project is carried out in a public High school “Colegio de Bachillerato Internacional 27 de Febrero” of the Loja city. This public High school is located in La Tebaida neighborhood. The population that attends to this institution belongs to urban and marginal sector of this city and the nearby towns. Most of students have a medium economic status.

This Educational Center was created on October 22nd 1958, under the name of “Dolores Gangotena de Ponce” , starting classes with many constraints. The school authorities, requested to change the name of the high school, so on November 25, 1960, it is denominated with the name of “ Colegio Tecnico 27 de Febrero”. The first principal was Sr. Lic. Luis Enrique Ortega.

The Institution mission is “ to contribute to the overall objectives of an education for freedom, democracy, solidarity, love for nature and environmental defense; and, in particular train theoretical qualified graduates, to integrate with quality and efficiency to the workplace as well as graduates in sciences to face life and continue the higher studies.

Current Situation Of The Research Problem

In February of the current academic period 2014 – 2015 the researcher observe the classes of English Language subject at “27 de Febrero” High School. During this period of time the researcher could notice that the ninth year, group F students have low performance in the writing skills.

The ninth years group “F” class students is made up of twenty- one students, among boys and girls, 12 boys and nine girls that are between 12 and 14 years old, all of them are supervised by a certified English teacher who is the guide to learn the English Language.

In this course there is a good environment of friendship and fellowship. Most of them like to participate in all activities; they are concerned about their tasks. They , also enjoy working individually, in pairs, in groups making any other activities.

However, they are having problems at the moment of writing, joining sentences; using the correct capitalization, and punctuation, when linking sentences.

Teacher focuses the writing tasks working on the textbook activities that consist of completing sentences and making their own ones. So in this way students are exposed to practice writing consequently, they have many errors at the moment of write and structure something.

For all these reasons the researcher is focusing on using U-C-ME strategy to develop the basic writing skills on students. Due to the wide- ranging application to any level learner, uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate are suggested in this case to develop their basic writing skills.

Research Problem

How does the Uncover-Concentrate- Monitor,-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy improve the English as a foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth- grade students, group F at 27 de Febrero High School. 2014 -2015 academic period?

Delimitation Of The Research

Timing

The development of this action research is carried out during the academic year 2014 – 2015.

Location

This Action Research will take place at “ 27 de Febrero” High School among the ninth grade group F students.

Participants

The researcher : Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño as a candidate teacher.
Students of ninth-grade group F of “ 27 de Febrero” High School. They are 21 students among boys and girls, 12 boys and 9 girls that are between 12 and 14 years old.

Sub problems

- ✓ What theoretical and methodological references about the Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor , Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period?
- ✓ What are the issues that limit the development of the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?
- ✓ What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?
- ✓ Which Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor, Evaluate techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?
- ✓ How does the Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor, Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?

c) JUSTIFICATION

English Language education is looking for solutions to the many deficiencies in the students learning process, and one of them is the writing skills. The researcher is going to try out a new strategy that arouses the interest of the students, something that keeps all the time them active and causes enjoyment in learning. For that reason, I would like to carry out my research project focusing on the use of Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor and Evaluate strategy to improve the writing skills in learners. It is an intention to help the ninth year students, parallel F at this institution in the improvement of English Language. Also it will enable the researcher to obtain experience in teaching and to get the bachelor's degree in English Language.

This research project focuses on applying uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate strategy, in order to help the ninth year students parallel F in the writing process. U-C-ME strategy acts as an intervening step to have students write their ideas from the very simple ones to complex ones. It is an indispensable tool to make a positive interaction between teacher- students and students –students, promoting the learning in an active way.

This project is valid because it will help students to develop their basic writing skills. The researcher wants to apply Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate strategy, to enrich the writing skills with ninth year students. It will directly benefit students' writing and the teachers' use of different writing techniques.

Finally, This action research project is a requirement in order to complete thesis and obtain bachelor's degree in English Language Specialization, at Universidad Nacional de Loja. Along this research the researcher will gain experience in teaching, and also it highlight the professional knowledge acquired during the career.

d) OBJECTIVES

General

To improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills through the uncover-concentrate- monitor -evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

Specific

✓ To research the theoretical and methodological references about the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills.

✓ To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

✓ To design an intervention plan based on the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

✓ To apply the most suitable techniques of the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.

✓ To reflect upon the effectiveness that the uncover- concentrate-monitor - evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period .

e) **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The Common European Framework

According to the National Curriculum Guidelines, that takes the Common European Framework as a model to standardize the English Language Teaching, there are some specifications for writing and also some indicators to assess writing depending on the level of the students (Ministry of Education, 2014)

In the Common European Framework, six levels are proposed, which are described as follows.

- ✓ A1-A2: Basic Users of the Language
- ✓ B1-B2: Independent Users of the Language
- ✓ C1-C2: Proficient Users of the Language

The target group of this research is the ninth grade which corresponds to, A1.2 level. The following Guidelines provide more information about it, and what students must be able to do in this level, which is described below.

Specifications for Writing : Level A1.2

In this level Students are expected to produce informational texts, transactional and expository texts consisting of a sequence of simple sentences that have more detail and show more variety in lexical range and sentence structure.

Writing Assessment Indicators

Level A1.2 learners will be able to:

- ✓ Copy familiar words and short phrases (e.g. simple signs, instructions, names of everyday objects, shops, and set phrases used regularly).

- ✓ Take simple notes from a dictated or recorded message within the limits of their vocabulary for the level.
- ✓ Write sequences of simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live and what they do for short *informational*, *transactional* and *expository* texts (e.g. flyers, posters, personal letters, autobiographies, etc.) by using basic appropriate punctuation marks.
- ✓ Conduct correspondence (e.g. personal letter) with a partner, giving and eliciting information and advice on personal, educational, and public issues.

Basic Writing Skills

Defining basic writing can be difficult. For some people, basic writing is the ability to use written language in a way that enables them to function within the academic world. For others, it is the mastery of grammar, form, or any number of other technical features of writing that one might perceive as desirable. Still, for others it can simply be a new form of communication (Maupin, 2007).

The development of writing skills and processes as well as trust in those processes is what makes basic writing so important. When the enormous pressure of perfection and correctness is taken away from students they will ultimately find a writing process that works for them and begin to develop into a more confident writer. In a sense, they will feel as though they have been invited into the conversation of education because they now possess the most basic ability to use written communication in a way which allows them to function academically (Maupin, 2007).

Therefore, basic writing is the easy way students have to express their own ideas in an easy way, and then each student feels confident writing in any setting of their lives, with the help or without the help of the teachers.

Writing in English as Foreign Language learning

Compared to other skills, writing is the most difficult skill to learn. Contemporary research theories on how to effectively teach English Foreign Language writing such as those of cognitivists and social constructionists based their approaches mainly on the first language writing. Some people view writing as an activity controlled in the mind of each individual as the person is writing particularly the activity which involves thinking and problem-solving process.

The social constructionists on the other hand, claim that learning to write does not confine to just what is happening in the writer's state of mind, but social interaction is also a key to learn how to write successfully.

Thus, teaching writing in classes of English as a foreign language, encourage students to think more freely and go a little bit beyond, because a student has not to have a face to face interaction, so the student has the chance to express himself or herself with pressures and subsequently the student finds the writing process easier to develop (Raimmes, 1982).

With the purpose students to improve their writing skills, the teacher has to introduce to them some macro and micro skills. These help each student to improve the English as Foreign Language as well as their way to write basic things in English.

The writing skills that Brown, (2007) states are outlined below.

Writing Skills

Macro skills of Writing

- ✓ Use cohesive devices in writing discourse.
- ✓ Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of writing discourse.
- ✓ Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
- ✓ Convey links and connections between events and communicate such relations, as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification..
- ✓ Distinguish between literal and implied meaning when writing.
- ✓ Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
- ✓ Develop and use a battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing (Brown, 2007).

Micro Skills

- ✓ Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.
- ✓ Use acceptable grammatical systems.
- ✓ Use cohesive devices and punctuation in written discourse.
- ✓ Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

- ✓ Appropriately accomplish the communicative function of written texts according to form and purpose.
- ✓ Convey links and connections between events and communicate relations such as main idea, supporting details, new and given information, generalizations, and exemplification.
- ✓ Distinguish between literal and implied meanings. (Brown, 2007)

Stages of the Teaching Learning Process of EFL writing

In 2010, Wright's research establishes that process writing involves guiding the students through the writing process in stages, helping them to focus first on ideas and to take care of correction related to grammar, spelling and mechanics toward the end, to finally have a good final product or result, which little by little is being polished through practice. There are generally five stages of writing.

Wright's (2010) five stages are outlined below.

Prewriting

Students get their ideas together, identify the purpose of the writing and identify who the audience will be. They decide on the main idea and the supporting details, they can use the following strategies to prepare write:

- ✓ Talking over their ideas with peers or with the teacher.
- ✓ Drawing pictures.
- ✓ Brainstorming to create list of things they can write about or a list of supporting details. Including the main idea.
- ✓ Closing their ideas to visualize what they want to write about.
- ✓ Using graphic organizers

- ✓ Creating an outline for organizing the text.

The teacher can also provide some form of shared experience for students to write about.

Drafting

Students focus on getting their ideas down on paper as quickly as possible. The ideas and materials generated during prewriting are an important source in this stage. Teacher have to teach students not to spend time worrying about spelling or grammar due to the first draft is only evaluated by how consistent is the content (Wright, 2010).

Revising

After reading over the first draft, students may want to rewrite some sentences and move thing around to better organize their arguments or supporting details. They may want to decide adding more details to support the main idea.

At this stage, students often need the help of their peers and the teacher, in order to give and receive feedback. They ask questions and receive suggestions for improvement.

Editing

At this stage students focus on editing to correct spelling, mechanics and grammar. The students first do their best to find errors and correct them on their own. If further help is needed, they can get corrections in peer response, and , finally, from the teacher.

Also Wright (2010), says that correcting students writing at this stage raises two issues: how to correct and how much to correct.

- ✓ How to correct: Teacher could merely underline the errors and have students figure out what is wrong and how to fix them. Other, can be that the teacher circle the error and give students some clue, and finally the teacher can make direct corrections for the students, indicating where the error is and write the correction.
- ✓ How much to correct: Teacher should focus on errors to students are ready to learn how to correct and errors that interfere with meaning. The teacher's goal is to help students to move their writing to the publishing stage.

These two essential issues, the teacher has in mind every time, because knowing how to correct and how much do it, helps students to go beyond into their writing skills without feeling ashamed or frustrating when they see the corrections in their sheets or grades about their mistakes.

Publishing

Once students have edited their work by making the appropriate correction, their either rewrite their final draft in clear handwriting on high quality paper or type it.

Publishing means making the final draft available for others. In this stage students read their writing to the class. The class and the teacher can ask the author questions pointing out the parts they like and, if appropriate giving constructing feedback to help students in future writing process. (Wright, 2010).

After students follow and complete all these stages, each one of them is able to make good writing compositions, using the appropriate form and structures, so the teacher easy asses them, and if necessary as in every English language skill,

teacher gives a feedback to students for them to master they basic skills in writing.

Then the cooperative learning as a foreign language teaching is another variable that helps the researcher, in this research process to know how much students like working cooperatively and how much easy or difficult, they find working in that way. Subsequently the researcher describes the cooperative learning as follows.

Cooperative Learning and English as a Foreign Language Teaching

According to Spencer Kagan (1998), quoted by Jane Joritz (2002) argues that cooperative learning is a type of structured peer interaction emphasizing positive human relationships, collaboration between peers, active learning, academic achievement, equal participation, and equal status of students in the classroom. It can be used to teach any subject matter.

This approach utilizes content less structures that provide a suggestion for classroom activities, where students can collaborate with each other in supportive and open ways, with content provided by the teacher or students.

The cooperative learning has five basic elements that are developed during the class process, then Johnson, Roger T. Johnson, & Edythe Johnson Hubelec (1991,) introduce them as follows.

Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning

Positive Interdependence: Students perceive that they need each other in order to complete the group's task ("sink or swim together"). Teachers may structure positive interdependence by establishing mutual goals (learn and make sure all other group members learn), joint rewards (if all group members achieve above the criteria, each will receive bonus points), shared resources (one paper for each group or each member receives part of the required information), and assigned roles (summarizer, encourager of participation, elaborator).

Face-to-Face Promotive Interaction: Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee-to-knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment.

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

Interpersonal And Small Group, Social Skills: Groups cannot function effectively if students do not have and use the needed social skills. Teachers teach these skills as purposefully and precisely as academic skills. Collaborative skills include leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills.

Group Processing: Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. Teachers structure group processing by assigning such tasks as (a) list at least three member actions that helped the group be successful and (b) list one action that could be added to make the group even more successful tomorrow.

Teachers also monitor the groups and give feedback on how well the groups are working together to the groups and the class as a whole.

According to Richards & Rodgers,(2001) this approach we can find some roles, which teacher, learners and materials have.

Roles In Cooperative Learning

- ✓ ***Learner roles:*** The learner must work collaboratively on task with other group members. Learners have to learn and develop team work skills. Learners are also directors of their own learning. So learning is something that requires students' direct and active involvement and participation.
- ✓ ***Teacher roles:*** The teacher has to create a highly structured and well organized environment in the class room, setting goals, planning and structuring tasks, establishing the physical arrangement of the classroom, assigning students to groups and roles, and selecting materials and time.

Another important role for the teacher is that of facilitator of learning. So the teacher has to move around the class helping students and groups

- ✓ ***The role of instructional materials:*** The materials create opportunities for students to work cooperatively.

Richards & Rodgers, (2001) States that there are three types of cooperative learning.

Types of Cooperative Learning

Formal Cooperative Learning Groups

These last from one class period to several weeks. These are established for a specific task and involve students working together to achieve shared learning goals.

Informal Cooperative Learning Groups

These are ad-hoc groups that last from a few minutes to a class period and are used to focus students attention or to facilitate learning during direct teaching.

Cooperative Base Groups

These groups last for a long period of time and its primary purpose is to allow members to give each other, the support, help encouragement, and assistance they need to succeed academically.

Then the we will analyze some current strategies for cooperative learning, that are so useful, for students to learn how to interact among themselves; with this strategies, everyone is going to be working, having the same opportunities to participate and the most important they have the chance to work with each other, encouraging the friendship, and the ability to be ready to interact with anybody.

Continuing, then some strategies, proposed by Socorro G. Herrera, Shabina K. Kavimandan, & Melissa A. Holmes (2011), are going to be briefly described.

Current Strategies of Cooperative Learning

Foldables: This strategy allows students to interact with other students, becoming as a great tool for vocabulary development. Also it helps students to match concepts and share with the teacher what they know. At the beginning of the strategy students share their initial thoughts about the target words and concepts. Then during the lessons students use the foldable to practice and apply their developing understanding of the new material, and at the end of the lesson, students use the Foldable for review and assessment of the vocabulary and concepts while keeping in mind their linguistic and cultural connections.

This strategy is very useful because, with this strategy students are encouraged to incorporate both linguistic and non-linguistic representations of the target vocabulary and concepts.

Magic Book: This strategy provides students a tool for learning and applying the academic vocabulary related to the content of the lesson. Furthermore the Magic Book helps teachers meet these goals and at the same time provides students with something novel, which may increase their attention and engagement as well as their retention of information (Willis, 2006).

As this strategy, implies the use of hands-on materials that are created by the learners helps move students beyond passive participation in learning.

Pic-Tac- Tell: Blachowicz & Fisher (2003); Nagy & Scott (2001) quoted by Socorro G. Herrera, Shabina K. Kavimandan, & Melissa A. Holmes (2011)

defines, Pic-Tac-Tell as “A strategy that teachers in any content area can use to bolster their students’ vocabulary development, also it encourages students’ play with language and interest in words, both of which can benefit them in many areas of the curriculum and beyond school”

Extension Wheel: This strategy encourages creativity and gives students a break from the normal paper-and-pen notes. Here each student will make personal connections to the topic based on his or her own interests, relevant existing knowledge, and understandings of both community and world issues.

The extension wheel guides learners to expand upon information gained in the lesson, in addition it lends itself to exploration of numerous text structures, including cause-effect, problem/solution, and point of view.

Continuing with the cooperative learning strategies, the researcher briefly describes the strategy that serves as a tool to improve the writing skills, which is an issue amongst the ninth grade students in the students in the chosen high school.

Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor, Evaluate (U-C-ME) as a Current Cooperative Learning Strategy.

U-C-ME is a tool that allows students to demonstrate their prior knowledge and connections to the particular topic or concept by writing down everything they know or have experienced that is related to the topic or concept before the lesson. During the lesson, students’ attention is focused on specific information, and growth is monitored at the end of the lesson. (Socorro Herrea, 2010) .

In other words this strategy involves a graphic organizer in order teacher to activate students' background knowledge about the vocabulary or concepts and generate questions about the new words , forms or structures.

The meaning of each this strategy, and what students do in each stage, is defined as follows.

- ✓ The “U” in the strategy stands for “uncovers” as students uncover their existing knowledge about the topic.
- ✓ The “C” stands for the “connections” that the students make with the topic and their existing background knowledge.
- ✓ The “ME” part is the final stage where the students have developed an academic understanding of the concepts or vocabulary they have learned.

Materials Needed

- ✓ U-C-ME template
- ✓ Teacher model of the U-C-ME chart on overhead
- ✓ Blank Sheets of paper
- ✓ Pens/Pencils

With the purpose, of developing in an ordered way the U-C-ME strategy, Socorro Herrea (2010) states that “it is necessary to have in mind the three phases to carry out the U-C-ME strategy” (...) which are described as follows.

Activation.

- ✓ Give students a blank U-C-ME template before the lesson.
- ✓ Have students write the name of the topic/concept that is the focus of the lesson around the outside of the center oval.

- ✓ Ask students to write down everything they “bring to the table” or know about the topic/concept inside the center oval.
- ✓ Encourage students to write down information in their native language if they prefer.
- ✓ Allow only 2–3 minutes for students to write.

Connecting.

- ✓ Students have to think of specific questions they may have about the topic.
- ✓ Generate questions that require students’ higher order thinking skills.
- ✓ Have students pose their own questions on the remaining spokes. These questions will become the guide for student learning.
- ✓ During instruction, make sure to concentrate on information that can be used to answer students’ questions.
- ✓ To guide students, it may be helpful to create a whole class U-C-ME template

Affirming.

- ✓ Have students monitor their learning by placing response to each of the questions posed in the corresponding ovals.
- ✓ Final evaluation of student understanding can be done by having students use what was in the ovals to summarize what they learned about the topic or concept:
- ✓ In written form (persuasive or narrative paragraph).
- ✓ In oral conversations with a peer (discussing what was learned and where or how it was learned).

As this strategy has many purposes, it is important to consider the following techniques, taken from Interactive Techniques which had been adapted from Thomas A. & Cross, (1993); Morrison & Marwitz , (2001); Silberman, (1996); VanGundy (2005); Watkins (2005) which have multiple benefits because teacher can easy and quickly assess students' work or knowledge.

- ✓ **Focused Listing:** It is a technique to work individually, in which students list ideas or words about any topic.
- ✓ **Think – Pair - Share:** It is useful to work in pairs. Here students share and compare interpretations with a partner, before discussing the terms.
- ✓ **Wisdom of another:** It is a good technique to work in small groups. After listing words, students move into small groups to share ideas about, a topic or question.
- ✓ **Discussion:** In pairs or according how they are grouped , students discuss their interpretations about the answers.
- ✓ **Number Off:** It is a good technique for grouping students, by counting them.
- ✓ **Simon Says:** It a good technique for get students to actively participate in some activities, and group together.
- ✓ **Pass the Chalk:** Teacher provides a chalk or a soft toy to students; whoever has it must answer a question. It's a good technique to have students answers some question after they have agreed on a meaning or discuss questions.
- ✓ **Team Shake:** Teacher asks students to walk around the class while they are listening a song, and when the song stops they have to shake hands with the partner in front. It's a good technique to group students (Connell, 2013).

- ✓ **Clock Partners:** Students have to find their partner in 30 seconds when the clock rings. So in that way students will group with a different partner every time (Connell, 2013).
- ✓ **Numbered Heads:** Students number off in teams. In this technique students literally put their heads together and make sure everyone knows and can explain the answer (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).
- ✓ **Bingo:** Students work alone or in pairs. In this technique students listen carefully and match, what they listen, or they write what they listen , then they can compare among themselves their answers (Connell, 2013).
- ✓ **Roundtable:** Students work in teams. One student makes contributions about any topic, and pass to the rest of the group members. Then they report to rest of the class (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

All those techniques described above are very useful to accomplish the researcher proposal, because they help maximize students' interaction and facilitate students' contributions, to each other's learning, due to the work is in groups . Additionally to that, they can easily improve their skills in writing by applying all the items described along this document.

f. METHODOLOGY AND WORK PLAN

Design Of The Research

Action research in education involves finding immediate solutions in the teaching- learning environments. According to Burns (2010) 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 into 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 choice for this 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 a deliberate way in the problematic situation by means of the U-C-ME as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students group F at 27 de Febrero High School during 2014-2015 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 U-C-ME.

Methods, Techniques and Instruments

Methods

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

The Scientific method will facilitate the study of the use of uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate applied in the developing of basic writing skills. It will help in the observations done before and during the prediction of the possible solution; it will assist with gathering data to make relevant predictions in the analysis of it.

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

The analytic-synthetic method will be used to analyze the obtained results through the questionnaires and observations. It will be used also to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and draw up the conclusions.

The static method will be used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data received from the questionnaires and the qualitative text analysis of the data received from the observations.

This work will use the research spiral cycles proposed by Kemmis & McTaggart, (2000) since the process is likely to be more fluid, open and responsive. It includes planning, acting and observing, and reflecting suggests.

Action research is an inquiry, undertaken with rigor and understanding in order to constantly refine practice; the emerging evidence-based outcomes will then contribute to the researching practitioner's continuing professional development (Koshy, 2005; p. 2) (Koshy, 2005) Action research is a process of study done by systematically collecting data on one's everyday practice and analyzing it in order to draw conclusions about how future practice should be.

It involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences, and then re-planning, and so forth. It offers a valuable opportunity for teachers or practitioners to be involved in the research to collect first-hand information (McNiff, 1993) (Atweb, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998). Action research will be applied in this study because it will enable the practitioner or researcher of this project to follow the steps in the spiral that helped her reflect upon her teaching and improve her students' situation. The researcher intends to see if the plan would work well or if any necessary modification or amendment would be needed to improve her students' language learning.

Techniques And Instruments

Data Collection

Since this work is an action research, elements of both 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 researcher taking into account the principles of question

construction. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods (test) will be used to develop quantitative data collection instruments, and observations and interviews (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative ones.

Tests

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

Pretest – Posttest

A researcher-made pretest will provide a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (ninth-grade students group F at 27 de Febrero High School) receive a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or 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.

Questionnaires

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

Observation

The emphasis during the observation will be on understanding the natural environment as lived by the ninth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School group F during their English classes. There will be two types of observations as detailed below.

Nonparticipant observation

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

Participant observation

In participant observation, the researcher will become a part and a participant in the situation being. The researcher will participate deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the uncover, concentrate, monitor and evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst the ninth -grade students at 27 de Febrero High School group F during 2014-2015 school year.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher will need an observation sheet to record the participants' behaviors shown on both variables: performance of the basic writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the U-C-ME as a cooperative-based strategy. This observation sheet is a self-developed instrument that describes accurately and comprehensively all the

relevant aspects. 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 (U-C-ME as a cooperative learning strategy).

Procedures

The action research work process will include the following stages:

The intervention plan will start and end with questionnaires. Two questionnaires will be applied; one at the beginning of the study to collect data of students basic writing skills and use of uncover-concentrate-monitor -evaluate. A variety of activities will be introduced to improve the writing skills. A checklist will be used as instrument to help the researcher to observe students' performance during class. Finally the second questionnaire will be applied to check the overall students' progress after the intervention plan. The students' progress before and after the intervention will be compared and analyze to draw the conclusion about the action research work.

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

Tabulation

The tabulation of data will be done with the data collected in the two questionnaires conducted. A logical analysis will be done with the information received.

Organization

The researcher will organize the work with the information received in all the strategies applied to compare and analyze the impact of the intervention. A report of the intervention. A report of the intervention will be disseminated with the findings and ideas among the teachers, the partners and the school.

Description

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

Population Sample

The subjects of this action research are students from ninth-grade group F. This group is composed by twenty one students, 12 boys and 9 girls who are between 12 and 14 years old. They are in basic proficient user level.

Intervention Plan and Observation

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño TIME: Week 1	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	<i>Getting to know students</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen each other's introduction.</p> <p>Speaking Students will talk about themselves.</p> <p>Writing Students will write a paragraph, using the basic skills Students will a biographical card to express their likes.</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To get started, teacher will have students to introduce themselves. For this activity, teacher will use the Pass the Chalk technique in which students talk about themselves and then they will have to pass the chalk to any other classmate. First teacher will start introducing him or herself, by saying, <i>My name.... I'm 21...My hobby...etc.</i> And then teacher will pass the chalk to any student. Once one student speak up, teacher will encourage to everybody to talk. This process will be repeated until every student have talked. ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students' diverse linguistic background. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher will explain to them what she likes doing in everyday life.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After teacher has finished explaining gives to students a sheet in order to they take a test . Once all students have the test, teacher will explain the questions there. <p>Once they have understood the questions they will stay quiet in their seats.</p> <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students are ready and quiet they have to write about their daily routines in the test. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The students read the questions teacher had written to help them to write a little paragraph about their daily routines. <p>Teacher will be observing students during the test development to provide information either about the instructions or about the questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Then students will write a biographical card about what they most enjoy doing, for example: <i>I like playing soccer....I like listening to music etc.</i> <p>Then in front of class, they have to share they biographical card with the rest of the students.</p> <p>To finish the lesson, teacher will provide a feedback about the test.</p>
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Student's notebook</p> <p>Student's textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.</p> <p>Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist</p> <p>Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly</p> <p>Data source 3: Pretest</p> <p>Data source 4: Pre-questionnaire</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 2	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	UNIT FOUR <i>Describing Actions</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen key action verbs. Students will listen their peers when they are reading a dialogue</p> <p>Speaking Students will read aloud a dialogue with their peers.</p> <p>Writing Students will create vocabulary cards with action verbs. Students will take notes of the action verbs they listen.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: Do, read, write, watch, ask, listen, play, study, smile, sit, take, use, run, show, make, shop, get, eat.</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher builds a lesson based on Action Verbs. ◆ To get started, teacher will have students activate their prior knowledge related to verbs. As a whole class, they will have to remember the verbs that they already learned in previous classes. This warm-up activity is called “Burning ball” in which students have to pass a ball teacher says pass, pass. Teacher will say: stop for the students to stop passing the ball. The student who has the ball at that time has to say and act any verb he/she remembers. This will last 3 or 5 minutes. ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students’ prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students’ diverse linguistic background. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, I will present flash cards of the new vocabulary.

	<p>Do Read Write Watch Ask Listen Play Study Smile Sit Take Use Run Show Make Shop Get Eat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As students are learning the new vocabulary, they individually have to take notes of action verbs ◆ After students have finished recording their notes for each new key word, they have to work in groups to share their personal interpretations for each new word. To group students, teacher will apply the technique El Cartero, to switch positions. Teacher will say “El cartero sent a letter to the people who have the same color shoes. And so on, until of them will be in groups at least of three. So they have to work together as they are grouped. ◆ While they are sharing, Teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information. ◆ Then they will work with the same partner to practice de dialogue about what is Bryan Doing, and teacher will walk around and help students with the interpretations. <p>Once they have agreed on an interpretation of each</p>
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	<p>word they have to go back to their seats</p> <p>Affirming</p> <p>Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to write in order the vocabulary on the U-C-ME template having as a central topic “Action Verbs”</p> <p>The students get together with a partner who is next, for that teacher will use the technique wisdom to another so both have to share ideas about what each verbs means and also the technique words and pictures in which they have to match the verb with the corresponding picture.</p> <p>Teacher will be observing my students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.</p> <p>Once the pairs have complete the template , teacher will assess the whole class by asking them what word they write for each picture etc.. At this point, they won’t have to see the vocabulary cards or the U-C-ME template either.</p> <p>After this activity, in pairs students will read aloud the dialogue in front of the class.</p> <p>As homework, students will search for new action verbs, and highlight which they most have difficulties.</p> <p>To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</p>
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>U-C-ME template</p> <p>Visual aids : Flash cards and with vocabulary.</p> <p>Student’s notebook</p> <p>Student’s textbook textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist</p> <p>Data source 2: Students’ writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 3	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	<i>UNIT FOUR Identifying the parts of the house</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen to their peers when they describe a picture of a house.</p> <p>Speaking Students will describe a picture of a house. Students will talk about their favorite place in their house</p> <p>Writing Students will write the name of each part of the house into a picture.</p> <p>Key Vocabulary: Bathroom, bedroom, dining room, garage, kitchen, living room, stairs, down stairs, up stairs</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on the parts of the house ◆ To get started, teacher will have students activate the knowledge about the last class related to action verbs (do, read, write, watch, ask, listen, play, study, smile, sit, take, use, run, show, make, shop, get, eat and any other words) As a whole class, they will have to remember the vocabulary words about action verbs that they learned in the previously class. This is a musical warm-up activity in which students have to pass a scarf but first they have to put the scarf around the neck, then make two knots, after that untie the knots and only then pass the scarf to rest of classmates as they listen to music. Teacher will stop the music for the students to stop passing the scarf.

	<p>When the music stops, the scarf will stop, too. The student who has the scarf either tie, or untie in his/her hands at that time has to dramatize the word that teacher will show to him or her. And the rest of students have to guess. Teacher will prompt the other students to say the vocabulary word again. Then teacher will play the music again, to do the same with some other students. This will last 5 or 6 minutes. The students will be placed in five columns so that the ball will be passed column by column.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' knowledge about last class vocabulary. <p>Connection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, Teacher will present a big poster about the parts of a house. ◆ As students are learning the parts of the house, they individually have to take notes of this words and what they mean. ◆ After students have finished recording their notes for each new key word, they have to share their ideas with a partner to share their personal interpretations for each new word. To find a partner I will apply the technique get in pairs by the initials of their names. For instance Karla and Katty will work together. To switch positions Teacher will apply the same technique, but using the last names. ◆ While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong, or if the words are correct spelled or not. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information, and well spelled words <p>Once they have agreed on a clear and understandable definition for each word, students have to go back to your seats.</p> <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have gone back to their
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	<p>positions, they have to individually write questions in their U-C-ME templates, The questions can be the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the parts of the house? 2. What do you do in the bedroom? 3. What do you do in the kitchen ? 4. What things can You keep in the garage? 5. What activities do you do in the living room? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After they have to write all questions in the U-C-ME template, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them, and answer this questions taking turns. ◆ At this time, teacher will hand flashcards with pictures of parts of the house, and students orally have to describe and say which activity they do in it with a partner. <p>Teacher will listen to them, during this activity to provide some feedback about the vocabulary of the parts of the house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once students have finished the orally performance, they have to pick up the next U-C-ME template, provided by the teacher, to write about how is like their own house ◆ Based on the previous poster students have to answer the following questions? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where do you do your homework? 2. Where do you rest? 3. In which place of your house do you have a meeting with your family ?..etc. <p>And students for instance have to say: I rest in my bedroom.....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Next, when students have finished writing in the U-C-ME. Have to share with a partner who is behind him/her. <p>Teacher will be observing my students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the pairs have finished interchanging ideas, I will assess the whole class by asking them to
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	<p>describe the parts of the house and what activity they like. At this point, they won't have to see any of their notes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As homework, students will write about how their house looks like, and which parts it has.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>U-C-ME template.</p> <p>Visual and audio aids: Flash cards with vocabulary, and picture chart, music</p> <p>Student's notebook</p> <p>Student's textbook textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist</p> <p>Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 4	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	UNIT 4 Talking About Positive Actions In progress
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen to their partners while he or she is explaining about a positive action that is happening now.</p> <p>Speaking Students will describe positive actions that are happening now.</p> <p>Writing Students will write correct word ordered sentences by describing actions that are happening now</p> <p>Grammatical Rule S+ Be (am, is , are) + verb + ing</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on the Present Continuous. Affirmative Sentences. ◆ To get started, teacher will have students to remember the previous class about action verbs (Do, read, write, watch, ask, listen, play, study, smile, sit, take, use, run, show, make, shop, get, eat.), parts of the house (Bathroom, bedroom, dining room, garage, kitchen, living room, stairs, down stairs, upstairs) and some other words related to things in the house and action verbs. Teacher will bring some pictures about parts of the house and action verbs , then teacher tapes them in the board in random order. Then teacher will call on several students to pick up two pictures one of about parts of the house and other about any action verb , students will show in the front to the rest of the class. As a whole class, they will have to describe that pictures, by using both.The result will sound funny. For example

some cards can be described as follows: I'm cooking in mi bathroom, or I'm resting in the garage. The same process is going to be repeated with 4 or at least five students. This will last 3 or 5 minutes.

- ◆ During this warm up stage, Teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge which will allow me to know how my students are progressing after three weeks.

Connection

- ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher will present in a chart the spelling rule to form Affirmative sentences, in present continuous

S + Be (am, is, are) + V + ing

- ◆ While, teacher is explaining the rule, also write some examples in the board.
 - I'm studying
 - He is playing in the park.
 - She is reading a book.
 - We are resting in the bedroom.

Once I have finished explaining how to make affirmative sentences, I will present a chart with them. I order students get a better understanding.

- ◆ As students are learning how to make affirmative sentences in Present Continuous, they individually have to take notes about them.
- ◆ After students have finished recording their notes they have to share their ideas with a partner to share their personal interpretations for each frequency adverb. To find a partner teacher will apply the technique Simon says, to switch positions. teacher will say simon says: stand up; simon says: stretch your arms and legs; Simon says, switch positions; Simon says, sit down; simon says, work with your classmate who is closer to you.
- ◆ While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion.

	<p>If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ They also have to create four more sentences, following the rule. <p>Once they have agreed on a good interpretations and created new sentences they have to go back to their own seats.</p> <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions , teacher will give them a sheet that has some incomplete sentences , and each student individually has to complete it. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Liza and Andy <u>are talking</u> . (talk) 2. Andy _____ TV. (watch) 3. Liza _____ Andy questions. (ask) 4. Andy _____ annoyed. (get) 5. Brian _____ in front of the computer. (sit) 6. He _____ . (not read) 7. He _____ to his parents. (write) <p>After students have completed the task, has to look for a classmate and discuss their answers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After students have finished the previous activity, they will have to work with a new partner who is next to them. ◆ At this time, each pair of students have to take a U-C-ME template and write sentences for each one of the pictures, in the template. <i>For example she is using the computer, or she is taking a shower, etc.</i> <p>Students will make complete sentences, with the correct word order and spelling rule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As homework, students will search for linking word or connectives words, to link or connect sentences. <p>To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</p>
<p>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</p>	<p>U-C-ME template Visual aids: Charts</p>

	Student's notebook Student's textbook textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 5	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	UNIT FOUR Talking About Negative Actions In progress
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen to their partners while he or she is explaining about a negative action that he/she isn't doing.</p> <p>Speaking Students will describe negative actions that aren't happening now.</p> <p>Writing Students will write correct word ordered sentences by describing actions that aren't happening now</p> <p>Grammatical Rule S+ Be (am, is , are) + not + verb + ing</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher building a lesson based on Present Continuous, Negative Sentences . ◆ To get started, teacher will have students ready for this new lesson. This is speed warm-up activity in which students have to think about what they most like or enjoy doing. teacher will give a student from the right side and one students from the left side a match lighted, and they carefully will have to pass it among them. Then when the match is completely burned students will have to stop passing them. The students that have the matches. Has to say what he or she most enjoy doing. He or she has to say, for instance; <i>I enjoy playing football at the stadium.</i> Then I will ignite the matches again, to do the same with some other students. This will last 4 or 5 minutes. The students will be placed in a circle so that the the ignited matches will pass

easier.

- ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge also get students prepared for the lesson now prepared.

Connection

- ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher will present in a chart the spelling rule to form Negative sentences, in present continuous

S + Be (am, is, are) + not + V + ing

- ◆ While, teacher is explaining the rule, also write some examples in the board.
 - I'm not studying
 - He isn't cooking
 - She isn't taking a shower
 - We aren't eating.

Once teacher have finished explaining how to make negative sentences, teacher will present a chart with them in order students get a better understanding.

- ◆ As students are learning how to make negative sentences in Present Continuous, they individually have to take notes about them.
- ◆ After students have finished recording their notes they have to share their ideas with a partner to share their personal interpretations about Negative sentences. To find a partner teacher will apply the technique Simon says, to switch positions. teacher will say simon says: stand up; simon says: stretch your arms and legs; Simon says, switch positions; Simon says, sit down; simon says, work with your classmate who is closer to you.
- ◆ While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information.
- ◆ They also have to create four more sentences, following the rule.

Once they have agreed on a good interpretations and

	<p>created new sentences they have to go back to their own seats.</p> <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them. ◆ At this time, teacher will hand out cards with some activities in order to they individually write down what they most enjoy doing. For this activity teacher will use the technique focused listing in which students will have to remember and write as many things they are doing, and also activities they aren't doing. ◆ Once students have finished writing by their own, they will have to work in pairs, so they have to follow this order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First they will have to tell each other, about what he or she is doing or isn't doing but using correctly the word order , and spelling rules, For example: <i>I'm studying, I'm not reading.</i> - Then the other classmate can answer by saying: <i>I'm talking /I'm not singing</i> - After that the next partner, to make the dialogue more interesting can say any of the expression found in the useful language: .. <i>Really? It's great</i> - Next, the partners have to interchange roles. <p>Teacher will be observing my students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As homework, students will complete the grammar practice in their books on page 37. <p>To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</p>
<p>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</p>	<p>Visual aids: Charts Student's notebook Student's textbook textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book</p>

	Level two, Pearson Education Inc.
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 6	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	UNIT FOUR <i>Asking yes/no questions and information questions in present continuous</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen to their partner when they asking to their peers about what she/he is doing</p> <p>Speaking Students will describe what they are doing Students will ask about to their partners what they are doing.</p> <p>Writing Students will individually create yes/no questions and information question.</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on Present Continuous, Yes/No questions and Information Questions ◆ To get started, teacher will have students activate their prior knowledge related to Affirmative Sentences and Negative Sentences. As a whole class, they will have to remember the action verbs that they already learned in previous classes. This is an acting warm-up activity in which students have to act according the word they have. Teacher will put all the vocabulary words in a plastic bag and each student have to pick up one word. Then students have to act, but they can't say any word, just mimes the words, then the rest of the class have to guess. For example <i>she is reading, or she isn't reading</i> Once, the students guess, Teacher will prompt the other students to say the sentence again. Then teacher will repeat

this activity with some students. This will last 5 minutes. The students will be placed in a half circle to all students can see the activity.

- ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge about the studied in the previous weeks.

Connection

1. After the warm-up activity, teacher will present a chart to explain students

The present continuous tense: <i>be (am/is/are) + verb -ing</i>		
Yes/No questions	Affirmative answers	Negative answers
Am I } Are you } Is he } Is she } } studying?	Yes, you are. Yes, I am. Yes, he is. Yes, she is.	No, you're not. / No, you aren't. No, I'm not. No, he's not. / No, he isn't. No, she's not. / No, she isn't.
Are you } Are we } Are they } } studying?	Yes, we are. Yes, we/you are. Yes, they are.	No, we're not. / No, we aren't. No, we're/you're not. / No, we/you aren't. No, they're not. / No, they aren't.
Information questions	Short answers	Long answers
What are you doing? What's she/he doing? What are they doing?	Studying. Watching TV. Doing homework.	I'm studying. She's/He's watching TV. They're doing homework.

- ◆ As teacher explains the chart, students individually take notes, about the explanation.
- ◆ After students have finished taking notes, they have to share their ideas with a partner to share their personal backgrounds. To find a partner teacher will apply the technique of counting. Teacher will ask students to count from one to three, And then all ones, two and numbers three have to get together.
- ◆ While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong in the case of spelling or word order . In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information.

Once they have compared their charts they have to go back to their own seats.

Affirming

- ◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work individually 3 writing yes/no questions and 3 information questions.
- ◆ At this time, I will walk around and monitor students activity, and help when necessary.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After, students have finished writing their sentences , they have to ask to other classmate one that is behind him/her. For this activity I will use the technique think-pair-share. So one student help to the other classmate to notice some errors and make suggestions for improvements. ◆ Once students have finished this activity, they have to give back the paragraph to the classmates, for they correct them. ◆ Next, students have to take into account their classmates suggestions for improve the paragraph. ◆ Then students make a final report about <p>Teacher will be observing my students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students individually have finished, have to publish or read aloud to the other classmates. ◆ Then to evaluate speaking, teacher will bring a big picture, and with the same partner students will ask for example... <i>Is Ms. Simpsom singing?</i> The other students have to answer, <i>No he isn't singing.</i> <p>Teacher will make some corrections if necessary for improvements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ As homework, students will create their own U-C-ME template, by writing any question they what to share or need to be clarify about any topic previously studied. <p>To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</p>
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	U-C-ME template Visual aids: charts. Student's notebook Student's textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.
DATA	Data source 1: Observation checklist

COLLECTION	Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 7	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	<i>UNIT FOUR Linking Present Continuous sentences</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Listening Students will listen to our partner while he or she is reading a short paragraph.</p> <p>Speaking Students will read aloud to a partner a paragraph to improve pronunciation.</p> <p>Writing Students will individually create a short paragraph using the Present Continuous.</p>
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	<p>Activation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on Present Continuous, Linking Sentences. ◆ To get started, teacher will have students activate their prior knowledge related Affirmative and Negative sentences, and questions in present Continuous This is an speed warm-up activity in which students have to pass a balloon very quickly. And when teacher says stop, students have to take a paper from the balloon and he/she has to answer the question. ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge about the studied in the previous weeks. <p>Connection</p> <p>After the warm-up activity, teacher will give students, a U-C-ME template in which they have to write any sentence using the appropriate word order.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After students have finished filling their templates, they have to share their ideas with a partner . To find a partner teacher will apply the

	<p>technique of Team shake . Teacher will ask students to walk around the classroom while a song is sounding, and when the song stops the students will shake their hands with the partner in front of him/her.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong in the case of spelling or word order . In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher will help them to get the correct information. <p>Once they have compared their templates they have to go back to their own seats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Then teacher present some connective words and explain to students what they mean in order to compose little paragraphs by linking sentences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Also - But - And - Then - First - In addition - Finally <p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work individually writing their first draft of their paragraph using the templates. They have to use their notes they made in the templates ad also the linking words. ◆ At this time, Teacher will walk around and monitor students activity, and help when necessary. ◆ After, students have finished their first draft, they have to interchange their drafts with other classmate. For this activity I will use the technique Clock partner. So one student help to the other classmate to notice some errors and make suggestions for improvements. ◆ Once students have finished this activity, they have to give back the paragraph to the
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	<p>classmates, for correct them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Then, students have to take into account their classmates suggestions to improve the paragraph. ◆ Then students make a final draft about their paragraphs. <p>Teacher will be observing my students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students individually have finished, have to publish or read aloud to the other classmates. <p>Teacher will make some corrections if necessary for improvements for the next activity.</p> <p>As homework, students will create their own U-C-ME template, by writing any paragraph</p> <p>To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</p>
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>U-C-ME template</p> <p>Student's notebook</p> <p>Student's textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist</p> <p>Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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.

CANDIDATE TEACHER: Karla Juliana Castillo Abendaño	
TIME: Week 8	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	<i>How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy to develop the English a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 academic period?</i>
TOPIC	UNIT FOUR <i>Reviewing Unit Contents</i>
LEARNING OUTCOMES	Listening Students will listen each other's compositions. Speaking Students will read aloud their own compositions. Writing Students will create a paragraph about Alex House.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	Activation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ To get started, teacher will have students to introduce to make a dynamic. For this activity, teacher will use the Pass the Chalk technique in which students have to answer some questions about the whole unit . First teacher will explain through an example, by saying, <i>Firs, I like resting on the garden...etc.</i> And then teacher will pass the chalk to any student. Once one student speak up, about any question teacher will encourage to everybody to talk. This process will be repeated until every student have talked. ◆ During this warm up stage, teacher will also assess the students' prior knowledge which will allow teacher student's achievements about the whole unit. Connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher will explain to them what we are going to do. Students will fill two U-C-ME templates, filling with ideas about the contents learnt in the unit. ◆ Then students will link, the ideas they have in the U-C-ME template, to make a paragraph about "Alex's House"

	<p>Affirming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Once the students have finished the two template, they are quiet and in silent have to write about their daily routines. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students read the question teacher has written to help them to write a little paragraph about their daily routines. <p>Teacher will be observing students during the test development to provide information either about the instructions or about the questions.</p> <p>To finish the lesson, teacher will provide a feedback about the test.</p>
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	<p>Student's notebook</p> <p>Student's textbook Abbs Brian, Barker Chris, Freebairin Ingrid, & JJ Wilson , (2008) English Book Level two, Pearson Education Inc.</p> <p>Rubric</p>
DATA COLLECTION	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist</p> <p>Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly</p> <p>Data source 3: Post-test</p> <p>Data Source 4: Post- Questionnaire</p>
SUPPORT	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

Adapted from D' Ann Rawilson & 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 students from the ninth year of basic education, parallel F
- ✓ The English teacher.
- ✓ The researcher.

Material

- ✓ U – C – ME Template
- ✓ Handouts
- ✓ English Book Level 2
- ✓ Printed Materials
- ✓ Flash Memory
- ✓ Laptop

Technical

- ✓ Computer
- ✓ Printer
- ✓ Internet Connection

Budget

Resources	Cost
Internet connection	\$100,00
Print of the project	\$15,00
Materials	\$20,00
Ringed	\$5,00
Mobilization	\$30,00
Others	\$50,00
TOTAL	\$220,00

Financing

All expenses related to the present research will be assumed entirely by the research conducting the investigation.

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j) ANNEXES

Annex 1. Observation Sheet



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

OBSERVATION SHEET							
Observation # Topic: Objective of the session: (What will students be able to do/know at the end of the session)	Date/Time: Class size: Participants: Ninth-grade students	Location: Duration of the observation (start/end times) Observer Involvement: Participant/ Not Participant					
DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Basic Writing Skills							
Descriptors		Observations					
Do students put interest in writing activities?							
Do students create simple sentences?							
Do students link the words and simple sentences correctly to create short phrases?							
Do student use appropriate punctuation marks?							
Do students well- spell the words?							
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: The uncover-concentrate-uncover-monitor as a cooperative learning strategy.							
Rating scale: 4 =always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1= rarely 0 = not observed							
Descriptors			4	3	2	1	0

All students clearly understand which groups they belong to					
All students have opportunities to learn with and from their peers					
All students take advantage of the given time to make or prepare their responses/ report for the group's.					
Students ask their teacher/ classmates for clarification to assist their peers during the performance of the academic activities					
Students listen to one another.					
Students question to one another					
Assume personal responsibility being involved in the group					
Students disagree politely					
Shy pupils contribute to group work					

Annex 2. Pre Test / Post Test



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

Student's code.....

Date:.....

Instructions:

Write a brief paragraph about what is happening in Alex's Home and in what place of the home they are. Briefly describe the home and answer yourself the following questions to include in your paragraph. What Is Max doing? In which place is it? What Is Alex doing? In which place is he? What Is Alice doing? In which place is she? What is Liz doing? In which place is she? What Is Tom doing? In which place is he? What Is Kate doing? In which place is she? As a conclusion write about what is your favorite place in your home.

Write the sentences in a logical order, taking into account the appropriate punctuation, word order and word spell.

Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

RUBRIC FOR THE PRE TEST AND POST TEST

Student's code.....

Date:.....

Dimension		1 = Weak	2 =Moderately Weak	3 = Average	4 = Strong	Total
Purpose/Task		Accomplishes the task; includes few details, some of which may be only loosely connected to the task. There are many irrelevancies.	Accomplishes the task; includes few details, some of which may be only loosely connected to the task. There are many irrelevancies	Accomplishes the task; includes some details that are generally connected to the development of the task, but there may be some irrelevancies.	Accomplishes the task; includes many details that are clearly connected to the development of the task, but there may be minor irrelevancies.	
Organization		The topic is not introduced in an expected way.	Introduce the topic in a non-clear way.	Introduce the topic in a fairly way	Introduce the topic in a clear and interesting way	
Vocabulary		Includes limited vocabulary and /or most vocabulary is inaccurate or unrelated to the topic.	Includes basic vocabulary; some vocabulary may be inaccurate or unrelated to the topic.	Includes a variety of vocabulary related to the topic.	Includes a wide variety of vocabulary that expands the topic but there may be minor inaccuracies	
Structure/ Conventions	Tense	Verbs do not agree with one another and there is little to no fluidity within writing because of verb tense confusion.	Little to no verb agreement. Fluidity of writing is affected by verb tenses.	Some verb tenses agree and fluidity is slightly affected by verb tenses.	No verb disagreement. Fluidity of writing is not affected by verb tenses.	
	Word Order	The sentences don't make sense at all.	Few sentences follow the logical and word sequential order	Some sentences do not follow a logical word order.	The facts are presented in a sequential word order	

	Punctuation	The paragraph is not clear, and very difficult to understand, not punctuation is presented.	The paragraph is not clear, sometimes difficult to understand, only with few punctuation	The paragraph is somewhat neatly handwriting. With some punctuation.	The paragraph is neatly handwriting, with most of the appropriate punctuation	
TOTAL SCORE						

Annex 3. Pre Questionnaire / Post Questionnaire



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE QUESTIONNAIRE / POST QUESTIONNAIRE

As student of the English Language Career of the Universidad Nacional de Loja, I would be very grateful if you can answer the following questionnaire in a clear and honest way. The information obtained will be used for the development of the research work.

Student's Code: _____

Date: _____

1. English class activities are developed in groups and pairs.

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

2. How important is it to you to complete activities during English class?

- | | | |
|----------------|-----|----------------------|
| Work in groups | () | 4 Very Important |
| Work in pairs | () | 3 Important |
| Work alone | () | 2 Somewhat Important |
| Work together | () | 1 No Important |

3. The group or pair activities are conducted in a positive and respectful environment.

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

4. Having good relationships and positive interactions are essential for groupwork.

- 4. Strongly Agree ()
- 3. Agree ()
- 2. Neither agree nor disagree ()
- 1. Disagree ()

5. How satisfying is it for you to work in groups?

- 4. Very satisfactory ()
- 3. Satisfactory ()
- 2. Somewhat satisfactory ()
- 1. Unsatisfactory ()

6. In group activities, all members contribute to the development of collective work.

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

k.RESEARCH MATRIX

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical Frame	Methodological design (Action Research)	Techniques and instruments
<p>General How does the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy improve the English as a foreign language basic writing skills amongst ninth- grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High School 2014 - 2015. academic period?</p> <p>Specific -What theoretical and methodological references about the U-C-ME as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014-2015 academic period? -What are the issues that limit the development of the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period? -What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period? -Which Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor, Evaluate techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period? -How does the Uncover-Concentrate- Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth – grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?</p>	<p>General -To improve the basic writing skills through the uncover- concentrate- monitor- evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014-2015 academic period .</p> <p>Specific -To research the theoretical references about the Uncover-Concentrate-Monitor-Evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy and it application on the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills. -To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period. -To design an intervention plan based on the uncover-concentrate-monitor-evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the English as a Foreign Language basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period. -To apply the most suitable techniques of the uncover-concentrate-monitor-evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period. -To reflect upon the effectiveness that the uncover-concentrate-monitor-evaluate as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade, group F students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014 – 2015 academic period.</p>	<p>-Basic Writing Skills - Writing in EFL learning -Writing Skills -Macro Skills -Micro Skills -Stages of the Teaching Learning Process of EFL writing -Prewriting -Drafting -Revising -Editing -Publishing -Specifications For Writing -Writing assessment Indicators</p> <p>-Cooperative Learning and English as a Foreign Language Teaching. - Basic Elements of Cooperative Learning -Roles in Cooperative Learning -Learner Roles - Teacher Roles -Materials Role -Types of Cooperative Learning -Formal Cooperative Learning Groups - Informal Cooperative Learning Groups. -Current Strategies of Cooperative Learning -Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor and Evaluate as a Cooperative Learning Strategy</p>	<p>Preliminary Investigation -Observing the English Classes. -Stating the background of the problem. -Describing Current Situation. -Locating and reviewing he literature -Creating a methodological framework for research. -Designing an intervention plan.</p> <p>Intervention and Observation -Administering tests and Questionnaires -Observing and monitoring students' performance according to the intervention plan</p> <p>Presentation of Research Findings -Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquires. -Organizing the Final Report</p>	<p>-Observation Sheet (Participant and no participant observation) - Pre and Posttest -Pre and Post Questionnaire.</p>

ANNEX 2.NATIONAL GRADING SCALES

Pre and Post test

Score Range	English approximation
10	Superior
9	Excellent
7-8	Average
5-6	Below Average
4	Failing

Pre and Post questionnaire

Score Range	English approximation
100	Above the expected level
90	Close to above the expected level
70-80	At the expected level
50-60	Below the expected level
40	Under the expected level

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