



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

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

THESIS

**METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE
PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH
STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO
AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERIOD
2011-2012.**

Thesis previous to obtain the Bachelor's Degree
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Specialization

AUTHOR: Estalin Fabián Garrochamba Peñafiel.

DIRECTOR OF THESIS: Dra. Mg. Sc. Carmen Dávila

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CERTIFICATION

Dra. Mg. Sc. Carmen Enith Dávila Vega

**TEACHER OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE
UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA.**

CERTIFIES:

That the work: **“METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL. ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.**, under the responsibility of the undergraduate **Estalin Fabián Garrochamba Peñafiel**, has been directed and corrected in all its parts. Therefore, I authorize its presentation, sustentation and defense.

Loja, 29 January 2013

**Dra. Mg. Sc. Carmen Dávila Vega
DIRECTOR**

AUTHORSHIP

The results of the research work, the criteria, analysis and conclusions and the recommendations exposed in the present thesis, are of the author exclusive responsibility.

They can be used as a resource for any kind of research.

Estalin Garrochamba

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My sincere thanks, first to the Universidad Nacional de Loja, next to the English Language Department, its coordinator and teachers who gave me the opportunity to study and finish the studies, my truthful gratitude to Mg. Sc. Carmen Dávila Vega, Who has given me, all her support as a thesis director so that I have been able to finish this research work.

The author

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this work to my parents because they have given me all their support to finish it. To my friend Efren who has been with me in all the moments that I have needed to finish one of the main goals in my life.

ESTALIN

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a. TITTLE

**METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE
PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE
WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF
BACHILLERATO AT "LA DOLOROSA" HIGH SCHOOL
ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.**

b. SUMMARY

The present research work entitled: **METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.**, has been developed with the purpose of determining the application of methodological strategies on the development of the productive skills into the English Language teaching learning process.

One of the methods used during the development of the present research work was the scientific method, which has helped to find the truth about the researched object. But it was necessary to use the descriptive, analytical-synthetic and explicative methods as well, which have served to develop every part of the research process.

To collect the data inside the research process the survey has been used as the main instrument that was applied to the teachers & students in order to determine the strategies that teachers are using to develop the productive skills.

The main results of the research show that the teachers are not applying appropriate strategies to work on the development of the speaking neither they use the ones to work on the development of the writing skill. It is noticeable that teachers do not diversify their methodology and they continue just working with the book activities. It was also found that teachers do not make students gain extra practice in the productive skills so that students have got a low performance in the English language teaching learning process.

Therefore, based on the found results it has been possible to determine that the methodological strategies that teachers apply influence in the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

El presente trabajo de investigación titulado: Estrategias Metodológicas para desarrollar las destrezas productivas del Idioma Ingles con los estudiantes de 1ro, ,2do Y 3er año de bachillerato en el colegio "La Dolorosa". Periodo académico 2011-2012., ha sido desarrollado con el propósito de determinar la aplicación de estrategias metodológicas en el desarrollo de las destrezas productivas en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del Idioma Ingles.

Uno de los métodos usados durante el desarrollo del presente trabajo de investigación fue el método científico, que ayudo a encontrar la verdad sobre el objeto investigado. También fue necesario utilizar los métodos descriptivos, sintético analítico y explicativo, que sirvió para desarrollar cada parte del proceso de investigación.

Para recopilar la información dentro del proceso de investigación la encuesta ha sido utilizada como principal instrumento, que fue aplicado a los profesores de Ingles y estudiantes para determinar las estrategias que los profesores están empleando para desarrollar las destrezas productivas.

Los principales resultados de la investigación muestran que los profesores no están aplicando estrategias apropiadas para el desarrollo de habla, ni tampoco los profesores usan las mismas para trabajar en el desarrollo de la escritura. Es notable que los profesores no diversifican su metodología y continúan trabajando con actividades de libro. También se descubrió que los profesores no hacen que los estudiantes logren práctica extra en las destrezas productivas, de esta manera los estudiantes tienen bajo rendimiento en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del Idioma Ingles.

Por lo tanto, basándose en los resultados encontrados ha sido posible determinar que las estrategias metodológicas que los profesores aplican influyen en el desarrollo de las destrezas productivas del Idioma Ingles con los estudiantes de 1ro, 2do y 3er año de bachillerato en el colegio "la dolorosa". Periodo académico 2011-2012.

b. INTRODUCTION

The present research work is about: **“METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.**, was developed with the purpose of knowing the influence of the main methodological strategies that teachers apply on the English teaching learning process in the development of productive skills.

The productive skills are speaking and writing; speaking is the action of conveying information or expressing feelings to other person, on the other hand, writing is to represent in visual or tactile form. Furthermore, writing uses symbols such as punctuations and numerals for expressing in a correct way any article or publication.

The English teaching Learning process always has come facing many problems with students at secondary education because they do not get a basic level of English in all their lifetime at school. One of the factors that is affecting them is the methodology that teachers apply which has been criticized as traditional.

The methodology is usually a guideline system for solving problems. For that reason, it is very important to mention the set of methods, phases, rules or ideas and techniques that the researcher must consider for reaching the goals in the research work.

The methodology of teaching English to second language learners has been confusing because 'grammar translation method' has been the most applied in schools and high schools and that is why, most students do not learn the language. Even when the

importance of speaking the English language is imperative, students face many problems due to teachers' methodology.

For these reasons, the problem that motivated the researcher to develop this work was to know how the methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at "La Dolorosa" High School?. Academic period 2011-2012.

The specific problems that were connected with the main problem were both the kinds of strategies teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English language and the kinds of strategies teachers apply to develop the writing skill of the English language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at "La Dolorosa" high school. Academic period 2011-2012.

The reasons that motivated the researcher to investigate the mentioned main problem were the following: The frequent application of traditional methodologies by the teachers, where most of the time students learn grammatical rules and they apply those rules translating sentences from the target language into their native language. This means that students are not prepared for real conversations or verbal communication, limiting the development of productive skills.

The specific objectives that were related to the present research were: to find out about which strategies teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English Language and

to determine if strategies used by the teachers are supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at "Dolorosa" High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

In agreement to the main problem, the general hypotheses says that the methodological strategies that teachers apply influence in the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at "Dolorosa" High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

To reach the proposed objectives and the confirmation of the corresponding hypotheses, it was necessary to work with different methods: the first one was the descriptive method which helped to describe the strategies that teachers apply with the students of the researched High School; the empiric method to get the data through the instruments previously designed; the deductive one to give a logical explanation of the observed facts and to establish the main conclusions; and, the scientific method to develop the phases of observation, enquiry and verification of the researched object.

Among the techniques that were used, is the survey which permitted to know the phenomenon in a participative and experiential way and it was applied to teachers as well as to students.

The present work includes the following parts:

First, it has the summary that describes briefly, clearly and in an effective way the pertinence of the research and it summarizes the main conclusions and outcomes that

researcher got through this thesis work

Then, it has introduction, that presents the thesis work in all its parts and it also describes the main problem that was the motivation to develop this research.

Next, it presents, the revision of literature where the main categories of the variables mentioned in the hypotheses are synthesized and which served as indicators to prove through a logical analysis, the stated hypotheses.

It also contains the materials and methodology used during the research process where the methods, techniques, procedures and instruments that have been used in the research process are described, and it also gives a reference about the researched population.

It presents the description of the results obtained in the research instruments. They are presented in tables and graphs to facilitate their interpretation and analysis of the data.

After that, it describes the discussion of the results, considering the ones that are the most representative and it also presents the verification of the stated hypotheses through a descriptive analysis.

It also refers, to the conclusions which have been possible to draw after having contrasting the information of the different instruments applied, establishing the logical relation among them with the specific objectives stated in the project.

Finally, it includes the recommendations or possible solutions to the problematic found and which worth the whole process of research. They can be used to improve the institutional weaknesses regarding to the strategies that teachers use to develop the productive skills.

c. .REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

STRATEGY

Strategy also is a term that is being used in education with reference to the methods, techniques and procedures utilized in teaching. The terminology can vary according to the dimension of the procedure, therefore a method, technique or a set of activities can become a strategy in teaching.

The term strategy is derived from the Greek word “strategos”, literally translated as “ the art of the general”. As a military term, it appeared in the literature in the latter part of the 18th century, referring to the larger aspects of conducting war. In the context, it was defined as “ the efficient application of resources to the accomplishment of objectives”, primarily the defeat of the enemy’s armed forces. While the larger aspects of conducting war were called strategies, smaller movements were referred to as tactics (Levis, 1985).

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process. Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn¹.

¹ Schmidt, R. W., & Frota, S. N. (1986). Developing basic conversational ability in a second language: A case study of an adult learner of Portuguese. In R. R. Day (Ed.), *Talking to learn* (pp. 237-326). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

1. Using minimal responses

Language learners who lack confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way to encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying. Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

2. Recognizing scripts

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated.

Instructors can help students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need

to say in response. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

3. Using language to talk about language

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Instructors can help students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language skill levels. Instructors can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check.

By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs, and by responding positively when they do, instructors can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself. As they develop control of various clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom.

DEVELOPING SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

Structured Output Activities

Two common kinds of structured output activities are *information gap* and *jigsaw* activities. In both these types of activities, students complete a task by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication.

a) Information Gap Activities

- Filling the gaps in a schedule or timetable: Partner A holds an airline timetable with some of the arrival and departure times missing. Partner B has the same timetable but with different blank spaces. The two partners are not permitted to see each other's timetables and must fill in the blanks by asking each other appropriate questions.
- Completing the picture: The two partners have similar pictures, each with different missing details, and they cooperate to find all the missing details. In another variation, no items are missing, but similar items differ in appearance.

b) Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities are more elaborate information gap activities that can be done with several partners. In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of the "puzzle," and the partners must cooperate to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be one panel from a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story. It may be one sentence from a written narrative. It may be a tape recording of a conversation, in which case no two partners hear exactly the same conversation.

- In one fairly simple jigsaw activity, students work in groups of four. Each student in the group receives one panel from a comic strip. Partners may not show each other their panels. Together the four panels present this narrative: a man takes a container of ice cream from the freezer; he serves himself several scoops of ice cream; he sits in front of the TV eating his ice cream; he returns with the empty bowl to the kitchen and finds that he left the container of ice cream, now melting, on the kitchen counter. These pictures have a clear narrative line and the partners are not likely to disagree about the appropriate sequencing. You can make the task more demanding, however, by using pictures that lend themselves to alternative sequences, so that the partners have to negotiate among themselves to agree on a satisfactory sequence.

Communicative Output Activities

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they

know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *role plays* and *discussions* .

In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may find them intimidating at first. To succeed with role plays:

- Prepare carefully: Introduce the activity by describing the situation and making sure that all of the students understand it
- Set a goal or outcome: Be sure the students understand what the product of the role play should be, whether a plan, a schedule, a group opinion, or some other product
- Use role cards: Give each student a card that describes the person or role to be played. For lower-level students, the cards can include words or expressions that that person might use.
- Brainstorm: Before you start the role play, have students brainstorm as a class to predict what vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions they might use.

- Keep groups small: Less-confident students will feel more able to participate if they do not have to compete with many voices.
- Give students time to prepare: Let them work individually to outline their ideas and the language they will need to express them.
- Be present as a resource, not a monitor: Stay in communicative mode to answer students' questions. Do not correct their pronunciation or grammar unless they specifically ask you about it.
- Allow students to work at their own levels: Each student has individual language skills, an individual approach to working in groups, and a specific role to play in the activity. Do not expect all students to contribute equally to the discussion, or to use every grammar point you have taught.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the outcome of their role plays.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the role play is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:

- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several

options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends.

- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.
- Use small groups instead of whole-class discussion: Large groups can make participation difficult.
- Keep it short: Give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the results of their discussion.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

OTHER SPEAKING STRATEGIES

“Speaking skills, like listening skills, are often neglected in the classroom or teachers assume that they are an area that does not require instruction or facilitation. In order to communicate effectively through speaking, children must exhibit fluency, clarity, and an awareness of audience. Such verbal communication skills are learned through practice

and observation of an effective speaker, such as the teacher”².

Creating a Positive Environment for Speaking Skills

The key to encouraging speaking skills in the classroom is creating the proper environment. Learners should feel relaxed, and social interaction with peers should be encouraged. One teacher of fourth grade suggests these goals:

- to speak clearly with proper pronunciation in order to communicate with others
- to speak expressively with feeling and emotion and avoid the monotone
- to speak effectively in different situations: with individuals, small groups, and the whole class
- to utilize speaking in all the communication arts and content areas to further learning

To achieve these goals, the teacher organized her instructional program around two criteria: a positive, receptive teacher attitude and a physical environment conducive to language use.

Speaking Skills: Strategies and Activities:

Most oral language instruction takes place indirectly; that is, the teacher creates the positive climate and the motivational activity, and the students do the rest.

a) Brainstorming:

One of the best ways to generate a number of ideas in a short amount of time is through the brainstorming strategy. Brainstorming helps to stretch a student’s imagination,

² Idem

encourages group cooperation, and leads to creative thinking through spontaneous contributions by all group members. Key principles of brainstorming include the following:

- Select a problem or topic and react to it quickly.
- Designate one person in the group as the recorder of ideas.
- Accept and record all ideas or suggestions.
- Build on other people's ideas.
- Do not criticize anyone else's ideas.
- Remember that, initially, quantity of ideas is more important than quality.

b) Interviewing:

Most information students gather for school projects comes from traditional sources like the encyclopedia or internet. Students need to learn that another way of gathering information is through interviewing, or asking someone for information or opinions.

Donald Graves recommends teaching young children about interviewing by having them poll their fellow classmates for information. In this simple polling technique, students choose a different interview or polling question to ask their classmates each day. After polling, a bar chart could be made to show the results of the survey.

Most students are familiar with interviews because of the many that are shown on television. You could show models of good interviews and analyze them as a class. Good interviewers keep in mind the following points:

- Gather background information on the subject.
- Learn something about the interviewee (person being interviewed).

- Decide ahead of time on the information desired.
- Formulate appropriate questions.
- Anticipate follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses.
- Determine how to begin and end the interview politely.

Interviewing is an important strategy for gathering information and conducting research on many topics.

c) Drama and Oral Language Development:

Television has made us a nation of spectators. The current craze for video games has intensified this situation. It is more important than ever that we make opportunities available for children to experience participation in the arts. Drama is truly one of the great oral communication forms.

Drama can take many forms in the classroom, from the simple dress-up play of preschoolers to full-blown theatrical productions with costumes, scenery, and memorized scripts. Whatever the form, the objectives of drama in the classroom remain the same:

- to encourage creative and aesthetic development
- to improve children's abilities to think critically
- to create an environment in which social and cooperative skills flourish
- to improve the general communication skills of students
- to enhance the individual child's knowledge of self

d) Pantomime:

Pantomime is the art of conveying ideas without words and incorporates gestures and

expressions. It is more like theater acting in the sense that an entire story can be told through the movements of the characters. Props and simple costumes can be used, but no speaking is allowed.

In preparing for their skit, students plan and talk among themselves. They choose parts; decide on the movements they will use to convey their story; and make simple props, signs or costumes, if necessary. This aspect of the preparation involves verbal communication. But once the group gets onstage (the front of the class), no talking is allowed. This is the real challenge of pantomime.

e) Choral Speaking:

There are several kinds of choral speaking activities to choose from:

- a) Antiphonal or dialogue: Poems with two parts or a question-and-answer format are appropriate here. Often the deep voices take one part while the light voices take the other. This usually means the dialogue takes place between a group of girls and a group of boys.
- b) Line-a-group or line-a-child: In this approach, individuals or small groups read one line of a poem at a time. They work to keep in harmony and tempo.
- Refrain: Narrative poems with a chorus are good candidates for refrain. A teacher or student can recite the story, with the other children in the class joining in on the chorus.
- Unison: Although unison speaking appears simple, it really requires skill for the students to keep together. Since everyone speaks every line, the rhythm and

timing have to be perfect. Almost every poem is appropriate for unison speaking.

- Cumulative speaking: One speaker begins, with other speakers, one by one, joining the first speaker. This type of speaking helps the student who may be nervous or shy in front of classmates to gain confidence by speaking with others.

f) Puppetry and Storytelling:

Like storytelling, puppets and masks have traditionally been associated with oral dramatic presentations. Like so many oral activities, creating the proper environment is the essential ingredient to a successful puppetry experience. Begin by creating a simple puppet stage in one corner of your classroom.

The next step is to gather some simple materials for creating easy-to-make puppets. Literally any scrap material can be used in the construction of puppets. Here are several kinds of puppets that students can make:

- Sock puppets: Have each child bring an old sock from home. Demonstrate that by placing your hand inside the sock—your fingers in the toe, your thumb in the heel—you can make the puppet come alive simply by opening and closing your hand. Next add cloth, felt, buttons, beads, yarn, and so on to make the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears. Additional material can be added to extend over the puppeteer's arm.
- Finger puppets: The simplest way to make a finger puppet is with an old glove. On each finger, draw, color, or paint facial features of different characters. You can add bits of yarn, sequins, or buttons. Each finger should

contain a face with a different expression or look. In this way, you have large groups of tiny character puppets that can talk back and forth.

- Paper-bag puppets: Paper-bag puppets are easy and inexpensive. Depending on the size of the paper bag used, you can create all types of puppets. Large bags (never plastic!) can be placed over children's heads and worn as full masks. Holes for eyes, nose, and mouth can be cut and the bags decorated with crayons or other materials. Smaller paper bags lend themselves as hand puppets.
- Stick-and-ball puppets: With a wooden dowel, tongue depressor, or bent coat hanger plus a plastic foam ball or old tennis ball, you can teach children to construct a stick-and-ball puppet. First cover the ball with felt or cloth and draw in the facial features. Then decorate with string, small buttons, and so on. Next insert the stick to support the head. (With a tennis ball, you have to cut a small hole to insert the stick.) Finally, cover the stick with a loose cloth, decorated to form a distinctive costume for your puppet. Insert your hand beneath the cloth and grasp the stick. Your puppet is ready.
- Shadow puppets: To create a shadow puppet, you will use stiff cardboard or oak tag. Cut your puppet shape from the flat pattern in profile because only this outline is seen by the audience. Intricate facial features are not necessary; the unique characteristics of the puppet come from the cut outline. Next, attach the cutout to a stick to be held by the student puppeteer.

g) Theater Acting:

Theater Acting includes many of the previously described oral language activities. It also

adds perhaps the most difficult aspect of acting: the memorization of a script. It is recommended that theater acting come after students are already familiar with the other forms of oral expression.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS

Here there are some clear descriptions how teachers are going to develop the following strategies the writing skills inside the classroom with their students. (Taken from: Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.)

Generating ideas

In all subject areas, students need to develop skills for getting what they know about a topic down on paper, and generating ideas or finding additional facts. They also need skills to check whether their writing is on-topic and fulfills its purpose.

Purpose

- Help students to start writing and ultimately to produce more writing.
- Encourage fluency in generating ideas for writing on any topic, in any subject area.
- Help students begin organizing ideas

Payoff

Students will:

- Rapidly generate fresh ideas about topics in any subject area.

- Write down ideas without self-editing.
- Generate raw material for more polished work.
- Complete writing activities on time, overcome writer's block, and improve test-taking skills.

TIPS FOR RAPID WRITING

- Write as fast as you can.
- No corrections or erasing allowed.
- Write until your teacher says "STOP" – do not stop before!
- Don't lift your pen/pencil from the paper or remove your hands from the computer.
- If you get stuck, jumpstart your brain by writing the topic title and extending it to a sentence.
- When your teacher says "STOP," count and record the number of words you have written.
- Be prepared to discuss your topic: use the writing you have done to start you off.

Adding Content

This strategy provides feedback to students before they start their first draft. Students exchange their brainstorming and notes for any project-paragraphs, research,

process, lab reports or summaries, and develop questions designed to help them draw out more details for their first draft.

Purpose

- Identify ideas and information that may have been omitted.
- Reconsider and revise initial thinking (such as brainstorming) *before* writing the first draft.
- Teach students how to question others and themselves

Payoff

Students will:

- Ask who, what, where, when, why and how (5W+H), and predict questions while writing.
- Add and support ideas, with the help of others and then on their own.
- When you build a fire, you need just enough wood to get it started. Usually we start with small pieces and then add the larger ones after the fire gets going.

Developing and organizing ideas (Webbing, Mapping and More)

“Students need to know how to organize what they have learned about any topic or assignment into a well-structured whole. In longer writing assignments, they need to know how to create a strong, focused introduction that catches the reader’s interest; how to link ideas in logically connected paragraphs that contain enough supporting detail; and how to conclude with a strong ending.

Effective writers use different strategies to sort the ideas and information they have gathered in order to make connections, identify relationships, and determine possible directions and forms for their writing. This strategy gives students the opportunity to reorganize, regroup, sort, categorize, classify and cluster their notes”³.

Purpose

- Identify relationships and make connections among ideas and information.
- Select ideas and information for possible topics and subtopics

Payoff

Students will:

- Model critical and creative thinking strategies.
- Learn a variety of strategies that can be used throughout the writing process.
- Reread notes, gathered information and writing that are related to a specific writing task.
- Organize ideas and information to focus the writing task.

Supporting the Main Idea

In this strategy, students learn how to select the better of two possible main ideas to use as a topic sentence in an information paragraph, and then learn how to choose details to

³ Brown, D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

support it. Student samples are selected from a variety of subject areas. Samples may also be used to teach summary writing.

Purpose

- Distinguish main ideas and supporting details for a paragraph.

Payoff

Students will:

- Write well-organized paragraphs for different subject areas, with supporting details.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic.
- Improve reading comprehension by spotting main ideas and supporting details.

Finding and Supporting the Main Idea

- Look at the scrambled statements in paragraph one.
- Identify two main ideas in paragraph one.
- Choose which main idea is best supported by the other statements given – this will be your main idea for the paragraph.
- Cross off or remove the statements that do not belong in the paragraph (that do not support your main idea).
- Order the statements in the paragraph.
- Share and compare your ideas with others.

- Write your final paragraph.

Revising and editing (reorganizing ideas)

Students need individual and group skills to assess their own work and the work of others for content, clarity, form and style, and for errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Ultimately, students have individual responsibility for the accuracy of their work, but they need to know how to help each other improve.

Purpose

- Help students to start writing and ultimately to produce more writing.
- Encourage fluency in generating ideas for writing on any topic, in any subject area.
- Help students begin organizing ideas.

Payoff

Students will:

- Rapidly generate fresh ideas about topics in any subject area.
- Write down ideas without self-editing.
- Generate raw material for more polished work.
- Complete writing activities on time, overcome writer's block, and improve test-taking skills.

Questions to revise writing

Your job as a revising partner is a very important one. You can help the writer by:

- giving the writer a sense of how completely the task has been accomplished
- praising parts of the piece that are well expressed or well explained
- targeting statements or arguments that may not be well supported with detail
- Suggesting new avenues of approach.

However, the writer owns the writing, and should not feel that your suggestions or ideas are being imposed as the solution. The best way to help your writing partner is to phrase your comments as open-ended prompts, as questions, or as a combination of an observation and a question”⁴.

⁴ Idem

d. MATERIALS AND METHODS

HUMAN RESOURCES

Researcher: Estalin Fabian Garrochamba Peñafiel

English Teachers of "La Dolorosa" High School. Loja Province

Students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of bachillerato at "La Dolorosa" High School,

MATERIAL RESOURCES

The materials that were necessary to finish the research process successfully, Were: office material, books, copies, computer, printer, paper, folders. USB drivers and so on.

BUDGET

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| - Project | 400 |
| - Thesis first draft | 300 |
| - Thesis second draft | 400 |
| - Printing and Publishing | 200 |
| - Unforeseen | 100 |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET | 1400 |

FINANCING

The expenses derived from the present work were assumed by the researcher.

DESIGN OF THE INVESTIGATION

This work was characterized as non-experimental, because it is a socio-educative work and it was developed in a descriptive way. The researcher did not have the chance to manipulate the variables of the work. The researcher also applied a survey and study of

documents and the description of the facts in the same way that they show themselves in the researched reality to discover the data and the obtained results in the work.

METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND PROCEDURES

METHODS

As a general method the scientific one was used, which permitted to develop a set of procedures oriented to discover, demonstrate and verify the knowledge that the science states in a systematic way about the researched object. Through this method the phases of observation, questioning of the object were developed in the same way as it is in the reality and the verification on the hypotheses relating to the variables through empiric data and the theoretical referents. It also was useful to deduce the conclusions under the basis of the theoretical referents and the tendencies of the obtained results in the field research.

The descriptive, analytic - synthetic and explicative methods were use in particular. It also the descriptive statistics was used as a tool.

The researcher used the descriptive method to pick up the information, describe the obtained results in the applied instruments and it let organize the information according to the hypotheses and the indicators that were found out for each one of the variables.

It gave the rules to demonstrate the meaning of the investigation, describe the problematic that the researcher found in this educative institution, the description of the variables the independent as well the dependant and it was possible to describe coherently in all the researching work presenting the results and

supporting the conclusions. This method served to describe the strategies that teachers use to develop the productive skills.

The analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze the empiric information from the applied instruments and therefore it was possible to derive the respective conclusions according to the tendencies of the results in the field information.

The explicative method was used, in the explanation of the logical implications of the variables of every hypothesis and in this way it was able to prove the same ones, through a descriptive deduction according to the obtained results constructed with the theoretical referents.

The descriptive statistics was used to represent the data in tables, squares and graphs to get a better comprehension of the information.

TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

In order to get enough empiric information about the researched object, the researcher used the most appropriate techniques and instruments.

A Survey: It was used as main research technique because it is widely used for collecting data in most areas of social inquiry; it was elaborated with its instrument the questionnaire to get enough information about the indicators that permitted to prove the specific hypotheses.

The survey was applied to all English teachers that teach in the morning section at “La Dolorosa” High School to know more about the types of methodological strategies they use to develop the productive skills to English language learning process.

It was also applied to the students of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School to know about the methodological strategies that teachers are using to develop the productive skills. It was applied through a questionnaire that was elaborated with close questions about the indicators that guided the research work. To apply the survey the researcher explained the purpose to obtain the data, due to people involved on it, may be able to collaborate actively and this facilitated the development of the research process.

PROCEDURES

After, the researcher picked up all the information through the research instruments; it was possible to develop the following procedures.

a) Tabulating

To tabulate the obtained information the researcher used the descriptive statistics to classify the questions by categories in order to facilitate their interpretation. The tabulation of all the applied instruments permitted the researcher contrast the obtained information from the teachers as well as from the students to make the respective inferences.

b) Organization

Once the information was tabulated, the researcher organized it by analyzing the questions that served to support and prove each hypothesis and keeping in mind the variables as a guide.

c) Graphic Representation

After tabulating the empiric information was represented in tables and graphs which facilitated the readers to see the results in bar diagrams and interpreted it in percentages for every question of the survey.

d) Analysis and Interpretation

Once the information was represented graphically, every question was analyzed considering two points of view: the teachers and students' opinion contrasted with the theoretical referents that guided the process of the research work.

e) Hypotheses verification

The verification of the hypotheses was done through the analytic-deductive method with a description of the indicators with major tendency and contrasting them with the information of the theoretical frame of the project.

f) Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions were drawn based on a specific analysis of the results of each question and they served to give respective recommendations to the authorities of the researched institution and also to the teachers and students in order to

contribute with the solution of the problem that motivated the development of the present research work.

To elaborate the final report it was necessary to integrate all the components of the investigative process trying a logic integration among them; this process required a new revision of the theme, objectives, hypotheses and theoretical frame so the researcher was able to get a good relation of them.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population that helped in the field work was constituted by 589 students of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of Bachillerato, Due to it is considered as a big population, it was necessary to take a sample of students from the researched groups. Therefore the research work was carried out with a sample of 121 students who were selected at random from the target groups.

Regards to the teachers' population it was necessary to work with all of them who are five in total and because it is a small population that teach in the morning session at "La Dolorosa" High School.

The population of students and teachers is presented in the following chart.

| YEARS | GROUPS | | | | | | TOTAL |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|-------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | |
| 1st year of Bachillerato | 43 | 41 | 45 | 44 | 44 | 35 | 252 |
| | FM A | FM B | QB A | QB B | SO C | INF | |
| 2nd year of bachillerato | 43 | 41 | 30 | 34 | 17 | 32 | 197 |
| 3rd year of Bachillerato | 27 | 27 | 17 | 17 | 25 | 27 | 140 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | 589 |
| Teachers | | | | | | | 5 |

The students' population was big, So it was necessary to get a sample of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd years of Bachillerato, by applying the following formula:

$$n = \frac{PQ \times N}{(N-1) \frac{E^2}{K^2} - PQ}$$

PQ = First quartile (0, 25)
 N= Population
 n = Sample
 K = Proportionality Constant (2)2
 E = Sample Error (10 %,) (0, 1)

$$n = \frac{0,25 \times 589}{(588) \frac{(0,1)^2}{(2)^2} - 0,25}$$

$$n = \frac{147,25}{0,01} - \frac{(588) \cdot 0,25}{4}$$

$$n = \frac{147,25}{1,22}$$

$$n = 121$$

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION

To get the sample in each course the following formula was applied:

$$F = \frac{n}{N}$$

$$F = \frac{121}{589}$$

F = distribution factor

n = sample size

N = population

$$F = 0.2054$$

This factor was multiplied by students' population of every researched group of Bachillerato at "La Dolorosa" High School, and in this way it will be obtained the sample per course.

The sample results are detailed in the next chart:

| COURSES | POPULATION | SAMPLE |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1st year of Bachillerato | 252 | 52 |
| 2nd year of Bachillerato | 197 | 40 |
| 3rd year of Bachillerato | 140 | 29 |
| TOTAL | 589 | 121 |
| Teachers' population | 5 | 5 |

e. RESULTS

TEACHERS' SURVEY

HYPHOTESIS No. 1

There is little application of appropriate strategies to develop the speaking skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “ La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

1) Do you apply methodological strategies to develop the speaking skill?

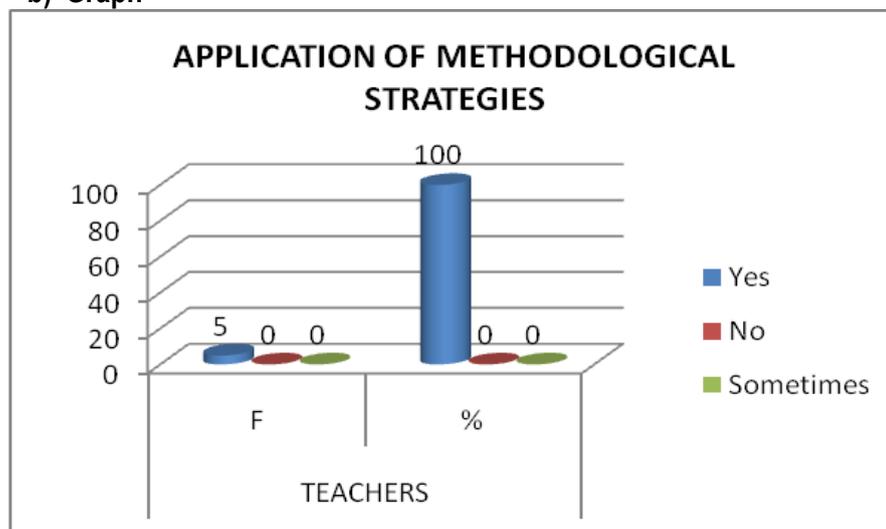
a) Statistics Table

| APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES | TEACHERS | |
|--|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Yes | 5 | 100 |
| No | 0 | 0 |
| Sometimes | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

The results show that 100% of teachers apply methodological strategies into the English teaching learning process.

It is a good idea to work on the speaking skill into the English language learning process, due to it is one of the most forgetful skills and its development requires a lot of practice and the application of specific strategies like: using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about the language etc.; that it can help students to expand the knowledge and feel more confidence when they are speaking the second language.

2) What do you think strategies are for you?. Tick just one of the three.

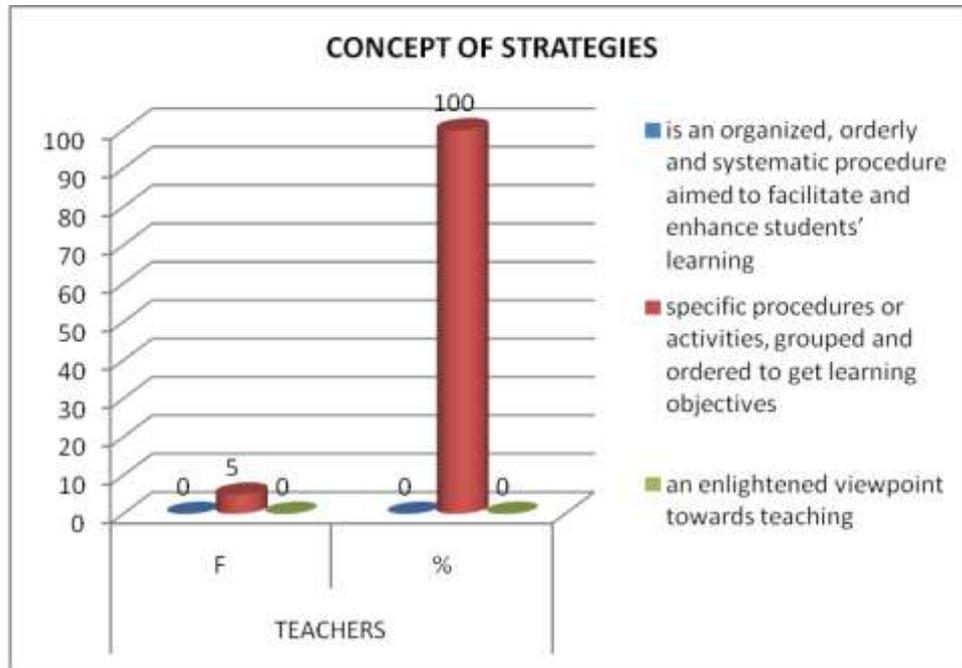
a) Statistics Table

| CONCEPT OF STRATEGIES | TEACHERS | |
|---|----------|------------|
| | F | % |
| an organized, orderly and systematic procedure aimed to facilitate and enhance students' learning | 0 | 0 |
| specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives | 5 | 100 |
| an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

The graph shows that 100% of teachers pointed out that strategies are specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives.

The results show all teachers were able to identify the correct definition of strategies which is very useful if they want to develop the speaking skill. The theory states that teaching strategies are combinations of specific procedures or operations, grouped and ordered in definite sequence that teachers can use in the classroom to implement both cognitive and affective objectives and it is important that teachers identify this description to select the best ones to work on speaking skill, and know the process or activities that they apply.

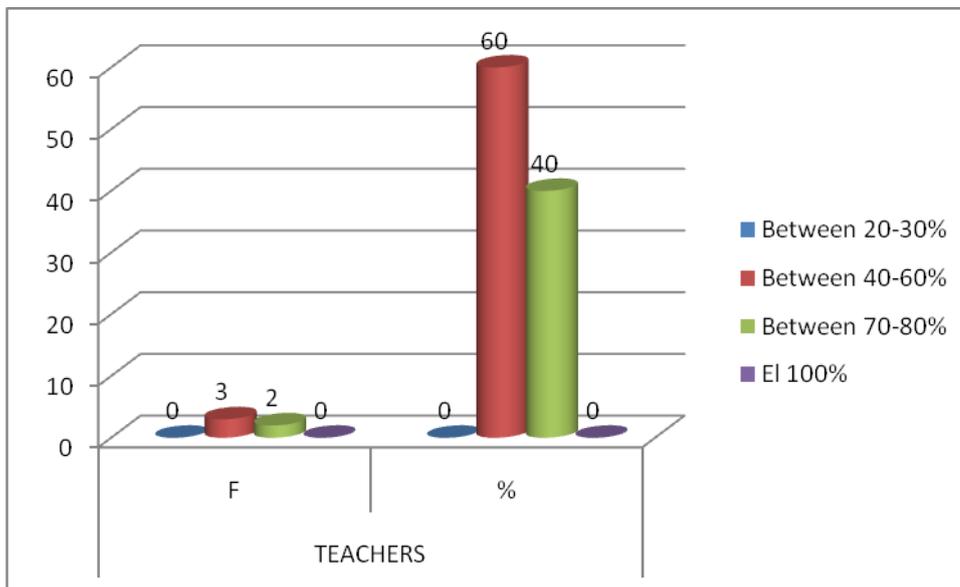
3) What percentage of English do you speak in class?

a) Statistic table

| PERCENTAGE OF LANGUAGE USED IN CLASS | TEACHERS | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|------------|
| | F | % |
| Between 20-30% | 0 | 0 |
| Between 40-60% | 3 | 60 |
| Between 70-80% | 2 | 40 |
| 100% | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey
 Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

The graph shows that 60% of teachers matched that they speak between 40 to 60% of English in class while 40% said that they speak between 70 and 80%.

It is known that learners of a foreign language have to attend his/her classes on the target language because they need to listen and have enough input before they are able to produce it. However if teachers do not speak 100% in English during the class, they will not provide enough language exposure to their students which limits their confidence to speak. It is also important keeping in mind that in our country the atmosphere that surrounds students is not favorable because they listen Spanish all the time and obviously this limits the learning of the target one.

4) Which thinking activities do you work with your students?

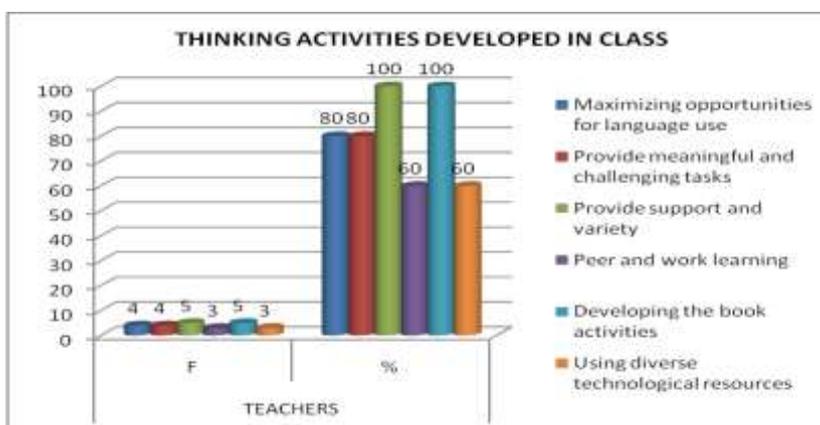
a) Statistics Table

| THINKING ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED IN CLASS | TEACHERS | |
|---|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Maximizing opportunities for language use | 4 | 80 |
| Provide meaningful and challenging tasks | 4 | 80 |
| Provide support and variety | 5 | 100 |
| Peer and work learning | 3 | 60 |
| Developing the book activities | 5 | 100 |
| Using diverse technological resources | 3 | 60 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

100% of teachers answered that they provide support and variety and develop the book activities as part of the thinking process; 80% of them matched that they work by maximizing the opportunities for language use and providing meaningful and challenging tasks and 60% of teachers pointed out that they develop peer and work learning and use diverse technological resources.

If teachers work by taking advantage of thinking activities in the English classroom students would have more opportunities to produce language because they maximize the use of the target language but if teachers are only worried about working on the book activities it will be impossible that students reach a good level in the speaking skill that is essential in the English language learning process. As it was said the development of the speaking skill in a foreign language depends on the strategies that teachers apply and the interaction that students can have with other speakers.

5) Which of the following speaking strategies do you work with?

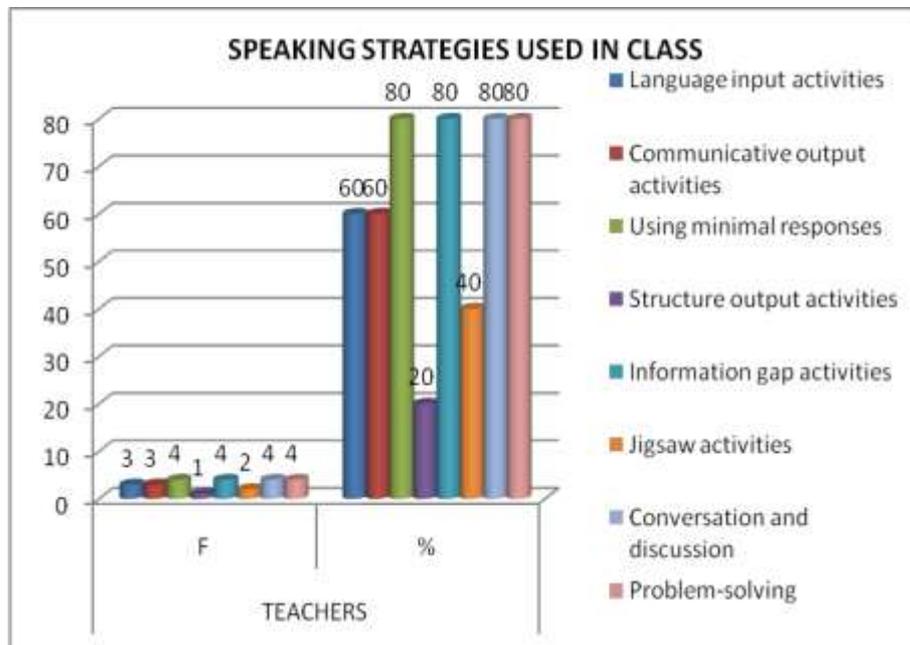
a) Statistics Table

| SPEAKING STRATEGIES USED IN CLASS | TEACHERS | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Language input activities | 3 | 60 |
| Communicative output activities | 3 | 60 |
| Using minimal responses | 4 | 80 |
| Structure output activities | 1 | 20 |
| Information gap activities | 4 | 80 |
| Jigsaw activities | 2 | 40 |
| Conversation and discussion | 4 | 80 |
| Problem-solving | 4 | 80 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

In relation to the speaking strategies that teachers use into the English class 80% of them matched using minimal responses, information gap activities, conversation and discussion and problem solving. 60% answered language input activities and communicative output activities. 40% matched jigsaw activities and 20% structured output activities.

The theory states that structured output activities can include the information gap and jigsaw strategies which are very useful to develop speaking; and communicative activities are role plays, discussions and problem solving which are also effective to develop the speaking. According to the results most teachers are wrong in the application the strategies to develop speaking because they use minimal responses which is a strategy to be applied with language learners who have lack of confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction.

Gaining Fluency is the main goal when a student is struggling with a new language, even when there is limited vocabulary.

6) How do your students develop extra class spoken practice of the English Language?

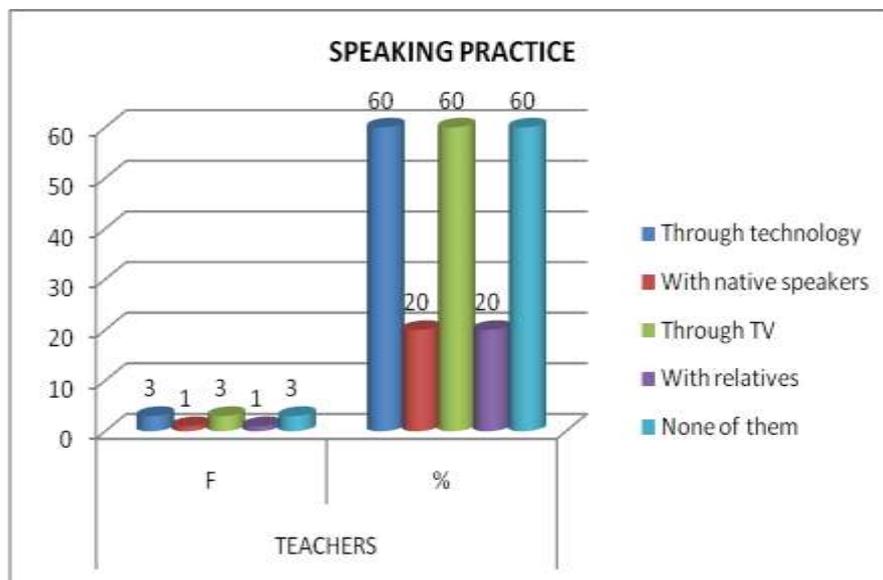
a) Statistics Table

| SPEAKING PRACTICE | TEACHERS | |
|----------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Through technology | 3 | 60 |
| With native speakers | 1 | 20 |
| Through TV | 3 | 60 |
| With relatives | 1 | 20 |
| None of them | 3 | 60 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

In this question 60% of teachers answered that students' work on extra speaking practice through technology and TV; 20% matched that students practice with native speakers and relatives but 60% of them also matched that their students do not

develop extra practice of speaking.

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have and this is only possible if students look for an extra way of improving their speaking by using other available sources than only their teacher and technology give. There are many opportunities to develop speaking skill one of them is the practice with native speakers.

HYPOTHESIS No. 2

The strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

7) How do you consider the writing skill in the English language?

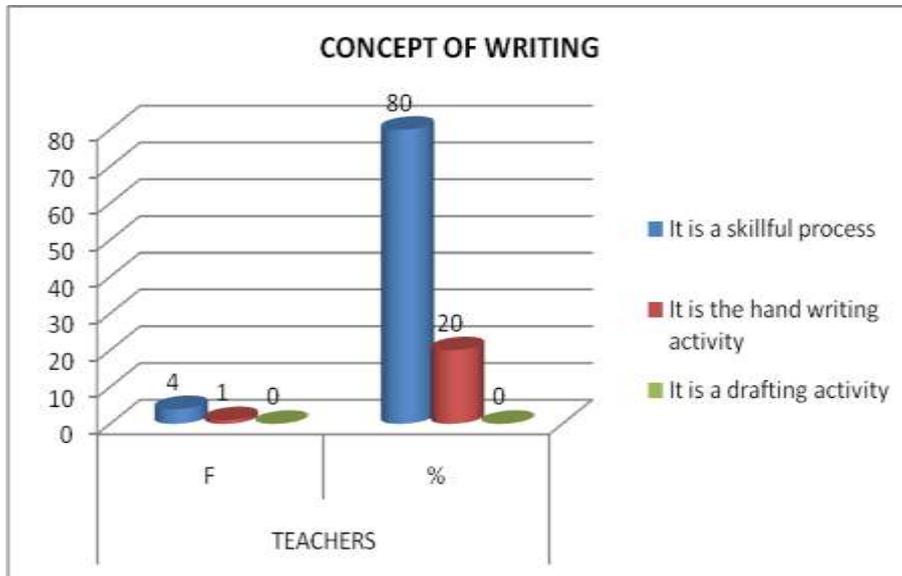
a) Statistics Table

| CONCEPT OF WRITING | TEACHERS | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|------------|
| | F | % |
| It is a skilful process | 4 | 80 |
| It is the hand writing activity | 1 | 20 |
| It is a drafting activity | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

80% of teachers answered that writing is a skillful process and 20% matched that it is a handwriting activity.

The results show that most teachers identified the correct definition of writing, which is essential to work on it at school. According to the theory it is a skillful process that needs a lot of practice and the application of many subskills to be developed. In the school setting, writing plays two distinct but complementary roles. First, it is a skill that draws on the use of strategies (such as planning, evaluating, and revising text) to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence. Second, writing is a means of extending and deepening students' knowledge; it acts as a tool for learning subject matter and it is also a productive skill that needs a lot of practice in a foreign language.

8) Which of these steps of the writing process do you work with the students?

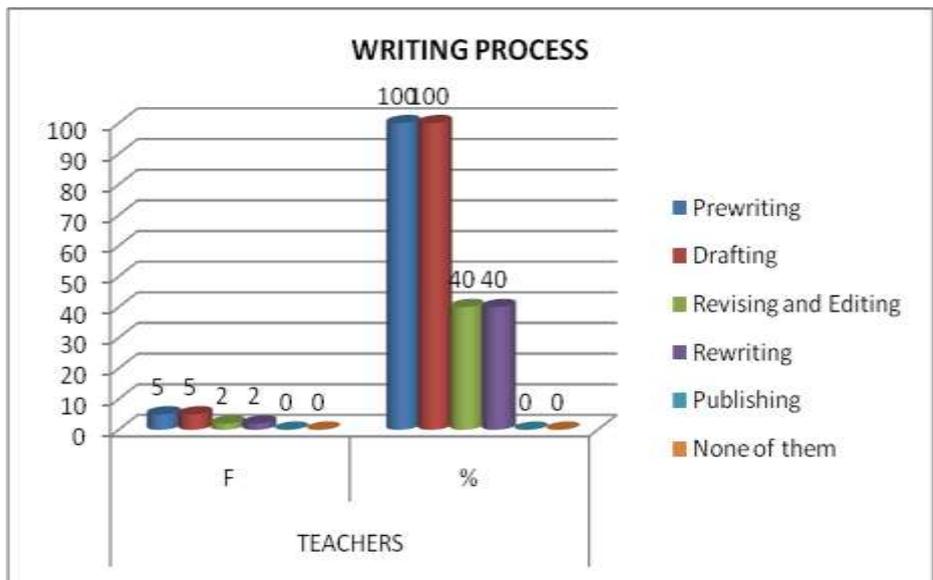
a) Statistics Table

| WRITING PROCESS | TEACHERS | |
|----------------------|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Prewriting | 5 | 100 |
| Drafting | 5 | 100 |
| Revising and Editing | 2 | 40 |
| Rewriting | 2 | 40 |
| Publishing | 0 | 0 |
| None of them | 0 | 0 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

In this question, 100% of teachers said that they work with prewriting and drafting and 40% matched revising and editing and rewriting.

According to the teachers' opinion, only they work on two of the five steps of the writing process. It is known that writing in English is a difficult skill that involves a process which not only needs to establish a purpose, selects the style and audience, the teachers have to prepare the tasks carefully working out stages of prewriting, planning, drafting, editing, publishing and reflecting. The procedures that each one includes.

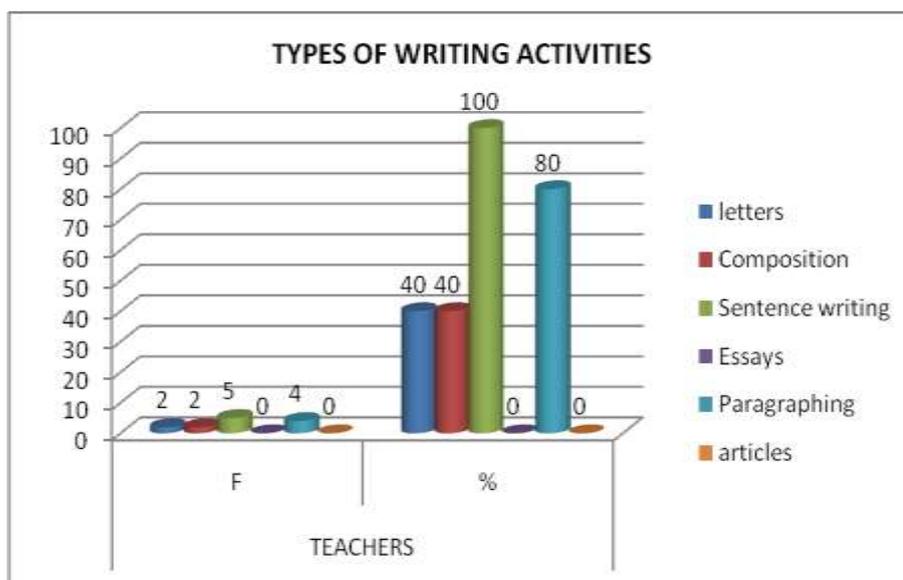
9) What type of writing activities do you develop with your students?

a) Statistics Table

| TYPE OF WRITING ACTIVITIES | TEACHERS | |
|----------------------------|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Letters | 2 | 40 |
| Composition | 2 | 40 |
| Sentence writing | 5 | 100 |
| Essays | 0 | 0 |
| Paragraphing | 4 | 80 |
| Articles | 0 | 0 |

Source: Teachers' survey
Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

As the graph shows, 100% of teachers practice the writing skill by sentence writing, 80% paragraphing and 40% through letters and compositions.

Most of the teachers just emphasize the development of written sentences or paragraphing which are not enough to develop a good writing skill. It is known that there are a lot of genres to practice the written production which could be done through essays, biographies, lyrics, recipes, parodies, journal entries, reports, articles, editorial and opinions, poetry (e.g., ballads, acrostics, counted-syllable formats, free verse, song lyrics, other formats), correspondence: (e.g., friendly letters; invitations; letters of thanks, complaint, application, sympathy, inquiry, protest, congratulation, apology), invitations, scripts: (e.g., skits, plays, radio plays, TV commercials), speeches, memoranda, instructions and advice, rules and regulations, pamphlets, résumé and cover letters. So the students will have more opportunities to practice this skill by producing authentic and real pieces of writing.

10) Which of the following writing strategies do you apply with students in class?

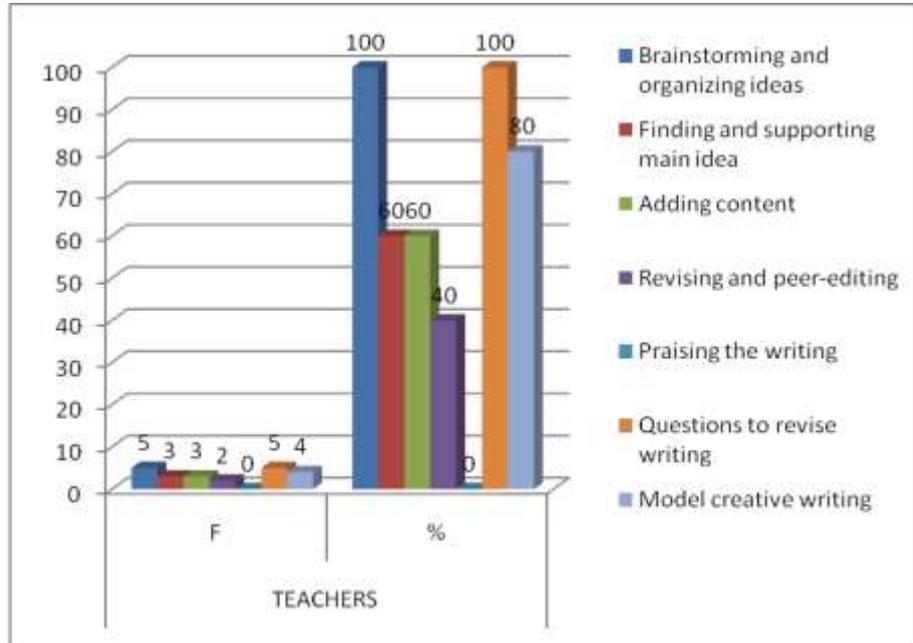
a) Statistics Table

| WRITING STRATEGIES | TEACHERS | |
|------------------------------------|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Brainstorming and organizing ideas | 5 | 100 |
| Finding and supporting main idea | 3 | 60 |
| Adding content | 3 | 60 |
| Revising and peer-editing | 2 | 40 |
| Praising the writing | 0 | 0 |
| Questions to revise writing | 5 | 100 |
| Model creative writing | 4 | 80 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

In this question, 100% of teachers matched that they apply strategies such as: brainstorming and organizing ideas and questions to revise writing, 80% matched model creative writing, 60% answered finding and supporting main idea, and adding content and 40% revising and peerediting.

Most of teachers said that they apply brainstorming and organizing ideas as strategies to work on the writing skill and this is useful but not enough if teacher wants that students become skilful writers in the foreign language. The theory says that strategies include tips for generating ideas, rapid writing techniques, developing and organizing ideas, finding and supporting main idea, revising and editing and questions to revise writing. The applications of appropriate techniques with the respective procedures assure an effective development of the writing skill.

11) When do you support the writing process to the students?

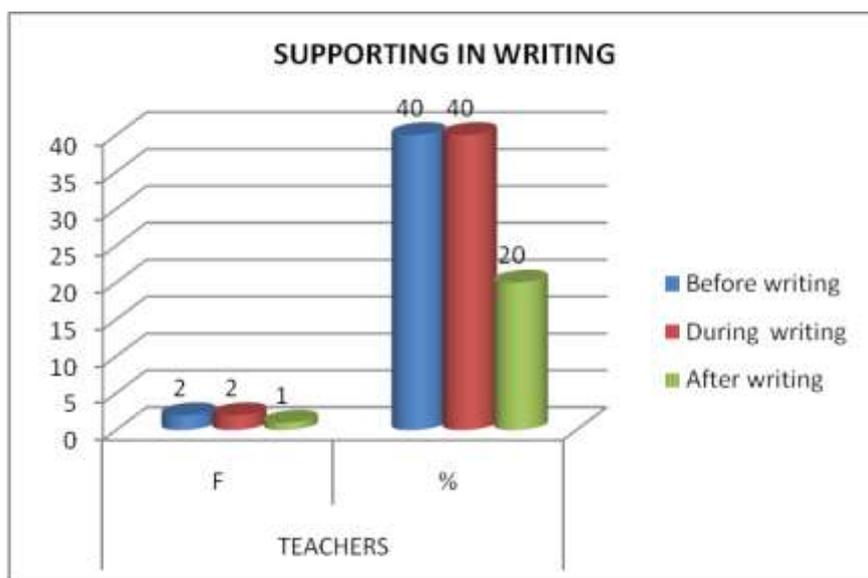
a) Statistics Table

| SUPPORTING IN THE WRITING PROCESS | TEACHERS | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Before writing | 2 | 40 |
| During writing | 2 | 40 |
| After writing | 1 | 20 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey

Responsible: Researcher

a) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

The graph shows that 40% of the surveyed teachers support their students before and during writing and 20% after writing.

Teachers need to apply many strategies to develop the writing skills inside the classroom with their students. They have to support every single stage of the whole process before by planning a topic, explaining the purpose, selecting a current subject,

showing a webbing or mapping the writing plan; during the writing process teachers give support by helping students to identify main and supportive ideas, clarifying, giving models, encouraging students to participate, revising, editing among others; and, after writing they will work on reviewing, discussing, reading, praising and engaging students in a critical self-assessment. Every single stage requires a series of steps that involves a process. Teachers have to support students in the development of the writing skill before, during and after the writing process.

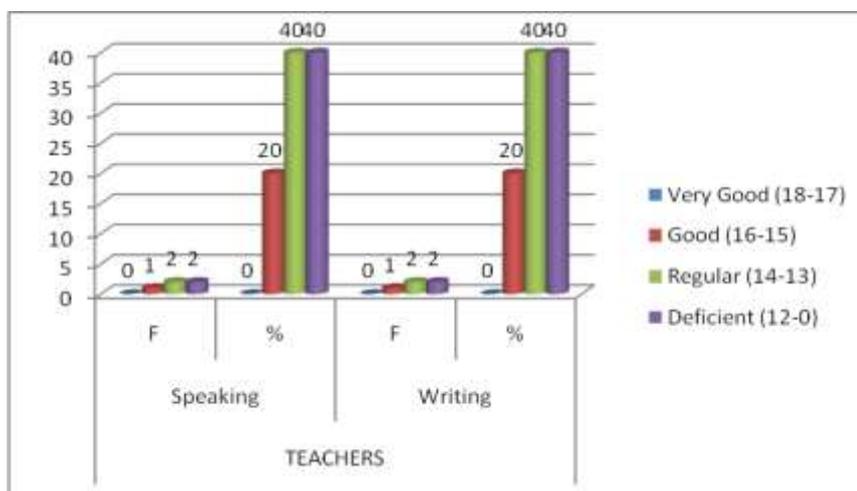
12) Check the student’s performance in the following skills? Point out with a X

a) Statistics Table

| STUDENTS' AVERAGE IN ENGLISH | TEACHERS | | | |
|------------------------------|----------|-----|---------|-----|
| | Speaking | | Writing | |
| | F | % | F | % |
| Very Good (18-17) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Good (16-15) | 1 | 20 | 1 | 20 |
| Regular (14-13) | 2 | 40 | 2 | 40 |
| Deficient (12-0) | 2 | 40 | 2 | 40 |
| TOTAL | 5 | 100 | 5 | 100 |

Source: Teachers' survey
 Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

According to teachers' opinion in the speaking skill: 40% of students are regular, and deficient, and 20% are good ; in writing 40% are regular and deficient, and 20% are good.

The development of microskills of speaking and writing involve a long process because they are productive and their learning requires the application of specific strategies that help students to develop step by step into the English language teaching learning process. The students' results in the speaking and writing skills placed in regular and it is evident that students are facing many problems meanwhile they are trying to produce the English language and this process needs a lot of support by part of the teachers.

STUDENTS' SURVEY

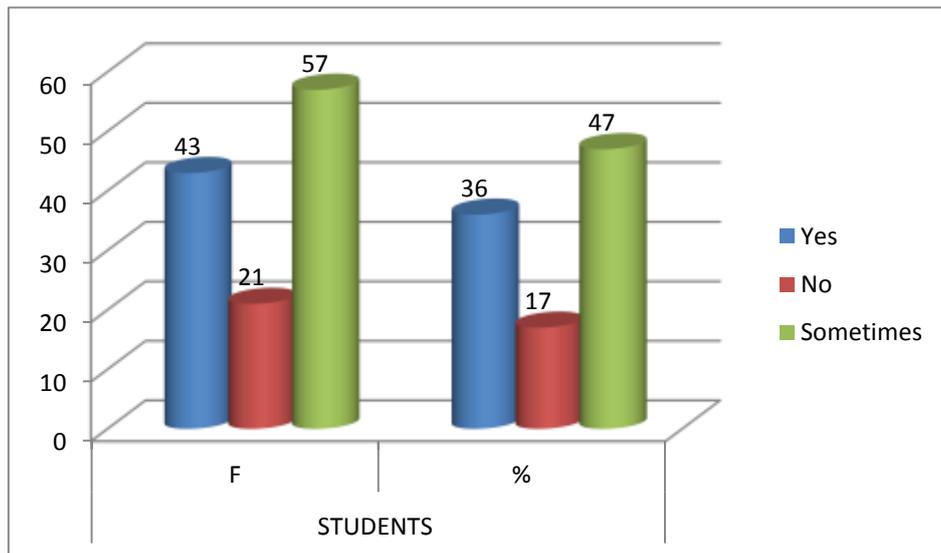
1. Does your teacher apply Specific strategies to develop the speaking skill?

a) Statistics Table

| APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES | STUDENTS | |
|---|----------|-----|
| | F | % |
| Yes | 43 | 36 |
| No | 21 | 17 |
| Sometimes | 57 | 47 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey
Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

According to the students' opinion, 47% of them manifested that teachers sometimes apply them, 36% said that teachers do apply them, and 17% matched that teachers do not apply specific methodological strategies to develop the speaking skill.

So considering students' opinion, teachers just sometimes apply specific strategies to work on the speaking skill with their students even when they said that they did it. The goal of teaching speaking is communicative efficiency. The Speaking skill involves the development of many subskills like: pronunciation, using stress, rhythm and intonation, using the correct forms of words, word order, using the appropriate vocabulary, building argument. Therefore work through the application of specific methodological strategies and effective opportunities; it helps students to learn to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

2) What do you think strategies are for you?

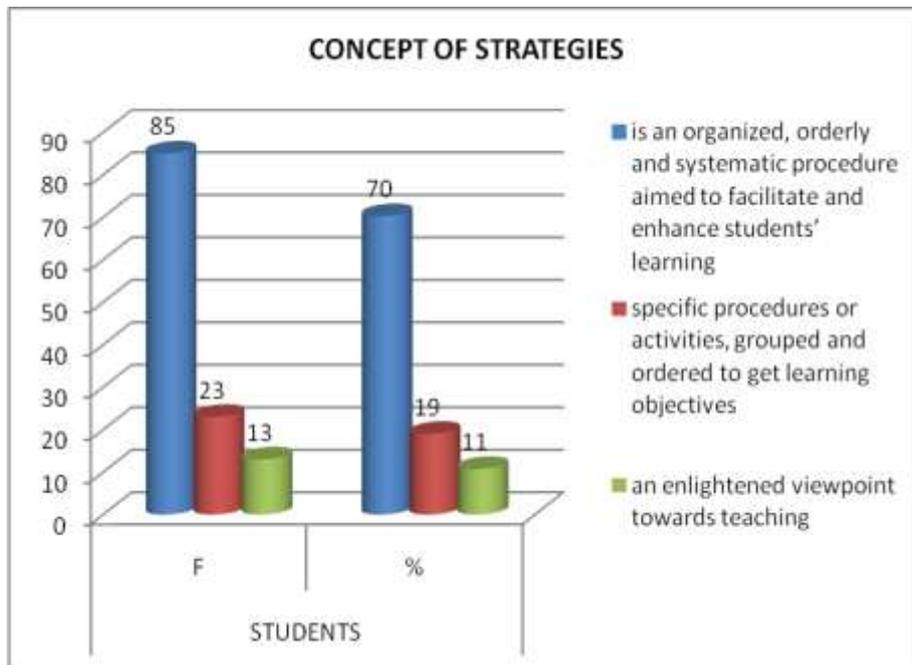
a) Statistics Table

| CONCEPT OF STRATEGIES | STUDENTS | |
|---|------------|------------|
| | F | % |
| an organized, orderly and systematic procedure aimed to facilitate and enhance students' learning | 85 | 70 |
| specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives | 23 | 19 |
| an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching | 13 | 11 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

In the question about the identification of the definition of strategies, 70% of students matched they are an organized, orderly and systematic procedure aimed to facilitate and enhance students' learning, 19% matched specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives; and 11% pointed that they are an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching.

Most of students made a mistake by identifying the methodological strategies definition which was stated as specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives. This is because they are not applying the strategies to become better learners. Learners demonstrate the speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. It is known that speaking is the most important skill and it requires a procedural development of steps to accomplish a real communication.

3) What percentage of English does your teacher speak in class?

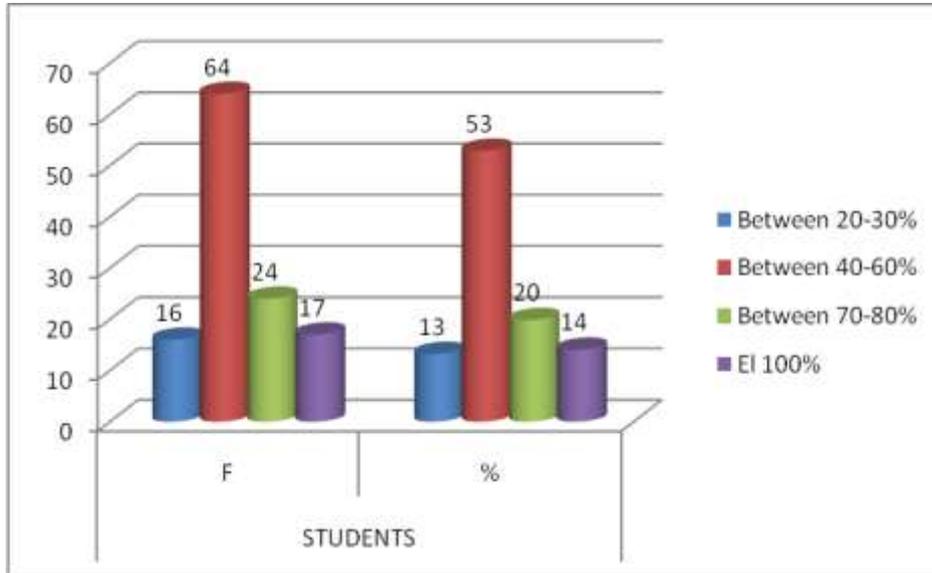
a) Statistics Table

| PERCENTAGE OF LANGUAGE USED IN CLASS | STUDENTS | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | F | % |
| Between 20-30% | 16 | 13 |
| Between 40-60% | 64 | 53 |
| Between 70-80% | 24 | 20 |
| 100% | 17 | 14 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

The graph shows that 53% of students said that teachers talk between 40 and 60 per cent of English in class, 20% between 70 and 80 per cent, 13 between 20 and 30% and 14% matched a hundred percent.

The results show that, teachers do not use the English language as a strategy that help students to learn the target language, according to the theory teachers have to use the language all the time meanwhile they provide authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations.

4) Which thinking activities does your teacher work with you in class?

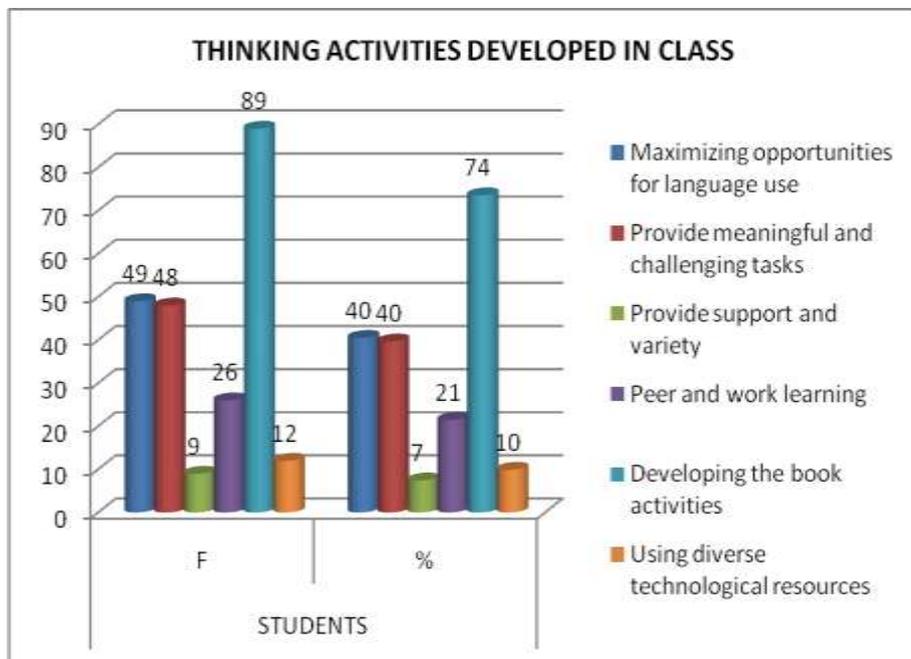
a) Statistics Table

| THINKING ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED IN CLASS | STUDENTS | |
|---|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Maximizing opportunities for language use | 49 | 40 |
| Provide meaningful and challenging tasks | 48 | 40 |
| Provide support and variety | 9 | 7 |
| Peer and work learning | 26 | 21 |
| Developing the book activities | 89 | 74 |
| Using diverse technological resources | 12 | 10 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

About the thinking skills that teachers work in class, 74% answered that students learn by developing the book activities, 40% of students matched maximizing opportunities for language use and providing meaningful and challenging tasks, 21% peer and work learning; 10% using diverse technological resources and 7% providing support and variety.

Speaking skill is developed by applying specific thinking skills such as, maximizing opportunities for language use, providing meaningful and challenge tasks, by providing support for understanding and using diverse technological resources, which are strategies that enable students to acquire a competitive speaking skill and not only developing the book activities. These strategies support a real interaction among students in an authentic context, taking advantage of the resources that there are especially on the internet and make the knowledge easier.

5) Which of the following speaking strategies does your teacher apply to work in class?

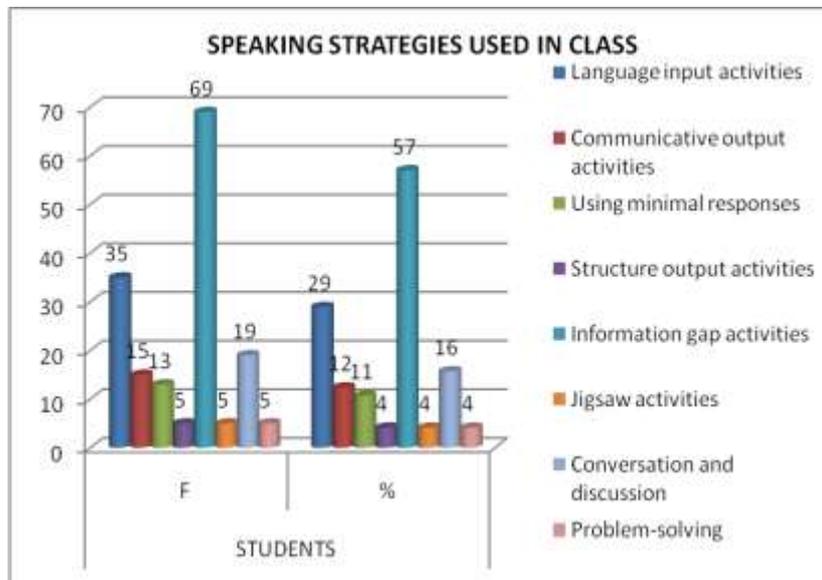
a) Statistics Table

| SPEAKING STRATEGIES USED IN CLASS | STUDENTS | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Language input activities | 35 | 29 |
| Communicative output activities | 15 | 12 |
| Using minimal responses | 13 | 11 |
| Structure output activities | 5 | 4 |
| Information gap activities | 69 | 57 |
| Jigsaw activities | 5 | 4 |
| Conversation and discussion | 19 | 16 |
| Problem-solving | 5 | 4 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

About the speaking strategies that teachers use in class, 57% of students answered information gap activities, 29% matched language input activities, 16% conversation and discussion, 12% communication output activities, 11% using minimal responses and 4% structured output, jigsaw and problem solving activities.

There is a disagreement between teachers and students because the first ones matched that they applied minimal responses while most students pointed information gap activities. Anyway teachers know the appropriate strategies to make speaking skill more interesting through the application of a range of balanced and meaningful strategies that offer the students enough language input, structured output, and communicative output due to they need to provide students enough opportunities to develop communicative skills in a real English language atmosphere.

6) How do you develop extra class spoken practice of the English Language?

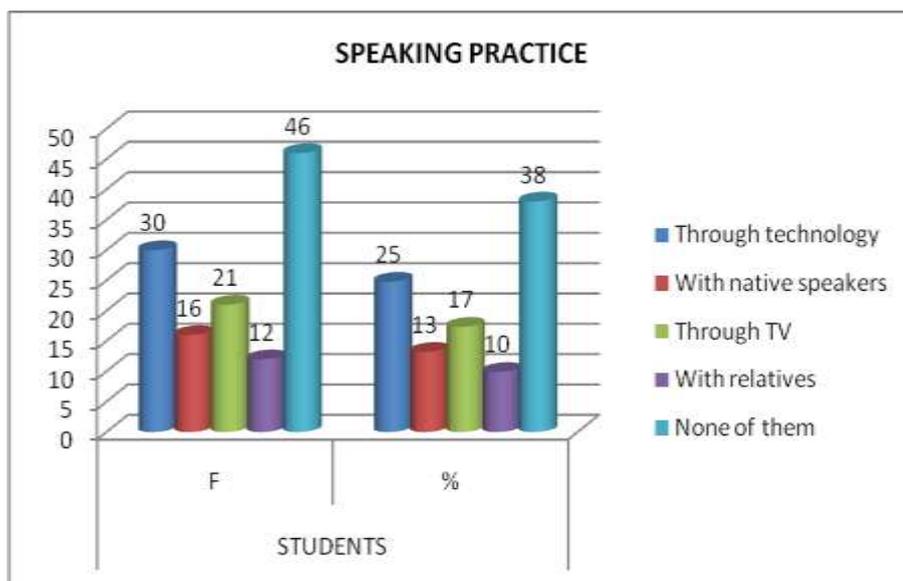
a) Statistics Table

| SPEAKING PRACTICE | STUDENTS | |
|----------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Through technology | 30 | 25 |
| With native speakers | 16 | 13 |
| Through TV | 21 | 17 |
| With relatives | 12 | 10 |
| None of them | 46 | 38 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

38% of students answered that they do not apply any of them, 25% matched through technology, 17% pointed to through TV, 13% with native speakers and 10% with relatives.

There is also a contradiction between the teachers and students results because, the first ones said that students do practice speaking through technology, TV, with

native speakers as an extra class activity; but the second ones state that they do not do extra class spoken practice. The ability to speak a language is the product of language learning and it also a crucial part of the language learning process which needs a lot of extra practice to get certain level of fluency. In fact people who have travelled have learnt the foreign language faster than students who are learning it in a different context where their native language do not help them neither they can have enough practice and interact with other people in the target language

Hypothesis No. 2

The strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

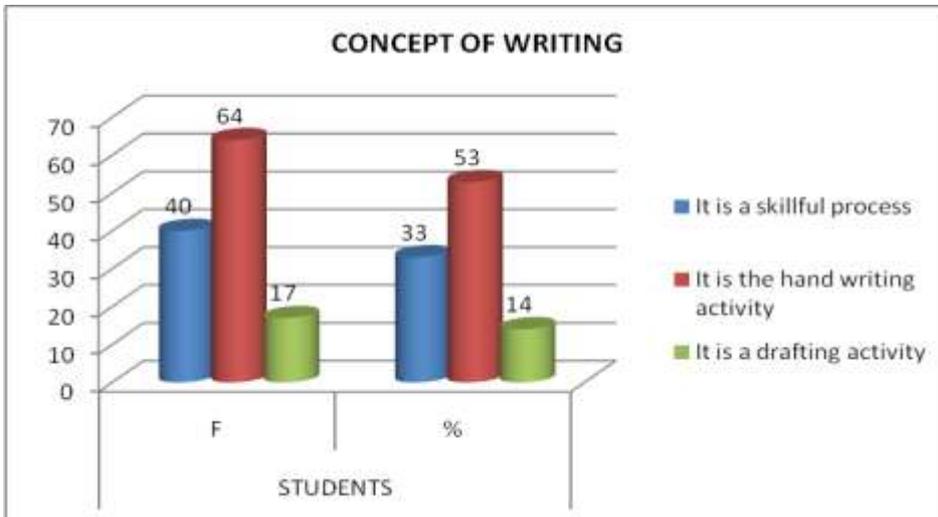
7) How do you think the writing skill in the English language could be? Tick one.

a) Statistics Table

| CONCEPT OF WRITING | STUDENTS | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | F | % |
| It is a skillful process | 40 | 33 |
| It is the hand writing activity | 64 | 53 |
| It is a drafting activity | 17 | 14 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey
Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

53% of students answered that writing is a handwriting activity, 33% pointed out that it is a skillful process and 14% matched that it is a drafting activity.

In this question students were not able to identify what writing means, which according to the theory it is a skillful process that has some stages to be developed. Writing is a productive skill that let students produce language in a written way, it also involves composing and developing information with the clear ability to either tell or retell that information in the form of narratives or descriptions.

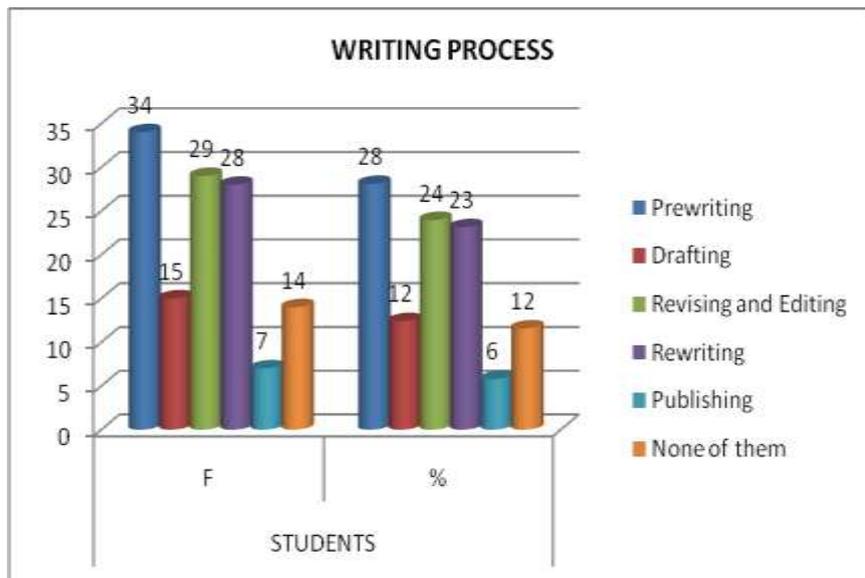
8) Which of these steps of the writing process does your teacher work with you?

a) Statistics Table

| WRITING PROCESS | STUDENTS | |
|----------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Prewriting | 34 | 28 |
| Drafting | 15 | 12 |
| Revising and Editing | 29 | 24 |
| Rewriting | 28 | 23 |
| Publishing | 7 | 6 |
| None of them | 14 | 12 |

Source: Students' survey
Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

About the writing process, 28% of students answered prewriting, 24% matched revising and editing, 23% rewriting, 12% pointed out drafting and none of them, and 6% publishing.

Students are confused about the stages of the writing process. They are not told about these phases nor they have idea about how to develop each one of them.

The theory states that the writing process includes a series of steps such as: (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing) to follow in producing a finished piece of writing. It also assists teachers and students in having the opportunity to plan, draft, edit and the revise any composition that they produce.

9) What type of writing activities does your teacher develop with you to develop the writing skill?

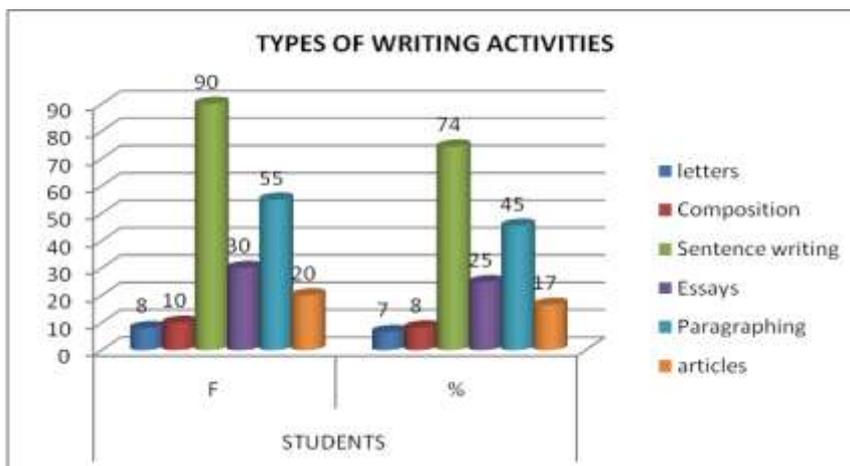
a) Statistics Table

| TYPE OF WRITING ACTIVITIES | STUDENTS | |
|----------------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| letters | 8 | 7 |
| Composition | 10 | 8 |
| Sentence writing | 90 | 74 |
| Essays | 30 | 25 |
| Paragraphing | 55 | 45 |
| articles | 20 | 17 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graphic



c) Interpretation and analysis

The graph shows that 74% of students answered that teachers make them practice writing in sentence writing, 45% in paragraphing, 25% in essays, 17% in articles, 8% in compositions and 7% in letters.

Learning a foreign language and develop the microskills is a very difficult process and writing is one of the productive skill, therefore students have to learn to write by producing language. Writing is developed through many activities such as: composition, summaries, poems, letters, essays, articles etc, therefore, students learn to write by writing, they need regular opportunities at and out of school to write in all topics because it is impossible to develop this skill by only writing sentences.

10) Which of the following writing strategies does your teacher apply in class?

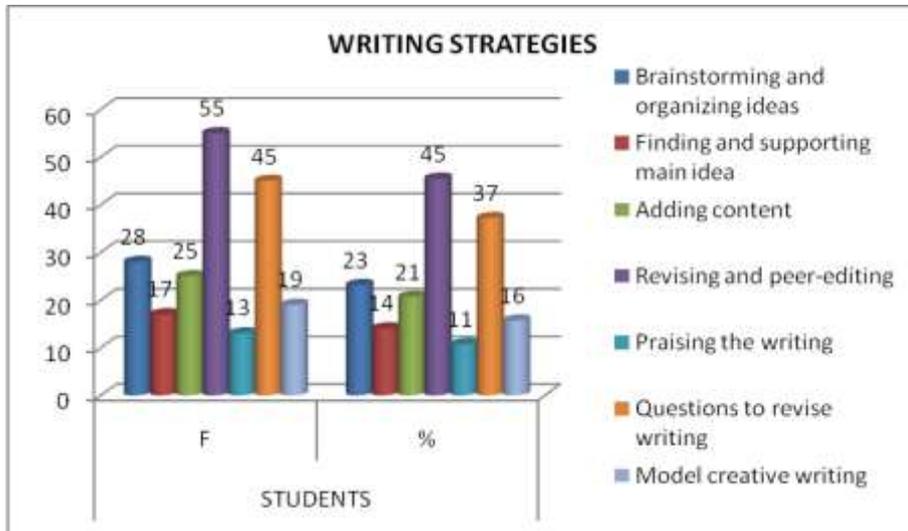
a) Statistics Table

| WRITING STRATEGIES | STUDENTS | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----|
| | F | % |
| Brainstorming and organizing ideas | 28 | 23 |
| Finding and supporting main idea | 17 | 14 |
| Adding content | 25 | 21 |
| Revising and peer-editing | 55 | 45 |
| Praising the writing | 13 | 11 |
| Questions to revise writing | 45 | 37 |
| Model creative writing | 19 | 16 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

About the strategies that teachers use in the writing process 45% of students revising and peer-editing, 37% questions to revise writing, 23% brainstorming and organizing ideas, 21% adding content, 16% model creative writing, 14% finding and supporting the main idea and 11% praising the writing.

According to the theory, Writing strategies are tools writers use to their job. students know how to organize what they have learned about any topic, how to select the best of two possible main ideas as a topic sentence in an information paragraph, how to assess their own work and the work of others for content, clarify form and style, check errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling; revising and praising; publishing their writing in a bulletin board. Strategies help students generate ideas, organizing their thoughts, choosing a purpose, exploring new

ideas, creating a structure the most important points. In this way students learn to elaborate, making stories clearer and more interesting.

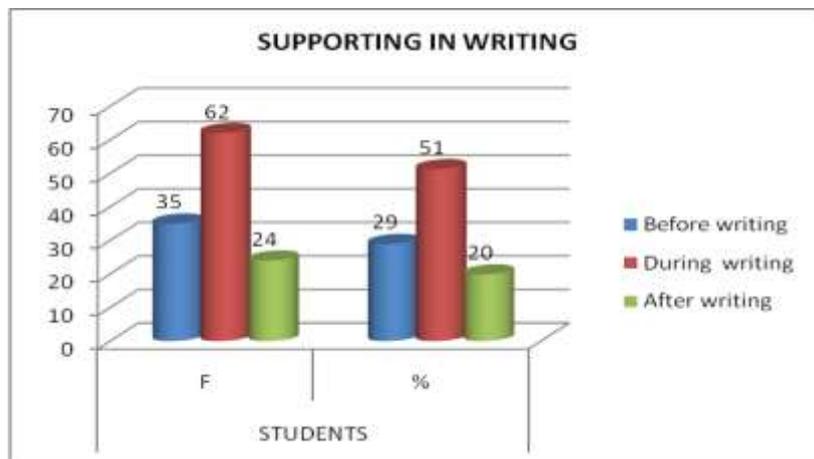
11) When does your teacher support the writing process?

a) Statistics Table

| SUPPORTING IN THE WRITING PROCESS | STUDENTS | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|------------|
| | F | % |
| Before writing | 35 | 29 |
| During writing | 62 | 51 |
| After writing | 24 | 20 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey
Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

51% of students pointed out that their teachers support them during writing, 29% before and 20% after writing.

The results show that teachers support the students during the writing process and the theory says that the application of every single writing strategy requires the teachers give support before, during and after the Writing process. The major outstanding support that teachers have to offer is after the process because it is necessary that students be aware about what they have produced in writing and learn from their mistakes, so that learners progressively improve all the stages of the writing process. It is also essential that students realize about the extra practice that they need to do and the responsibility that they have to be able to produce a foreign language in a correct way.

12) Check your real performance in the following skills?

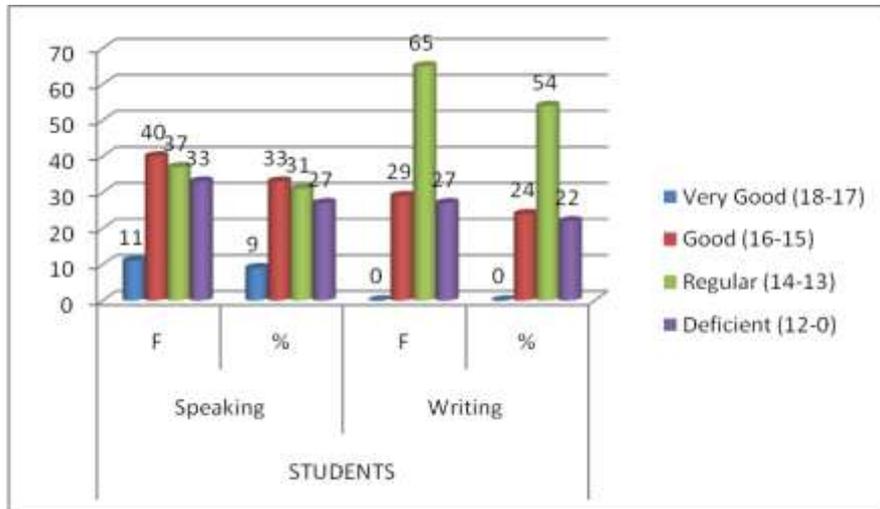
a) Statistics Table

| STUDENTS' AVERAGE IN ENGLISH | STUDENTS | | | |
|------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Speaking | | Writing | |
| | F | % | F | % |
| Very Good (18-17) | 11 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Good (16-15) | 40 | 33 | 29 | 24 |
| Regular (14-13) | 37 | 31 | 65 | 54 |
| Deficient (12-0) | 33 | 27 | 27 | 22 |
| TOTAL | 121 | 100 | 121 | 100 |

Source: Students' survey

Responsible: Researcher

b) Graph



c) Interpretation and analysis

About the average that students have reached in the researched skills the results show: in speaking 33% good, 31% regular, 27% deficient and 9% very good; in writing 54% regular, 24% good and 22% deficient.

The students' performance in relation to the methodological strategies that teachers apply into the English language teaching learning process were not very good, so that if teachers do not work by giving students enough opportunities to speak or developing all the stages of the writing process it is difficult to develop productive skills in a foreign language

g. DISCUSSION

HYPOTHESIS ONE

a) Statement

There is little application of appropriate strategies to develop the speaking skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

b) Demonstration

The first hypothesis has two variables the independent one is the application of appropriate strategies and the dependent variable is the development of the speaking skill of the English Language.

The question number **ONE**, 100% of teachers said that they do apply appropriate methodological strategies to develop the speaking skill. However 47% of students answered that teachers sometimes apply them, therefore teachers work on the speaking skill but in a limited way.

In question **number TWO**, 100% of the teachers identified the methodological strategies definition, as specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives, but 70% of students confuse the method with the methodological strategies definition. This is because teachers do not explain to students the strategies that they use in class and it is evident that there is little application of them in the development of the

speaking skill. If teachers work with specific strategies to support the English language learning students will identify them easily.

In question **number THREE** about the percentage of language used in class 60% of teachers and 53% of students matched that teachers speak between 40 and 60 percent of English into the English language teaching learning process which means that teachers are trying to do their best but it is not enough to give students input and motivate them to produce spoken language.

In question **number FOUR** about the thinking activities that teachers work in class to develop the speaking skill, 100% of them pointed out that they provide support and variety, 74% of students answered that they just develop the book activities. These answers evidence that there is not enough application of appropriate thinking activities like: providing meaningful and challenging tasks, by providing support and variety, and using diverse technological resources.

In question **number FIVE**, the results about the specific strategies that teachers apply to develop the speaking skill were: 80% of teachers answered: using minimal responses, information gap activities, conversation and discussion and problem solving. But, 57% of students answered information gap activities. These results evidence that teachers just make filling gap activities from the book which is not a strategy to produce language. Actually teachers are working in the development of grammar and they do not care about the application of specific strategies to work on the productive speaking skills.

In question **number SIX** about the extra practice of the speaking skill, 60% of teachers answered that students do it by watching TV, and through technology, Teachers also said that time is not enough in the classroom to develop the speaking skill and it is noticed the low performance that they have in this skill. But 38% of students said that they do not do any kind of extra practice in the spoken language. This is because teachers do not ask students to practice extra class activities.

➤ **Decision**

Based on the before analysed results, it has been possible to accept the hypothesis number one which states that, there is little application of appropriate strategies to develop the speaking skill, according to the following reasons: the first one teachers just make students fill gaps in the book; the second one teachers did not do practice: through technology, TV, with native speakers and relatives as extra class activities, and they do not apply specific strategies like: using minimal responses, conversation and discussion into the English Language teaching learning process with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

HYPOTHESIS TWO

a) Statement

The strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

b) Demonstration

In this hypothesis the independent variable is the strategies that teachers apply and the dependent one is the development of the writing skill.

In question **number SEVEN**, which was about the definition of the writing, 80% of teachers identified it as a skilful process meanwhile 53% of students answer that it is the hand writing activity. So that, it is noticeable that teachers do not explain their students about the meaning of writing and all the process to develop in it. Neither they tell students about the strategies that it is necessary to apply when they have to write in a foreign language.

In question **number EIGHT**, was about the steps of the writing process that teachers make students work on, and 100% of teachers said that they develop the prewriting and drafting because it takes too much time to follow the whole writing process in the weekly class, and 28% of students answered prewriting. So that, it is evident that students are just practicing prewriting - (it covers everything that do before starting your rough draft) and they do not follow the whole writing process because it takes too much time and they do not have it, in the weekly class.

Question **number NINE** was about the activities that students do to produce the language through writing. It is seen that 100% of teachers and 74% of students answered that they write sentences which is not enough to develop the writing skill when students are learning a foreign language. Writing includes a series of steps like: prewriting, drafting, revising, rewriting and publishing; and the application of appropriate strategies such as:

Brainstorming and organizing ideas, finding and supporting main idea, adding content, praising the writing and questioning to revise writing etc.; to work on every single phase so that teachers should make students produce longer pieces of writing to support its development effectively.

Question **number TEN**, was done to verify the strategies that teachers apply in the writing production and 100% of teachers answered brainstorming and organizing ideas and question to revise writing, 45% of students answered revising and peer-editing which means that students are not aware of strategies that they should use to develop writing skill, which is a complex process. They need to have a wide background of language in grammar and vocabulary.

Question **number ELEVEN**, was done to check when the teacher supports the writing process, 40% of teachers answered before and during writing, and 51% of students said during the writing process, but if teachers do not develop all the steps of the writing process, they are not responding to students' needs and giving support during writing. There is a clear evidence that, the lack of application of specific strategies to develop the writing process influences the development of Teaching-learning process of the English language.

Question number **TWELVE** was done to validate the students' performance. So, taking into account the opinion of teachers and students; 40% of teachers said that students' performance is regular and deficient and, between 54 and 33% of students placed their

skills performance in regular or in good. Therefore, the researcher can say that teachers are not applying specific strategies to develop writing as well as speaking skill in the English language teaching-learning process and it is evidenced that students have low achievement in these skills.

➤ **Decision**

All the analysis done in the questions supports the argument of the second hypothesis which says that the strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language because most students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School do not follow the whole writing process to produce a composition. Even though teachers are applying strategies of pre-writing and some of them during the writing process, but it is not enough to support the writing skill, due to writing includes a series of steps and the application of appropriate strategies, so that students produce longer pieces of writing.

h. CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis of the obtained results in the instruments applied to teachers as well as to students. The following conclusions can be stated:

- Students are not aware of the methodological strategies definition nor they have a wide knowledge about the application and the procedures that they include in the development of the productive skills in order to reach a good level in the learning of the foreign language.
- Teachers apply some methodological strategies in the English teaching-learning process like: filling gaps, drills, translation from target language into native language and memorizing vocabulary; activities that have characteristics of traditional methodology because these ones are addressed to work on reading, grammar and vocabulary rather than the development of productive skills.
- Teachers apply some methodological strategies to develop the speaking skill, but they are not enough to reach a good level of proficiency. The development of this skill involves the management of appropriate strategies like: language input activities, communicative output techniques, information gap, conversations, and role plays etc., which are used by teachers only sometimes during the process. Also they do not make students support the language production through extra class activities.
- Students have low performance in speaking skill, because teachers are developing the extra practice of the speaking skill in a restricted way. Due to the teachers do not have enough time to make students work through technology, TV or practices with native speakers, students do not reach an acceptable level in the foreign language.

- There is little application of strategies to work in the improvement of the writing skill. Even though teachers know all the steps of the writing process, most of the time, they just work on the development of the drafting step which is not enough to develop a good level in this productive skill. Writing involves a series of procedures that run together to complete the practice of every single subskill.
- Teachers employ some writing activities to develop the writing skill, but they are not sufficient to accomplish a good writing level. The development of the writing skill implies the management of specific writing activities like: Writing letter, composition, essays, paragraphing, articles, parodies, recipes, editorial and opinions, which are not used by teachers in the development of the writing skill.
- The students' performance in speaking and writing is limited because there is little application of specific strategies to work on the development of these skills. That is to practice and to apply appropriate strategies to be developed. This process should be known and well-explained to students because they have to be aware about the steps that every productive skill involves in its developmental course.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers must teach their students about the methodological strategies and the procedures that each one involves, so that students recognize and improve the performance in the development of the productive skills.
- Teachers should be trained in the application of communicative methodology and strategies, due to they need to know specific strategies to work on the development of the productive skills of the English Language process. This way they will be able to overcome the application of traditional methodology and make students improve the English language learning.
- Teachers also should be trained in the benefits of ICTs on the development of the speaking skill and the specific strategies that they have to apply in speaking such as: maximize opportunities for language use, provide meaningful material, provide support and variety, use challenging tasks etc., because students need teacher to support their production during the development of the speaking skill.
- Teachers must encourage students to practice English language outside the class, or at home by using the technology, TV, making friends on the social networks, sending messages by cellphone, listening to English music because they can take advantage of it, working on extra class activities. Students in this way, will improve the level of productive skills.
- Teachers must apply all the steps of the writing process. They should organize the appropriate strategies to work and develop the writing skill such as: brainstorming,

organizing, revising, editing, praising and publishing, in order to make students be aware about the complexity in the development of the writing skill and make them to produce longer pieces of writing.

- Teachers should assume the responsibility for finding the appropriate writing activities, such as: recipes, parodies, poems, postcards, songs, storytelling, letters etc., which are useful for them to have more opportunities to practice this skill by creating authentic and real pieces of writing.
- Teachers and students should become aware of their responsibility in the English language teaching learning process during their whole school life. The first ones by applying the best appropriate methodological strategies and students by taking advantage of their teachers' knowledge.

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k. ANNEXES

PROJECT



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

AREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE, Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

PROJECT

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL. ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.

AUTHOR:

Estalín Fabián Garrochamba Peñafiel.

LOJA – ECUADOR

2012

a. THEME

**METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO
DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF
1ST, 2ND, 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLETATO AT
“LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC
PERIOD 2011-2012.**

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

BACKGROUND

The present research work, will be developed with English teachers and students of “La Dolorosa” High School, for this reason it is necessary to present a short background about it.

In 1940 the Bishop of Loja, Nicanor Roberto Aguirre founded “La Dolorosa” High School, being Mr., Dr, Francisco Valdivieso Samaniego its first principal of this prestigious educational establishment.

In 1980, on October 20, through the Ministry of Education, it was decided to create the “Vicente Anda Aguirre” Night Session, annexed to “La Dolorosa” High School.

In 1987, on September 13, by means of Ministerial decision was created the elementary school “La Dolorosa”, added to “Vicente Anda Aguirre” and “La Dolorosa” High School too. In this way this establishment offers all youth from Loja and the south region, an education accessible to all budgets.

This educational center is constituted by three sessions, in the morning as “La Dolorosa” High School, in the afternoon runs the elementary school “La Dolorosa”; and at night works the “Vicente Anda Aguirre” High School.

The staff in this Educative Unit is constituted by 200 teachers, 81 teachers belong to the morning section, and the others belong to night section; There are also 14 people as part of the administrative staff that work in the morning

session. From this population only 9 teachers are part of the English Department.

The High School is located in Loja city, Jose Antonio Eguiguren and Olmedo streets. It has two sessions the morning one has 992 students and the night session has 649 students. There are 461 students of basic education (eight, ninth and tenth years) and 531 students in Bachillerato who belong to the morning session.

The establishment is considered as a big High school because it has 4.012 square meters in extension of its physical area. It also has 4 concrete blocks that are divided into 30 study classrooms blocks; as well as a basketball and volley ball courts and even an indoor football pitch for students' who practice sports activities.

Nowadays, this educational center is guided by the priest and doctor in sciences of education reverend father Socrates Chinchay Cuenca and as deputy headmaster Dr, Dalton Herrera. The types of students that attend to study there are male in the morning session, and female and male in the night one.

The vision of this institute is to be considered as an academic-formative institution that facilitates to the student a practical knowledge about values, a positive and progressive attitude towards the knowledge, a formative approach to the research, a growing capacity of human-civic relationship and

a permanent education to respond to the labour and social demands of a competitive world.

Its mission is to create a formative-integral compromise, oriented towards the respect, solidarity, sociable Christians and worker youth, in their occupational field. This compromise is carried out through the studies of basic level and the bachillerato in different specialties according to humanistic- scientific demands for having a university projection and a good appeal of life in general.

Its slogan is “For an education of quality where nobody is excluded”, which is supported by an educational curriculum based on the pedagogic pattern of the formative integral system that includes: socio-cognitive, epistemologic, psycopedagogic and transcendency systems.

This institution has the specializations of: Computing, Physics-Mathematics, Chemistry-Biology and Social- Science. In each specialization the students also have some complementary subjects such as: Physical Education, Natural Science and Computing Laboratory, Religion, and Music.

It's necessary to emphasize that the present research project will be developed with collaboration of students in the morning session who are in 1st, 2nd, 3rd years of Bachillerato at “ La Dolorosa” High School.

CURRENT SITUATION OF THE RESEARCHED OBJECT.

The importance of speaking a second language nowadays is increasing around the world. It is known that English is the first spoken language in most of the countries whatever their own languages are. This language is on the internet, the biggest databases are made in it. It lets you to keep in touch and share new information in English and even the scientific experiments are first published in it. For all these reasons, English language is now recognized as an official second language in most countries overseas.

So learning English as a foreign language is a long process that sometimes can become boring because, the environment does not help learners to practice it outside of a classroom. This is a process that requires the application of many strategies that help students to communicate a message by using it fluently.

The methodology that teachers use is essential to achieve some success in students learning of English due to there is not enough class periods to expose students in this context, so that they can receive enough input and exposure before producing the language easily. A speaker of the English language needs to manage listening, reading, speaking and writing and these are macroskills that involve the development of many subskills in each one.

The discussion about the best methods to learn a foreign language has been supported by different theories through the time. The updated tendencies have shown us that nobody learns in the same way, due to there are many learning styles. It is also said that, people have different types of intelligences. However, teachers have not improved their methodology, it keeps the same, most of the time and students do not reach a basic level of the English language during their school lifetime.

Even worse, if a teenager is asked about the reasons for studying English he/she answers that they are not interested in learning it. Sometimes, the teachers' methodology and the way they teach English is not appropriate that they make students demotivate and hate the language rather than encourage them to speak it.

Learning strategies are defined as “specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques -such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task - used by students to enhance their own learning” (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992, p. 63).

The strategies must be designed to develop the four skills on the target language. The strategies are classified in: cognitive, metacognitive, memory related, compensatory, affective and social strategies. They must be chosen by the teachers according to the students' needs. Although, teachers most of the time work with receptive skills rather than the productive ones and they just follow the tasks that the book gives them.

Therefore, They do not design certain strategies that help students become aware of the process that is involved in learning a foreign language. Therefore, It is necessary that teachers choose strategies that fit the different students learning styles.

Speaking and writing are the productive skills in the English language. Students learn to speak through the application of communicative strategies by providing them a real context where they can interact with native speakers, by designing challenging tasks that students need to develop and utilize higher subskills, by creating opportunities to speak or write about situations in real life, by sharing the students' learning responsibility and by diversifying the strategies that can help student to produce the language.

Even though, there is an infinite number of strategies that teacher can use to do their classes more interesting; they do not manage a wide range of strategies that can help them to facilitate the development of the productive skills in the class.

The development of the productive skills is a hard work, because the process involves a current practice in everyday situations where students have the opportunity to communicate in the English language. But, most students do not have this chance even during classes at school neither they have a place where they can practice the language.

It's worthwhile to emphasize that students of our country have faced several problems to learn the English language and some of them even do not want to be forced to study it at higher education. This is a big issue that English teachers must be aware about. All teachers must reflect about the methodology that we are using because it is necessary a big change, which can begin right now that education requires to improve in the whole country where most students do not get a basis level of English learning in secondary school. Neither they have got a regular level in the development of the speaking and writing skills that are the productive ones and therefore the most difficult to develop into the learning process of a foreign language.

Because of, all the before mentioned reasons it is useful to state the following research problem.

RESEARCH PROBLEM.

How the methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at "Dolorosa" High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

a) TEMPORAL

The present research project will be developed during the period 2011-2012

b) SPATIAL

The present research project will be carried at “La Dolorosa” High School which is located in Loja city, on José Antonio Eguiguren and Olmedo streets

c) OBSERVATION UNITS

The groups who will give sufficient information about the stated research theme are the following:

- The students of 1st, 2nd, 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School.
- The English teachers that belong to this institution.

d) SUBPROBLEMS

From stated general problem is deriving the following sub problems:
What kind of strategies do teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School?. Academic period 2011-2012?

What kind of strategies do teachers apply to develop the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School?. Academic period 2011-2012?

c. **JUSTIFICACION**

It's important to develop this research project, because, it will be possible to detect, know and determine, where the English teachers of "La Dolorosa" High School are failing with their students and what kind of methodological strategies they put into practice to develop productive skills in the English language teaching learning process.

According to the arguments, this research project is justified by the following reasons:

Since **scientific** point of view, it will find out the most suitable strategies that can be useful to work on the productive skills. This information will be processed in the theoretical references of the project so that it could be used by authorities and teachers of the researched institution to improve the methodological problems found inside of teaching-learning process.

Since the **educational** point of view, it is so elemental to develop this research project, because it will assist English teachers to become more aware about the last trends in education and in a more specific way in handling specific strategies to develop the productive skills with learners of English as a foreign language.

Moreover it's necessary to point out the application or use of the methodological strategies reflected on the students' performance, and through the development of real speaking and writing tasks that let learners communicate in real contexts by using the English language.

Since **social** point of view, this thesis work will help people to apply some specific strategies that let them learn a foreign language easily and consequently improving their living standard and getting some more jobs opportunities in different parts of the world, specially where English language is spoken.

The present research project is also **important** and **pertinent** because it is genuine and it will generate completely clear ideas of explanations or descriptions of the use of new methodological strategies to develop productive skills inside English language teaching. Moreover it will be developed in one of most important secondary institutions of Loja City, and it also has the support of the researcher who has the sufficient information, economical and material resources to fulfill it, successfully in the determined time.

Finally, it is worth to develop, because it is a previous requirement that undergraduates of the English language career have to achieve in order to get the professional degree as English language teachers.

d. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL

To identify which methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

SPECIFICS

To find out which strategies teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

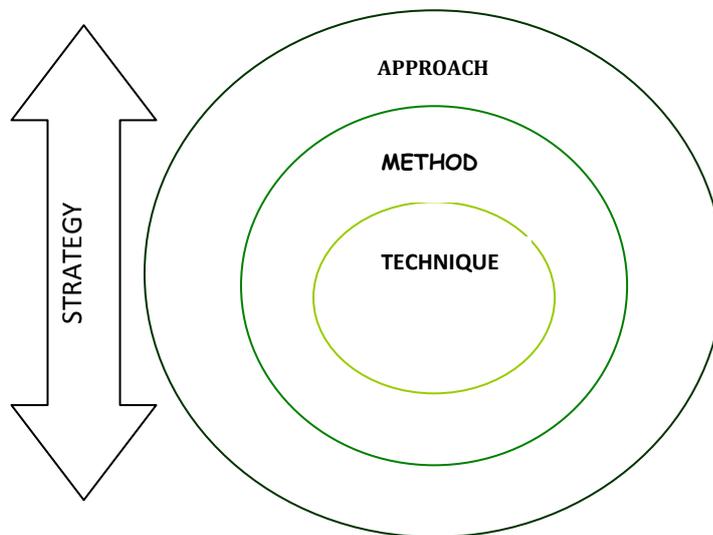
To determine if strategies used by the teachers are supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

e. THEORETICAL FRAME

CHAPTER I

APPROACH, METHOD, TECHNIQUE AND STRATEGY DEFINITION

The simple diagram found below is an attempt to distinguish them:



Adapted from: *The Dimensions of Teaching* (Garcia, 1989)

Based on the diagram, it clearly shows that approach encompasses the whole orientation of teaching. Approach is the broadest of the three, making technique the most specific, and the method found in between approach and technique.

An approach is an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching. It provides philosophy to the whole process of instruction. As presented by the diagram, the method and technique are just parts and parcels of approach. Approach gives the overall wisdom, it provides direction, and sets expectations to the entire spectrum of the

teaching process. Furthermore, approach sets the general rule or general principle to make learning possible.

“A **method**, on the other hand, is an organized, orderly, systematic, and well-planned procedure aimed at facilitating and enhancing students’ learning. It is undertaken according to some rule, which is usually psychological in nature. That is, it considers primarily the abilities, needs, and interests of the learners. Method is employed to achieve certain specific aims of instruction. To make it as an effective instrument, it should be presented with certain amount of efficiency and ease. More so, the teaching method aims to achieve greater teaching and learning output, thus saving time, efforts and even money on the part of both the teacher and the learner. It directs and guides the teacher and the students in undertaking any class lesson or activity”¹

To appraise that teaching method is good and effective, the following characteristics would tell if it is so:

- ✓ good method recognizes individual differences;
- ✓ if it provides students’ learning;
- ✓ if it facilitates growth and development;
- ✓ if it achieves the desired results of the teacher as reflected in her instructional objectives.

¹ RICHARDS Jack and RODGERS Theodore, *Approaches and Methods in language Teaching*, Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pag. 19.

One must remember that there is no such thing as the best method. Thus, there is no single correct way to teach a class. Instead, there are many good ways of teaching the students.

The procedural variation of a method calls for the third term, technique. Technique encompasses the personal style of the teacher in carrying out specific steps of the teaching process. Through technique, teachers enable to develop, create and implement, using her distinctive way, the procedures (method) of teaching.

Strategy also is a term that is being used in education with reference to the methods, techniques and procedures utilized in teaching. The terminology can vary according to the dimension of the procedure, therefore a method, technique or a set of activities can become a strategy in teaching.

The term strategy is derived from the Greek word “strategos”, literally translated as “the art of the general”. As a military term, it appeared in the literature in the latter part of the 18th century, referring to the larger aspects of conducting war. In the context, it was defined as “the efficient application of resources to the accomplishment of objectives”, primarily the defeat of the enemy’s armed forces. While the larger aspects of conducting war were called strategies, smaller movements were referred to as tactics (Levis, 1985).

It was in the writing of American theorists and researchers such as B.O Smith and Hilda Taba where the notion of a teaching strategy first appeared. But it was Willard B. Spalding who used the term strategy earlier when, in 1958, he stated that the curriculum is the strategy by which the schools attempt to fulfill the goals of education. Referring to strategy – as applied to curriculum- as a sound calculation and coordination of the means and ends, Spalding pointed out.

In a paper entitled “ Toward a Theory of Instruction” Smith (1963) defined teaching as a “system of actions intended to induce learning”, and strategy as “ a pattern of acts that serves to obtain certain outcomes and to guard against certain others”. It is obvious that Smith was adapting military concepts to a classroom setting.

Another theorist, Taba (1969) also focused attention on the concept of teaching strategy. In her view, it was useless to study teaching as a global process; rather, it was necessary to identify particular teaching strategies required for particular types of instructional objectives. The main aim of strategies, she proposed, was the development of children’s thinking skills.

Aber et. al (1971) defined teaching strategy as: teaching strategy is a purposefully conceived and determined plan of action. Ideally, the strategy is designed to facilitate a particular kind of learning in a given situation and in terms of a specific learning objective. The strategy is selected for use after a comprehensive

assessment of the specific situation prior to the actual instructional art. The operations of assessing the situation and selecting the strategy represent the “professional expertise” that the teacher brings to the instructional setting.

Another definition of teaching strategy was given by McClosky (1971): teaching strategy is a teaching approach that is used either in solving a classroom problem or in improving instruction.

According to Frankael (1973), teaching strategies represent the combinations of specific procedures or operations, grouped and ordered in definite sequence that teachers can use in the classroom to implement both cognitive and affective objectives.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGIES

Merriam Webster’s Online Dictionary defines pedagogy as “the art, science, or profession of teaching”. If teaching is an art, science, or profession then certain skills and techniques are required to become a teaching “artist,” “scientist,” or professional. Furthermore, these artists, scientists, and professionals demonstrate their skill in the act of teaching. That is to say, (Anderson 2006:232) “A pedagogy (a mental model in the mind of the teacher and the policies of an educational institution) is been shown in learning activities developed and assigned to learners. What are examples of effective net learning activities?”

The strategies that teachers choose to use in their practice are usually determined by the learning theory they expose. Historically, there have been three main

theories of learning, behaviorism, cognitivism and constructivism. An emerging learning theory that arose from the unique environment of the Internet is connectivism. The Internet provides affordable for all four of these learning theories.

“Strategic teaching describes instructional processes that focus directly on fostering student thinking, but goes well beyond that. Strategic teaching and strategic learning are inexorably linked. A strategic teacher has an understanding of the variables of instruction and is aware of the cognitive requirements of learning”². In such an awareness, comes a sense of timing and a style of management. The strategic teacher is the one who:

1. is a thinker and decision maker;
2. possesses a rich knowledge base;
3. is a modeler and a mediator of instruction

Variables of instruction refer to those factors that strategic teachers consider in order to develop instruction. These variables, as the name implies, change, and therefore the teacher must be aware of the nature of change as well as the actual variables themselves. These variables are:

1. characteristics of the learner;
2. material to be learned (curriculum content);

² Jones, B.F., et. al., Eds. 1987. *Strategic Teaching and Learning: Cognitive Instruction in the Content Areas*. Alexandria, Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

3. the criterial task (the goals and outcomes the teacher and learner designate);
4. learning strategies (goal directed activities in which learners engage).

In teaching content at the elementary, middle, or secondary level, the strategic teacher helps guide instruction by focusing on learning strategies that foster thinking skills in relation to the content. In connecting new information to what a student already knows, learning becomes more meaningful, and not simply retained for test-taking purposes. There are numerous strategies that teachers can develop that accomplish this purpose. To give one information is not difficult, but to help one be able to develop the tools to both know what information is relevant and the means to acquire it, is perhaps the most important function of any social studies teacher. There are numerous techniques for engaging students in thinking about content.

“Besides thinking skills, there are such practical matters as how best to present a lesson on weather, teaching map and globe skills, helping students work together in groups, how to question effectively, and how to answer student questions. The first and foremost criterion is that the teacher thoroughly know the content, the second criterion is that the teacher have a set of rules for classroom management that are understood and implemented, and the third criterion is that the teacher have the resourcefulness and knowledge to rehearse unfamiliar techniques, and more importantly, have the capacity to adjust any lesson plan to maintain academic focus. Many of these tasks are learned on-the-job. Nothing you can learn in any course is more valuable than learning what to do when you don't

know what to do. When you can do that, you are well on your way to becoming a great teacher”³.

a) **Strategic Learning**

Strategic learning is, in effect, a highly probable outcome of effective strategic teaching. Reduced to its essentials, strategic learning is learning in which students construct their own meanings, and in the process, become aware of their own thinking. The link between teaching, thinking, and learning is critical. As a teacher, if you are not causing your students to think about what you are presenting, discussing, demonstrating, mediating, guiding, or directing, then you are not doing an effective job. You must be more than a dispenser of information. You must create conditions and an environment that encourages thinking, deepens and broadens it, and which causes students to become aware of how they think.

The process of thinking about how we think is referred to as **metacognition**. In helping students create knowledge, it is useful to think of knowledge as occupying space that can be thought of as a pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid is declarative knowledge, or knowledge of "what is." Declarative knowledge is akin to awareness. One step up on the pyramid is procedural knowledge, or knowledge of "how something works, or functions." At the top of the pyramid is conditional knowledge, or knowledge of "when or why" a particular procedure will work. Conditional knowledge is closely related to the predictive function of knowledge.

³ CROMLEY Jennifer, 2006, “Learning to Think, Learning to Learn”, national Institute for literacy, Washington D.C. Pag. 37.

When students develop a broad and deep system of conditional knowledge, they are able to predict more accurately, solve problems more efficiently, and in a sense, are freer because they can identify and articulate more options from which to choose. Strategic learning is a valuable system to help your students develop conditional knowledge”⁴.

Thinking Skills

Generally, thinking skills are not taught. It is difficult to implement them as part of the curriculum. Human beings are not born with not much more than rudimentary thinking skills. Thinking skills are one of the most important, yet inadequately implemented areas of the curriculum. Certainly a part of helping students develop and improve their thinking skills is connected in some significant way with challenge and discovery. However, it is often the case that what works in a given situation may not work at all in another, different situation. The variables related to thinking skills are themselves quite formidable. Having both developed and taught thinking skills courses at the undergraduate and graduate level, perhaps a good way to begin is to start with the fundamentals, so...

The vocabulary below and the definitions are intended to help the prospective teacher sort out the various thinking skills and terminology associated with curriculum and instructional decision making. When preparing lessons, almost without exception, good teachers seek to help students acquire thinking skills that

⁴ **KIZLIK Bob Dr.** “Information about Strategic Teaching, Strategic Learning and Thinking Skills” Article published in ADPRIMA 2011.

relate to the content of the lesson and, if possible, extend beyond it. Something to remember is that if your students aren't **thinking** about what you're saying or doing, you are not communicating effectively. Good teachers have always known this and use this principle to engage, motivate and keep the attention of their students. The outcome is invariably genuine learning.

But it is important to consider the following terms:

PART I: GLOBAL TERMS

Thinking - thinking refers to the process of creating a structured series of connective transactions between items of perceived information (my own definition).

Metacognition - metacognition refers to awareness and control of one's thinking, including commitment, attitudes and attention.

Critical thinking - critical thinking refers to reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. Critical thinkers try to be aware of their own biases, to be objective and logical.

Creative thinking - refers to the ability to form new combinations of ideas to fulfill a need, or to get original or otherwise appropriate results by the criteria of the domain in question.

PART II: SPECIFIC TERMS

Activating prior knowledge: recalling something learned previously relative to the topic or task

Analyzing skills: core thinking skills that involve clarifying information by examining parts and relationships.

Attention: conscious control of mental focus on particular information.

Attitudes: personally held principles or beliefs that govern much of one's behavior.

Classifying: grouping entities on the basis of their common attributes.

Commitment: an aspect of knowledge and control of self that involves a decision to employ personal energy and resources to control a situation.

Comparing: noting similarities and differences between or among entities.

Composing: the process of developing a composition, which may be written, musical, mechanical, or artistic.

Comprehending: generating meaning or understanding.

Concept formation: organizing information about an entity and associating the information with a label (word).

Conditional information: information about the appropriate use of an action or process important to a task.

Core thinking skills: cognitive operations used in thinking processes.

Creative thinking: original and appropriate thinking.

Critical thinking: using specific dispositions and skills such as analyzing arguments carefully, seeing other points of view, and reaching sound conclusions.

Curriculum: a structured series of intended learning outcomes.

Decision making: selecting from among alternatives.

Declarative information: factual information.

Defining problems: a focusing skill used in clarifying puzzling situations.

Disposition: inclinations to engage in some types of behavior and not to engage in others. Certain dispositions are associated with critical and creative thinking.

Elaborating: adding details, explanations, examples, or other relevant information from prior knowledge.

Encoding skills: remembering skills that involve storing information in long term memory.

Establishing criteria: setting standards for making judgments.

Evaluating (as applied to metacognition): assessing one's current knowledge state.

Evaluating skills: core thinking skills that involve assessing the reasonableness and quality of ideas.

Executive control: evaluating, planning, and regulating the declarative, procedural, and conditional information involved in a task.

Focusing skills: core thinking skills that involve selected to selected pieces of information and ignoring others.

Formulating questions: an information-gathering skill that involves seeking new information through inquiry.

Generating skills: core thinking skills that involve producing new information, meaning, or ideas.

Identifying attributes and components: determining characteristics or parts of something.

Identifying errors: disconfirming or proving the falsehood of statements.

Identifying relationships and patterns: recognizing ways elements are related.

Inferring: going beyond available information to identify what may reasonably be true.

Information-gathering skills: core thinking skills that involve bringing to consciousness the relevant data needed for cognitive processing.

Integrating skills: core skills that involve connecting or combining information.

Knowledge and control of process: a component of metacognition that involves executive control of declarative, procedural, and conditional information relative to a task.

Knowledge domain: a body of information commonly associated with a particular content area or field of study.

Metacognition: a dimension of thinking that involves knowledge and control of self and knowledge and control of process.

Mnemonics: a set of encoding strategies that involve linking bits of information together through visual or semantic connections.

Observing: an information-gathering skill that involves obtaining information through one or more senses.

Oral discourse: talking with other people.

Ordering: sequencing entities according to a given criterion.

Organizing skills: core thinking skills that involve arranging information so that it can be used more effectively.

Philosophic tradition: an approach to studying thinking that focuses on broad issues about the nature and quality of thinking and its role in human behavior.

Planning: developing strategies to reach a specific goal; delineation of end-means relationships.

Predicting: anticipating an outcome based on the use of one's personal knowledge.

Principle formation: recognizing a relationship between or among concepts.

Problem solving: analyzing a perplexing or difficult situation for the purpose of generating a solution.

Procedural information: information about the various actions or processes important to a task.

Psychological tradition: an approach to studying thinking that focuses on the nature of specific cognitive operations.

Recalling skills: remembering skills that involve retrieving information from long-term memory.

Regulating: checking one's progress toward a goal.

Rehearsal: an encoding strategy that involves repeated processing of information.

Remembering skills: core thinking skills that involve conscious efforts to store and retrieve information.

Representing: changing the form of information to show how critical elements are related.

Research: conducting inquiry for the purpose of confirming or validating one or more hypotheses.

Restructuring: changing existing knowledge structures to incorporate new information.

Retrieval: accessing previously encoded information.

Schemata: knowledge structures associated with a specific state, event, or concept

Self-knowledge and self-control: a component of metacognition that involves commitment, attitudes, and attention.

Setting goals: a focusing skill that involves establishing direction and purpose.

Summarizing: combining information efficiently into a cohesive statement.

Thinking processes: relatively complex and time-consuming cognitive operations - such as concept formation, problem solving, and composing, all of which employ one or more core thinking skills.

Verifying: confirming the accuracy, truth, or quality of an observation, hypothesis, claim, or product.

PART III: THINKING PROCESSES

A thinking process is a relatively complex sequence of thinking skills.

Concept formation - organizing information about an entity and associating that information with a label. A concept may be defined a perceived relationship between two or more facts.

Principle formation - recognizing a relationship between or among concepts.

Comprehending - generating meaning or understanding by relating new information to prior knowledge.

Problem solving - analyzing a perplexing or difficult situation for the purpose of generating a solution.

Decision making - the process of selecting from among available alternatives.

Research - conducting inquiry for the purpose of confirming or validating one or more hypotheses.

Composing - developing a product, which may be written, musical, mechanical, or artistic.

Oral discourse - talking with other people.

PART IV. CORE THINKING SKILLS

“Thinking skills are relatively specific cognitive operations that can be considered the "building blocks" of thinking. The following (1) have a sound basis in the research and theoretical literature, (2) are important for students to be able to do, and (3) can be taught and reinforced in school”⁵.

FOCUSING SKILLS - attending to selected pieces of information and ignoring others.

1. Defining problems: clarifying needs, discrepancies, or puzzling situations.
2. Setting goals: establishing direction and purpose.

INFORMATION GATHERING SKILLS - bringing to consciousness the

⁵ Idem

relative data needed for cognitive processing.

3. Observing: obtaining information through one or more senses.
4. Formulating questions: seeing new information through inquiry.

REMEMBERING SKILLS - storing and retrieving information.

5. Encoding: storing information in long-term memory.
6. Recalling: retrieving information from long-term memory.

ORGANIZING SKILLS - arranging information so it can be used more effectively.

7. Comparing: noting similarities and differences between or among entities.
8. Classifying: grouping and labeling entities on the basis of their attributes.
9. Ordering: sequencing entities according to a given criterion.
10. Representing: changing the form, but not the substance of information.

ANALYZING SKILLS - clarifying existing information by examining parts and relationships.

11. Identifying attributes and components: determining characteristics or the parts of something.
12. Identifying relationships and patterns: recognizing ways elements are related.
13. Identifying main ideas: identifying the central element; for example the hierarchy of key ideas in a message or line of reasoning.

14. Identifying errors: recognizing logical fallacies and other mistakes and, where possible, correcting them.

GENERATING SKILLS - producing new information, meaning or ideas.

15. Inferring: going beyond available information to identify what may reasonably be true.

16. Predicting: anticipating next events, or the outcome of a situation.

17. Elaborating: explaining by adding details, examples, or other relevant information.

INTEGRATING SKILLS - connecting and combining information.

18. Summarizing: combining information efficiently into a cohesive statement.

19. Restructuring: changing existing knowledge structures to incorporate new information.

EVALUATING SKILLS - assessing the reasonableness and quality of ideas.

20. Establishing criteria: setting standards for making judgments.

21. Verifying: confirming the accuracy of claims.

STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

“The English language learners in the classroom may be very different in their

background, skills, and past experience from the other students you are teaching. Some may have come to the U.S. from a country in which they attended school regularly and will bring with them literacy skills and content knowledge, although in another language. Other students may come with a history of survival within a war-torn country where there was no opportunity for consistent--or any--schooling. There will be differences in home background as well. Many will belong to very low-income families; the parents of some of these, however, may have been highly educated in their own country, and may have once held professional positions. The resources and the needs that the individual students bring are therefore often likely to be very different.

The first step is answering the question "Who are they?", that is to say that it is necessary for teacher understand students' needs, resources the students bring and these will help the teacher to plan instructional goals and to build a classroom environment that will enhance learning for all of students".⁶

WHO ARE THEY?

Although ELL students come from diverse backgrounds, they have several common needs. Certainly, they need to build their oral English skills. They also need to acquire reading and writing skills in English. And they must attempt to maintain a learning continuum in the content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, and social studies). Some ELL students will have other needs that will make the

⁶ Brown, A.L., Bransford, J.D., Ferrara, R.A., & Campione, J.C. (1983). Learning, remembering, and understanding. In J.H. Flavell & E.M. Markman (Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology: Vol. III. Cognitive development* (pp. 106-126). New York: John Wiley & Sons, p. 148.

task of learning much more difficult. Some come from places where schooling is very different. Some may have large gaps in their schooling while others may not have had any formal schooling and may lack important native language literacy skills that one would normally expect for students of their age.

ELL students are also diverse in their economic backgrounds. Some may come from backgrounds where there are financial difficulties or health problems. These students may need support from health and social service agencies. Or, they may simply need your understanding about some of the special circumstances that they face. It may be that both their parents work long hours and cannot help with homework, or they may be required to babysit brothers and sisters until late each evening, making it difficult to complete all of the assigned homework.

The important point to remember is that any individual student presents a profile of aptitudes and abilities in subject areas and skills, and that this is true for students who are learning English as much as for native English speakers. However, the student who is learning English will have more trouble in expressing his or her level of understanding and capabilities in the second language.

All children bring unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to the classroom. ELL students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can offer many resources for the entire classroom including:

- Information -- about other countries and their cultures, customs, and

resources;

- New perspectives -- about the world, about society, about beliefs; and
- Opportunities -- for exposure to other languages, for sharing ways of thinking and doing things that might otherwise be taken for granted.

When the information, perspectives, and opportunities are offered by the presence of students from other language and cultural backgrounds are used as a resource for instruction, the whole class benefits.

Students build awareness of other points of view and other ways of understanding and, consequently, come to learn more about themselves.

As a classroom teacher, you can develop approaches and practices for working with ELL students that will allow you to include them in instruction with English speaking students. Through your experience, you are able to work with students who differ in levels of ability, in areas of strength, and in special skills or aptitudes.⁷

Here are some strategies that can help teachers to keep students motivated to learn a new language:

⁷ Baron, J.B. and Sternberg, R.J. 1987. *Teaching Thinking Skills: Theory and Practice*. New York: W.H. Freeman.

UNDERSTANDING SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Research has shown that many commonly held "folklore" beliefs about children and language learning are, in fact, inaccurate. The following points about second language learning should be helpful for a teacher in understanding more about ELL students' efforts to learn English.

“It is not simple or easy for students to learn a second language. Learning a second language is a big task for anyone. After all, while learning a first language is a process that involves much of a young child's day, ELLs must work even harder to acquire a second language. For children as for adults, it can be difficult emotionally to take the step into a new language and culture. Children, perhaps even more than adults, can be shy and embarrassed around others when trying out beginning language skills.

Learners need time to learn a new language. Despite the common view that children have special abilities for learning language, research shows that, in fact, older children and adults have the ability to learn the vocabulary and grammar of a new language faster than younger children. This is because older children and adults have already developed learning strategies and, through learning their primary language, have formed an explicit understanding of language rules and structures that can help them in learning a second language. Yet, because they appear proficient with smaller vocabulary and simple phrases and quickly gain native-like pronunciation, young children are often perceived to develop second language proficiency quickly.

Fluency on the playground does not necessarily mean proficiency in the classroom. Often, we may hear a student conversing easily in English on the playground with other students. This, however, does not mean that she/he has become fluent in English; although social conversational skills are important, they are not sufficient for classroom-based academic learning. Yet, it is easy to overlook the fact that academic language can still be challenging and adversely affect the student's academic performance even though he/she is fluent in everyday conversations. In fact, a child who is fluent in English on the playground is likely to require four to six years to acquire the level of proficiency needed for successful academic learning (Collier 1989)⁸.

Different patterns in learning a second language (e.g., error patterns) may also occur based on the learner's first language. For example, a student whose first language does not mark definite and indefinite references may have a hard time acquiring the use of English articles.

Silence is sometimes needed. Students may be silent at times as they learn to speak a second language. Some learners need to focus more on listening than speaking, especially during the early stages of learning a new language. For others, there may be a need to briefly "tune out" at points in the course of a day to "recharge" from the constant effort of listening and speaking in a new language.

⁸ BAKER Laurie, GREENBLATT Leslie, McNEELY J. Robert, and MALARZ Lynn, 1994, NCBE (The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Program) Information Guide Series, Number 19

Silence may also occur in extended pauses before a student answers a question. Allow students additional time to collect their thoughts and structure their answer. Moving too quickly to the next student discourages efforts to respond; in contrast, recognizing that the student needs more time to answer lets the student know that you are interested in listening.

Errors can indicate progress: As with first language acquisition, errors can actually have a positive meaning. They often appear when a learner is trying out new grammatical structures. When the focus is on communicating, direct correction of errors can hinder students' efforts and discourage further attempts to express ideas with the language skills they have available. Rather than correct errors directly, a teacher can continue the dialogue by restating what the student has said to model the correct form.

INSTRUCTION IN THE ACTIVE LEARNING CLASSROOM

“Valuing the diverse resources that ELL students bring to the classroom and being sensitive to their unique needs can serve to build an instructional environment that can benefit all students. Current education research and reform focus on increasing student participation in instruction and on basing instruction on the real-life needs of students. An active learning instructional model for ELL students includes elements that address the special language-related needs and cultural differences of students who are learning English. There are five key instructional elements to active learning for ELL students.

- The classroom should be predictable and accepting of all students. All students are able to focus on and enjoy learning more when the school and classroom make them feel safe comfortable with themselves and with their surroundings. Teachers can increase comfort level through structured classroom rules and activity patterns, explicit expectations, and genuine care and concern for each student.
- Instructional activities should maximize opportunities for language use. Opportunities for substantive, sustained dialogue are critical to challenging students' abilities to communicate ideas, formulate questions, and use language for higher order thinking. Each student, at his or her own level of proficiency, should have opportunities to communicate meaningfully in this way.
- Instructional tasks should involve students as active participants. Students contribute and learn more effectively when they are able to play a role in structuring their own learning, when tasks are oriented toward discovery of concepts and answers to questions, and when the content is both meaningful and challenging.
- Instructional interactions should provide support for student understanding. Teachers should ensure that students understand the concepts and materials being presented. For ELL students this includes providing support for the students' understanding of instruction presented in English.

- Instructional content should utilize student diversity. Incorporating diversity into the classroom provides ELL students with social support, offers all students opportunities to recognize and validate different cultural perspectives, and provides all students information on other cultures and exposure to other languages. Also, examples and information relevant to ELL students' backgrounds assist them in understanding content”⁹.

CREATE AN ACCEPTING AND PREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

“A supportive environment is built by the teacher on several grounds. There is acceptance, interest, and understanding of different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and customs. Explicit information on what is expected of students is provided and is reinforced through clearly structured daily patterns and class activities. These provide important social and practical bases for students, especially ELL students.

When students are freed of the need to interpret expectations and figure out task structures, they can concentrate on and take risks in learning.

- Provide a clear acceptance of each student: Treat ELLs as individuals and as equal members of the class. Recognize and be aware of cultural differences; however, don't assume that, because a student comes from a particular language or cultural group, he/she shares all the beliefs or customs of that group. Also, understand that singling out students as spokespersons for a culture may make them uncomfortable. Show

⁹ Idem

acceptance by making the environment more accessible to ELL students. One way is to place signs in the student's language and in English to identify areas in the classroom (e.g., "class library," "science materials," "quiet work center") and around the building (e.g., "office," "cafeteria"). Such multilingual signs make families as well as students feel more welcome in the school.

- Make classroom activities structured and predictable: Give students a clear understanding of how tasks proceed. For example, if students work in cooperative groups, begin by describing how they work together. Make lists of student roles and group responsibilities, and explain and discuss these. Keep the basic structure for cooperative group work consistent. In this way, students will know what is expected of them, even though the specific content or tasks will change. Ensure that students have a clear sense of their daily schedules, even if they vary from day to day. Students will be less able to focus on instruction when they are concerned about where they should be or what they should be doing. When a change in schedule is needed, give as much advance notice as possible. Do not rely on simply telling students; add other ways of letting students know about the change, such as correcting a posted schedule, or crossing off the usual activity and adding in the new activity.
- Let students know what is expected of them: For all students, a clear, shared understanding of the rules for participating in the class, acceptable behavior during and after completing specific class activities, and general

expectations for student behavior are important. For ELL students who are often struggling with cultural differences as well as language, it is even more important to:

- explain or demonstrate expectations about classroom rules and behaviors (e.g., provide specific information on how to gain the teacher's attention, how use of a particular activity center is shared); and
 - assist students whose cultural definitions of being a student differ from class expectations (e.g., describe the types of activities that the class will do, how to ask questions within these different activities, or when and how it is acceptable to interrupt the teacher or to move about the classroom).
- Have high expectations for all students: An environment in which students feel comfortable and accepted is also one where all students feel that their participation is valued and that it is likely to lead to success. Positive, high expectations for performance are important for ELL students within any classroom. They, as much as English proficient students, need to develop content knowledge and the higher order thinking skills that will be required of them as they progress into further training or employment. There must be opportunities provided for ELL students to work with challenging tasks. ELL students should be included, for example, in cooperative working groups and given responsibilities that allow them to contribute to the group goal.

High expectations for ELL students are important not only within the classroom but within the school. The context of the school must be one in which all students are viewed as highly capable and able to take on challenging work successfully”¹⁰.

MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANGUAGE USE

Language is really central to learning for all students, ELLs and native English speakers alike. Through experience in trying to express ideas, formulate questions, and explain solutions, students' use of language supports their development of higher order thinking skills. The following points are important ways to maximize language use.

- Ask questions that require new or extended responses: The teacher's questions should elicit new knowledge, new responses, and thoughtful efforts from students. They should require answers that go beyond a single word or predictable patterns. Students can be asked to expand on their answers by giving reasons why they believe a particular response is correct, by explaining how they arrived at a particular conclusion, or by expanding upon a particular response by creating a logical follow-on statement.
- Create opportunities for sustained dialogue and substantive language use It is often hard to give many students the opportunities needed for meaningful, sustained dialogue within a teacher-centered instructional

¹⁰ Idem

activity. To maximize opportunities for students to use language, teachers can plan to include other ways of organizing learning activities. For example, in cooperative learning groups students use language together to accomplish academic tasks. In reciprocal teaching models, each student or group is responsible for completing then sharing/teaching one portion of a given task.

Opportunities for maximizing language use and engaging in a sustained dialogue should occur in both written and oral English. Students can write in daily journals, seen by only themselves and the teacher.

This type of writing should be encouraged for students at all levels. Some ELL students may be too embarrassed to write at first; they may be afraid of not writing everything correctly. The focus in this type of writing, however, should be on communicating.

Students should be given opportunities to write about what they have observed or learned. Less English proficient ELLs can be paired to work with other, more proficient students or be encouraged to include illustrations when they report their observations. The teacher should also ensure that there are substantive opportunities for students to use oral and written language to define, summarize, and report on activities. Learning takes place often through students' efforts to summarize what they have observed, explain their ideas about a topic to others, and answer questions about their presentations. ELL students' language proficiency may not be fully equal to the task; however, they should be

encouraged to present their ideas using the oral, written, and nonlinguistic communication skills they do have. This can be supplemented through small group work where students learn from each other as they record observations and prepare oral presentations.

- Provide opportunities for language use in multiple settings: Opportunities for meaningful language use should be provided in a variety of situations: small groups, with a variety of groupings (i.e., in terms of English proficiency); peer-peer dyads (again, with a variety of groupings); and teacher-student dyads. Each situation will place its own demands on students and expose them to varied types of language use.

The physical layout of the room should be structured to support flexible interaction among students.

There can be activity areas where students can meet in small groups or the teacher can meet with a student, or the furniture in the room can be arranged and rearranged to match the needs of an activity.

- Focus on communication: When the focus is on communicating or discussing ideas, specific error correction should be given a minor role. This does not mean that errors are never corrected; it means that this should be done as a specific editing step, apart from the actual production of the written piece. Similarly, in oral language use, constant, insistent

correction of errors will discourage ELLs from using language to communicate.

Indirect modeling of a corrected form in the context of a response is preferable to direct correction.

PROVIDE FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN MEANINGFUL AND CHALLENGING TASKS

“Many teachers now plan for instruction of both ELL and English proficient students as they structure their classroom activities. With this type of diversity in the class, some shifts in approach are needed.

However, the types of adaptations that can be helpful to ELL students are also those that recent research and reform efforts indicate are effective for all students.

For example, many descriptions of instructional innovation focus on increasing student participation in ways that result in students asking questions and constructing knowledge, through a process of discovery to arrive at new information that is meaningful and that expands students knowledge.

An important goal is to create or increase the level of "authentic" (Newmann and Wehlage, 1993) instruction, i.e., instruction that results in learning that is relevant and meaningful beyond success in the classroom task alone”¹¹.

¹¹ Newmann, F. M., and Wehlage, G. G. (1993). Five standards of authentic instruction. *Educational Leadership*, 50, 7, April, 8-12.

- Give students responsibility for their own learning: In active participation, students assist the teacher in defining the goals of instruction and identifying specific content to be examined or questions to be addressed. Students also play active roles in developing the knowledge that is to be learned (e.g., students observe and report on what they have observed, write to organizations for needed information, and assist each other in interpreting and summarizing information). Active participation also involves some shifting of roles and responsibilities; teachers become less directive and more facilitative, while students assume increasing responsibility.

ELL students need to participate as much as other students. Their participation can be at a level that is less demanding linguistically, but still requires higher order thinking skills and allows them to demonstrate or provide information in nonlinguistic ways. For example, using limited written text, an ELL student with very little oral or written proficiency in English can create a pictorial record of what was observed in a science class, noting important differences from one event to the next.

- Develop the use of a discovery process: When students take an active role in constructing new knowledge, they use what they already know to identify questions and seek new answers. A discovery process is one in which students participate in defining the questions to be asked, develop

hypotheses about the answers, work together to define ways to obtain the information they need to test their hypotheses, gather information, and summarize and interpret their findings. Through these steps, students learn new content in a way that allows them to build ownership of what they are learning. They are also learning how to learn.

- Include the use of cooperative student efforts: Recent findings about how people learn emphasize the social nature of learning. Many successful examples of classroom innovation with ELL students show the value of using cooperative working groups composed of heterogeneous groups of students, including students at different levels of ability.

The composition of groups should be carefully considered and should be flexible so that students experience working with different individuals. Mixing ELL and English proficient students within groups promotes opportunities to hear and use English within a meaningful, goal-directed context.

Learning to work in cooperative groups requires practice and guidance for the students. Formal roles should be assigned to each member of a group (e.g., note-taker, reporter, group discussion leader), and these roles should be rotated. At older grades, as students identify different tasks to be accomplished by a group, students might define and assign their own responsibilities. In all cases, the use of group work requires attention to ensure that each individual has opportunities and responsibilities in contributing to the development of the overall product.

Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that some cultural groups prefer independent rather than cooperative learning structures and activities. Teachers may want to consider adjusting the balance of learning activities for students to accommodate such differences and to provide more support, thereby allowing students to gradually become more comfortable in these activities.

- Make learning relevant to the students' experience: Content matter is more meaningful for students when it relates to their background and experience.

Furthermore, new knowledge is best learned and retained when it can be linked to existing "funds of knowledge" (Moll et al. 1990) so new content should be introduced through its relationship to an already understood concept. For example, a discussion of food cycles can begin with a discussion of foods commonly found in students' homes and communities.

It is important that the learning experience regularly draws links between home, the community, and the classroom because this serves to contextualize and make content meaningful for students. An active learning instructional approach ultimately seeks to develop in students a view of themselves as learners in all aspects of their lives, not only in the classroom. Students should see opportunities and resources for learning outside of the classroom as well. Whenever possible, the resources of the home and community should be used. For example, when a class is learning about structure, a parent who is a carpenter can be called upon to explain how the use of different materials can

affect the design and strength of a structure (taking into account function, strength, flexibility, and so on).

- Use thematic integration of content across subject areas: Learning is also made more meaningful when it is contextualized within a broader topic. Mathematics, social studies, and science can all become interrelated through their common reference to the same theme or topic of interest. In this way different perspectives on the topic are developed through linkages across different types of learning activities.
- Build in-depth investigation of content: Instruction is more challenging and engaging when it provides in-depth examination of fewer topics rather than more limited coverage of a broader range of topics. Furthermore, a comprehensive exploration of one or more content areas promotes understanding and helps students retain what they learn. Also, integrated, thematic curricula that address the same topic across different content areas provide students opportunities to explore a given subject in greater depth.
- Design activities that promote higher order thinking skill: Classroom tasks should challenge students by requiring them to develop and utilize higher order skills.

Higher order thinking activities require students to use what they know to generate new information (e.g., to solve problems, integrate information, or compare and contrast). Higher order skills are utilized, for example, when students are asked to review a folktale from one country that they have just

read, to identify another folktale from their own background that they think makes a similar point, and to explain the similarities and differences. This is in contrast to lower order thinking skills such as rote repetition of responses or memorization of facts”¹².

PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR UNDERSTANDING

Students need opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning-to seek out information and formulate answers. This is what the active learning instructional model provides. However, essential to the process is the support provided by the teacher. As a partner in students' investigations of new content, the teacher should:

Guide and facilitate students' efforts: The teacher's input as a facilitator and guide to students should be carried out in a variety of ways, such as:

- asking open-ended questions that invite comparison and contrast, and prompt students to integrate what they have observed, draw conclusions, or state hypotheses;
- assisting students in identifying needed resources, including setting up linkages with resources in the local community (e.g., local experts who could visit, field trips to organizations, and so on);
- structuring learning activities that require students to work cooperatively and modeling the different group member roles.

¹² Idem

- encouraging students to discuss concepts they are learning, to share their thoughts, and to express further questions that they would like to tackle;
- establishing long-term dialogues with students about the work they are doing, either in regular teacher/student conferences or dialogue journals;
- setting up opportunities for students to demonstrate or exhibit their work to other classes in the school as a means of prompting further dialogue outside of the classroom.

a) Monitor and adapt speech to ELL students

In using English with ELL students, the teacher should also listen carefully to his/her own language use and try to adapt it to meet the students' level of understanding of English. For example, the following can help a student to gain a better understanding of what is being said:

- restate complex sentences as a sequence of simple sentences;
- avoid or explain use of idiomatic expressions;
- restate at a slower rate when needed, but make sure that the pace is not so slow that normal intonation and stress patterns become distorted;
- pause often to allow students to process what they hear;
- provide specific explanations of key words and special or technical vocabulary, using examples and nonlinguistic props when possible; use everyday language; and
- provide explanations for the indirect use of language (i.e., indirect management strategies may need to be explained. For example, an

ELL student may understand the statement, "I like the way Mary is sitting" merely as a simple statement rather than as a referenced example of good behavior).

b) Provide additional support for understanding English

ELL students will need additional support to assist them in understanding the instruction provided in English. This support will be helpful, however, to all students in the class. The teacher should provide nonlinguistic examples that help to explain or clarify the content that is presented. Some suggestions are:

- bring in objects, photographs, or other materials as examples;
- use visual organizers and graphics to organize, illustrate, and point out key points;
- use demonstrations or role playing to illustrate a concept;
- provide notes (perhaps an outline of the lesson) to students for their later review of what was presented; and
- allow time for students to discuss what they learn and generate questions in areas that require clarification. Have other students try to answer the questions that arise.

It will be important for the teacher to monitor students' work closely to be able to provide assistance when needed. Do not rely exclusively on oral responses or spoken language when assessing how well ELL students have learned

specific content. Other forms of assessment can be based on written work, demonstrations, or special projects.

c) Work with peers

Students can also be supported through working with peers. This should entail working with a variety of other students, both ELLs and English speakers, at different types of activities. In some activities, for example, it may be advantageous to mix ELLs with English proficient peers in a cooperative group effort (projects that have a lot of hands-on involvement often work well in this setting). This opportunity to work with proficient English speakers can be motivating for ELL students, while also providing meaningful, goal-directed opportunities for them to use English. ELL students will also benefit from one-on-one work with English proficient students, especially ones who have shown interest in or a special ability for working in tandem with students who are not fully proficient in English.

Larger groups that include multiple ELL and English proficient students also offer certain advantages.

For example, two ELL students from the same language group can work together in their native language to complete a project, then practice presenting their work in English to other students in the group. A variation is to pair each ELL with a "buddy" who speaks the same native language but is more proficient in English. Another variation is to pair ELLs with older, English proficient students (perhaps high school or college students) who serve as tutors.

d) Use native language

Use of the native language is helpful to the ELL student in learning content area material. If the teacher or the aide in the classroom speaks the native language of the ELL student, then the student's language can be used to further explain or expand upon what is being presented. If students are literate in their native language, then, where available, it is helpful to provide materials written in the native language of the ELL students that deal with topics related to those being discussed in class.

UTILIZE CULTURAL DIVERSITY

ELL students bring to the classroom firsthand knowledge of the customs, daily lives, thoughts, and feelings of people in other countries. Through sharing these resources, all students can gain.

a) Make sharing mutual

When students from other cultures offer information on their country's customs, English proficient students can describe American customs or, perhaps, research and report on customs of the countries from which their families originated. Also, sharing cultural insights should be placed in context, and related to other themes. In this way, there is a rationale and value placed on the sharing of cultures beyond differences alone and students will feel more as contributors and less as being put on the spot. A teacher should be aware, however, that, for some students, being pointed out as an individual is very uncomfortable.

b) Integrate diversity into content

Ideally, sharing should evolve out of and enrich instructional content; recognition of cultural diversity should be an ongoing theme, rather than a one-week "special." Different holidays and festivals should be recognized, not only those of the cultures represented in class. A unit on folktales in language arts class, for example, can draw on many different sources and, by so doing, encourage students to talk about, act out, or illustrate folktales they are most familiar with. A social studies unit on patterns of politeness can include discussion of differences between situations within a culture (e.g., what is acceptable to say when talking with a fellow student versus a principal or teacher) and differences between cultures.

Looking at and talking about these kinds of patterns can help all the students in the class understand more about behaviors they might observe in others, as well as develop a greater awareness about their own cultures. No teacher can become an encyclopedia of practices, expectations, or beliefs; however, every teacher should develop an attitude of interest and learning about cultural differences.

WORK TOGETHER WITH OTHERS

The attempt to restructure activities in your classroom and to deal with new forms of diversity is a challenging one. It is not one that a teacher needs to face alone.

a) Combine your expertise with that of other teachers

A significant body of recent research has focused on the value of teachers combining their professional expertise and sharing their experiences with one

another. Teachers can offer important support to each other by serving as sounding boards for successes and failures, as additional sources of suggestions for resolving problem situations, and as resources to each other in sharing ideas, materials, and successful practices. Also, the more teachers who work with the same students share information, the more consistent and effective their students' overall instructional experience will be. Teachers should take steps to:

- collaborate and confer with the ESL/bilingual specialist in the school;
- collaborate with other content area teachers who work with the same ELL students to share resources, ideas, and information about students' work;
- share ideas and experiences with teachers who are interested in trying out more active instructional activities with their students, whether ELL or English proficient; and
- involve the principal. Let the principal know what you are doing, explain how you are implementing an active instructional model in your class, and explain the benefits for all students.

Ask for support; some of this support should come in tangible ways, such as assistance in scheduling joint planning periods for collaborating teachers.

b) Build links with the home and the community

Reach beyond the classroom to incorporate experiences that draw on students' homes and communities.

Through linkages between their homes, communities, and the classroom, students will come to see learning as integral to all parts of their lives. Bringing in community leaders and parents also builds students' self-esteem, and the support identified through these linkages can provide additional access to community resources. Through these, the different skills and knowledge of community members can be identified and later utilized in the classroom. Inform parents and community members about what is happening in the classroom and in the school and invite them to visit to become aware of what students are doing.

c) Build linkages with other classrooms and support within the school

What happens in one classroom is often not enough. The same active learning model and the levels of expectation and involvement of the ELL student should pervade all classes. For this reason, ideally, change toward an active learning instructional model should occur within a school rather than within a single classroom. Gaining a principal's support for an active instructional model is key to this. Even if it is only one teacher or two teachers working together to bring about change into their classrooms, the principal's support and recognition of this effort will be important.

YOU CAN'T DO IT ALL AT ONCE

If you are interested in moving toward an active learning instructional model, starting small is okay.

Begin by becoming more familiar with your students. Perhaps set up a regular time with each for discussion. Learn about models for cooperative group work and plan to try cooperative work for one specific type of activity on a regular basis. Talk with other

teachers and develop ideas together. Step by step you will be able to build an active learning approach that will benefit all students in your classroom.”¹³

¹³ BAKER Laurie, GREENBLATT Leslie, McNEELY J. Robert, and MALARZ Lynn, 1994, NCBE (The National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education Program) Information Guide Series, Number 19.

CHAPTER II

TEACHING SPEAKING

Many language learners regard speaking ability as the measure of knowing a language. These learners define fluency as the ability to converse with others, much more than the ability to read, write, or comprehend oral language. They regard speaking as the most important skill they can acquire, and they assess their progress in terms of their accomplishments in spoken communication.

Language learners need to recognize that speaking involves three areas of knowledge:

- Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary): Using the right words in the right order with the correct pronunciation
- Functions (transaction and interaction): Knowing when clarity of message is essential (transaction/information exchange) and when precise understanding is not required (interaction/relationship building)
- Social and cultural rules and norms (turn-taking, rate of speech, length of pauses between speakers, relative roles of participants): Understanding how to take into account who is speaking to whom, in what circumstances, about what, and for what reason.

“In the communicative model of language teaching, instructors help their students develop this body of knowledge by providing authentic practice that prepares students for real-life communication situations. They help their students develop

the ability to produce grammatically correct, logically connected sentences that are appropriate to specific contexts, and to do so using acceptable (that is, comprehensible) pronunciation”¹⁴.

GOALS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING SPEAKING

The goal of teaching speaking skills is communicative efficiency. Learners should be able to make themselves understood, using their current proficiency to the fullest. They should try to avoid confusion in the message due to faulty pronunciation, grammar, or vocabulary, and to observe the social and cultural rules that apply in each communication situation.

To help students develop communicative efficiency in speaking, instructors can use a balanced activities approach that combines language input, structured output, and communicative output.

Language input comes in the form of teacher talk, listening activities, reading passages, and the language heard and read outside of class. It gives learners the material they need to begin producing language themselves.

Language input may be content oriented or form oriented.

- Content-oriented input focuses on information, whether it is a simple weather report or an extended lecture on an academic topic. Content-

¹⁴ Brown, and G. Yule. (1983). *Teaching the spoken language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

oriented input may also include descriptions of learning strategies and examples of their use.

- Form-oriented input focuses on ways of using the language: guidance from the teacher or another source on vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar (linguistic competence); appropriate things to say in specific contexts (discourse competence); expectations for rate of speech, pause length, turn-taking, and other social aspects of language use (sociolinguistic competence); and explicit instruction in phrases to use to ask for clarification and repair miscommunication (strategic competence).

In the presentation part of a lesson, an instructor combines content-oriented and form-oriented input. The amount of input that is actually provided in the target language depends on students' listening proficiency and also on the situation. For students at lower levels, or in situations where a quick explanation on a grammar topic is needed, an explanation in English may be more appropriate than one in the target language.

Structured output focuses on correct form. In structured output, students may have options for responses, but all of the options require them to use the specific form or structure that the teacher has just introduced.

Structured output is designed to make learners comfortable producing specific language items recently introduced, sometimes in combination with previously learned items. Instructors often use structured output exercises as a transition

between the presentation stage and the practice stage of a lesson plan. Textbook exercises also often make good structured output practice activities.

In *communicative output*, the learners' main purpose is to complete a task, such as obtaining information, developing a travel plan, or creating a video. To complete the task, they may use the language that the instructor has just presented, but they also may draw on any other vocabulary, grammar, and communication strategies that they know. In communicative output activities, the criterion of success is whether the learner gets the message across. Accuracy is not a consideration unless the lack of it interferes with the message.

In everyday communication, spoken exchanges take place because there is some sort of information gap between the participants. Communicative output activities involve a similar real information gap. In order to complete the task, students must reduce or eliminate the information gap. In these activities, language is a tool, not an end in itself.

In a balanced activities approach, the teacher uses a variety of activities from these different categories of input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels, including beginners, benefit from this variety; it is more motivating, and it is also more likely to result in effective language learning

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING SPEAKING SKILLS

Students often think that the ability to speak a language is the product of language learning, but speaking is also a crucial part of the language learning process.

Effective instructors teach students speaking strategies -- using minimal responses, recognizing scripts, and using language to talk about language -- that they can use to help themselves expand their knowledge of the language and their confidence in using it. These instructors help students learn to speak so that the students can use speaking to learn¹⁵.

1. Using minimal responses

Language learners who lack of confidence in their ability to participate successfully in oral interaction often listen in silence while others do the talking. One way to encourage such learners to begin to participate is to help them build up a stock of minimal responses that they can use in different types of exchanges. Such responses can be especially useful for beginners.

Minimal responses are predictable, often idiomatic phrases that conversation participants use to indicate understanding, agreement, doubt, and other responses to what another speaker is saying. Having a stock of such responses enables a learner to focus on what the other participant is saying, without having to simultaneously plan a response.

¹⁵ The National Capital Language Resource Center, Washington, DC, (2003, 2004). The essentials of the language teaching.

2. Recognizing scripts

Some communication situations are associated with a predictable set of spoken exchanges -- a script. Greetings, apologies, compliments, invitations, and other functions that are influenced by social and cultural norms often follow patterns or scripts. So do the transactional exchanges involved in activities such as obtaining information and making a purchase. In these scripts, the relationship between a speaker's turn and the one that follows it can often be anticipated.

Instructors can help students develop speaking ability by making them aware of the scripts for different situations so that they can predict what they will hear and what they will need to say in response. Through interactive activities, instructors can give students practice in managing and varying the language that different scripts contain.

3. Using language to talk about language

Language learners are often too embarrassed or shy to say anything when they do not understand another speaker or when they realize that a conversation partner has not understood them. Instructors can help students overcome this reticence by assuring them that misunderstanding and the need for clarification can occur in any type of interaction, whatever the participants' language skill levels. Instructors can also give students strategies and phrases to use for clarification and comprehension check.

By encouraging students to use clarification phrases in class when misunderstanding occurs, and by responding positively when they do, instructors can create an authentic practice environment within the classroom itself. As they develop control of various clarification strategies, students will gain confidence in their ability to manage the various communication situations that they may encounter outside the classroom

DEVELOPING SPEAKING ACTIVITIES

Traditional classroom speaking practice often takes the form of drills in which one person asks a question and another gives an answer. The question and the answer are structured and predictable, and often there is only one correct, predetermined answer. The purpose of asking and answering the question is to demonstrate the ability to ask and answer the question.

In contrast, the purpose of real communication is to accomplish a task, such as conveying a telephone message, obtaining information, or expressing an opinion. In real communication, participants must manage uncertainty about what the other person will say. Authentic communication involves an information gap; each participant has information that the other does not have. In addition, to achieve their purpose, participants may have to clarify their meaning or ask for confirmation of their own understanding.

To create classroom speaking activities that will develop communicative competence, instructors need to incorporate a purpose and an information gap and

allow for multiple forms of expression. However, quantity alone will not necessarily produce competent speakers. Instructors need to combine structured output activities, which allow for error correction and increased accuracy, with communicative output activities that give students opportunities to practice language use more freely.

a) Structured Output Activities

Two common kinds of structured output activities are *information gap* and *jigsaw* activities. In both these types of activities, students complete a task by obtaining missing information, a feature the activities have in common with real communication. However, information gap and jigsaw activities also set up practice on specific items of language. In this respect they are more like drills than like communication.

b) Information Gap Activities

- Filling the gaps in a schedule or timetable: Partner A holds an airline timetable with some of the arrival and departure times missing. Partner B has the same timetable but with different blank spaces. The two partners are not permitted to see each other's timetables and must fill in the blanks by asking each other appropriate questions. The features of language that are practiced would include questions beginning with "when" or "at what time." Answers would be limited mostly to time expressions like "at 8:15" or "at ten in the evening."

- **Completing the picture:** The two partners have similar pictures, each with different missing details, and they cooperate to find all the missing details. In another variation, no items are missing, but similar items differ in appearance. For example, in one picture, a man walking along the street may be wearing an overcoat, while in the other the man is wearing a jacket. The features of grammar and vocabulary that are practiced are determined by the content of the pictures and the items that are missing or different. Differences in the activities depicted lead to practice of different verbs. Differences in number, size, and shape lead to adjective practice. Differing locations would probably be described with prepositional phrases.

These activities may be set up so that the partners must practice more than just grammatical and lexical features. For example, the timetable activity gains a social dimension when one partner assumes the role of a student trying to make an appointment with a partner who takes the role of a professor. Each partner has pages from an appointment book in which certain dates and times are already filled in and other times are still available for an appointment. Of course, the open times don't match exactly, so there must be some polite negotiation to arrive at a mutually convenient time for a meeting or a conference.

c) Jigsaw Activities

Jigsaw activities are more elaborate information gap activities that can be done with several partners. In a jigsaw activity, each partner has one or a few pieces of

the "puzzle," and the partners must cooperate to fit all the pieces into a whole picture. The puzzle piece may take one of several forms. It may be one panel from a comic strip or one photo from a set that tells a story. It may be one sentence from a written narrative. It may be a tape recording of a conversation, in which case no two partners hear exactly the same conversation.

- In one fairly simple jigsaw activity, students work in groups of four. Each student in the group receives one panel from a comic strip. Partners may not show each other their panels. Together the four panels present this narrative: a man takes a container of ice cream from the freezer; he serves himself several scoops of ice cream; he sits in front of the TV eating his ice cream; he returns with the empty bowl to the kitchen and finds that he left the container of ice cream, now melting, on the kitchen counter. These pictures have a clear narrative line and the partners are not likely to disagree about the appropriate sequencing. You can make the task more demanding, however, by using pictures that lend themselves to alternative sequences, so that the partners have to negotiate among themselves to agree on a satisfactory sequence.
- More elaborate jigsaws may proceed in two stages. Students first work in input groups (groups A, B, C, and D) to receive information. Each group receives a different part of the total information for the task. Students then reorganize into groups of four with one student each from A, B, C, and D, and use the information they received to complete the task. Such an organization could be used, for example, when the input is given in the

form of a tape recording. Groups A, B, C, and D each hear a different recording of a short news bulletin. The four recordings all contain the same general information, but each has one or more details that the others do not. In the second stage, students reconstruct the complete story by comparing the four versions.

With information gap and jigsaw activities, instructors need to be conscious of the language demands they place on their students. If an activity calls for language your students have not already practiced, you can brainstorm with them when setting up the activity to preview the language they will need, eliciting what they already know and supplementing what they are able to produce themselves.

Structured output activities can form an effective bridge between instructor modeling and communicative output because they are partly authentic and partly artificial. Like authentic communication, they feature information gaps that must be bridged for successful completion of the task. However, where authentic communication allows speakers to use all of the language they know, structured output activities lead students to practice specific features of language and to practice only in brief sentences, not in extended discourse. Also, structured output situations are contrived and more like games than real communication, and the participants' social roles are irrelevant to the performance of the activity. This structure controls the number of variables that students must deal with when they are first exposed to new material. As they become comfortable, they can move on to true communicative output activities.

d) Communicative Output Activities

Communicative output activities allow students to practice using all of the language they know in situations that resemble real settings. In these activities, students must work together to develop a plan, resolve a problem, or complete a task. The most common types of communicative output activity are *role plays* and *discussions* .

In role plays, students are assigned roles and put into situations that they may eventually encounter outside the classroom. Because role plays imitate life, the range of language functions that may be used expands considerably. Also, the role relationships among the students as they play their parts call for them to practice and develop their sociolinguistic competence. They have to use language that is appropriate to the situation and to the characters.

Students usually find role playing enjoyable, but students who lack self-confidence or have lower proficiency levels may find them intimidating at first.

To succeed with role plays:

- Prepare carefully: Introduce the activity by describing the situation and making sure that all of the students understand it
- Set a goal or outcome: Be sure the students understand what the product of the role play should be, whether a plan, a schedule, a group opinion, or some other product

- Use role cards: Give each student a card that describes the person or role to be played. For lower-level students, the cards can include words or expressions that person might use.
- Brainstorm: Before you start the role play, have students brainstorm as a class to predict what vocabulary, grammar, and idiomatic expressions they might use.
- Keep groups small: Less-confident students will feel more able to participate if they do not have to compete with many voices.
- Give students time to prepare: Let them work individually to outline their ideas and the language they will need to express them.
- Be present as a resource, not a monitor: Stay in communicative mode to answer students' questions. Do not correct their pronunciation or grammar unless they specifically ask you about it.
- Allow students to work at their own levels: Each student has individual language skills, an individual approach to working in groups, and a specific role to play in the activity. Do not expect all students to contribute equally to the discussion, or to use every grammar point you have taught.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the outcome of their role plays.
- Do linguistic follow-up: After the role play is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Discussions, like role plays, succeed when the instructor prepares students first, and then gets out of the way. To succeed with discussions:

- Prepare the students: Give them input (both topical information and language forms) so that they will have something to say and the language with which to say it.
- Offer choices: Let students suggest the topic for discussion or choose from several options. Discussion does not always have to be about serious issues. Students are likely to be more motivated to participate if the topic is television programs, plans for a vacation, or news about mutual friends. Weighty topics like how to combat pollution are not as engaging and place heavy demands on students' linguistic competence.
- Set a goal or outcome: This can be a group product, such as a letter to the editor, or individual reports on the views of others in the group.
- Use small groups instead of whole-class discussion: Large groups can make participation difficult.
- Keep it short: Give students a defined period of time, not more than 8-10 minutes, for discussion. Allow them to stop sooner if they run out of things to say.
- Allow students to participate in their own way: Not every student will feel comfortable talking about every topic. Do not expect all of them to contribute equally to the conversation.
- Do topical follow-up: Have students report to the class on the results of their discussion.

- Do linguistic follow-up: After the discussion is over, give feedback on grammar or pronunciation problems you have heard. This can wait until another class period when you plan to review pronunciation or grammar anyway.

Through well-prepared communicative output activities such as role plays and discussions, you can encourage students to experiment and innovate with the language, and create a supportive atmosphere that allows them to make mistakes without fear of embarrassment. This will contribute to their self-confidence as speakers and to their motivation to learn more.

OTHER SPEAKING STRATEGIES

“Speaking skills, like listening skills, are often neglected in the classroom or teachers assume that they are an area that does not require instruction or facilitation. In order to communicate effectively through speaking, children must exhibit fluency, clarity, and an awareness of audience. Such verbal communication skills are learned through practice and observation of an effective speaker, such as the teacher”¹⁶.

Speaking Skills: Strategies and Activities:

Most oral language instruction takes place indirectly; that is, the teacher creates the positive climate and the motivational activity, and the students do the rest.

¹⁶ Developing speaking skills (notes from the language arts 3rd, Ed. 2004 Yellen Blake, & De Vries Holcomb Hathaway Publishers, Scottsdale, AZ)

a) Creating a Positive Environment for Speaking Skills

The key to encouraging speaking skills in the classroom is creating the proper environment. Learners should feel relaxed, and social interaction with peers should be encouraged. One teacher of fourth grade suggests these goals:

- to speak clearly with proper pronunciation in order to communicate with others
- to speak expressively with feeling and emotion and avoid the monotone
- to speak effectively in different situations: with individuals, small groups, and the whole class
- to utilize speaking in all the communication arts and content areas to further learning

To achieve these goals, the teacher organized her instructional program around two criteria: a positive, receptive teacher attitude and a physical environment conducive to language use.

b) Conversation and Discussion:

The teacher seeks to engage children in talk with other children in a relaxed atmosphere. Socialization skills as well as language are enhanced when students engage in conversations and discussions. Conversation is informal, spontaneous, and relatively unstructured. Discussion is more formal and usually topic-centered talk. It focuses on a specific topic or purpose. Both are similar in that they build on the student's home-learned experiences and serve to give practice in

pronunciation, fluency, expression, and vocabulary. They also help children build confidence to express themselves orally.

Here are some classroom guidelines:

- Speak loud enough to be heard in your group but not so loud as to disturb others.
- Only one person speaks at a time.
- While one person is speaking, the other members of the group must actively listen to the speaker.
- No one insults or offends any other member of the group.

To practice conversation, a teacher could schedule several “talking times” each week. During these times, several students get in a circle and talk about whatever interests them. This is the “inner circle.” Sitting around them in the “outer circle” are the rest of the students who listen and observe. At the next “talking time” groups are switched.

In the discussion strategy, sticking to the point is essential. The goal of a discussion is to reach a conclusion or solve a problem. Before starting the discussion, the topic should be clearly defined and understood by everyone. Usually, it is stated in the form of a question (Should children have to do chores to earn an allowance?). Great discussion topics come from literature, school events or problems, experiences, current news, etc. Students discuss the topic and try to reach some sort of consensus. Other types of discussions are panel discussions and debates.

For transactional literature discussions, the following six steps are a good guideline for students:

- Get ready. Skim the book for topics to discuss, using pictures, chapter names, etc. Make oral predictions and test the reasons for each prediction.
- Read and stop to think aloud. The teacher models what he or she is thinking as the group reads in order for students to learn how to think about the text as they read.
- Write a response. Time is given to students to write short responses to the reading on Post-its. These are self-selected responses, not responses to a set of teacher-directed questions.
- Engage in a discussion. Students spend 15 to 30 minutes discussing their responses using the RQL2 strategy (Respond about likes or dislikes; Question aspects of the story they did not understand; Listen to classmates; Link story to one's life).
- Write. Based on the discussion, students are given time to write in their journals.
- Review. As a group, the students review what they learned about human nature, about things in nature, about themselves, or about any concepts in the reading.

c) Brainstorming

One of the best ways to generate a number of ideas in a short amount of time is through the brainstorming strategy. Brainstorming helps to stretch a student's imagination, encourages group cooperation, and leads to creative thinking through spontaneous contributions by all group members. Key principles of brainstorming include the following:

- Select a problem or topic and react to it quickly.
- Designate one person in the group as the recorder of ideas.
- Accept and record all ideas or suggestions.
- Build on other people's ideas.
- Do not criticize anyone else's ideas.
- Remember that, initially, quantity of ideas is more important than quality.

Many teachers are familiar with brainstorming but do not utilize it effectively or frequently enough. Plan to make the brainstorming strategy part of your teaching practices. Model the process for students:

- Begin with a whole-class brainstorming session where each student records his or her own ideas.
- Provide a problem question as a stimulus and a time limit to eliminate frivolous ideas and daydreaming.

- When time is called, let each student share his or her list. Second, open up the brainstorming session to everyone.
- The teacher records the ideas for the whole class at the chalkboard to model the role of the recorder.
- You may begin to evaluate some of the ideas in terms of their effectiveness in solving the initial problem.

d) Interviewing:

Most information students gather for school projects comes from traditional sources like the encyclopedia or internet. Students need to learn that another way of gathering information is through interviewing, or asking someone for information or opinions.

Donald Graves recommends teaching young children about interviewing by having them poll their fellow classmates for information. In this simple polling technique, students choose a different interview or polling question to ask their classmates each day. (Which is your favorite meal—breakfast, lunch, or dinner? What is your favorite color?) After polling, a bar chart could be made to show the results of the survey.

Most students are familiar with interviews because of the many that are shown on television. You could show models of good interviews and analyze them as a class. Good interviewers keep in mind the following points:

- Gather background information on the subject.
- Learn something about the interviewee (person being interviewed).
- Decide ahead of time on the information desired.
- Formulate appropriate questions.
- Anticipate follow-up questions based on the interviewee's responses.
- Determine how to begin and end the interview politely.

Interviewing is an important strategy for gathering information and conducting research on many topics. However, you must eventually tie interviewing to real projects so that students can see a relevance to the research they are doing. Here are two group projects that make interviewing authentic:

1. **Creating a Newscast:** The focus for this project is on fluent, distinct speaking so that each speaker is clearly understood. The teacher divides the students into groups. Each group researches its assigned segment of the news (local news, national news, weather, sports, etc.). Then the group collaboratively writes a script for its segment. Students practice so that their newscast is clear and fluent. It's important that each member of the group has a speaking part. If the teacher can videotape each segment, the class can analyze the whole newscast together.
2. **Campaigning:** Students learn the power of oral persuasion through campaigning for a change within the school. Students can divide into teams to

write and create a campaign slogan and a 30-second campaign advertisement for the change. Students should practice the advertisement so that it is clear and fluent. The teacher then videotapes each one and plays them for the class. They can be analyzed to determine why they are persuasive. It's important in critiquing for students to first name one or two things they really liked about the ad and why, and then to suggest one or two things the group could do to make it even better.

e) Dialogue Improvisation and Patterned Conversation:

In dialogue improvisation, students create new dialogue for the characters in a familiar story as they act out a part of the story.

In patterned conversation, the teacher chooses literature with predictable texts. Students can use puppets or props to help them become one of the characters. They use the pattern-phrases from the text to retell the story . . . or to take it in new directions.

f) Show-and-Tell & Sharing:

These are the oldest and most popular oral language activities used in the primary grades. Generally the activity is a brief talk by a student describing a favorite object brought from home. Although it is familiar and widely used, it is not a particularly effective oral language activity. This is because it traditionally involves one child at a time getting up in front of the rest of the class. The rest of the students are expected to listen attentively. To make show-and-tell a truly

meaningful activity, divide the students into small groups. Then set aside time a few mornings a week for show-and-tell.

To teach the strategy, bring something from your own home that is meaningful to you. Show it to a small group of children and talk about it. Allow the children to handle the object and to ask you questions about it. In this way, they learn how to conduct the small-group show-and-tell activity in which everyone gets a chance to talk and share about his or her object. Small groups are also less intimidating to young children.

Another way to make this oral language activity truly meaningful is to ask caregivers to help their child prepare for show-and-tell. The topic could be based on an experience or a small item found on a nature hike instead of an expensive toy. As children become more and more familiar with this activity, their presentations improve and their talks are more organized.

g) Drama and Oral Language Development:

Television has made us a nation of spectators. The current craze for video games has intensified this situation. It is more important than ever that we make opportunities available for children to experience participation in the arts. Drama is truly one of the great oral communication forms.

Drama can take many forms in the classroom, from the simple dress-up play of preschoolers to full-blown theatrical productions with costumes, scenery, and

memorized scripts. Whatever the form, the objectives of drama in the classroom remain the same:

- c) to encourage creative and aesthetic development
- d) to improve children's abilities to think critically
- e) to create an environment in which social and cooperative skills flourish
- f) to improve the general communication skills of students
- g) to enhance the individual child's knowledge of self.

h) Pantomime:

Pantomime is the art of conveying ideas without words and incorporates gestures and expressions. It is more like theater acting in the sense that an entire story can be told through the movements of the characters. Props and simple costumes can be used, but no speaking is allowed.

In preparing for their skit, students plan and talk among themselves. They choose parts; decide on the movements they will use to convey their story; and make simple props, signs or costumes, if necessary. This aspect of the preparation involves verbal communication. But once the group gets onstage (the front of the class), no talking is allowed. This is the real challenge of pantomime.

Another kind of group pantomime skit can be based on a familiar story that the class has heard or read.

i) Choral Speaking:

There are several kinds of choral speaking activities to choose from:

Antiphonal or dialogue: Poems with two parts or a question-and-answer format are appropriate here. Often the deep voices take one part while the light voices take the other. This usually means the dialogue takes place between a group of girls and a group of boys.

Line-a-group or line-a-child: In this approach, individuals or small groups read one line of a poem at a time. They work to keep in harmony and tempo.

Refrain: Narrative poems with a chorus are good candidates for refrain. A teacher or student can recite the story, with the other children in the class joining in on the chorus.

Unison: Although unison speaking appears simple, it really requires skill for the students to keep together. Since everyone speaks every line, the rhythm and timing have to be perfect. Almost every poem is appropriate for unison speaking.

Cumulative speaking: One speaker begins, with other speakers, one by one, joining the first speaker. This type of speaking helps the student who may be nervous or shy in front of classmates to gain confidence by speaking with others.

You may want to start choral speaking by just repeating some favorite poems to the children and having them join in with you. With longer poems, you may want the students to have copies of the text for reference. One pitfall you need to guard against is allowing this activity to become merely a test of oral fluency. The true goal is to help children understand the meaning of poems and to interpret that meaning through oral expression.

j) Storytelling:

Storytelling is one of the oldest forms of entertainment. It was the television and radio of long ago. Today the art of storytelling has been revitalized in the United States. Professional storytellers are appearing at festivals (like Weber State's Storytelling Festival in November!), in concerts, and in elementary and secondary classrooms to share their art form. Teaching children to tell stories to their classmates is one of the most effective ways to develop speaking skills in young children.

To teach storytelling to children, it is not necessary to be a great storyteller yourself. It is helpful, however, if you can demonstrate to children some of the characteristics of an effective storyteller. A good storyteller should do the following things:

- Select a story that he or she really enjoys and that is appropriate for the audience.

- Be thoroughly familiar with the story; memorize only key phrases, not the entire story.
- Be imaginative and include gestures and facial expressions to convey meaning.
- Speak with expression, feeling, and emotion.
- Look directly at the audience; gaze about so that everyone feels involved in the story.

After you have demonstrated storytelling techniques, divide your class into small groups and have students practice telling stories to one another. Storytelling is an art form that develops through practice. When ready, the children can share their stories with the entire class. Here are some activities to involve students in the art of storytelling:

- Talk boxes: Provide the group with three boxes containing index cards. The cards in the first box contain brief descriptions of characters. Those in the second box contain brief plot descriptions, and those in the third box contain descriptions of settings. Each child in the group chooses one card from each box. They should study their cards for a few minutes and then make up a story that incorporates the character, plot, and setting listed.
- Story boxes: Teachers place a variety of objects into a box or large bag. Each child closes her or his eyes, reaches into the box or bag, and pulls out one object. After the children examine the object and think about it for a

while, they should each make up a story that includes the object in some manner.

- **Wordless books:** A wordless book tells a story through pictures alone. While turning the pages slowly, the “reader” adds the narration and dialogue to create a complete story with beginning, middle, and end. Once students see the wordless book strategy modeled by the teacher, they quickly pick up on it and begin telling stories themselves.
- **Liar’s goblet:** Most children are familiar with tall tales (Paul Bunyan, Pecos Bill, etc.). They love to expand on and embellish their own adventures. This activity builds on the idea of a tall tale and on children’s enjoyment of exaggeration. It can be taught in the form of a game. First, you need a goblet (a cup, glass, or mug will do). One person in the group takes the liar’s goblet and makes up a short but exaggerated tall tale. The next person in the group takes the goblet and says, “That’s nothing; why I remember” Each student tries to top the previous story; each story, though different, grows more exaggerated.
- **Serial stories:** This storytelling activity is based on a game that many children are familiar with. One person, usually the teacher or designated group leader, begins a story. At any point, the person stops and the next person in the group continues the story. A variation on this activity utilizes a ball of yarn. When the first storyteller stops, he or she tosses the yarn to any other person in the group while still holding on to his or her

section of yarn. The next person then continues the story. The ball of yarn is tossed back and forth, making a web design. Finally, one person tosses the ball of yarn back to the person who originally began the story; this is the signal that the story is about to end. The final storyteller concludes by say, “And that’s the end of this yarn. “

- **Chalk or draw-along stories:** In this activity, the storyteller begins the tale by drawing a circle or line on the board. As the story continues, the teller adds more details to the drawing. Eventually, when the story is completed, there is a finished drawing on the chalkboard. To teach this activity, draw and tell the entire story to a small group of children. When the students have learned the story and the picture drawing, they can tell it to another group of children who have not heard it yet.
- **New versions and new endings:** Another storytelling activity involves changing elements in the story plot and/or altering the endings of familiar stories. It works particularly well with folktales and fairy tales. To start this activity, read a number of different versions of the same story to your students. For example, you could read a traditional story of the Three Little Pigs and then read Jon Scieszka’s book *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*.

k) Puppetry and Storytelling:

Like storytelling, puppets and masks have traditionally been associated with oral dramatic presentations. Like so many oral activities, creating the proper

environment is the essential ingredient to a successful puppetry experience. Begin by creating a simple puppet stage in one corner of your classroom. This could be as easy as draping an ordinary table with an old tablecloth or with colored butcher-block paper. You could also cut out the bottom of a large cardboard box, cover the box with colored paper, and make a simple cloth curtain to hang over the front. Once your puppet stage is in order, the students will naturally gravitate toward it.

The next step is to gather some simple materials for creating easy-to-make puppets. Literally any scrap material can be used in the construction of puppets. Here are several kinds of puppets that students can make:

- **Sock puppets:** Have each child bring an old sock from home. Demonstrate that by placing your hand inside the sock—your fingers in the toe, your thumb in the heel—you can make the puppet come alive simply by opening and closing your hand. Next add cloth, felt, buttons, beads, yarn, and so on to make the eyes, mouth, nose, and ears. Additional material can be added to extend over the puppeteer's arm.
- **Finger puppets:** The simplest way to make a finger puppet is with an old glove. On each finger, draw, color, or paint facial features of different characters. You can add bits of yarn, sequins, or buttons. Each finger should contain a face with a different expression or look. In this way, you have large groups of tiny character puppets that can talk back and forth.

- Paper-bag puppets: Paper-bag puppets are easy and inexpensive. Depending on the size of the paper bag used, you can create all types of puppets. Large bags (never plastic!) can be placed over children's heads and worn as full masks. Holes for eyes, nose, and mouth can be cut and the bags decorated with crayons or other materials. Smaller paper bags lend themselves as hand puppets.
- Stick-and-ball puppets: With a wooden dowel, tongue depressor, or bent coat hanger plus a plastic foam ball or old tennis ball, you can teach children to construct a stick-and-ball puppet. First cover the ball with felt or cloth and draw in the facial features. Then decorate with string, small buttons, and so on. Next insert the stick to support the head. (With a tennis ball, you have to cut a small hole to insert the stick.) Finally, cover the stick with a loose cloth, decorated to form a distinctive costume for your puppet. Insert your hand beneath the cloth and grasp the stick. Your puppet is ready.
- Shadow puppets: To create a shadow puppet, you will use stiff cardboard or oak tag. Cut your puppet shape from the flat pattern in profile because only this outline is seen by the audience. Intricate facial features are not necessary; the unique characteristics of the puppet come from the cut outline. Next, attach the cutout to a stick to be held by the student puppeteer. The unique effect created by the shadow puppet depends on the special stage that you create by stretching a sheet of

translucent cloth tightly in a frame. Stand behind the frame and place a bright light behind the puppet and the screen. The audience sees a dark silhouette or shadow against the light screen.

L) Improvisation:

In improvisation, the dialogue of the various characters is improvised by the actors as the story unfolds; however, an improvisation is not totally unplanned. Generally the story is known in advance, and the actors alter the dialogue as they see fit. In improvisation, unlike theater acting, a script does not have to be memorized. However, simple props, costumes, and even scenery can be used, and students enjoy creating these in class.

m) Readers Theater:

This is another form of dramatic presentation that increases children's comprehension of literature as well as develops oral language. Readers theater is a presentation by two or more participants who read from scripts and interpret a literary work in such a way that the audience imaginatively senses characterizations, setting and action. Vocal intonation and facial expressions can also be used to enhance the quality of the presentation. A narrator is often used to direct the various reader-actors on and off the stage and to communicate scene changes to the audience.

Children's literature is a treasure chest of material to use with readers theater. Adapting the book to create a script entails a lot of conversation and

collaboration. Sometimes creating an entertaining script calls for adding new dialogue and new scenes, utilizing students' imaginations and sense of story.

n) Theater Acting:

Theater Acting includes many of the previously described oral language activities. It also adds perhaps the most difficult aspect of acting: the memorization of a script. It is recommended that theater acting come after students are already familiar with the other forms of oral expression. A school play or program should be part of the learning process that leads children to a greater appreciation of literature. It builds confidence in oral communication abilities and enhances social growth, including cooperative learning skills.

To introduce theater acting it is best to begin with discussion. Talk about the work to be performed. Encourage children to make suggestions and decisions about characters, the setting, the staging, and so on. Then improvise the play or story until everyone has a sense of the action, the movement of characters, and the overall theme of the play. Do not be afraid to revise lines, to change parts, or to recast characters.

Theater acting represents the culmination of a dramatics unit. It brings together and integrates listening, speaking, reading and writing skills like no other single activity. It gives students a heightened awareness of the power of literature to evoke emotions from an audience. It engages youngsters in critical thinking and discussion. However, choosing to do a full-scale play production in your class

means a commitment of time and energy. You cannot squeeze it between spelling tests, worksheets and basal reader lessons. The sacrifices you make, however, are balanced by the excitement, enthusiasm, and genuine learning that takes place when students discover their talents as actors.

CHAPTER III

WRITING DEFINITION

“Students learn to write by writing, they need regular opportunities at schools to write in all subjects. A consistency approach to the writing process in all subject areas and explicitly instruction on the writing process by the subject teacher helps students become better writer. Models of good writing in the subject area, and feedback that is constructive and formative are critical to students’ growth as writers”¹⁷.

WHY WRITING IS IMPORTANT

Most contexts of life (school, the workplace, and the community) call for some level of writing skill, and each context makes overlapping, but not identical, demands. Proficient writers can adapt their writing flexibly to the context in which it takes place. In the school setting, writing plays two distinct but complementary roles. First, it is a skill that draws on the use of strategies (such as planning, evaluating, and revising text) to accomplish a variety of goals, such as writing a report or expressing an opinion with the support of evidence. Second, writing is a means of extending and deepening students’ knowledge; it acts as a tool for learning subject matter.

¹⁷ Brown, D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS.

Here there are some clear descriptions how teachers are going to develop the following strategies the writing skills inside the classroom with their students. (Taken from: Harmer, J. (1991). *The practice of English language teaching*. London: Longman.)

Generating Ideas

In all subject areas, students need to develop skills for getting what they know about a topic down on paper, and generating ideas or finding additional facts. They also need skills to check whether their writing is on-topic and fulfills its purpose. Further, they need to be able to explain the writing assignment and the process they are following to effectively complete the assignment.

Purpose

- Help students to start writing and ultimately to produce more writing.
- Encourage fluency in generating ideas for writing on any topic, in any subject area.
- Help students begin organizing ideas

Payoff

Students will:

- Rapidly generate fresh ideas about topics in any subject area.
- Write down ideas without self-editing.

- Generate raw material for more polished work.
- Complete writing activities on time, overcome writer’s block, and improve test-taking skills.

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a topic for rapid writing or invite the students to suggest topics. • Explain that the purpose of rapid writing is to allow students to record what they know about the topic, subject, or activity, without worrying about repetition, spelling, grammar, or any other errors. • Give directions for rapid writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Optional) Suggest topics for rapid writing that are related to the subject of study. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the signal to begin. • Time the students. • Give the signal for students to stop writing. (You may want to give them a one-minute warning.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the starting signal, write or type as quickly as possible without stopping or making any corrections. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to count the number of words they have written. • Ask who has at least ___ words, until only one or two hands remain up. • Discuss the topic, based on what the students have written. Encourage students who don’t usually participate. • Focus the students’ attention on how their rapid writing can be the starting point for more polished pieces. • Alternatively, as a follow-up direct students to begin classifying and organizing their ideas. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count and record the number of words. • Discuss the topic by reading aloud parts of what they have written. • In pairs, explain the thinking behind the categories used. • One student from each group reads the paragraph to the class. |

TIPS FOR RAPID WRITING

- Write as fast as you can.
- No corrections or erasing allowed.
- Write until your teacher says “STOP” – do not stop before!
- Don’t lift your pen/pencil from the paper or remove your hands from the computer.
- If you get stuck, jumpstart your brain by writing the topic title and extending it to a sentence.
- When your teacher says “STOP,” count and record the number of words you have written.
- Be prepared to discuss your topic: use the writing you have done to start you off.

Adding Content

This strategy provides feedback to students before they start their first draft. Students exchange their brainstorming and notes for any project-paragraphs, research, process, lab reports or summaries, and develop questions designed to help them draw out more details for their first draft.

Purpose

- Identify ideas and information that may have been omitted.

- Reconsider and revise initial thinking (such as brainstorming) *before* writing the first draft.
- Teach students how to question others and themselves

Payoff

Students will:

- Ask who, what, where, when, why and how (5W+H), and predict questions while writing.
- Add and support ideas, with the help of others and then on their own.
- When you build a fire, you need just enough wood to get it started. Usually we start with small pieces and then add the larger ones after the fire gets going. That’s what we are going to do with your initial ideas or drafts for writing your assignment.

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign a topic based on class content. • Review who, what, where, when, why and how (5W + H questions), using the handout. • Suggest other possible questions, depending on the type of assignment (narrative or informative). • Remind students about the purpose of this activity – to ask questions (based on what’s already there) that they would like the writer to answer. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individually brainstorm or make notes for the topic. • Read the instructions with the teacher. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create groups of 4 to students. | |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time the students – have them pass their work to the person to their left and add questions to the work that is handed to them. In 3 to 5 minutes, depending on length of the work, call “time” and have the students pass their work to the left again. • Have students continue until the work has been returned to the original author. • (Optional) Ask students to begin answering the questions or making suggestions regarding the questions they see on the papers in front them, once work has been passed to at least two others in the group. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within their group, pass work left and quickly skim the work handed to them. • As they read, ask questions based on the 5Ws and how. • Work silently. • Use stick-on notes and write comments and questions in margins. • (Optional) Start answering some of the questions others have written on the work, once they have questioned the work of at least two of the people in the group – even if it is not theirs. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the edited work and the answers to the questions as the basis for a written assignment. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to answer as many of the questions as possible when they get their own work back. • Use the questions and answers as the basis for responding to the written assignment. |

Instructions for adding content

The assignment you have written is like a small flame – it’s an idea, and you may need to add more ideas to it. Here’s an easy way to learn the questions you need to ask in order to add fuel to your fire. You are going to trade work with people in your group and ask questions without talking.

When you are in your group, you will each pass your work to the person on your left. You will work within a time limit, so work quickly.

Don't worry if you don't finish all of the assignment you are looking at – the next person will probably deal with parts that you don't.

As you read, ask some questions, some of your questions might be:

What's this all about?

What happened?

Where did this happen

When did this occur?

Who was involved?

Why did this occur?

What happened as a result?

Do not talk until you have passed around all of the work. If you can't read or understand something, don't ask the person. Just write down a question or comment, such as "I don't get this" or "I can't read this."

Write in the margin or at the top of the page, or in the lines – just don't write on top of someone else's writing!

When you finally get your own work back, try to answer as many of the questions as you can. The information you give will add to whatever you are writing.

Developing and organizing ideas (Webbing, Mapping and More)

"Students need to know how to organize what they have learned about any topic or assignment into a well-structured whole. In longer writing assignments, they need to know how to create a strong, focused introduction that catches the reader's interest; how to link ideas in logically connected paragraphs that contain enough supporting detail; and how to conclude with a strong ending.

Effective writers use different strategies to sort the ideas and information they have gathered in order to make connections, identify relationships, and determine possible directions and forms for their writing. This strategy gives students the opportunity to reorganize, regroup, sort, categorize, classify and cluster their notes”¹⁸.

Purpose

- Identify relationships and make connections among ideas and information.
- Select ideas and information for possible topics and subtopics

Payoff

Students will:

- Model critical and creative thinking strategies.
- Learn a variety of strategies that can be used throughout the writing process.
- Reread notes, gathered information and writing that are related to a specific writing task.
- Organize ideas and information to focus the writing task.

¹⁸ Brown, D. (1994). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall Regents.

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select a current subject-specific writing task. · Prepare an overhead transparency sample or chart-paper sample of possible ideas and information gathered on the topic (e.g., point-form notes for a report on the uses of lasers in the medical field). • Using a marker, model for students how to make connections among the ideas and information (e.g., number, circle, color-code, draw arrows). • Using a strategy such as webbing or mapping makes it easier to see connections and relationships. Writers often create a graphic organizer to manipulate and group their information into meaningful clusters. • Use a web to demonstrate the process of rereading notes and arranging key points to show the connections and relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recall what they already know about the topic and writing task. • Make connections to own notes. • Note the links and connections that the teacher makes among ideas and information. Consider the similarities and differences of their own thinking. • Recall past use of a webbing strategy to record or organize thinking. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to contribute to the web by identifying important ideas and key information and by suggesting how to place the points to create a web. • Ask students questions to clarify the decisions. For example: - What does this mean? - Is this important? Why? - Is there another way to sort my notes? · • Model for students how to use the web to create a possible outline or template for writing a first draft. • Consider the generalizations and/or categories that emerge from the connections and | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to the discussion. Note the similarities and differences in responses. |

| | |
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| relationships, to help identify subtopics, headings and structure. | |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students refer to their notes for the writing task. · Ask students to create a web by sorting and organizing their ideas and information. • If appropriate, consider having students who are writing on a similar topic work in pairs to create a web for their combined notes. Some students may prefer to use scissors to cut-and-paste their web. · • Ask students to reread their webs and use them to create an outline for writing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reread notes and identify important information and ideas. • Use the question prompts to rephrase notes, identify key points, and group the ideas and information to create a web. • Share and compare webs. • Make the connection between the web and possible ways of organizing the information and ideas into a template for writing |

Supporting the Main Idea

In this strategy, students learn how to select the better of two possible main ideas to use as a topic sentence in an information paragraph, and then learn how to choose details to support it. Student samples are selected from a variety of subject areas. Samples may also be used to teach summary writing.

Purpose

- Distinguish main ideas and supporting details for a paragraph.

Payoff

Students will:

- Write well-organized paragraphs for different subject areas, with supporting details.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic.
- Improve reading comprehension by spotting main ideas and supporting details.

| What teachers do | What students do |
|---|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the sample Finding and Supporting the Main Idea to create similar sets specific to your content area. • Enlarge each set of statements and cut up into their separate statements. • Place each set of statements into a separate envelope. • Divide the class into groups of three or four and give each group one set of statements. · Model the strategy on the board or overhead using the set that was given to the students. • Teach how to find the main ideas in the statements (see Tips and Resources). • Hand out a second set of envelopes to each group for them to complete independently. • Alternatively, have the students complete this activity directly on paper, without cutting up the groups of statements. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read through the set of statements with the teacher. • Annotate statements while the teacher models. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate through the class. Ask students how they know which statement is the best-supported generalization. · Point out that if students | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work individually or in pairs or small groups. • Read the group of sentences. • Look for the best-supported general statement. (If there is |

| | |
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| <p>have more sentences crossed out than they have left to work with, they have probably selected the wrong generalization.</p> | <p>more than one main idea: choose the one that has the most supporting statements.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place statements to the side if they do not fit the selected main idea. • Place the selected main idea or generalization at the top. • Place the supporting statements directly under the generalizations. |
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and discuss the second set of sentences. If needed, have students move on to another set of sentences. • When work is complete, review work with students and discuss answers. • Model how to use the sentences to write a paragraph – using the paragraph template. • Demonstrate how to write a concluding sentence. The basic style is to reword the first sentence/generalization. • Alternatively, assign topic and have students write a generalization and supporting details. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the statements with the teacher. • Write sentences into a paragraph. • Alternatively, write own generalization and supporting details in answer to a teacher assigned topic (e.g., write instructions for how to find the area of a circle; explain effects of gravity; discuss the impact of a current event). |

Finding and Supporting the Main Idea

Look at the scrambled statements in paragraph one.

Identify two main ideas in paragraph one.

Choose which main idea is best supported by the other statements given – this will be your main idea for the paragraph.

Cross off or remove the statements that do not belong in the paragraph (that do not support your main idea).

Order the statements in the paragraph.

Share and compare your ideas with others.

Write your final paragraph.

Revising and Editing (reorganizing ideas)

Students need individual and group skills to assess their own work and the work of others for content, clarity, form and style, and for errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. Ultimately, students have individual responsibility for the accuracy of their work, but they need to know how to help each other improve.

Purpose

- Help students to start writing and ultimately to produce more writing.
- Encourage fluency in generating ideas for writing on any topic, in any subject area.
- Help students begin organizing ideas.

Payoff

Students will:

- Rapidly generate fresh ideas about topics in any subject area.
- Write down ideas without self-editing.

- Generate raw material for more polished work.
- Complete writing activities on time, overcome writer’s block, and improve test-taking skills.

| What teachers do | What students do |
|--|---|
| <p>Before</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare an overhead or a paper copy of a writing sample based on the subject-area assignment (e.g., a report, an explanation, a procedure, a letter to the editor, or an essay). Note: It may be necessary to excerpt a piece if the assignment is lengthy. • Read the sample aloud, asking students to listen carefully (to hear “how it sounds”) while following with their eyes. • Ask students to identify areas of concern or confusion. • Model the use of questions and prompts to the writer, asking students to consider the purpose of these questions and prompts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look and listen for areas of confusion or concern in the writing sample. • Offer suggestions for areas of concern or confusion. • Suggest the purposes or effects of the questions and prompts. |
| <p>During</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give students the Student Resource, Asking Questions to Revise Writing, and take a few minutes to read it over with them. • Put students in conferencing groups of three or four to read each other’s writing. • Ask students to share their piece of writing with at least two people in their group. • Encourage students to use one or two of the prompts or questions. • Provide 20 to 30 minutes for this exercise. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange writing drafts with another group member. Take turns reading the writing aloud to each other and asking questions or providing prompts. • Exchange writing drafts with a different group member, and repeat the procedure in the preceding point. |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>After</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage students in whole-class discussion about the process. How did they feel about using the questions or prompts? How helpful was the process in helping them to set direction for revising their writing draft? • Direct students to revise their writing draft. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise own writing drafts based on the prompts and questions from their partners. |
|---|---|

Questions to revise writing

Your job as a revising partner is a very important one. You can help the writer by:

- giving the writer a sense of how completely the task has been accomplished
- praising parts of the piece that are well expressed or well explained
- identifying areas of confusion
- targeting statements or arguments that may not be well supported with detail
- Suggesting new avenues of approach.

However, the writer owns the writing, and should not feel that your suggestions or ideas are being imposed as the solution. The best way to help your writing partner is to phrase your comments as open-ended prompts, as questions, or as a combination of an observation and a question. Some suggestions are below.

- Begin by using any “praise” statements that you can.

- If you can't use the "praise" suggestion, you should use the "questions."¹⁹

| Praise | Questions |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This work seems very complete. • I really like the way you wrote.... [Be specific!] • Your point of view is very clear. • Your supporting details are very strong in this paragraph. • Your introduction (or conclusion) is very strong. • Your introduction really gives me a clear picture of where this piece of writing is going. • You've organized your arguments in a very convincing way. • Your topic sentences state the main idea of each paragraph very clearly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your writing doesn't seem to be finished. • What are your plans for finishing it? • This part confuses me. What could you do to make it clearer? • What is your point of view here? • How can you support this argument with more strength? • What is your evidence in this paragraph? • How could you make your introduction (or conclusion) stronger? • What could you add to your introduction to give me a "road map" of the direction of this piece of writing? • How could you organize this piece to really persuade your reader to agree with your point of view? • How could you rearrange the ideas in this paragraph to have a clear topic sentence? |

¹⁹ Idem

HYPOTHESES

GENERAL

The methodological strategies that teachers apply influence in the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

SPECIFICS

There is little application of appropriate strategies to develop the speaking skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

The strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.

f. METHODOLOGY

DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

When a research is carried out at any case, it is necessary to mention the way that it will be developed. So that, according to the characteristics and the nature of the theme, the present research work will be a non-experimental one because the researcher will not has the chance to manipulate the variables. Its main objective is to describe the reality just as the researcher will observe it in the researched environment.

METHODS, TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

METHODS

As a general method the scientific method will be used in the development of research because, it will let the researcher develop a set of procedures oriented to discover, demonstrate and verify the knowledge in a systematic way trying to prove the hypotheses. Through this method it will be possible to develop the phases of observation, questioning of the object in the same way as it is in the reality. It will also facilitate the verification of the hypotheses in through the gathering of enough empiric data that will be contrasted with the theoretical referents to contrast the variables cause and effect. It also will be useful to deduce the conclusions under the basis of the

theoretical referents and the tendencies of the obtained results in the field research.

As particular methods the researcher will use the descriptive, the analytic-synthetic and the explicative methods. It will also be necessary to use the descriptive statistics as a tool to present the data in an expressive way.

Descriptive Method

This method will be used to describe the collected information in the field work through the research instruments applied. It will also let organize that information according to the variable of the stated hypotheses and the indicators that the researcher will find out about each variable.

It will give the rules to demonstrate the meaning of the research, describing the problematic about the problem found in the researched educative institution. Finally this method will serve to describe what type of methodological strategies the teachers are using to develop the productive skills with students in 1st,2nd,3rd of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School inside the English teaching learning process.

Analytic-synthetic Method

The researcher will use the **analytic-synthetic** method, because it will serve to analyze and examine the obtained information from the applied research instruments by making the interpretation of the data and setting out the respective conclusions, based on the major results tendency. It also will help the researcher to find the most appropriate strategies to develop the productive skills.

Explicative method

The **explicative method** will be also used, in the explanation of the logical implications of the variables of every hypothesis and in this way the researcher will be able to prove them, through a descriptive deductive analysis according to the obtained outcomes contrasted with the theoretical referents and in this way it will be possible to prove the specific stated hypotheses in the project.

TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

In order to get enough empiric information about the researched object, the researcher will use the most appropriate techniques and instruments.

A Survey: It will be used as main research technique because it is widely used for collecting data in most areas of social inquiry; it will be elaborated

with its instrument the questionnaire to get enough information about the indicators that will let prove the specific hypotheses.

The survey will be applied to all English teachers who work in the morning session at “La Dolorosa” High School to know more about the types of methodological strategies they use to develop the productive skills inside English language learning process.

It will also be applied to the students of 1st,2nd,3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School to know about the methodological strategies that teachers are using to develop the productive skills. It will be applied through a questionnaire that will be elaborated with close questions about the indicators that will guide our research work. To apply the survey the researcher will explain the purpose and the intention of obtained data in the survey, due to people involved on it, may be able to collaborate actively and this will facilitate the development of the research process.

PROCEDURES

After, the researcher pick up all the information through the research instruments, it will be possible to develop the following procedures:

1. Tabulating

To tabulate the obtained information the researcher will use the descriptive statistics to classify the questions by categories in order to facilitate their interpretation. The tabulation of all the applied instruments will let the researcher contrast the obtained information as from the teachers as well the students and make the respective inferences.

2. Organization

Once the information is tabulated, the researcher will organize it by analyzing the questions that will serve of supporting to prove every hypothesis and keeping in mind the variables as a guide that will help researcher to prove them.

3. Graphic Representation

After that, the tabulated empiric information will be represented in tables and graphs which will facilitate the readers to see the results in bar diagrams and interpreted it in percentages for every question in the survey.

4. Analysis and Interpretation

One the information is represented graphically, Every question will be analyzed considering two points of view: the teachers and students' opinion contrasted with the theoretical referents that will guide the process of the research work.

5. Hypotheses verification

The verification of the hypothesis will be done through the analytic-deductive method with a description of the indicators with major tendency and contrasting them with the information of the theoretical frame of the project.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The conclusions will be drawn on base of a specific analysis of the results of each question and they will serve to give respective recommendations to the authorities of the researched institution and also to the teachers and students in order to contribute with the solution of the problem that motivated the development of the present research work.

To elaborate the final report it will be necessary to integrate all the components of the investigative process trying a logic integration among them; this will require a new revision of the theme, objectives, hypotheses and theoretical frame so the researcher will get a good relation of them.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population that will help us in the field work is constituted by 589 students of 1st, 2nd, 3rd years of Bachillerato, and due to it is considered as a big population, it will be taken a sample of students from the researched groups. Therefore the research work will be carried out with a sample of 121 students who will be selected in isolated way from the target groups.

Regards to the teachers' population we will work with all of them who are five in total and because it is a small population that teach in the morning session at "La Dolorosa" High School.

The population of students and teachers is presented in the following chart.

| YEARS | GROUPS | | | | | | TOTAL |
|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-----|-----|------------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | |
| 1 st year of Bachillerato | 43 | 41 | 45 | 44 | 44 | 35 | 252 |
| | FM A | FM B | QB A | QB B | SOC | INF | |
| 2 nd year of bachillerato | 43 | 41 | 30 | 34 | 17 | 32 | 197 |
| 3 rd year of Bachillerato | 27 | 27 | 17 | 17 | 25 | 27 | 140 |
| TOTAL | | | | | | | 589 |
| Teachers | | | | | | | 5 |

Due to the students' population is big, it will be necessary to get a sample of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd years of Bachillerato, by applying the following formula:

$$n = \frac{PQ \times N}{K^2} - PQ$$

PQ = First quartile (0, 25)
 N = Population
 n = Sample
 K = Proportionality Constant (2)
 E = Sample Error (10 %), (0, 1)

$$n = \frac{0,25 \times 589}{(0,1)_2 - \frac{(588) \times -0,25}{(2)_2}}$$

$$n = \frac{147,25}{0,01 - \frac{(588) \times -0,25}{4}}$$

$$n = \frac{147,25}{1,22}$$

$$n = 121$$

SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION.

To get the sample by course was will applied the following formula:

$$F = \frac{n}{N}$$

$$F = \frac{121}{589}$$

F = distribution factor
n = sample size
N = population

$$F = 0.2054$$

This factor was multiplied by students population of every researched group of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School, and in this way it will be obtained the sample per course.

The results are detailed the sample in the next chart:

| COURSES | POPULATION | SAMPLE |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| 1 st year of Bachillerato | 252 | 52 |
| 2 nd year of Bachillerato | 197 | 40 |
| 3 rd year of Bachillerato | 140 | 29 |
| TOTAL | 589 | 121 |
| Teachers' population | 5 | 5 |

g. TIMETABLE

| MONTHS / | 2012 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|---------|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|--|
| | mar | | | | Abr | | | | May | | | | Jun | | | | Jul | | | | Oct-nov | | | | Dec | | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | |
| Presentation of the Project | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Write the recommendations | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Checking and redesign instruments | | | | | | | | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Application of the research instruments | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Processing of the research | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drawing conclusions | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Elaboration of the report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | x | x | x | | | | | | | | | |
| Private qualification of the thesis | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | | | | | |
| Writing the recommendations | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | x | | | | |
| Public sustentation and Graduation | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | x | x | | | |

h. ORGANIZATION Y MANAGEMENT OF THE INVESTIGATION

HUMAN RESOURCES

The research work will be carried out with the active participation of the researcher Mr. Estalin Fabián Garrochamba Peñafiel. The teachers of the researched High School who are 5 and the students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorasa” High School whose sample is 121.

MATERIAL

The material that will be necessary to finish the research process successfully, will be used it could be: office material, books, copies, computer, printer, paper, folders, USB drivers and so on.

BUDGET

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| - Project | 400 |
| - Thesis first draft | 300 |
| - Thesis second draft | 400 |
| - Printing and Publishing | 200 |
| - Unforeseen | 100 |
| TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET | 1400 |

FINANCING

The expenses derived from the present work will be assumed by the researcher.

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ANNEXES

Teachers' Survey

Dear teacher:

The present survey has as main objective to improve the strategies to develop the productive skills of the English Language with the students of Bachillerato at "Dolorosa" High School. For that reason I wonder if you could complete it.

1. Do you apply methodological strategies to develop the speaking skill?

Yes () No () Sometimes ()

Why:.....

2. What do you think strategies are for you?. Tick just one of the three

- a) is an organized, orderly and systematic procedure aimed at facilitating and enhancing students' learning ()
- b) specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives ()
- c) an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching. ()

3. What percentage of English do you speak in class?

- a) 20-30% ()
- b) 40-60% ()
- c) 70-80% ()
- d) 100% ()

Why:.....

4. Which thinking activities do you work with your students?

- a) Maximizing opportunities for language use ()
- b) Provide meaningful and challenging tasks ()
- c) Provide support and variety ()
- d) Peer and work learning ()
- e) Using diverse technological resources

Others:

.....

5. Which of the following speaking strategies do you work with?

- a) Language input activities ()
- b) Communicative output activities ()

- c) Using minimal responses ()
- d) Structure output activities ()
- e) Information gap activities ()
- f) Jigsaw activities ()
- g) Conversation and discussion ()
- f) Problem-solving ()
- g) Role plays ()
- h)

Others:

6. How do your students develop extra class spoken practice of the English Language?

- a) Through technology ()
- b) With native speakers ()
- c) Through TV ()
- d) With relatives ()
- e) None of them ()

Explain:.....

7. How do you consider the writing skill in the English language?

- a) It is a skillful process ()
- b) It is the hand writing activity ()
- c) It is a drafting activity ()

Why?.....

8. Which of these steps of the writing process do you work with the students?

- a) Prewriting ()
- b) Drafting ()
- c) Revising and Editing ()
- d) Rewriting ()
- e) Publishing ()

Others:.....

9. What type of writing activities do you develop with your students?

- a) Letters ()
- b) Compositions ()
- c) Sentences writing ()
- d) Essays ()
- e) Paragraphing ()
- f) Articles ()

Others:.....

10. Which of the following writing strategies do you apply with students in class?

- a) Brainstorming and organizing ideas ()
- b) Finding and supporting main idea ()
- c) Adding content ()
- d) Revising and peer-editing ()
- e) Praising the writing ()
- f) Questions to revise writing ()
- g) Model creative writing ()

Others:.....

11. When do you support the writing process to the students?

- a) Before writing ()
- b) During writing ()
- c) After writing ()

How:.....

12. Check the students' performance in the following skills?

| SKILLS | Very good 20-18 | Good 17-15 | Regular 14-12 | Deficient 11-0 |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Speaking | | | | |
| Writing | | | | |

Thanks for your collaboration

Students' Survey

Dear student:

The present survey has as main objective to improve the strategies to develop the productive skills of the English Language with the students of Bachillerato at "Dolorosa" High School. For that reason I wonder if you could complete it.

1. Does your teacher apply Specific strategies to develop the speaking skill?

Yes () No () Sometimes ()

Why:.....

2. What do you think strategies are for you?

- a) is an organized, orderly and systematic procedure aimed at facilitating and enhancing students' learning ()
- b) specific procedures or activities, grouped and ordered to get learning objectives ()
- c) an enlightened viewpoint towards teaching. ()

3. What percentage of English does your teacher speak in class?

- a) 20-30% ()
- b) 40-60% ()
- c) 70-80% ()
- d) 100% ()

Why:.....

4. Which thinking activities does your teacher work with you in class?

- i) Maximizing opportunities for language use ()
- j) Provide meaningful and challenging tasks ()
- k) Provide support and variety ()
- l) Peer and work learning ()
- m) Using diverse technological resources

Others:

5. Which of the following speaking strategies does your teacher apply to work in class?

- a. Language input activities ()
- b. Communicative output activities ()
- c. Using minimal responses ()
- d. Structure output activities ()
- e. Information gap activities ()
- f. Jigsaw activities ()
- g. Conversation and discussion ()
- h. Problem-solving ()

Others:

6. How do you develop extra class spoken practice of the English Language?

- a. Through technology ()
- With native speakers ()
- Through TV ()
- With relatives ()
- None of them ()

Explain:.....

7. How do you think the writing skill in the English language could be?

Tick one.

- a. It is a skillful process ()
- b. It is the hand writing activity ()
- c. It is a drafting activity ()

Why?.....

8. Which of these steps of the writing process does your teacher work with you?

- a. Prewriting ()
- b. Drafting ()
- c. Revising and Editing ()
- d. Rewriting ()
- e. Publishing ()

Others:.....

9. What type of writing activities does your teacher develop with you to develop the writing skill?

- a. Letters ()
- b. Compositions ()
- c. Sentences writing ()
- d. Essays ()
- e. Paragraphing ()
- f. Articles ()

Others:.....

10. Which of the following writing strategies does your teacher apply in class?

- a. Brainstorming and organizing ideas ()
- b. Finding and supporting main idea ()
- c. Adding content ()
- d. Revising and peer-editing ()
- e. Praising the writing ()
- f. Questions to revise writing ()
- g. Model creative writing ()

Others:.....

11. When does your teacher support the writing process?

- a. Before writing ()
- b. During writing ()
- c. After writing ()

How:.....

12. Check your real performance in the following skills?

| SKILLS | Very good 20-18 | Good 17-15 | Regular 14-12 | Deficient 11-0 |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Speaking | | | | |
| Writing | | | | |

Thanks for your collaboration

CONSISTENCY MATRIX

THEME: METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE PRODUCTIVE SKILLS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH STUDENTS OF 1ST, 2ND AND 3RD YEARS OF BACHILLERATO AT “LA DOLOROSA” HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERIOD 2011-2012.

| PROBLEMS | OBJECTIVES | HYPOTHESES | VARIABLES | INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <p>GENERAL How the methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills on the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School?. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> <p>SPECIFICS What kind of strategies do teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School?. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>GENERAL To identify which methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> <p>SPECIFICS To find out which strategies teachers apply to develop the speaking skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>GENERAL The methodological strategies that teachers apply influence on the development of the productive skills in the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> <p>SPECIFICS There is little application of appropriate strategies to develop the speaking skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>Methodological strategies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching-learning strategies • Thinking skills • Strategies for working with English language learners <p>Speaking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching speaking |

| | | | | |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|---|
| <p>What kind of strategies do teachers apply to develop the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>To determine if strategies used by the teachers are supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language with students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>The strategies used by the teachers are not supporting the development of the writing skill of the English Language in students of 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of Bachillerato at “La Dolorosa” High School. Academic period 2011-2012.</p> | <p>Productive skills</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and techniques for teaching speaking • Strategies to develop speaking skills • Developing speaking activities <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition • Why writing is important • Strategies to develop writing skills |
|---|--|--|--------------------------|---|

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