



# **UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA**

**ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN**

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER**

### **TITLE**

**THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND MAP AS A  
COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL  
BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE  
STUDENTS AT BERNARDO VALDIVIESO HIGH SCHOOL,  
2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.**

Research work as previous requirement to  
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Education English Language Specialization.

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**2016**

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That the present thesis entitled **THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND MAP AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT BERNARDO VALDIVIESO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.**, under the responsibility of the undergraduate student Gabriela Estefania Lima Salinas , has been thoroughly been revised. Therefore, I authorize its presentation for the corresponding legal purposes.

**Loja, January 21, 2016**



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**THE AUTHOR**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my parents and friends that gave me a hand when I needed.

And also to my grandmother Maria Cabrera who is in heaven and blesses my life.

*GABRIELA ESTEFANIA*

## MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO

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**a. TITLE**

THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND MAP AS A COOPERATIVE  
LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL BASIC WRITING SKILLS  
AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT BERNARDO VALDIVIESO  
HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.

## **b. RESUMEN**

Este trabajo de investigación se enfocó en el uso del mapa mental académico literario como estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo para desarrollar la habilidad de escritura con los estudiantes de 9no año del colegio Bernardo Valdivieso. Un plan de intervención de ocho semanas se realizó en este proceso para mejorar la habilidad. Pruebas y cuestionarios fueron usados para medir el progreso de los estudiantes y percepción del uso del mapa mental académico literario como estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo. El método científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético y estadístico fueron usados para analizar, describir los resultados y luego, dar conclusiones y recomendaciones. Los resultados obtenidos de la post prueba y cuestionario indicaron que el uso de esta estrategia facilitó significativamente el mejoramiento de las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes, también confirmó el entusiasmo y actitud positiva de los estudiantes en el trabajo cooperativo. Finalmente la intervención realizada mejoró significativamente las calificaciones de los estudiantes.

## **ABSTRACT**

This action research work focused on the use of academic literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills amongst ninth grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” high school. An intervention plan of eight weeks was carried out in this process to improve the skill. Tests and questionnaires were used to measure the students’ progress and perception of the usage of academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy. The scientific, descriptive, analytic-synthetic and statistic methods were used to analyze, describe the results and then, give conclusions and recommendations. The results obtained from the post test and questionnaire indicated that the use of this strategy facilitated meaningfully the improvement of the writing skill in the students; also it confirmed the enthusiasm and the positive attitude of the students toward working with the cooperative learning. Finally, the intervention done improved meaningfully the students’ grades.

### **c. INTRODUCTION**

This descriptive study was focused on the use of the academic literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy to improve the writing skills with students from twelve to thirteen years old in a public school. These students received English classes once a week without the support of resources and activities that motivate and facilitate their learning. In this study the strategy was investigated as cooperative learning to facilitate the improvement of writing skills.

Due to the limited amount of studies done on this field, the development of this research work was relevant. This research has not been done before in the English Language Department of the Universidad Nacional de Loja. Thus, it should be mentioned that this work was pretty important because it permitted the practitioner to get involved into the educative context and the reality. For ninth-grade students it helped to improve their writing skills as well as for the teachers, because this investigation demonstrates that the academic literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy is really useful.

Writing is an important aspect in the English learning process; especially when teaching it to elementary school students. Elementary school students still like to play and do some fun activities. Teaching writing to them by using a traditional way (using calligraphy) makes them get bored easily. Therefore, teacher should be creative and innovative in teaching so that students can have fun in learning writing .The reasons that motivated to the researcher to choose this topic were: to expand the writing skills of the ninth-grade students, to improve the

relation to work in group activities, to gain practice during the intervention, and to obtain the Bachelor's degree English Language Specialization.

The following specific objectives were stated: to research the theoretical and methodological references about The Academic Literacy Mind Map as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the English as a foreign language basic writing skills; to diagnose the issues that limit the development of English as a foreign language basic writing skills; to design an intervention plan based on the Academic Literacy Mind Map as a cooperative learning strategy; to apply the most suitable techniques of it as a cooperative leaning strategy; to show the effectiveness that Academic Literacy Mind Map as a cooperative learning strategy had in students' writing skills.

The following methods were used: the scientific method which helped the researcher in the observations done before and during the intervention; the descriptive was used to explain and analyze the object of the investigation and it facilitated the description of the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher; the analytic-synthetic method was used to make the quantitative statistical analysis from the obtained results through the questionnaires and tests; and finally the statistical method was used to make the quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires and tests.

Summarizing, this work is organized in five parts: literature review, materials and methods (methodology), results, discussion, conclusions and recommendations. The literature review section describes two variables which

were basic writing skills and the academic literacy mind map as cooperative learning. The materials and methods section detailed the design of the investigation; some techniques helped to the researcher to carry out in this study, as well the population that was considered.

In the results part, the findings of the research are described and analyzed; these findings are presented in tables and figures with the corresponding analysis. Another part is the discussion that shows the major findings of the research, the importance of them and why the information obtained is relevant to this study. The last part about the conclusions and recommendations describe what was found in the research and what can be done in the future to improve this situation.

## **d. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Basic writing skills**

The main reason to describe the basic writing skills in this research was because the research observed during the phase diagnostic of this investigation an issue in the develop 9<sup>th</sup> grade students writing skills.

If students learn to write they have a lot of possibilities in the world, they can write a letter from a friend, write short stories that comes from their imagination. While there are basic rules and formats to follow when learning how to write, writing can also be creative and imaginative.

Teaching writing is often about teaching grammar. If grammar comes up anywhere in EFL, it is in the writing classroom. Most EFL students will have some writing skills when you get them and they will often have an idea that their writing is quite good. Unfortunately, it will very often be quite poor.

In fact, they often will have quite poor writing skills even at the sentence level. Therefore, you will need to take them back to sentence level and begin to teach them very basic structure and how to write simply. Run-on and fragmented sentences will be very common until you correct those errors.

The more basic you get with your writing students, the better. Once a good foundation is built, you can move on to basic paragraph writing and on to essays. These skills take time to develop though and you will find that most textbooks will move your students forward too quickly.



You may find resistance from your students when you take them back to basics. This can be done without demoralizing them or making them feel their skills are poor. Take the approach that we can make the good skills you already have even better by polishing up some good basic skills. (Educator, 2006)

They are an important part of communication .Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations.

Writing is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech but the development and presentation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

Here we have some writing definitions:

- **Writing** is a method of representing language in visual or tactile form.

Writing systems use sets of symbols to represent the sounds of speech, and may also have symbols for such things as punctuation and numerals. (William, 1996)

- **Writing** is not language. Language is a complex system residing in our brain which allows us to produce and interpret utterances. Writing involves making an utterance visible. Our cultural tradition does not make this distinction clearly. We sometimes hear statements such as *Hebrew has no vowels*; this statement is roughly true for the Hebrew writing system, but it is definitely not true for the Hebrew language. Readers should constantly check that they are not confusing language and writing. (Coulmas, 1997)

- **Writing** is a medium of human communication that represents language through the inscription or recording of signs and symbols. In most languages, writing is a complement to speech or spoken language. Writing is not a language but a form of technology. Within a language system, writing relies on many of the same structures as speech, such as vocabulary, grammar and semantics, with the added dependency of a system of signs or symbols, usually in the form of a formal alphabet. The result of writing is generally called text, and the recipient of text is called a reader. Motivations for writing include publication, storytelling, correspondence and diary. Writing has been instrumental in keeping history, dissemination of knowledge through the media and the formation of legal systems. It is also an important medium of expressing oneself by way of written words as do authors, poets and the like. (Royer, 2000)

### **Styles of Writing**

Style in writing is concerned with choice because every writer has available the enormous resources of a whole language and each writer selects the arrangements of words that he/she thinks will best express the intended meaning, emphasize and tone to produce the desired response from readers (Kirkman, 1992,2005)

Several elements of writing contribute to an author's style, but three of the most important are word choice, sentence fluency, and voice.

### **Word choice**

Good writers are concise and precise, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word and using adjectives correctly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work in order to convey meaning. Also they choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. (Cali K. B, 2003)

### **Sentence fluency**

It is the flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences. Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures. (Cali K. B., 2003)

Writers avoid loose sentences, deleting excessive words and rearranging their ideas for effect. Furthermore, more readable style results when writers choose their words carefully, delete redundancies, make vague words more specific, and use subordinate clauses and phrases to rearrange their ideas for the greatest effect. (Cali K. B., 2003)

### **Voice**

The voice is an essential element of style that reveals the writer's personality. A writer's voice can be impersonal or chatty, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate, serious or funny. (Cali K. B., 2003)

By following these writing styles, students can develop effective English writing skills. It is imperative to present your ideas aptly to the readers. The

transition of sentences and paragraphs in a sequential manner is an ideal way of connecting with your readers.

Good writing skills come from practice and knowledge. There are different types of writing including expository, narrative, descriptive, persuasive and creative. Formats of every writing style vary from each other. Once you decide what you are going to write and for whom, you are going to write then you can start writing. If you are writing a formal email to your senior manager then your language should be very professional. Try to convey the message in simple and short manner. If you want to share something with your friend then you can write causally. Different types of writing are discussed below in detail.

- **Expository Writing:** In this form of writing, the writer tries to inform and explain the concept thoroughly to the readers with required fact and figures. It is a popular writing style and often used in essay writing. Paragraphs in expository writing should be limited. It should start with an introductory sentence that explains the topic appropriately to readers. After that you can create two three paragraphs that will justify the topic with accurate facts and figures. Moreover, it is ideal to have conclusion in the last paragraph. With this style of writing, a person can easily acquire essay writing skills.

- **Narrative writing:** Narrative writing is all about describing a story or sharing an experience with readers. In this type of writing, a writer portrays a role of main character and tries to plot a story with the help of sensory details. Paragraphs in narrative writing are structured with vivid descriptions so as to stimulate readers' interest. This writing style is primarily used in biographies, novels, poems, etc.

- **Persuasive writing:** It is written in such a way that it convince the reader completely. The advertisement you often see in television or hoardings are examples of persuasive writing style. It is written with a purpose to persuade a reader for performing an action.
- **Descriptive writing:** This style of writing describes a place, person or thing with sensory details. It frames a picture of that thing, place or person in the minds of readers and enables them to experience that thing by using their five senses.
- **Creative writing:** This form of writing is usually enjoyed by the writers. In creative writing, the writer explains a poem, story or an event in a creative manner so as to meet the aesthetic needs of readers. It is written to entertain people and to involve them in reading for a longer time.

**The writing sub- skills are:**

**Sentence structure**

Are you adding variety to your sentences with opening clauses, transition words and a question inserted here and there? Are you avoiding repetition and ensuring that you are not simply lining up statement after statement? Are you ensuring that the most important parts of your key sentences are placed at the beginning or the end of the sentence, rather than being buried in the middle? (Airfoil 2011). In summer, the sentence structure is defined as a word or group of words that expresses a complete idea and that includes a subject and a verb or it is a set of words that in principle tells a complete thought.

## **Punctuation**

Many students do not take full advantage of punctuation. They never venture beyond the comma and the period—the two punctuation marks that nobody can do without. Some are afraid that if they use other forms of punctuation, they will do so incorrectly, so they never take the risk. Learning to punctuate effectively does involve learning the rules, and this handout summarizes the most important of them. But learning to punctuate is about much more than rules. Punctuation, when skillfully deployed, provides you with considerable control over meaning and tone. Try to experiment with all forms of punctuation in order to expand your expressive range as a writer and observe closely how accomplished writers use punctuation to good effect. This handout limits itself to punctuation that occurs within sentences: commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, and parentheses. (Plotnick,2000)

## **Vocabulary**

Are you stuck in corporate-ese, filling in your sentences with the latest buzzwords? Or have you worked to expand your vocabulary so that you choose words with more precise meanings and less repetition? Do you enjoy a play on words or do you prefer the industry lingo? (Airfoil 2011). In this case, the main idea is to use the vocabulary in a correct way in order to avoid the repetition and give sense in the writing.

## **Spelling**

It is one of the most difficult sub writing skills for learners, because it is the act of forming of words from letters. In others words to use the orthography correctly

Here we have others additional ideas about sub writing skills:

- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean using forms that express the right tense, or case or gender.
- Use the style appropriate to the gender and audience.
- Make the main ideas distinct from supporting ideas or information.
- Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what is assumed they don't know.
- Be able to structure a text into paragraphs and use devices such as thesis statement.
- Be able to write purposefully and meaningfully.
- Be able to produce writing at efficient rate, especially during examinations.

In conclusion, this research was made in order to recognize the different problems that exist in the writing skill which can be improved through cooperative learning using the academic literacy mind map strategy among students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school. Through this literature review we can know more clearly the situation of the students of 9th grade.

### **The Academic Literacy Mind map as a cooperative learning strategy**

The strategy of academic literacy mind map can be used with students to help them activate their prior knowledge and to provide them with a link for explicit access to the new content. It helps us explore our learners 'readiness for the new content and provides for the means of practice and application as tied to review and assessment.(Vohra,2015)

Traditionally mind maps as the academic literacy have been used to as a tool for the note taking, it allows to student to organize and record the information in a correct way.(Buzan, 1983)

This strategy does not only work traditionally because the objective is to active the student prior knowledge practicing the cooperative learning. Also this strategy helps to students to layer information in such way that they can visually make connections among ideas and then use the resulting map to organize their final thoughts at the end of the lesson, building on what the students are ready known and guiding them to extend their extending understandings in ways that promote new content learning, at the same time this activities promote the friendship between students because they can work in groups in order to activate the class and practice a cooperative learning

According to Herrera (2010), instruction that is constructivist in its approach to teaching exemplifies the idea of "teacher as facilitator "in the classroom, however "is facilitation guiding by what the learning brings, both culturally and linguistically, to the learning environment". As used in this strategy ,academic literacy mind maps support teachers' efforts to be affective facilitators who, from



the very onset of the lesson, guide students' construction of knowledge by using students' existing knowledge as the foundation for new learning.

The Academic Literacy Mind Map strategy allows students to record their initial associations and schematics links to the content and then, during the lesson, reinforce those that support their understanding of the academic content and vocabulary. As the students create their mind map they are able to use alternate means of communication such as drawing, symbols and native language to help to reader or listener gain insight into their thoughts processes.

Through its emphasis on both linguistic and nonlinguistic forms of representation, as well as the associative dynamics of memory, the Academic Literacy Mind Map primes students' brains to retain the new material.

With frequent implementation of the Academic Literacy Mind Map, students can begin to consistently use mind maps as learning strategies, which O'Malley and Chamot (1990) define as "special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information". Students can easily apply their procedural knowledge of this strategy to any content area. Regardless of their level of English language proficiency, students can use this strategy to connect to text in ways that are meaningful to them.

This strategy contains the following phases:

**Activation.** It helps to students enhance their understanding of the topic. First the students individually thought about the topic and then proceeded with drawing what they thought about something. Allowing students time for reflecting thinking at the beginning of the lesson guides them to focus on the ideas that are uniquely

their own, when students share their reflective thinking, they are able to practice their language skills as well as inform peers about their unique background knowledge.

The students' interaction in this phase of the strategy helps move all learners toward a level of understanding that enables them to see how associations help us retain and elaborate on information. This strategy makes the idea of think-alouds more concrete for students, and it allows them to see relationship among concepts and mentally organize ideas. (Beare, 1997)

Example:

Directions

- Place students in small groups
- Share the topic with the students and ask them to do “what is in your mind” regarding the topic. To do this give each student a blank sheet of paper and have each one individually think of words and pictures that connect to the topic.
- Once students have finished recording the pictures and ideas they generated through their individual reflective thinking, have them share ideas in small groups.
- Next give each group a piece of poster paper on which to draw their mind maps.
- Bring the class back together and have each group share their mind map ideas with the class. Once the groups have finished sharing, proceed with the lesson.

**Connection:** using this strategy, we can ease the cognitive demands of the task by allowing students to use the mind map as an interactive note taking tool. Key to this process is ensuring that students have plenty of opportunities to interact with peers to both confirm what they understand from the lesson and elaborate on connections among concepts and terms.

By connecting new information to the existing schematic connections recorded on their mind map, students are able to monitor their learning and develop their meta-cognitive processes.

This phase of the strategy helps the teacher understand students' thought processes so that he or she can effectively address misconceptions, revoice key connections, and guide students throughout the lesson to more complete understanding of the topic.

The visuals included on the mind map help students remember the concepts and vocabulary through associations that are meaningful to them. (Herrera, Kavimanda, & Holmes, 2011)

Example:

Directions

- As you continue with the lesson, stop at regular intervals and have students in their small groups talk to each other about the different concepts being explained.
- After students have finished discussing their ideas, have them individually add new information to the group's mind map. For this task, have students use a marker of a color that is different from that which they used to record their

initially understandings. By doing this, you will be able to distinguish brainstormed associations from new learning.

- You can further expand upon the process by asking students to connect their new learning with their initial ideas on the mind map.
- As students record and expand upon connections among the concepts, informally monitor their understanding by observing their work and listening to their conversations.
- Have students continue adding to their mind maps throughout the lesson.

**Affirmation:** Students are able to use their new understanding of the topic to negotiate the most important ideas and determine a logical order. This phase provides for individual students accountability for the new material as students transfer the learning on their mind maps to writing pieces and then share their summaries with the class. The mind map provides students with a visual reminder of the process they used to make sense of key terms and concepts. (Herrera, Kavimanda, & Holmes, 2011)

Example :

Directions: Have students work together to create a brief group summary of their learning. To do this:

- Have students mark with a star the ideas on their mind map that they think are the most important to include in their summary.
- Ask students to negotiate the order of the details and number them accordingly.
- On a separate sheet of poster paper, have the group record its summary.

- When all groups have finished writing their summaries, have them take turns sharing their summaries with the whole class
- Allows students to use their mind maps to individually complete additional curricular tasks, such as end-of-chapter tests or cloze exercises.
- When finished with the lesson, display the group mind maps in the classroom.

According to Buzan (2000) Techniques of the Academic literacy mind map are the following, which can work individually or groups:

- Start in the center of a blank page turned sideways, because starting in the center gives your Brain freedom to spread out in all directions and to express itself more freely and naturally.
- Use an image or picture for your central idea, because an image is worth a thousand words and helps you use your imagination. a central image is more interesting, keeps you focused, helps you concentrate, and gives your brain more of a buzz!
- Use colors throughout, because colors are as exciting to your Brain as are images. Color adds extra vibrancy and life to your Mind Map, adds tremendous energy to your Creative Thinking, and is fun.
- Connect your main branches to the central image and connect your second- and third-level branches to the first and second levels, etc. because your brain works by association. It likes to link two (or three, or four) things together. If you connect the branches, you will understand and remember a lot more easily.

- Make your branches curved rather than straight-lined, because having nothing but straight lines is boring to your brain.
- Use one key word per line, because single key words give your mind map more power and flexibility.
- Use images throughout, because each image, like the central image, is also worth a thousand words. So if you have only 10 images in your mind map, it's already the equal of 10,000 words of notes.

By on the other hand the principles of cooperative learning using the academic literacy mind map are:

- ***Positive Interdependence:*** You'll know when you've succeeded in structuring positive interdependence when students perceive that they "sink or swim together." This can be achieved through mutual goals, division of labor, dividing materials, roles, and by making part of each student's grade dependent on the performance of the rest of the group. Group members must believe that each person's efforts benefit not only him- or herself, but all group members as well. (Johnson, 2006)
- ***Individual Accountability:*** The essence of individual accountability in cooperative learning is "students learn together, but perform alone." This ensures that no one can "hitch-hike" on the work of others. A lesson's goals must be clear enough that students are able to measure whether (a) the group is successful in achieving them, and (b) individual members are successful in achieving them as well. (Johnson, 2006)

- ***Face-to-Face (Promotive) Interaction:*** Important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics only occur when students promote each other's learning. This includes oral explanations of how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned, and connecting present learning with past knowledge. It is through face-to-face, promotive interaction that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals. (Johnson, 2006)
- ***Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills:*** In cooperative learning groups, students learn academic subject matter (taskwork) and also interpersonal and small group skills (teamwork). Thus, a group must know how to provide effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict management. Given the complexity of these skills, teachers can encourage much higher performance by teaching cooperative skill components within cooperative lessons. As students develop these skills, later group projects will probably run more smoothly and efficiently than early ones. (Johnson, 2006)
- ***Group Processing:*** After completing their task, students must be given time and procedures for analyzing how well their learning groups are functioning and how well social skills are being employed. Group processing involves both taskwork and teamwork, with an eye to improving it on the next project. (Johnson, 2006)

According to Mc Connell points out as the act of cooperation is something which is deeply embedded in western societies. It seems to be a fundamental aspect of our everyday lives that people cooperate, although we do make choices about when to cooperate and with whom. The nature of cooperation is something

which social scientists are interested in analyzing and researching. (Argyles Michael, 1991)

### **Reasons to Use Cooperative Learning**

- To learn to work as a group and share our ideas and thought, because to work together is the best way to learn more.
- Because it can serve as in a future to work cooperatively. For example, some companies requires people who can work cooperatively in teams. Also with family life changing, many learners do not develop these skills at home.
- Cooperative learning helps people learn social skills and therefore increases the chances that they will be able to keep the jobs for which they are trained.
- Cooperative learning structures can be used to develop constructive and supportive peer relationships. (David W.Jhonson, 1994)

The role of the teacher in the classroom:

- Teacher gives an explanation about what is an academic literacy mind map.
- Teacher clarify ordinal each topic in order students understand and be able to use correctly the academic literacy mind map.
- Teacher gives each student or each group a different colored or pen marked.
- Teacher forms groups in the class and gives the theme to be applied.
- Teacher controls the class and monitors that all students be active in the development of the activity.
- Teacher encourages students to support the key terms written in the paper.



The role of the students:

- Students have to pay attention during the class lesson
- Students have to include in the mind map only the key information that has relation among them.
- Students have to follow the instructions of teacher.
- Students have to be active and participate along of the procedure.
- Students have to be able to explain correctly the information added in the mind map.

## **e. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Materials**

In the present research work three kinds of resources were used to carry out it: The human resources were thirty-six students of ninth-grade, the researcher, who applied the intervention plan, and the teacher, who monitored the students' work. In materials the paper was used to print the project and give copies of some activities to students, and also the book. The technical resources used were the computer, which was helpful to type the information, the printer to reproduce the worksheets and the internet to research the information.

### **Design of the research**

Action research is one form of classroom-centered research which is focused on a particular problem. This action research is designed to try to understand and solve a concrete problem in an individual teacher's classroom, which represents a low level of writing skills that were diagnosed through the pre-test where the participants were the students of 9<sup>th</sup> grade of Basic Education, therefore the researcher applied the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve teaching and facilitate learning.

Action research offered many benefits such as the improvement practitioner's critical thinking, the relationship and good communication between students and the trainee teacher; also it helped to develop new knowledge directly related to the classroom. Students take advantage to acquire the practitioner's knowledge as the

practitioner to the students. In addition, other benefit is to allow to the trainee teacher to find the solution for the problem related to writing skills, due to students enjoyed the contents and implementations of the research.

This action research approach was implemented for studying and addressing a practical problem within a single classroom. Also in order to improve the writing skills in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade taking into account the cooperative learning. University encouraged the teacher candidate to get involved in real-life teaching practices through the implementation of an intervention plan as a strategy to develop the writing skills.

## **Methods**

The Scientific method facilitated the study of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy applied in the developing the EFL basic writing skills. It helped in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one also assisted during the prediction of the possible solution; it assisted with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

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

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

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

## **Techniques and instruments**

### **Data Collection**

In order to collect the essential information to carry out this research work, the researcher applied the following research techniques for collecting data: the observation, the questionnaire and the test

### **The Observation**

It was applied at the beginning of the research in order to identify the problematic related to and to analyze the possible solutions that solve the problematic found.

### **The questionnaire**

It was applied through the instrument of the questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan.

Firstly, the survey gathered information related to the materials, techniques and resources that the teacher applied to teach the EFL basic writing skills. Secondly, the survey helped to collect information about the activities and techniques applied with the academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy that the researcher carried out, it allowed to find out if the teacher teaching activities have caught students' attention and have helped to improve the EFL basic writing skills of the student.

### **The test**

Also, it was applied at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan; at the beginning it was used to diagnose the level of basic writing skills that students had; and, at the end to verify the level of basic writing skills achieved by the

students after the materials and techniques applied with the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative language strategy.

### **Materials**

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

### **Population**

The participants on this research were 36 students of the Bernardo Valdivieso high school between twelve- thirteen years old and they were selected for this study through the observation and the diagnose made before . Moreover they were students of 9<sup>th</sup> grade that according to the CEFR their level of proficiency is A.1.

## **f. RESULTS**

This section displays the results obtained from the following data collection sources: 1) Pre and Posttest to measure the cognitive dimension about the performance of writing skills consisting of the following subskills purpose task, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order and punctuation mark. 2) Pre and Post questionnaires to measure the students' behavior and attitude. The data were supported by related results obtained throughout statistics which includes the means and percentage calculation of total scores. Finally, the data were analyzed in accordance with three of the five research objectives of the investigation because they supported and reflected emphatically the investigation.

**Objective one:** To research the methodological and theoretical references about the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the EFL basic writing skills.

This objective helped the researcher to find the literature review about these variables and facilitated the researcher to understand the research. Also, the elements of a lesson plan which were effective in the improvement of the English writing skills.

**Objective 3.** To design an intervention plan based on the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

This objective helped the researcher to design an intervention plan, which was divided into 8 macro plans with 24 lesson plans based on the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to solve the limitations in this skill. Each lesson plan has different activities of work based on the academic literacy mind map.

Additionally, the rest of the objectives are showed in the following tables and figures.

## Pre Test Results

**Objective two: To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period.**

### a. Table 1

*Pretest results: Performance of Ninth Grade Students' Writing Skills*

STUDENTS' CODE	P /2	O /2	V /2	T /1	WO /2	P.M /1	TOTAL
UEBV01S	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.25	0.00	1.75
UEBV02S	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.75	1.50	0.75	8.00
UEBV03S	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00
UEBV04S	0.50	1.00	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	3.75
UEBV05S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.50
UEBV06S	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.75	1.50	0.25	7.00
UEBV07S	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.50
UEBV08S	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.75	1.00	0.50	7.25
UEBV09S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.50
UEBV10S	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
UEBV11S	1.50	1.50	2.00	0.75	1.50	0.75	8.00
UEBV12S	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	5.00
UEBV13S	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.00	1.25
UEBV14S	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	3.25
UEBV15S	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
UEBV16S	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
UEBV17S	1.00	1.00	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	3.50
UEBV18S	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	2.50
UEBV19S	1.50	1.00	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.00	5.00
UEBV20S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.00	1.50
UEBV21S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.25	1.75
UEBV22S	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.00	1.25
UEBV23S	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.50
UEBV24S	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.75	1.00	0.50	6.75
UEBV25S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.25	1.25
UEBV26S	0.50	1.00	1.00	0.25	0.00	0.25	3.00
UEBV27S	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.25	2.00
UEBV28S	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.25	4.00
UEBV29S	0.50	0.50	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.00	2.00
UEBV30S	0.50	1.00	1.50	0.50	1.00	0.75	5.25
UEBV31S	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.50	0.50	0.00	1.50
UEBV32S	1.00	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.50	0.25	3.00
UEBV33S	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.25	0.00	0.00	1.75
UEBV34S	0.50	0.50	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.00	2.75
UEBV35S	0.50	1.00	1.50	0.50	1.00	0.25	4.75
UEBV36S	0.50	0.50	1.00	0.25	0.50	0.25	3.00
MEAN	0.75	0.63	0.67	0.28	0.51	0.20	3.03

Note: Writing skills P= Purpose/task. O= Organization. V= Vocabulary. T= Tense. WO= Word order. P.M= Punctuation. UEBV01S Bernardo Valdivieso High School First Student



## **b. Interpretation and Analysis**

According to the results of table 1 the highest indicator mean was purpose task (0.75/2), it represented strength in this class, but on the other hand the lowest indicator mean was punctuation mark (0.20/1), and it showed a weakness in the same class. It demonstrates a very poor and low score in this class and it means that most of the students had difficulties with the writing skills. Therefore, it was inferred that there was an obvious limitation for ninth-grade students to produce a written sentence with the correct punctuation or organization, paragraphs with correct word order and tense, message or a brief text with a specific purpose. This implies that students needed to be more exposed to do activities that help them to master the writing skills.

Being this case, the mean 3.03 for writing skills represented a big issue in the classroom which concerned the researcher to design and conduct this action research in the class in order to improve writing skill through the academic literacy mind map.

## Comparisons of the Pre and Post Questionnaire Results

**Objective four:** To apply the most suitable techniques of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period.

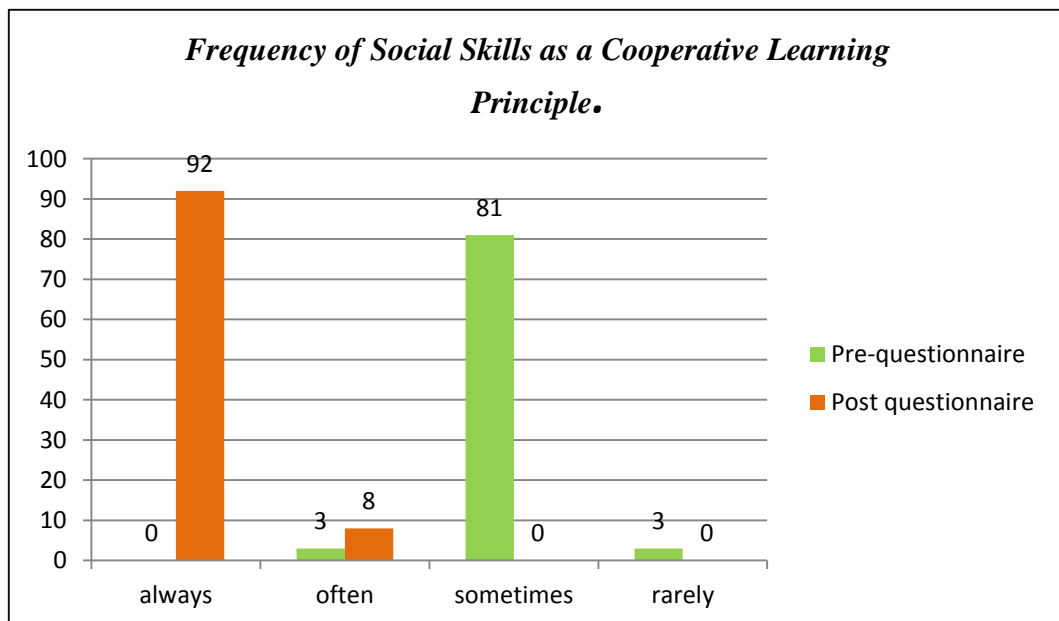
**Question 1:** English class activities are developed in groups and pairs.

### a. Table 2

*Frequency of Social Skills as a Cooperative Learning Principle.*

	Pres Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
always	0	0	33	92
often	1	3	3	8
sometimes	29	81	0	0
rarely	6	3	0	0

### b. Figure 1



### c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is shown in table 2, before the intervention, few students (3%) answered that they often used to work in groups or pairs showing to the researcher the necessity to look for a cooperative-based strategy such as the academic literacy mind map because through it students could improve the writing skills. For that reason, the researcher designed an intervention plan based on the cooperative learning where students worked in groups or pairs. As a result, in the post questionnaire the results changed notably; since the majority of students (92%), answered that they always used to work in groups or pairs. It means that cooperative learning was so effective for learning and developing writing skills. The percentage shows a moderate level of working and learning cooperatively.

Walker (1983) defines social skills as “a set of competencies that a) allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, b) contribute to peer acceptance and to a satisfactory school adjustment, and c) allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment”

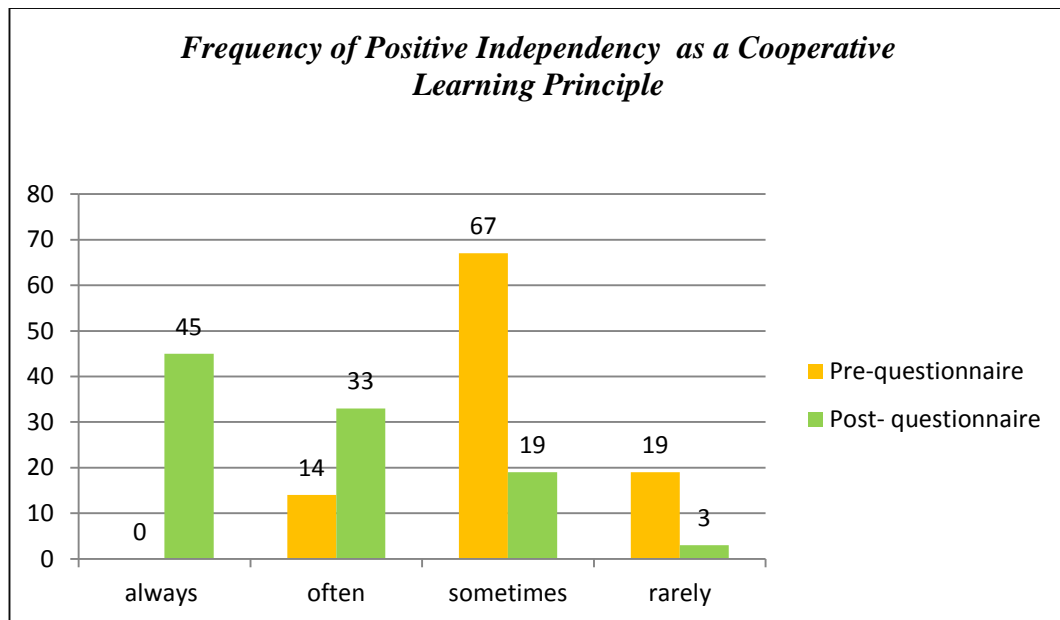
**Question 2:** The group or pair activities are conducted in a positive and respectful environment.

#### a. Table 3

*Frequency of Positive Independency as a Cooperative Learning Principle*

	Pres Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	16	45
Often	5	14	12	33
Sometimes	24	67	7	19
Rarely	7	19	1	3

**b. Figure 2**



**c. Interpretation and Analysis**

As it is indicated in table three, few students (14%) pointed out that the group or pair activities were conducted in a positive and respectful way. It represented the lack of socialization in the class between the teacher and students. The researcher implemented some techniques of the strategy in order to improve the environment in the class. However, the result of the post-questionnaire (45%) was higher it was because the intervention plan that took place during eight-weeks planed for the 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students. It was evident that the cooperative learning was so useful in the target group.

According to Jonson (2006) says you will know when you've succeeded in structuring positive interdependence when students perceive that they "sink or swim together." This can be achieved through mutual goals, division of labor, dividing materials, roles, and by making part of each student's grade dependent on

the performance of the rest of the group. Group members must believe that each person's efforts benefit not only him- or herself, but all group members as well.

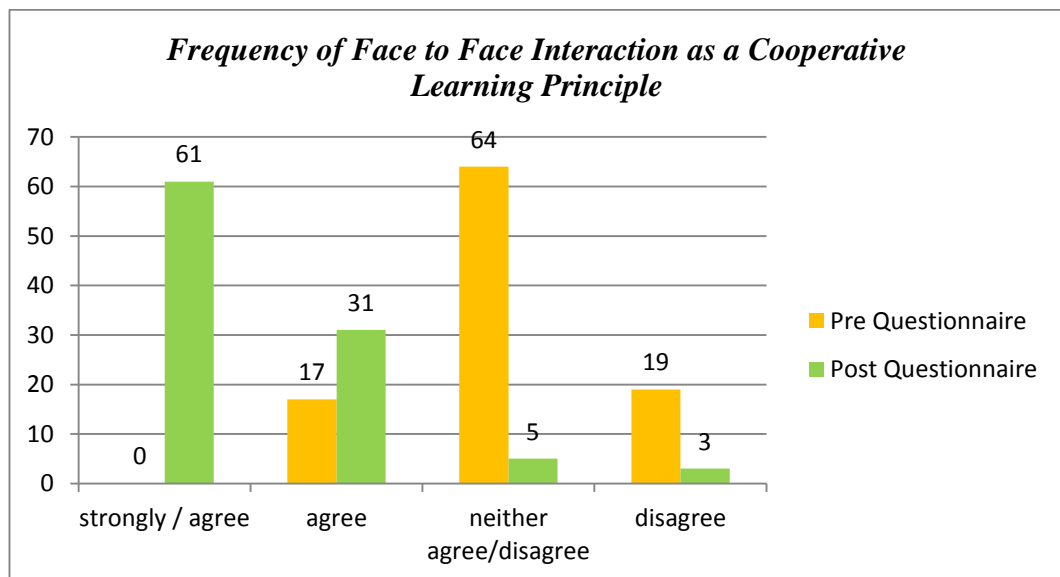
**Question 3:** Having good relationships and positive interactions are essential for group work.

**a. Table 4**

*Frequency of Face to Face Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle*

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
strongly/agree	0	0	22	61
agree	6	17	11	31
neither agree/disagree	23	64	2	5
disagree	7	19	1	3

**b. Figure 3**



### c. Interpretation and Analysis

It appears from table four few students (17%) who agreed that a good relationship and positive interactions were essential for group work. It showed the poor interaction and the lack of communication in this target group which affected in the development of the writing skills. Nevertheless, after the application of the intervention plan, by using the strategy, materials, methodology and techniques, learners got a higher result (61%) that could be seen in the post-questionnaire. This indicated that the cooperative learning improved the interaction of the group.

According to Jonson (2006), important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics only occur when students promote each other's learning. This includes oral explanations of how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned, and connecting present learning with past knowledge. It is through face-to-face, promotive interaction that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals.

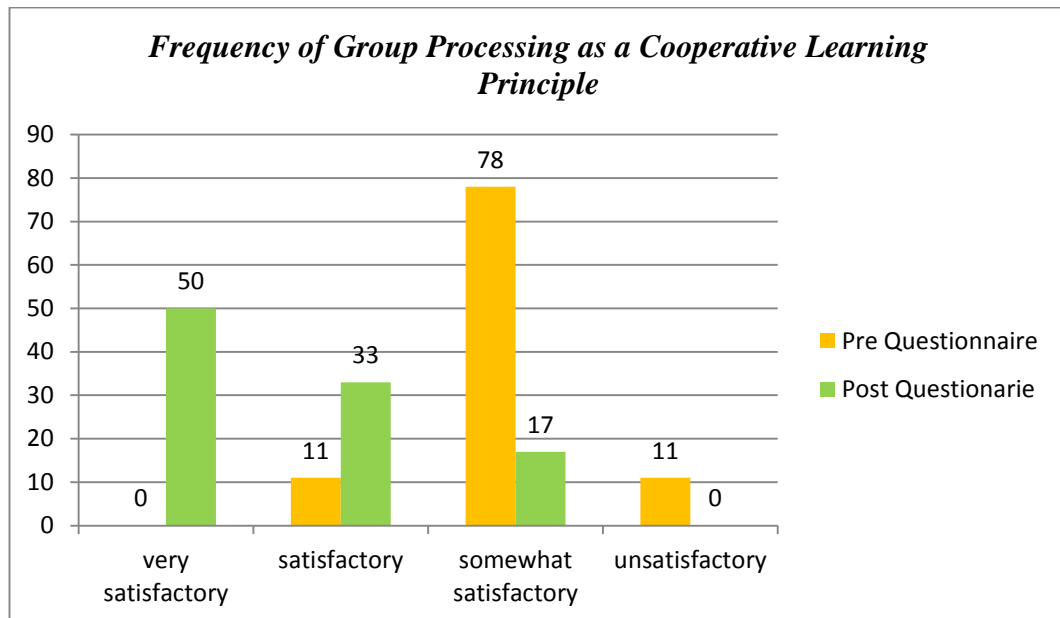
#### **Question 4:** How satisfying is it for you to work in groups?

##### a. Table 5

*Frequency of Group Processing as a Cooperative Learning Principle*

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
very satisfactory	0	0	18	50
satisfactory	4	11	12	33
somewhat satisfactory	28	78	6	17
unsatisfactory	4	11	0	0

**b. Figure 4**



**c. Interpretation and Analysis**

According to the information showed above, it can be seen that in the pre-questionnaire few student (11%) answered that they feel satisfactory working in groups maybe because teacher had never worked before in these ways, practicing a cooperative learning. In consequence, the researcher applied an intervention plan where students had the opportunity to work in groups or in pairs by using a correct material for each activity; they also took into account some strategies and techniques like the academic literacy mind map. For some of these reasons, the post test result was (50%) which means that students really liked to work in groups and practice a cooperative learning into the class.

According to Jonson (2006) after completing their task, students must be given time and procedures for analyzing how well their learning groups are functioning and how well social skills are being employed. Group processing

involves both task work and teamwork, with an eye to improving it on the next project.

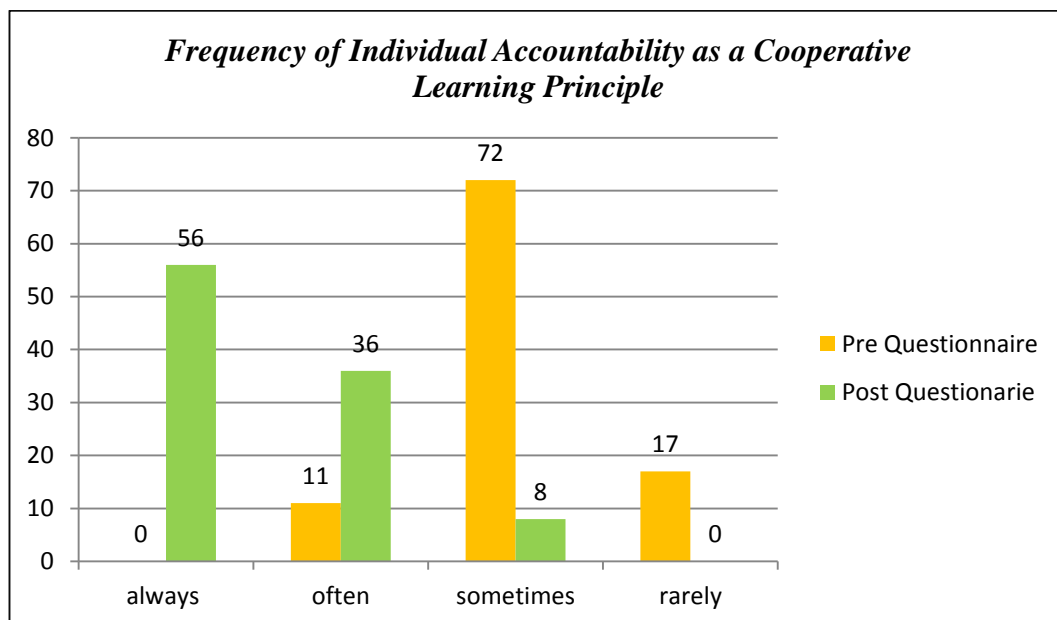
**Question 5:** In group activities, all members contribute to the development of collective work.

**a. Table 6**

*Frequency of Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle*

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
always	0	0	20	56
often	4	11	13	36
sometimes	26	72	3	8
rarely	6	17	0	0

**b. Figure 5**





### **c. Interpretation and Analysis**

Table 6 indicates that in the pre questionnaire few students (11%) contributed to the development of collective work because it is probable that in this class existed a low individual interest, causing a lack of participation in the team work while it also affected the writing skill development. In response to this issue the researcher applied an intervention plan designed for students in order to reduce these problems. As a consequence of all this process the post questionnaire showed a notable change, since more than half of the students (56%), contributed to the development of collective work. It is evident that the cooperative learning and academic literacy strategy once more were successful in this research.

According to Jonson (2006), essence of individual accountability in cooperative learning is "students learn together, but perform alone." This ensures that no one can "hitch-hike" on the work of others. Lesson goals must be clear enough that students are able to measure whether (a) the group is successful in achieving them, and (b) individual members are successful in achieving them as well.

### **Post Test Results**

**Objective five:** To reflect upon the effectiveness that the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014-2015 academic period.

**a. Table 7**

*Posttest Results: Performance of Night-Grade Students' Writing Skills.*

<b>STUDENTS' CODE</b>	<b>P /2</b>	<b>O /2</b>	<b>V /2</b>	<b>T /1</b>	<b>WO /2</b>	<b>P.M /1</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
UEBV01S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV02S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV03S	2.00	2.00	1.50	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV04S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV05S	2.00	2.00	2.00	0.75	1.50	0.50	8.75
UEBV06S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV07S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV08S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV09S	2.00	2.00	1.50	0.75	1.50	1.00	8.75
UEBV10S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV11S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV12S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV13S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV14S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV15S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.50
UEBV16S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV17S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	9.25
UEBV18S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV19S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV20S	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	1.50	0.75	7.75
UEBV21S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV22S	2.00	1.50	1.50	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.00
UEBV23S	2.00	1.50	1.50	1.00	1.50	1.00	8.50
UEBV24S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	10.00
UEBV25S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV26S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.50
UEBV27S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	0.75	9.75
UEBV28S	2.00	1.50	2.00	0.75	1.50	0.75	8.50
UEBV29S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.00
UEBV30S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.50	10.50
UEBV31S	2.00	1.50	1.50	0.75	2.00	1.00	8.75
UEBV32S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	8.75
UEBV33S	2.00	1.50	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.00
UEBV34S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.50
UEBV35S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	1.00	9.50
UEBV36S	2.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.50	0.75	9.25
<b>MEAN</b>	<b>2.00</b>	<b>1.82</b>	<b>1.92</b>	<b>0.97</b>	<b>1.74</b>	<b>0.89</b>	<b>9.33</b>

Note.P= Purpose/task. O= Organization. V= Vocabulary. T= Tense. WO= Word order. P.M= Punctuation. UEBV01S=Bernardo Valdivieso High School First Student.

## **b. Interpretation and Analysis**

In table seven, data revealed the mean for the writing skills purpose got the highest score (2/2) and punctuation got the lowest score (0.89/1). Moreover, the total score mean was 9.33 out of 10, it represented an excellent score. Additionally, the post test means showed a strong and good indication that ninth-grade students could be able to achieve the activity with the correct information (purpose). So, students used a very adequate organization of the ideas (organization). Furthermore the students were able to use the necessary new terminology (vocabulary). In the same way, students had relation between ideas although some sentences did not follow a logical word order the rest of the instruction was very clear. Finally, the punctuation which are periods after each sentence were used almost all the time when necessary.

Writing is not language. Language is a complex system residing in our brain which allows us to produce and interpret utterances. Writing involves making an utterance visible. Our cultural tradition does not make this distinction clearly. (Henry Rogers, *Writing Systems: A Linguistic Approach*. Blackwell, 2005).

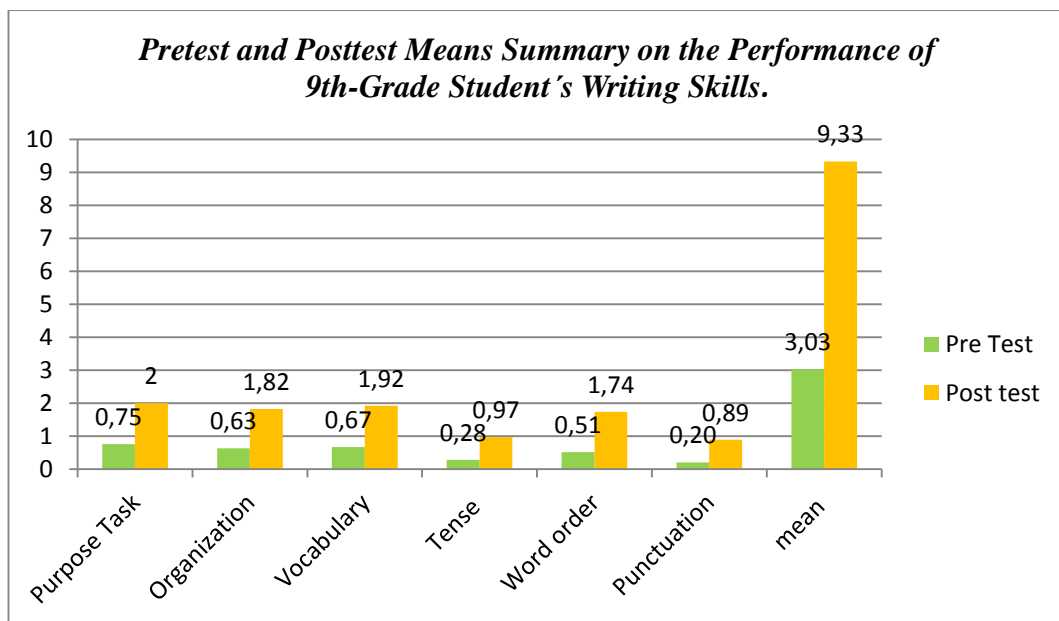
## Comparing Pre and Post-Test Means

### a. Table 8

*Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of 9th-Grade Student's Writing Skills.*

	pre test	post test
Purpose task (2/2)	0.75	2.00
Organization (2/2)	0.63	1.82
Vocabulary (2/2)	0.67	1.92
Tense (1/1)	0.28	0.97
Word order(2/2)	0.51	1.74
Punctuation mark (1/1)	0.20	0.89
Means	3.03	9.33

### b. Figure 6



### c. Interpretation and Analysis

In the table 8, it can be seen the results changes from the first test to the second one, in the second the Purpose task and Vocabulary writing skills got the highest test score means (2), but the word order got the lowest score, In effect it showed

a good progress in the students due to the implementation and design of cooperative learning activities during the intervention plan. Moreover it is important to recognize the post test mean (9.33) which was excellent. The researcher applied all the materials and contents in a correct way in order to improve the writing, where the progress was evident in the results.

Cooperative learning has been proved to be an effective teaching strategy to both the teacher and learner. It encourages learning to take place and allow communication skills to foster among learners (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006).

According to Brent (2007) the cooperative learning is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that results from working on a high-performance team. In conclusion, the fluency of cooperative learning to increase the student's writing skills had an optimistic effect through the presentation of the intervention plan.

Writing is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way. In summary, the practice of cooperative learning to increase the students 'writing skills had an optimistic effect.

## **g. DISCUSSION**

The present research was carried out with 9th –grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school. Through the data results the students’ knowledge showed that students worked successfully in the writing skills development and cooperative learning progressed after the intervention plan. The findings in the pre and posttest and pre and post questionnaires showed the significant progress students got.

The application of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy is an important tool that helped students learning. The pretest mean was low (3.03) which showed that students had serious problems in writing but after the use of the strategy it changed, the posttest mean was higher(9.95) let them to appreciate that the writing skills difficulties in the students were overcome in a great level. These findings show a good result in the 9<sup>th</sup>-grade students because they were able to write in correct way, following a word order, avoiding grammar mistakes, using correct punctuation and giving tense in each written word.

The findings in the pre and posttests questionnaires revealed an important change in the behavior and perception of the students on cooperative learning. The pre questionnaire showed that most of the students did not practice a cooperative learning in the class; however, then the results changed because in the post questionnaire this ideology was different, It means that results accomplish the expectative, in other words the practice of a cooperative learning was very useful in some aspects as the relationship between teacher and students, face to face interaction between classmates , the social skills were used and developed in

each student, the group progressing was successful and also the individual accountability.

At the beginning of this intervention the students' attitude was not the best because they did not pay attention, sometimes they played and made jokes, however during the process the students put more interest in the classes, their participation and interaction were more comfortable; It showed the strengths of the class. On the other hand, also existed limitations or weakness like the big number of students that did not let work in an adequate way.

## **h. CONCLUSIONS**

- The issues that limited the development of the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students were that all students had problems in writing; they did not use a correct order, punctuation. The media was low 3.03 /10. In addition, students did not use a correct grammar, punctuation and tense. So, they did not feel motivated to improve their writing skill. This was because of the lack of good communication between teacher and students and absence of practice of cooperative learning strategies that facilitated and helped students to improve their writing skills.
- The application of the most suitable techniques of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy reduced students' limitations in a great way. Students improved their participation and collaboration in each activity of writing during the intervention plan. Moreover, students were aware of the mistakes they made at the moment to write a sentence or paragraph.
- The effectiveness that the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy was significant, this is because all the class at the end of the process of the intervention plan showed satisfaction and were more relaxed. Students worked cooperatively and consequently they improved their writing.



## **i. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Teachers should make a diagnostic test before starting with the school year in order to determine students' weakness and strengths. This helps to design a plan according to the students' level and needs.
- Teachers should consider the implementation of strategies and techniques in the classes to stimulate students to be more participative and pay attention, at the same time students learn to write in a correct way.
- Teachers should employ time on the development of writing skills using and applying techniques and strategies as the cooperative learning which make students interact each other, feel comfortable, to get their participation in class and keep them engaged to learn English.

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k. ANNEXES



# UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE CAREER

### THEME

THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND  
MAP AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING  
STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL BASIC  
WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-  
GRADE STUDENTS AT BERNARDO  
VALDIVIESO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 –  
2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.

### AUTHOR

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LOJA – ECUADOR

2015

**a. THEME**

THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND MAP AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT BERNARDO VALDIVIESO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD.

## **b. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **Background**

This research work will be developed at "Bernardo Valdivieso" high school which was created in 1826 by Bernardo Valdivieso who was a wonderful philanthropist. It is located in "La Pradera" neighborhood, between Eduardo Kigman Avenue and Catamayo Street in the city of Loja. Actually the main authority of the institution is the Dr. Franklin Orellana Bravo. This institution offers from the Beginner Level to the basic level and high school and has three sections which are in the morning, afternoon and evening.

Nowadays, this high school is confirmed one hundred eighty nine teachers, which seventeen are English teachers. On the other hand, the amount of students that are educated in this institution are two thousand one hundred ninety.

In order to carry out this research work, the researcher has considered taking into account the ninth grade of Basic Education parallel "K", which involves thirty seven students who are between 12 and 13 years old. They belong in the afternoon section.

### **Current situation of the research problem**

Currently the teaching-learning process of the English language faces several problems in the educational institutions in our country; these troubles are usually related to the way of teaching, the lack of strategies and skills developed by the teachers, didactic resources, familiar troubles, large number of students etc.

One of the difficulties in the learning of the English language is the fact that students do not have a good basic writing skills background that allows them to have an effective communication, spoken or written. Therefore, in order to determine the incidence on the learning of the EFL basic writing skills, the researcher carried out an observation to the group of students chosen to develop the present action research; this observation allowed finding out that the students of the ninth grade of Basic Education have a very low level of basic writing skills which does not permit them to have a good cooperative learning among them and with the teacher.

The observation permitted to know that the causes for the problem found are several; one of these causes that do not allow the improving of the EFL basic writing skills are the fact that teachers do not use good strategies such as jigsaw, write around, academic literacy mind map, etc.; and another identified cause was that the teacher uses traditional teaching methods and he/she does not apply suitable techniques and activities to get students learn the basic writing skills in an enjoyable and effective way

### **Research problem**

How does the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy improve the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso 2014 – 2015 academic period?

## **Delimitation of the research**

### **Timing**

This research will be done during the academic period 2014-2015

### **Location**

The "Bernardo Valdivieso" high school is going to be the educative institution in which this project will be carried out.

### **Participants**

- The researcher
- Students of the ninth-grade of Basic Education at "Bernardo Valdivieso"

high school

### **Sub problems**

- What theoretical and methodological references about the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?
- What are the issues that limit the development of the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?
- What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?



- Which academic literacy mind map techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at 27 de Bernardo Valdivieso high School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?

- How does the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school during the 2014 - 2015 academic period?.

### **c. JUSTIFICATION**

Nowadays English language is called International language and it is considered as one of the most popular and useful around the world. People use the English as a way to communicate in very different fields such as medicine, business and education, and the technology which is starting to become a universal language.

One of the main factors that have an incidence on the use of English language for communicative purposes is the fact of being able to develop good writing skills where teachers have to find the suitable and innovative tools and strategies to work with the students. Academic literacy mind map is a cooperative strategy appropriate to provide the basic writing skills because it contains some applications with colors, imagination etc. it's important that students collaborate with each other , with their ideas and thoughts which then permit them the reflection. Academic literacy mind map provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain, that way students will develop writing skills.

The researcher has considered important the facts mentioned before to carry out his research work entitled: " The academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy to develop EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” high school academic period 2014 – 2015”. This research is also important because it is focused on the use of strategies in order to overcome one of the difficulties of the English language that students have to face which is improve the basic writing skills with a variety of techniques and materials related to the topic. The researcher is focused on doing this research

work that can be used to solve a problem embraced in the developing of the English language.

Finally, the development of this research work is a requirement for the researcher in order to get the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education, English Language Specialization as established in the regulations of the Area de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación of the Universidad Nacional De Loja.

#### **d. OBJECTIVES**

##### **General**

- To improve the EFL basic writing skills through the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period.

##### **Specifics**

- To research the theoretical and methodological references about the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the EFL basic writing skills.
- To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period
- To design an intervention plan based on the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period.
- To apply the most suitable techniques of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 academic period.

- To reflect upon the effectiveness that the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school academic period.

## **e. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy**

This investigation was carried out in the Bernardo Valdivieso high school with the students of 9th grade that was the target group for this research. The academic literacy mind map was applied as a cooperative learning strategy to develop 9<sup>th</sup> grade students writing skills which was an issue observed during the diagnostic of this research.

Cooperative learning has been proved to be an effective teaching strategy to both the teacher and learner. It encourages learning to take place and allow communication skills to foster among learners (Jacobs & McCafferty, 2006).

The term cooperative learning (CL) refers to students working in teams on an assignment or project under conditions in which certain criteria are satisfied, including that the team members be held individually accountable for the complete content of the assignment or project. Cooperative learning is an approach to group work that minimizes the occurrence of those unpleasant situations and maximizes the learning and satisfaction that result from working on a high-performance team. (Brent, 2007)

Cooperative learning covers many aims which can be summarized as follows:

***Academic Learning:*** Cooperative learning can help students learn academically simply put, as students acquire the content of the subject, they develop meta-disciplinary competence.

***Social-affective Learning:*** Social-affective learning is another aspect which students can benefit from cooperative learning. They learn to support each other, to deal with heterogeneity in a group, to work in a team and to deal with the perspective of others.

***Personality Development:*** Personality development is another benefit of Cooperative learning. It helps students strengthen the confidence in their abilities and motivate them to apply themselves more in the learning process.

### **The Nature of Cooperative Learning**

MacConnell points out as the act of cooperation is something which is deeply embedded in western societies. It seems to be a fundamental aspect of our everyday lives that people cooperate, although we do make choices about when to cooperate and with whom. The nature of cooperation is something which social scientists are interested in analyzing and researching. Argyle (Argyles Michael, 1991)

### **Reasons to Use Cooperative Learning**

- To learn to work as a group and share our ideas and thought, because to work together is the best way to learn more.

- Because it can serve as in a future to work cooperatively. For example, some companies requires people who can work cooperatively in teams. Also with family life changing, many learners do not develop these skills at home.
- Cooperative learning helps people learn social skills and therefore increases the chances that they will be able to keep the jobs for which they are trained.
- Cooperative learning structures can be used to develop constructive and supportive peer relationships. (David W.Jhonson, 1994)

According to Johnson there are three types of Cooperative Learning:

- ***Formal cooperative learning groups:*** It takes time periods to several weeks with specific tasks and involve students working together to achieve shared learning goals.
- ***Informal cooperative learning groups:*** Consists of having students work together to achieve a joint learning goal in temporary, these groups are used to focus student attention or to facilitate learning during direct teaching.
- ***Cooperative base groups:*** Cooperative base groups are long-term cooperative learning groups with stable membership whose primary responsibilities are to help students provide each other with support, encouragement, and assistance in completing assignments and hold each other accountable for striving to learn.

Also there are five key elements differentiate cooperative learning from simply putting students into groups to learn



- ***Positive Interdependence:*** You'll know when you've succeeded in structuring positive interdependence when students perceive that they "sink or swim together." This can be achieved through mutual goals, division of labor, dividing materials, roles, and by making part of each student's grade dependent on the performance of the rest of the group. Group members must believe that each person's efforts benefit not only him- or herself, but all group members as well. (Johnson et al., 2006).
- ***Individual Accountability:*** The essence of individual accountability in cooperative learning is "students learn together, but perform alone." This ensures that no one can "hitch-hike" on the work of others. A lesson's goals must be clear enough that students are able to measure whether (a) the group is successful in achieving them, and (b) individual members are successful in achieving them as well. (Johnson et al., 2006).
- ***Face-to-Face (Promotive) Interaction:*** Important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics only occur when students promote each other's learning. This includes oral explanations of how to solve problems, discussing the nature of the concepts being learned, and connecting present learning with past knowledge. It is through face-to-face, promotive interaction that members become personally committed to each other as well as to their mutual goals. (Johnson et al., 2006).
- ***Interpersonal and Small Group Social Skills:*** In cooperative learning groups, students learn academic subject matter (taskwork) and also interpersonal and small group skills (teamwork). Thus, a group must know

how to provide effective leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict management. Given the complexity of these skills, teachers can encourage much higher performance by teaching cooperative skill components within cooperative lessons. As students develop these skills, later group projects will probably run more smoothly and efficiently than early ones. (Johnson et al., 2006).

- ***Group Processing:*** After completing their task, students must be given time and procedures for analyzing how well their learning groups are functioning and how well social skills are being employed. Group processing involves both taskwork and teamwork, with an eye to improving it on the next project. (Johnson et al., 2006).

### **Current strategies of cooperative learning**

There are some useful strategies that can be used with all students to learn in class. Engaging students in individual or small group activities—pairs or more especially—is a low-risk strategy that ensures the participation of all. Some of these strategies are especially effective to work in classes which are described below. (Minnesota, may 8, 2008)

#### ***Write around***

The purpose of the strategy write around is to engage students in a silent conversation. While we eagerly want students to share their opinions or debate things they've read or discussed in class out loud, this strategy takes a slightly more inclusive approach. This strategy also develops students writing ability by

asking them to both think critically and constructively respond to different students' opinions. (Chamberlain, 2012)

### ***Jigsaw***

It is a strategy that emphasizes cooperative learning by providing students an opportunity to actively help each other build comprehension. Use this technique to assign students to reading groups composed of varying skill levels. Each group member is responsible for becoming an "expert" on one section of the assigned material and then "teaching" it to the other members of the team. (Aronson, 1971)

### ***Think-Pair-Share***

Each member in a group "thinks" about a question they have from what they just learned, and then they "pair-up" with a member in the group to discuss their responses. Finally they "share" what they learned with the rest of the class or group.

### ***Write/Pair/Share***

The format for this strategy is identical to the think-pair-share, except that students process the question asked of them by writing about it rather than reflecting. After a brief time to note their thoughts, each student turns to a partner to discuss. The activity closes with the instructor calling on random students to summarize their responses (Minnesota T. U., May 8. 2008)

### ***Roundtable.***

A question is posed by a group leader, teacher/facilitator or another participant. Each person writes one answer (or another sort of response, as directed by group

leader) on paper that's passed around the group. Each group shares/presents their answer to the entire class. (Minnesota T. U., May 8. 2008)

### ***Numbered Heads Together***

Ask students to number off in their teams from one to four. Announce a question and a time limit. Students put their heads together to come up with an answer. Call a number and ask all students with that number to stand and answer the question. Recognize correct responses and elaborate through rich discussions (Minnesota T. U., May 8. 2008)

### **The academic literacy mind map as a current cooperative learning strategy**

The Academic Literacy Mind Map strategy allows students to record their initial associations and schematics links to the content and then, during the lesson, reinforce those that support their understanding of the academic content and vocabulary. As the students create their mind map they are able to use alternate means of communication such as drawing, symbols and native language to help to reader or listener gain insight into their thoughts processes.

A Mind Map is a powerful graphic strategy which provides a universal key to unlock the potential of the brain. It harnesses the full range of thinking skills – word, image, number, logic, rhythm, color and spatial awareness – in a single, uniquely powerful manner. In so doing, it gives you the freedom to roam the infinite expanses of your brain. The Mind Map can be applied to every aspect of

life where improved learning and clearer thinking will enhance human performance. (Buzan, 2011)

Mind Maps are so easy to do and so natural, the ingredients for your “Mind Map Recipe” are very few: Blank unlined paper, colored pens and pencils, your brain and your imagination.

When you use Mind Maps on a daily basis, you will find that your life becomes more productive, fulfilled, and successful on every level. There are no limits to the number of thoughts, ideas and connections that your brain can make, which means that there are no limits to the different ways you can use Mind Maps to help you. (Buzan, 2011)

Mind Mapping is an extremely effective method of taking notes. Not only do Mind Maps show facts, they also show the overall structure of a subject and the relative importance of individual parts of it. They help you to associate ideas, think creatively, and make connections that you might not otherwise make.

Mind Maps are useful for summarizing information, for consolidating large chunks of information, for making connections, and for creative problem solving. To use Mind Maps effectively, make sure you print your words, use different colors to add visual impact, and incorporate symbols and images to further spur

creative thinking. If you do any form of research or note taking, try experimenting with Mind Maps. You'll love using them. (Carl, 2011)

*According MODERN MIND MAP by Buzan, some Techniques are:*

- Start in the center of a blank page turned sideways, because starting in the center gives your Brain freedom to spread out in all directions and to express itself more freely and naturally.
- Use an image or picture for your central idea, because an image is worth a thousand words and helps you use your imagination. a central image is more interesting, keeps you focused, helps you concentrate, and gives your brain more of a buzz!
- Use colors throughout, because colors are as exciting to your Brain as are images. Color adds extra vibrancy and life to your Mind Map, adds tremendous energy to your Creative Thinking, and is fun.
- Connect your main branches to the central image and connect your second- and third-level branches to the first and second levels, etc. because your brain works by association. It likes to link two (or three, or four) things together. If you connect the branches, you will understand and remember a lot more easily.
- Make your branches curved rather than straight-lined, because having nothing but straight lines is boring to your brain.
- Use one key word per line, because single key words give your mind map more power and flexibility.

- Use images throughout, because each image, like the central image, is also worth a thousand words. So if you have only 10 images in your mind map, it's already the equal of 10,000 words of notes.

**The role of the teacher in the classroom:**

- Teacher gives an explanation about what is an academic literacy mind map.
- Teacher clarify ordinal each topic in order students understand and be able to use correctly the academic literacy mind map.
- Teacher gives each student or each group a different colored or pen marked.
- Teacher forms groups in the class and gives the theme to be applied.
- Teacher controls the class and monitors that all students be active in the development of the activity.
- Teacher encourages students to support the key terms written in the paper.

**The role of the students:**

- Students have to pay attention during the class lesson
- Students have to include in the mind map only the key information that has relation among them.
- Students have to follow the instructions of teacher.
- Students have to be active and participate along of the procedure.
- Students have to be able to explain correctly the information added in the mind map.

## **Basic writing skills**

The main reason to describe the basic writing skills in this research was because the research observed during the phase diagnostic of this investigation an issue in the develop 9<sup>th</sup> grade students writing skills.

If children learn to write they have a lot of possibilities in the world. They can write a letter from a friend, write short stories that comes from their imagination. While there are basic rules and formats to follow when learning how to write, writing can also be creative and imaginative.

Teaching writing is often about teaching grammar. If grammar comes up anywhere in EFL, it is in the writing classroom. Most EFL students will have some writing skills when you get them and they will often have an idea that their writing is quite good. Unfortunately, it will very often be quite poor.

In fact, they often will have quite poor writing skills even at the sentence level. Therefore, you will need to take them back to sentence level and begin to teach them very basic structure and how to write simply. Run-on and fragmented sentences will be very common until you correct those errors.

The more basic you get with your writing students, the better. Once a good foundation is built, you can move on to basic paragraph writing and on to essays.



These skills take time to develop though and you will find that most textbooks will move your students forward too quickly.

You may find resistance from your students when you take them back to basics. This can be done without demoralizing them or making them feel their skills are poor. Take the approach that we can make the good skills you already have even better by polishing up some good basic skills. (Educator, 2006)

They are an important part of communication .Good writing skills allow you to communicate your message with clarity and ease to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations.

Writing is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the hardest of the skills, even for native speakers of a language, since it involves not just a graphic representation of speech but the development and presentation of speech, but the development and presentation of thoughts in a structured way.

### **Styles of Writing**

Style in writing is concerned with choice because every writer has available the enormous resources of a whole language and each writer selects the arrangements of words that he/she thinks will best express the intended meaning, emphasize and tone to produce the desired response from readers (Kirkman, 1992,2005)

Several elements of writing contribute to an author's style, but three of the most important are word choice, sentence fluency, and voice.

### **Word choice**

Good writers are concise and precise, weeding out unnecessary words and choosing the exact word and using adjectives correctly and adverbs rarely, letting their nouns and verbs do the work in order to convey meaning. Also they choose words that contribute to the flow of a sentence. (Cali K. B., 2003)

### **Sentence fluency**

It is the flow and rhythm of phrases and sentences. Good writers use a variety of sentences with different lengths and rhythms to achieve different effects. They use parallel structures within sentences and paragraphs to reflect parallel ideas, but also know how to avoid monotony by varying their sentence structures. (Cali K. B., 2003)

Writers avoid loose sentences, deleting excessive words and rearranging their ideas for effect. Furthermore, more readable style results when writers choose their words carefully, delete redundancies, make vague words more specific, and use subordinate clauses and phrases to rearrange their ideas for the greatest effect. (Cali K. B., 2003)

## **Voice**

The voice is an essential element of style that reveals the writer's personality. A writer's voice can be impersonal or chatty, authoritative or reflective, objective or passionate, serious or funny. (Cali K. B., 2003)

### ***Writing sub skills***

- Use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions.
- Use the correct forms of words. This may mean using forms that express the right tense, or case or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order
- Use vocabulary correct
- Use the style appropriate to the gender and audience Make the main sentence constituents, such a subject, verb and object, clear to the reader.
- Make the main ideas distinct from supporting ideas or information.
- Make the text coherent, so that the other people can follow the the development of the ideas.
- Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what is is assumed they don't know.
- Be able to structure a text into paragraphs and use devices such as thesis statement.
- Be able to write purposefully and meaningfully.
- Be able to produce writing at efficient rate, especially during examinations.

In conclusion, this research was made in order to recognize the different problems that exist in the writing skill which can be improved through cooperative learning using the academic literacy mind map strategy among students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school.

**Intervention and observation plan.**

<p><b>Name:</b> Gabriela Estefania Lima Salinas  <b>School:</b> Bachillerato Bernardo Valdivieso high school  <b>Grade Level:</b> 9<sup>th</sup>, “K” Grade</p>	
<p><b>WEEK ONE</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Getting to know the students and Pre-test</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will be able to listen to their classmate presentation.  <b>Speaking</b>  Students will be able to introduce themselves.  <b>Writing</b>  Students will be able to create biography cards about themselves.  Students will be able to write questions.  <b>Key Vocabulary:</b>  Name, last name, age, birthday, family, favorite activity, favorite kind of music.</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is planning a lesson based on the presentation of the students</li> </ul> <p>To get started, teacher introduces herself and plays a warm up called good memory. First students should stand in a circle.</p>

Then the teacher will choose one students who with start, this student has say his or her name very loud, all the class have pay attention in order to remember the name because each student of the right have to follow the same instruction but this student have to say his or her name and also the names that were mentioned before according the turns. The student who doesn't memorize automatically lost and he or she has to pay a penitence it could be describe his or her family, etc.

During this warm up stage, teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows the teacher to know students' diverse linguistic background.

#### **Connection**

- ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher gives a pre- test in order to know and analyze the level of writing skills that students have.
- ◆ After the pre-test, teacher shows some flash card about his or her self in order to catch the attention of the students and familiarize with the next activity.
- ◆ After students have to create a bibliography card where they have to include names, last names, age, birthday, family, favorite music etc.
- ◆ While they are creating your bibliography card teacher monitors them to check if they are right or wrong and give support needed.

#### **.Affirming**

- ◆ Once the students have finished creating their own biography card then they have to introduce themselves to the class using the bibliography card, the other students to take notes about each presentation and write it down in a paper.

	♦ As homework, students create and write a bibliography card about a friend or family.
<b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b>	warm up Visual aids: flash cards Bibliography cards Student's notebook Student's textbook (Abbs, Barker, & Freebairn, English, 2008) Rubric
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Pre-test
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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

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

<p><b>Name:</b> Gabriela Estefania Lima Salinas  <b>School:</b> Bachillerato Bernardo Valdivieso high school  <b>Grade Level:</b> 9<sup>th</sup>, “K” Grade</p>	
<p><b>WEEK TWO</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? (dialogue and comprehension and useful expressions )</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will listen to partner while he or she is talking about what is Brian doing?  Students will listen to teacher when he or she describes the picture in the book.  <b>Speaking</b>  Students will describe what is Brian doing?  Students read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.  <b>Writing</b>  Students will individually create a mind maps about what is Brian doing  Students will write a short summary about what is Brian doing .</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is planning a lesson based on what is Brian doing.</li> <li>◆ To get started. Teacher plays“ guess the picture “warm map , First the teacher form two teams in which one students per team have to come to the front and starts to draw a picture., the students of the other team must try to guess what the picture is before the person has finished drawing it. The students who come to front has to draw a picture, so the student who guess has to make a sentence with the picture, if the sentences is correct the get a point finally that way two or more students do the same according the turns.</li> <li>◆ During this warm up stage, teacher assesses the students’ prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students’ diverse linguistic background</li> </ul>

**Connection**

◆ After the warm-up activity, I will present flash cards about what is Brian doing.

- He is upstairs in the bedroom
- He is reading
- He is writing an e-mail
- He is e-mailing his parents

◆ As students are learning the new knowledge, they individually have to take notes about what is Brian doing on a sheet of paper. Students will connect this ideas in a mind map with different colors in order that they memorize it. And then they could remember according the color.

◆ After students have finished recording their notes for each new key word, they have to share their ideas with a partner to share their personal background for each new expression.

◆ While they are sharing, teacher can review them in order to check if they are correct or wrong. In the case they are right teacher affirm the discussion. If they're wrong teacher will help them to get the correct order.

**.Affirming**

◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them.

◆ At this time, I will hand out a sheet of paper where they made the mind map.



	<div data-bbox="724 331 1342 801" data-label="Diagram"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Each rectangle of the mind map has an idea about what is Brian doing.</li> <li>◆ The new partner to follow these steps to work with this mind map that they already created. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students observe the different colors which they used to record their initially understandings.</li> <li>-Students have to distinguish brainstormed associations from the new learning.</li> <li>-Students record and expand upon the connections among the expressions.</li> <li>-Students can add more ideas in their mind maps</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Teacher asks students to describe again what is Brian doing, at this point the students won't observe the flash cards and they won't see the mind maps because they ready record this information.</li> <li>◆ As homework. Students will write a short summary about what is Brian doing but in a correct order.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>Academic literacy mind map  Visual aids: flash cards with ideas about what is Brian doing.  Markers and board  Student's notebook  Student's textbook  quiz</p>

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

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<p><b>WEEK THREE</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? (vocabulary)</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will be able to listen to their classmates the presentation about new vocabulary.  Students will be able to listen carefully what involves each new word in order understand well.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will be able to make roles in groups of three in order to improve the pronunciation of the new vocabulary.  Students read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will be able to create new sentences with the vocabulary  Students will be able to create a mind map about the vocabulary (they will draw)  Students will write a short summary using sentences with the new vocabulary.</p> <p><b>Key words :</b>  Bathroom, bedroom, dining room, garage, kitchen, living room, stairs, downstairs, upstairs.</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on adverbs of frequency</li> <li>◆ To get started, I will have students activate their prior knowledge related to useful expressions , what is Brian doing and some other words related to unit four .As a whole class, they will have to remember useful expressions that they already learned in previous classes. This is warm-up activity called “tingo-tango” in which</li> </ul>

	<p>students have to pass a ball as they listen the phrase “tingo-tango” in this case the teacher will be who repeat this phrase when the teacher stop to repeat the phrase, the ball will stop, too. The student who has the ball at that time has to say a sentence with the word that teacher will give to him or her. Once, the student speaks up, teacher corrects some mistakes and says in a correct way in order that students repeat again and memorize it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ During this warm up stage, teacher also assesses the students’ prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students’ diverse linguistic background.</li> </ul> <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ After the warm-up activity, I will present flash cards of the new vocabulary in context.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bathroom</li> <li>● bedroom</li> <li>● dining room</li> <li>● garage</li> <li>● kitchen</li> <li>● living room</li> <li>● stairs</li> <li>● downstairs</li> <li>● upstairs</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ As students are learning the new vocabulary, they individually have to take notes of the 9 new words on a sheet of paper. They can associate these according the place. Students will connect this vocabulary in a mind map with different colors according the order memorize and develop the imagination.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ After students have finished recording their notes for each new key word, they have to share their ideas with a partner to</li> </ul>
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	<p>share their personal background for each new expression.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ While they are sharing, teacher can review them in order to check if they are correct or wrong. In the case they are right teacher affirm the discussion. If they're wrong teacher will help them to get the correct order.</li> </ul> <p><b>Affirming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them.</li> <li>◆ At this time, I will hand out a sheet of paper where they made the mind map.</li> <li>◆ Each circle of the mind map has a new world according the color.</li> <li>◆ The new partner to follow these steps to work with this mind map that they already created. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Students observe the different colors which they used to record their initially understandings.</li> <li>-Students have to distinguish brainstormed associations from the new learning.</li> <li>-Students record and expand upon the connections among the expressions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Teacher asks students to repeat the vocabulary and her or his only shows the picture without any key world.</li> <li>◆ As homework. Students will write a sentence with each world.</li> </ul>
<b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b>	<p>Academic Literacy mind map  Visual aids: flash cards.  Student's notebook</p>

	Student's textbook Rubric
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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<p><b>Name:</b> Gabriela Estefania Lima Salinas  <b>School:</b> Bachillerato Bernardo Valdivieso high school  <b>Grade Level:</b> 9<sup>th</sup>, “K” Grade</p>	
<p><b>WEEK FOUR</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? spelling rules of -ing.</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will listen the spelling rules  Students will listen the way in which can be used the spelling rules.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will describe a sentence using in a correct way the spelling rules in the verbs.  Students will read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will created a mind map using note making about spelling rules  Students will write at less ten complete sentences in a short essay (taking into account the spelling rules of -ing) about what is her or himself doing.</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher building a lesson based on the spelling roles to describe something that you’re doing.</li> <li>◆ To get started, Teacher will have students activate their prior knowledge related to what is Brian doing. As a whole class, they will have to remember about that they already learned in previous classes. In this case teacher will reproduce a dialogue warm up in a radio in order that the students listen it and recognize the activities that Brian is doing. Students have to take notes in a sheet of paper the main ideas (can be a mind map) of the dialogue. Then teacher will ask to students</li> </ul>

read the main ideas.

### **Connection**

- ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher presents chart about spelling rules to form the -ing.
- ◆ As students are learning about spelling rules, they have to close their eyes and think about it for a minute or two, in silence. They then have two minutes in which to note down their ideas about the spelling rules they will use a mind map, like a tree. If they do not know a word in English, they can write it in L1 at this stage, as dictionaries or too much teacher intervention tend to halt and inhibit the creative flow.

Then, working in groups, they can compare and discuss their ideas, perhaps adding to their mind maps as they go. This stage also provides the opportunity for peer teaching, as other students may be available to provide the English word for the idea that was noted down in L1.

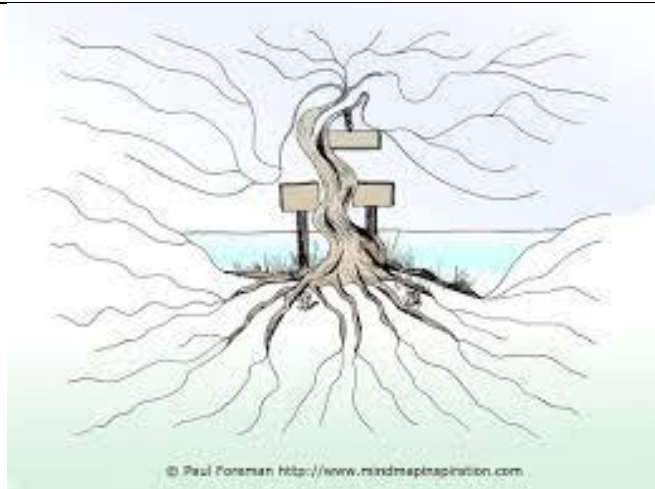
After students have finished to write his or her ideas they will share them in order to improve the knowledge

While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, I will help them to get the correct information.

### **Affirming**

- ◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with other
- ◆ At this time, teacher will hand out the works that the students made.





- ◆ Each branch of the tree has a spelling rule.
- ◆ The new partners should follow these steps to work with it that they already created plus the academic literacy mind map:
  - Students have to identify the spelling rules that exist in the sentences that are in the tree.
  - Students use and develop their imagination to develop a mind map in order to gather information
  - Students work together in order to memorize the expressions
  - Students remember and record again the ideas that they wrote
  - Students correct mistakes and add more information

Teacher will be observing the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.

- ◆ Once the pairs have checked the work the teacher asks students about some examples about new ways to use spelling rules of .ing.
- ◆ As homework, Students will write at least six complete sentences in a short essay (using useful expressions) about the daily routines.
- ◆ Students have to prepare a presentation about the new vocabulary.

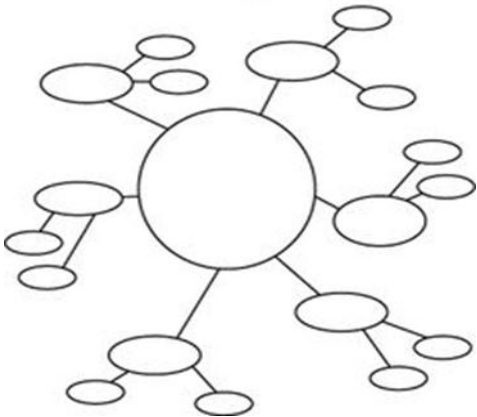
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To finish the lesson, on a power point, we will review again the learning outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b>	Academic literacy mind map Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric Quiz
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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<p><b>WEEK FIVE</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? The present continues (positive and negative sentences)</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will listen to the classmates while he or she is saying an example using present continues  Students will listen to the teacher when she or he is correcting the error in some sentences.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will describe affirmative and negative sentence with present continues.  Students read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will develop a mind map but with nexus waver which cover other level of information.  Students a good and big essay of ten or twelve sentences about all the ideas that they put in the mind map.</p> <p><b>Key words :</b> be(am/is/are)+verb-ing</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on present continues.</li> <li>◆ To get started, I will have students activate their prior knowledge related to useful expressions, what is Brian doing .As a whole class, they will have to remember the new vocabulary that they already learned in previous classes. This is warm-up activity called “tingo-tango” in which students have to pass a ball as they listen the phrase “tingo-tango”in this case the teacher will be who repeat this phrase when the teacher stop to repeat the phrase, the ball will stop, too. The student who has the ball at that time has to say a sentence with the word that teacher will</li> </ul>

	<p>give to him or her. Once, the student speaks up, teacher corrects some mistakes and says in a correct way in order that students repeat again and memorize it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ During this warm up stage, teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students' diverse linguistic background.</li> </ul> <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ After the warm-up activity, I will present power point of present continues.</li> <li>◆ As students are learning grammar, students will write briefly his or her own ideas about present continues. They will use their own examples. Then they will share with the classmates. Students have to create a mind map with connectives and also with sub connectives.</li> <li>◆ After students have finished making the mind map. They will share ideas with other classmates in order to improve also the pronunciation.</li> <li>◆ While they are sharing, teacher monitors them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher affirms their works. If they are wrong, teacher helps them to get the correct information.</li> </ul> <p><b>Affirming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them.</li> <li>◆ At this time, teacher hand out the mind map with connectives and sub connectives.</li> </ul>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Mind Map</b></p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students while observe and analyze the mind map they also apply the academic literacy mind map. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students can take notes is no particular order because it will help to structure categorize these ideas just in our brainstorming.</li> <li>- Students will put the main topic in the center next they will create major points extending out from the second title.</li> <li>- Students will use different connectives that will cover information of minor stuff. -students can expend more the mind imp if they use examples(could be own examples)</li> <li>- Students will get a lot of wonderfully ideas and knowledge which he or she ca use to do a good essay.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ Teacher ask for the own information and ideas of the students about present continues.They will be able to answer without any help.</li> <li>◆ As homework, Students have to write 5 affirmative and negative sentences with present continues.</li> <li>◆ Students have to complete the pages 36</li> </ul>
<p><b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>Academic Literacy mind map Visual aids: power points with information.</p>

	Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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<p><b>WEEK SIX</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? The present continues (yes/no questions, affirmative and negative answers, information questions , short and long answers)</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Grammar</b>  Students will be able to identify what are the ways to ask and answer about present continues  Students will be able to construct simple sentences using the yes, no questions or information question.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will speak in order to ask and answer  Students will construct a dialogue that involved all the aspects.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will develop a mind map but using images throughout, because each image, like the central image, is also worth a thousand words. So if you have only 10 images in your mind map, it’s already the equal of 10,000 words of notes</p> <p><b>Key words :</b> yes/no questions, affirmative and negative answers, information questions , short and long answers</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher is building a lesson based on present continues( yes/no questions, affirmative and negative answers, information questions , short and long answers)</li> <li>◆ To get started, with a warm up called broken telephone, it is a listening and pronunciation activity that always gets people laughing. The leader first must think of a sentence or phrase and whisper</li> </ul>

	<p>it to the person beside her it has to be according the topic that we have been study, it can involve all in a single sentence. That person will then whisper what she heard to the next person. Each person can only say, "Can you please repeat that?" one time. When the message reaches the end of the chain that person must speak out loud. Oftentimes the message will be completely different when it reaches the end. Try to find out where the chain broke! In a big group you can send the message two ways and find out which team comes closest to the real message (first they usually get up at 6:00 am and then take breakfast.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ During this warm up stage, teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which will allow me to know my students' diverse linguistic background.</li> </ul> <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ After the warm-up activity, I will present more examples and information about the topic. yes/no questions, affirmative and negative answers, information questions , short and long answers.</li> <li>◆ As students are learning grammar, students will write briefly his or her own ideas about present continues. They will use their own examples. Then they will share with the classmates.</li> <li>◆ After they finished the activity, they will have to compare to compare their answer with a classmate. To find a partner teacher will apply the techniques Index Card to get in pairs. Teacher will put matching stickers in the cards with the face down in the chairs of the students and then teacher will say watch the cards they will have to find the other classmate to work.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ While they are sharing their work teacher will check the development of it by checking in each group how they are doing. Also they will have to make one question and the other must answer.</li> </ul> <p><b>Affirming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Once they return to their seats, they will have to work with the partner that is behind him/her.</li> <li>- At this time, they will have to use their notebooks to write a short paragraph.</li> <li>- They will use at least 5 yes /no questions and information questions.</li> <li>- After to write it, they will read what was written in their notebooks in order to practice their pronunciation.</li> <li>- Once they have finished to read their work teacher will have to ask questions for them in order to clarify if was understood the theme.</li> <li>- As homework they will have to write 10 questions with the answer.</li> </ul>
<b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b>	Academic Literacy mind map Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric Quiz
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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<p><b>WEEK SEVEN</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? Comprehensive lecture</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will listen the lecture that the teacher will read  Students will the intonations and pronunciation to the classmates.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will describe main ideas about the reading  Students will read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will created a mind map using an image or picture for your central idea, because an image is worth a thousand words and helps you use your imagination. a central image is more interesting, keeps you focused, helps you concentrate, and gives your brain more of a buzz</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher building a lesson based on the sequence lecture</li> <li>◆ <b>Draw the Picture warm up</b> which students get in pairs and then one person looks at a scene from a magazine or book. The other person has a pencil and a blank piece of paper. The person with the picture will try to describe everything he sees to the drawer. When the describer is finished, they have to compare the drawings to the real thing! Whose is the closest to the original? This will last 5 minutes. The students have to join with the partner that</li> </ul>

is in front of his/her.

### **Connection**

- ◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher presents power points of the sequence words in the daily routines.
- ◆ As students are learning about reading , they can take notes about the key words of the reading in order that they understand in a correct way , in silence. They then have two minutes in which to note down their ideas about the reading they will use a mind map.
- ◆ Students will created a mind map using an image or picture for your central idea, because an image is worth a thousand words and helps you use your imagination. a central image is more interesting, keeps you focused, helps you concentrate, and gives your brain more of a buzz
- ◆ Then, working in groups, they can compare and discuss their ideas, perhaps adding to their mind maps as they go. This stage also provides the opportunity for peer teaching, as other students may be available to provide the English word for the idea that was noted down in L1.
- After students have finished to write his or her ideas they will share them in order to improve the knowledge
- While they are sharing, teacher will monitor them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, teacher will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, I will help them to get the correct information.

<p>A d a p t e d</p> <p>f r o m</p> <p>D , A n n</p> <p>R a w l i n s o n</p>	<p><b>Affirming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with other</li> <li>◆ At this time, teacher will hand out the works that the students made.</li>   <li>◆ Once they have gone back to their respective positions they will have to work with the partner that follows in the list.</li> <li>◆ At this time teacher will give them a sheet of paper where they will have to make a mind map with the most essential information about the reading.</li> <li>◆ The paper is divided in four circles and each one of them have other divisions in order they complete with the ideas</li> <li>◆ Each one will have to participate to complete the sheet until it is well done.</li> <li>◆ Teacher will be supervising the class to verify if they are working</li> <li>◆ As homework they will have to develop the progress check</li> </ul>
<p><b>CLASSROOM RESOURCES</b></p>	<p>Academic literacy mind map Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric</p>
<p><b>DATA &amp; COLLECTION</b></p>	<p>Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly</p>
<p><b>SUPPORT</b></p>	<p>Coaching and guidance from our university professor.</p>

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

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

<p><b>Name:</b> Gabriela Estefania Lima Salinas  <b>School:</b> Bachillerato Bernardo Valdivieso high school  <b>Grade Level:</b> 9<sup>th</sup>, “K” Grade</p>	
<p><b>WEEK EIGHT</b></p>	
<p><b>RESEARCH PROBLEM</b></p>	<p><i>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</i></p>
<p><b>TOPIC</b></p>	<p><b>Unit 4 : What’s Brian doing? feedback</b></p>
<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES</b></p>	<p><b>Listening</b>  Students will listen a feedback given for teacher about what is Brian doing with the respective topics studied.  Students will listen to classmates when they say examples according all the unit.</p> <p><b>Speaking</b>  Students will talk about his or her activities that they are doing in that moment.  Students will read aloud to a partner to improve pronunciation.</p> <p><b>Writing</b>  Students will create some new examples with present continues.  Students will complete some worksheets about the respective sub topic that involve unit 4 as useful expressions, vocabulary and present continues.  Students will complete the post-test according the unit..</p>
<p><b>INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS</b></p>	<p><b>Activation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teacher building a lesson that involved all the main topics about unit four.</li> <li>- To motivate students with the new topic I will make a <b>warm up called time to speak</b> in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a picture. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the word. Then the student will throw the ball</li> </ul>

	<p>to another. This process will have to repeat with some students. This will take 10 minutes.</p> <p><b>Connection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ After the warm-up activity, teacher presents all the topics that they have been studying in order to give the feedback.</li> <li>◆ As students they ready lean about this, however they can review again in order to provide a little more their knowledge. Students will create a general mind map only with key words because that way they will memories and develop the imagination of you. They can use the different kind of mind maps that exist with connectives and sub connectives etc.</li> <li>◆ Finally the teacher will check the mind maps in order to help if maybe it is wrong.</li> </ul> <p><b>Affirming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Students will complete some sheet of paper of exercises about unit 4.</li> <li>◆ Students should develop these activities, they can use the previous knowledge plus the academic literacy mind map which will help to complete more easy the exercises.</li> <li>◆ To get started, whit the test teacher explains in a clear way all the instructions that students have to follow in order to answer the test, each question is explained.</li> <li>◆ Teachers ask for any duties about the test in order to clarify these</li> <li>◆ As homework, Students will have to review for the next unit.</li> </ul>
<b>CLASSROOM</b>	Warm up. Student's notebook

<b>RESOURCES</b>	Rubric Post Test
<b>DATA COLLECTION</b>	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Post-test
<b>SUPPORT</b>	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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

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

## **f. METHODOLOGY**

### **Design of the research**

The present research work corresponds to Action Research, which has become more popular as a mode of research among practitioners. It includes the process of actively participating in a change situation and at the same time as conducting research. Action research can be undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students assisted or guided by professional researchers, with the aim of improving strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within they are related.

This action research has the aim of improving the EFL basic writing skills through the application of materials and techniques with the use of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy.

Besides, this study is an applied educational research work since it is a practical action research that will allow the practitioner to study aspects, analyze and reflect on the results that will be derived of the application of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy for EFL basic writing skills

### **Methods, techniques and instruments methods**

#### **Methods**

This study will make a description of the data resulting from the application of an intervention plan that will allow the application of materials and techniques with the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy to improve the EFL basic writing skills and achieve the set goals of this research project; and,



to support its development the following general methods will be applied along the descriptive research:

The Scientific method will facilitate the study of the academic literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy applied in the developing the EFL basic writing skills. It will help in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one will also assist during the prediction of the possible solution; it will assist with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

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

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

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

## **Techniques and instruments**

### **Data Collection**

In order to collect the essential information to carry out this research work, the researcher will apply the following research techniques for collecting data: the observation, the survey and the test.

#### **The Observation:**

It is going to be applied at the beginning of the research in order to identify the problematic related to and to analyze the possible solutions that solve the problematic found.

#### **The questionnaire:**

It is going to be applied through the instrument of the questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan.

Firstly, the survey will gather information related to the materials and techniques that the teacher applies to teach the EFL basic writing skills and the resources she uses. And secondly, the survey will help collect information about the activities and techniques applied with the academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy that the researcher will be carried out, it will allow to find out if her teaching activities have caught students' attention and have helped improve the EFL basic writing skills of the students.

**The test:**

Also, it is going to be applied at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan; at the beginning it will be used to diagnose the level of basic writing skills that students have; and, at the end to verify the level of basic writing skills achieved by the students after the materials and techniques applied with the academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy.

**Procedures**

The development of this action research work is going to include the following steps:

First of all, the problematic was detected in advance through the observation, where the researcher could realize that the students do not have a satisfactory level of the EFL basic writing skills because of the lack strategies such as the academic literacy mind map.

After that, the researcher investigated the materials and techniques that can be applied using academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy; this allowed the researcher to have enough information to plan the teaching activities that will be developed through the working plan.

The intervention plan will start with the application of the questionnaire and the test, which will allow finding out the activities and techniques carried out with strategies by the teacher and to identify the level of basic writing skills that the students have. These results will also help the researcher to reflect about the best teaching practices, the motivation, the evaluation process and the attitude that a

teacher should have in order to catch students' attention, and in this case, to get students develop a good range of basic writing skills.

Then" the teacher will apply the most suitable materials and techniques with academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy in order to improve the English language vocabulary of the students, this process will be done with the help of other strategies and teaching aids that provide a good classroom environment, motivation and taking advantage of time at maximum.

Once finished the teaching activities, a second questionnaire and test will be applied in order to verify if the materials and techniques with the use of academic literacy mind map as cooperative language strategy have improved the EFL basic writing skills of the students.

After the intervention plan, the researcher will analyze the data collected; it will allow her to verify the set goals have been achieved and to draw the conclusions of the intervention program.

Finally, a written report that details all the activities carried out during this action research and intervention plan will be presented for the private and public presentation of this research work.

## **Tabulation**

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

## **Organization**

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

## **Description**

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

## **Population Sample**

All the thirty four students of the ninth-grade of Basic Education parallel "G" of the "Bernardo Valdivieso" high school have been chosen as a sample.

g. TIME LINE

PHASES	ACTIVITIES	2015												2016				
		FEB	MAR	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEP	OCT	NOV	DIC	JAN	FEB	MAR			
Project	Presentation	x																
	Correction		x x															
	Approval			x x x														
	Appointment of the Thesis Advisor					x x												
Intervention Plan	Validation of Data Collection Instruments					x												
	Act and Observe					x x x x x x x x												
	Data Organization and Tabulation							x x										
Thesis Development	Interpreting and Reflecting								x x x									
	Writing up and Reporting									x x								
	Thesis Review and Certification																	



## **h. BUDGET AND FINANCING**

### **Resources**

#### **Human**

- The researcher :Gabriela Estefanía Lima Salinas
- Students of ninth-grade students at “Bernardo Valdivieso” high school, 2014 – 2015 academic period.

#### **Material**

- **Office material:** books, notebooks, copies, paper.
- **Technical Resources:** internet, computer, printer, flash memories.
- **Didactic Resources:** flashcards, power point presentations.

#### **Budget**

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Printed materials	\$ 50
Print of the project	\$ 10
Computer	\$ 20
Internet Connection	\$ 50
Books	\$50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$180</b>



**Financing**

The expenditures resultant from the development of this research work will covered by the researcher.

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## Annexes

### Research Matrix

Theme: THE ACADEMIC LITERACY MIND MAP AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP EFL BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT BERNARDO VALDIVIESO HIGH SCHOOL. ACADEMIC PERIOD 2014 – 2015..

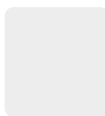
<b>Problem</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Theoretical Frame</b>	<b>Methodological Design (Action Research)</b>	<b>Techniques and Instruments</b>
<p><b>General</b></p> <p>How does the Academic Literacy mind map as cooperative learning strategy improve the writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High schools during the 2014-2015 school year?</p>	<p><b>General</b></p> <p>- To improve the EFL basic writing skills through the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year.</p>	<p><b>The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy</b></p> <p>Reasons to use cooperative learning</p> <p>Current strategies of cooperative learning</p> <p>The academic literacy mind map as a current cooperative written strategy</p>	<p><b>Preliminary investigation</b></p> <p>-Observing the English classes.</p> <p>-Stating the background of the problem.</p> <p>-Describing current situation.</p> <p>-Locating and reviewing the literature.</p> <p>- Creating a methodological framework for research.</p>	<p>-Observation sheet (Participant and Non-participant Observation)</p> <p>-Pre and Posttest.</p> <p>-Pre and Post Questionnaire.</p> <p>-Subtests.</p>
<p><b>Specific</b></p> <p>-What theoretical and methodological references about</p>	<p><b>Specific</b></p> <p>- To research the theoretical and</p>	<p><b>Basic written skills</b></p> <p>The styles of written</p> <p>The write sub skills</p>	<p><b>Intervention and observation</b></p> <p>-Designing an intervention plan.</p> <p>-Administering tests and questionnaires.</p>	

<p>the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year?</p> <p>- What are the issues that limit the development of the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year?</p> <p>- What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory</p>	<p>methodologica l references about the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the EFL basic writing skills.</p> <p>- To diagnose the issues that limit the development of the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year?</p> <p>- To design an intervention plan based on the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL basic</p>		<p>-Observing and monitoring students' performance according to the intervention plan</p> <p><b>Presentation of research findings.</b></p> <p>-Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquires.</p> <p>-Organizing the final report-</p>	
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<p>outcome on developing the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 high school year?</p> <p>-Which academic literacy mind map techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at 27 de Bernardo Valdivieso high School during the 2014 - 2015 school year?</p> <p>- How does the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy reduce</p>	<p>writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year.</p> <p>-To apply the most suitable techniques of the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the EFL basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year.</p> <p>-To reflect upon the effectiveness that the academic literacy mind map as a cooperative learning</p>			
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<p>the difficulty to develop the ELF basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso high school during the 2014 - 2015 school year.</p>	<p>strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at Bernardo Valdivieso High School during the 2014 - 2015 school year.</p>			
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## Annex 2. Pre and Posttest



### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

#### DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE TEST / POST TEST

**Student's Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Instructions:**

Write a brief paragraph about what is happening in Alex's House and tell where their relatives are. Briefly describe the home and answer yourself the following questions to include in your paragraph. What is Max, Alex, Alice, Liz, Tom and Kate doing? And where are they? As a conclusion write about what is your favorite place in your house. Why is it your favorite place? What is in that room? What can you do there? etc.

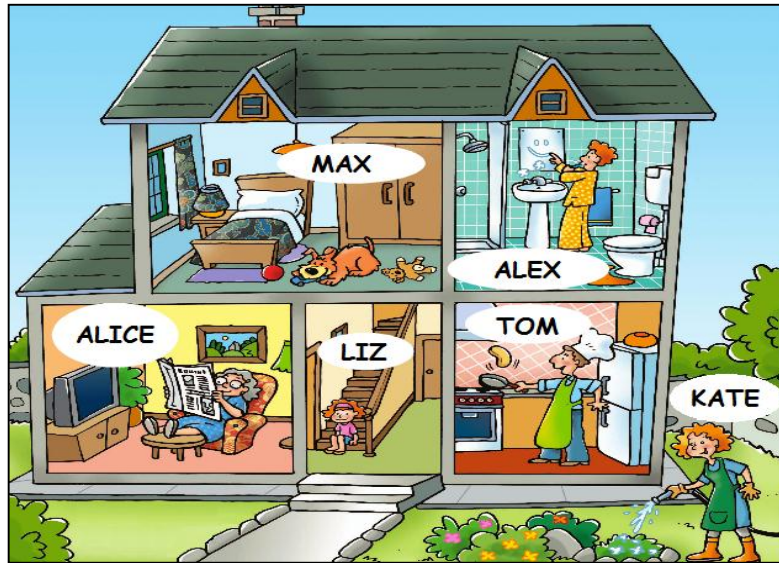
Write the sentences in a logical order, taking into account the appropriate punctuation, personal pronouns, tense of the verbs, word order and spelling.

**Duration of the task:** 30 minutes

**Length of the paragraph:** 6 – 10 lines



## Alex's House



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Thank you.

## RUBRIC FOR THE PRE – POST TEST

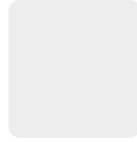
Student's code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

	Word Order	The sentences don't make sense at all.	Few sentences follow the logical and word sequential order	Some sentences do not follow a logical word order.	The facts are presented in a sequential word order	
	Punctuation	The paragraph is not clear, and very difficult to understand, not punctuation is presented.	The paragraph is not clear, sometimes difficult to understand, only with few punctuation	The paragraph is somewhat neatly handwriting. With some punctuation.	The paragraph is neatly handwriting, with most of the appropriate punctuation	
<b>TOTAL SCORE</b>						

### Annex 3. Pre and Post Questionnaire



#### UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

#### DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: QUESTIONNAIRE

Como estudiante de la Carrera de Idioma Inglés de la Universidad Nacional de Loja le agradecería mucho me ayude a contestar el siguiente cuestionario de forma clara y honesta puesto que la información obtenida será utilizada para el desarrollo del presente trabajo de investigación.

**Código del estudiante:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fecha:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. Las actividades en la clase de Inglés son desarrolladas en grupo y parejas.

#### **Group Processing / Social Skills**

- |                   |     |
|-------------------|-----|
| 4. Siempre        | ( ) |
| 3. Con frecuencia | ( ) |
| 2. A veces        | ( ) |
| 1. Rara vez       | ( ) |

2. Trabajar en las actividades de la clase de Inglés, ¿qué tan importante es para usted?

#### **Group Processing**

Trabajar en grupo	( )	4 Indispensable
Trabajar en pares	( )	3 Sumamente
Importante		
Trabajar solo/a	( )	2 Medianamente
		Importante
Trabajar conjuntamente	( )	1. Poco Importante

**3. Las actividades grupales o en parejas se desarrollan en un ambiente positivo y de respeto. Positive Interdependence**

- 4. Siempre ( )
- 3. Con frecuencia ( )
- 2. A veces ( )
- 1. Rara vez ( )

**4. ¿Tener una buena relación e interacción es fundamental dentro del grupo de trabajo? Face to Face Interaction**

- 4. Muy de acuerdo ( )
- 3. De acuerdo ( )
- 2. Ni de acuerdo ni en desacuerdo ( )
- 1. En desacuerdo ( )

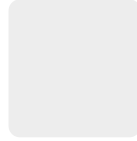
**5. Cuán satisfactorio es trabajar en grupo para usted. Group Processing**

- 4. Satisfactorio ( )
- 3. Muy satisfactorio ( )
- 2. Poco satisfactorio ( )
- 1. No satisfactorio ( )

**6. En las actividades grupales todos los integrantes contribuyen en el desarrollo del trabajo colectivo. Individual Accountability**

- 4. Siempre ( )
- 3. Con frecuencia ( )
- 2. A veces ( )
- 1. Rara vez ( )

**GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACION.**



**UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA**

**DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: QUESTIONNAIRE**

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

**Student's Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

- Work in groups ( ) 4 Very Important
- Work in pairs ( ) 3 Important
- Work alone ( ) 2 Somewhat Important

Work together ( ) 1 No Important

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

4. Always ( )

3. Often ( )

2. Sometimes ( )

1. Rarely ( )

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

4. Strongly Agree ( )

3. Agree ( )

2. Neither agree nor disagree ( )

1. Disagree ( )

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

4. Very satisfactory ( )

3. Satisfactory ( )

2. Somewhat satisfactory ( )

1. Unsatisfactory ( )

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

4. Always ( )

3. Often ( )



2. Sometimes ( )

1. Rarely ( )

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION**

## ANNEX

### GRADING SCALE

#### Basic writing skills

<b>Quantitative score range</b>	<b>Qualitative score range</b>
10	Superior
9	Excellent
7-8	Average
5-6	Below average
4	Failing

#### Foldables as a cooperative learning strategy

<b>Quantitative score range</b>	<b>Qualitative score range</b>
81-100	High level of cooperative learning practice
61-80	Expected level of cooperative learning practice
41-60	Moderate level of cooperative learning practice
21-40	Unexpected level of cooperative learning practice
01-20	Low level of cooperative learning practice

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