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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A
TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG
TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT “PÍO JARAMILLO
ALVARADO” HIGH SCHOOL IN LOJA CITY, ACADEMIC
PERIOD 2014–2015.**

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AUTHOR

LEIDY KARINA GUAMÁN CUMBICOS.

THESIS ADVISOR

DRA. CARMEN ENITH DÁVILA VEGA. MG. SC.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSIDAD
NACIONAL DE LOJA,

CERTIFIES:

The present research work entitled: **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT “PÍO JARAMILLO ALVARADO” HIGH SCHOOL IN LOJA CITY, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2014 – 2015**; under the responsibility of the undergraduate Leidy Karina Guamán Cumbicos has been thoroughly revised and fully analysed; therefore I authorize the presentation of the thesis for the pertinent legal aims.

Loja, November 30, 2015



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Firma:

Autora: Leidy Karina Guamán Cumbicos.

Cédula: 1725855124

Dirección: Zamora, Barrio Jorge Mozquera

Correo electrónico: lkgc1992@gmail.com

Celular: 0994626694

DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS

Directora de tesis: Dra. Carmen Enith Dávila Vega. Mg. Sc.

Tribunal de grado

PRESIDENTA: Dra. Maria Lorena Muñoz Vallejo. Mg. Sc.

VOCAL 1: Dra. Silvana Isabel Trujillo Ojeda. Mg. Sc.

VOCAL 2: Lcdo. Jhim Bolter Vivanco Loaiza. Mg. Sc.

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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

First of all, I want to dedicate this work to God for letting me to achieve one of the goals in my life; to the memory of my beloved mother *Esperanza* who has been my inspiration in achieving this goal, to my children *Sheidy* and *Joseph* who have been my major motivation to finish this work.

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THESIS OUTLINE

- i. COVER PAGE
- ii. CERTIFICATION
- iii. AUTORÍA
- iv. CARTA DE AUTORIZACIÓN
- v. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
- vi. DEDICATION
- vii. MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO
- viii. MAPA GEOGRÁFICO Y CROQUIS
- ix. THESIS OUTLINE
 - a. TITLE
 - b. RESUMEN
ABSTRACT
 - c. INTRODUCTION
 - d. LITERATURE REVIEW
 - e. MATERIALS AND METHODS
 - f. RESULTS
 - g. DISCUSSION
 - h. CONCLUSIONS
 - i. RECOMMENDATIONS
 - j. BIBLIOGRAPHY
 - k. ANNEXES
INDEX

a. TITLE

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A TECHNIQUE
TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT
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b. RESUMEN

Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo general mejorar la escritura, implementando los diarios de diálogo. Se aplicaron los métodos científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético; y estadístico. La población estuvo conformada por los 29 estudiantes del décimo año del colegio “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” Los instrumentos aplicados fueron: un pre prueba para diagnosticar el nivel de escritura y una post prueba para medir el progreso; así mismo, un pre y un post cuestionario para recolectar información sobre la percepción de la implementación. Para registrar sucesos relevantes o situaciones particulares durante la intervención, se utilizaron hojas de observación y diarios de campo. Los resultados mostraron un cambio positivo, los estudiantes mejoraron su escritura, destacándose en el uso correcto de mayúsculas y minúsculas y en puntuación. En conclusión, la implementación de los diarios de diálogo fue útil para desarrollar las habilidades de escritura en los estudiantes, pues contribuyó significativamente en su cambio de actitud hacia la escritura.

ABSTRACT

This research had as general objective to develop writing skills through the implementation of dialogue journals. The methods applied along the research were: the Scientific, the Descriptive, the Analytic-synthetic, and the Statistical. The population was integrated by 29 tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school. The instruments applied were a pre-test to diagnose students’ level of writing and a post-test to measure students’ progress. Also, a pre and a post questionnaire were applied to gather information about students’ perceptions of the implementation. Observation sheets and a field diary served to record relevant events or particular situations that happened during the intervention. The results showed a positive change on students’ writing, achieving the highest grades in the aspects of capitalization and punctuation. In conclusion, the implementation of dialogue journals was useful to develop the writing skills on students and it contributed meaningfully on their changes of attitude toward writing.

c. INTRODUCTION

At present, the educational world of the English Language is dealing with an excessive number of concerns within the establishments, the majority related directly to the teaching and learning process. Meanwhile, one of the greatest challenges for English Language Learners is writing. Although the language barrier affects students' understanding and performance across all subject areas, the area in which students experience the most difficulty is writing. According to The Nation's Report Card: Writing (2008), English Language learners score lower than English Proficient students with only 5% of students assessed scoring proficient or higher in writing, and 42% scoring below basic.

Moreover, it has been noticed that students face troubles in writing. Some difficulties lie in formulating sentences to convey what is intended to be expressed. Furthermore, there are problems deciding the correct tenses and grammatical agreements. Besides, the range of vocabulary is poor and what's more, there is no awareness of the right writing conventions such as capitalization and punctuation and also misspelling of words is quite frequent. Several factors have contributed to increase these problems; one apparent issue is the nonexistence of useful writing techniques, which leads to the failure of writing development. So, the central problem in this research work was to find out how if the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develops writing among tenth-year students at "Pío Jaramillo Alvarado" High School.

The reason why this theme was chosen is because it is an original idea for solving the students' writing problems. Due to this action research has never been developed before at the English Language Department of the Universidad Nacional de Loja.

The specific objectives of this study were: to research the theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals and its application to the writing ; then, to diagnose the issues that limit the development of tenth year students' writing; to design an intervention plan by implementing the dialogue journals to develop writing skills, to apply the dialogue journals as a technique to solve writing limitations and finally to reflect upon the effectiveness that the implementation of dialogue journals had on students' writing.

In this work the following methods were useful: The *Scientific method* facilitated the theoretical study of both variables of the research, to design the data collection instruments, lesson plans and also to analyze the results obtained from the instruments applied. The *Descriptive method* permitted to describe the different stages before, during and after the intervention plan. It also served to explain and analyze the object of this research that was the writing skill. Additionally, this method served to describe the tables and figures considering the information pre and post intervention; The *Analytic-synthetic method* was used to make a logical analysis with the results obtained from the pre/post tests and pre/post questionnaires. It also helped to draw up the conclusions and recommendations. The *Statistical method* facilitated the quantitative and

qualitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the instruments applied. It also served to tabulate the results obtained in the tests and questionnaires.

The content of this research work includes the followings parts: First, it contains the **abstract** which describes clearly the general objective of this work, and states the methods used, the main results and the most important conclusions. Second, it covers the **introduction** part describing the contextualization of the problem investigated along with the main problem, the reasons why this topic was chosen, the specific objectives of the investigation, the methodology used and the content of the thesis. Next, it presents the **literature review** part that provides theoretical references about both variables: writing and dialogue journals. Then, the **materials and methods** section details the three kinds of resources used along the study, the design of the research, the methods that helped in this study, and the techniques and instruments used. Also, the researched population is included. After that is detailed the **results** with its respective charts and figures; it also has the corresponding analysis and interpretation of each question. Then comes the **discussion** part which includes the major findings of this research and states why those findings are relevant; following the **conclusions** that are written based on the objectives and finally the **recommendations** that contain suggestions for teachers to take into account when developing students' writing.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

WRITING

Definition

Writing skills are defined as an important part of communication which allows communicating a message with clarity and easing to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. (SkillsYouNeed, 2015)

A.P Jim (2010) defines writing as a complex skill. He states that requiring mastery on writing is not only grammatical patterns but also the rules such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter.

Writing is “the use of letters, symbols or other conventional characters, for the recording by visible means of significant sounds.” (Classic encyclopedia, 2006)

According to Meyers (2005) writing is an action-a process of discovering and organizing ideas, putting them on a paper, reshaping and revising them.

Harmer (2004) referred to writing as an important skill that needs to be learnt to reinforce the language skills. Writing a text is recognized as a little complicated skill; because it is necessary take into account all the types of text that exist.

Importance

According to Frost (2010) writing is so important for communication. She states that if people don't have good writing skills they will have a hard time communicating with their readers.

The author describes the importance as follow:

Good writing skills can help you in life. If you're trying to get a job, good writing skills make you more desirable to the employer. One of the first things an employer looks at is your cover letter or resume. If you have an interesting cover letter it could lead to an interview. It is supported by Brown (2004) who states that, writing is important for achieving employment in this global era. Thus, how to write for students is crucial as input for them to face the future.

Good writing skills can lead to a monetary value. It is to make a living writing; it is not only for people who write books. There are technical writers, copywriters, software writers the list goes on and on. Even if you are not a professional writer there is ways to make money with your good writing skills. You could write a blog on the side. There are endless ways to make some extra money on the internet with endless amounts of content. It's rare to find good content on the internet and when you do sometimes it's worth paying for.

Without good writing skills the world would be in anarchy and chaos. Bad writing skills can lead to misinformation. Bad writing skills can lead to the wrong or ambiguous message. Good writing skills can lead to a much needed confidence boost.

On the other hand, writing is so important due to it enables students to practice and improve new grammatical structures, vocabulary or expressions they have learnt. When writing, students have a chance to take risks. They are learning by attempts and mistakes. "They necessarily become very involved with the new

language, the effort to express new ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.” (Raimes, 1983)

Types

Expository Writing: the writer tries to inform and explain the concept thoroughly to the readers with required fact and figures. With this style of writing, a person can easily acquire essay writing skills.

Narrative writing: it is about describing a story or sharing an experience with readers. The writer portrays a role of main character and tries to plot a story with the help of sensory details. The Paragraphs are structured with vivid descriptions so as to stimulate readers’ interest. This is used in biographies, novels, poems, etc.

Persuasive writing: It has the purpose to persuade a reader for performing an action. It aims to convince the reader completely. The advertisement you often see in television or hoardings are examples of persuasive writing.

Descriptive writing: This style 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 is usually enjoyed by the writer, who 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.

(Edurite, 2015)

Components

Jacobs (2004), argues that there are main five components of Writing. They are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

Content: The content of writing should be clear, so that, readers can understand the message conveyed and gain the information from it. The content should be well unified and completed. Then, the term is usually known as unity and become completeness characteristics of good writing. Besides that, the main idea has to be explained and developed fully. Completeness is the conditioning ideas which are developed through particular information. Unity means that every part of sentences contributes to one principle by unifying thought. Moreover, unity is the first quality of an effective sentence. Unity means that everything in it has logical relation to the purpose of the sentences as a whole and nothing is omitted which is necessary to that purpose.

Organization: The process of organization in writing involves: *Coherence*: Coherence means all the ideas stick together. The ideas are part in the right order and it does not make the reader confuses. This makes the writer's thought easy to follow from sentence reader paragraph. *Order of importance*: beginning with the important and building up the most important. The advantages of building up to the most important ideas stem from the suspense involved and tendency for readers to remember best what they read last. A conclusion with surprise, a clever moment, and appeal acting or with some order strong endings is more likely to be useful successfully. *General to specific*: it begins with the topic sentence that makes a general statement followed by a series of supporting sentences which supply specific details, examples and facts. *Chronological order*: the events are arranged in order in which they occurred, usually moving from the first and the earliest to the last and which latest. Some give direction or explanation of a

process, other sum which historical events, and the steps or action are taken by individual or organization. *Spatial pattern*: descriptions such as: neighborhood, a room or buildings are written. In describing a house or a building, the writer probably firstly describe the exterior and interior. By moving systematically rather than irregularly over the scene we convey the viewer to overall plan or scene. Moreover, the reader has a mental picture of what is described.

Vocabulary: One of the requirements of good writing always defines on the effective use of words. In personal description, words play dual roles; to communicate and to evoke, to let the readers to perceive and feel. These two fold purposes are evident even such a practical and common form of writings as an advertisement. The effective use of words also deals with connotative or figurative language. They are all important nearly all forms of writing but particularly in personal description. Word rich in association are more effective than those mainly transmit transformation. However, words and phrases enrich the ability to convey experiences imaginatively but they do not have place in factual description. In scientific and technical writing, language should be exact and precise to convey specific meaning and design to communicate information but not the writer's feeling.

Language use/grammar: Language use of writing involves correct usage endpoints of grammar. There are many points of grammar such as: verbs, nouns and agreement. Specific nouns and strong verbs give a reader a mental image of description. This specific noun can be characterized by using modifier of adjectives, adverbs and participle form. There are many opportunities for errors in

the use of verbs and mistake in arrangement are very common. Mistakes in written work are much serious since we have an opportunity to re-read and to correct what we have written. We should avoid errors in verbal forms, subject-verb agreement and pronoun antecedent agreement in a case of a noun or pronoun.

Mechanics: The use of mechanics is due to capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appropriately. This aspect is very important since it leads reader to understand or recognize immediately what the writer means to express definitely. The use of favorable mechanics in writing will make readers easy to understand the conveying ideas and other messages stated in the writing. *Capitalization:* The use of capitalization in the writing can clarify the ideas. If the sentences are capitalized correctly, ambiguous meaning and misunderstanding would not be appeared. Besides, through correct capitalization of a sentence will help the reader to differentiate one sentence to others. *Punctuation:* It can be used as a unit of meaning and suggest how the units of its relation go to each other. *Spelling:* There are three important rules followed in using spelling appropriately. They are suffix addition, plural formation and handling error within the words.

Micro- and Macro-Skills

According to Orwig (2010) there are several micro-skills which are involved in writing such as “use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions ” or “use the style appropriate to the genre and audience” or “make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas” and many others. That is why even native speakers of the language find writing difficult.

Brown (2004) says there is a taxonomy that can be the guidance to set writing assessments. The classification includes micro-skills which are exactly appropriate to be applied in imitative and intensive writing performance, and macro-skills which are necessary to be applied in responsive and extensive ones.

Micro-skills of writing include:

To produce graphemes and orthographic pattern in English, produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purposes, produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate order patterns, use acceptable grammatical system (e. g., tense, agreement, and pluralization), patterns, and rules, express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms and use cohesive devices in writing discourse.

Macro-skills of writing include:

To use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse, appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose, convey links and connection between events, and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification, distinguish between literal and implied meaning when writing, correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text, develop and use battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Teaching Writing

Kern (2000) proposes three main approaches to teach writing:

Product-oriented approach: This approach concerns with the internal and structural patterns of writing. The focus is dealt with grammatical rules, sentence arrangements in the text, and other writing structural aspects.

Process-oriented approach: Instead of drilling students to produce well-organized writing works, process-oriented approach emphasizes on leading the students to express their creativity and guiding them to reconstruct and to reorganize their writing to be better. In this approach, the students are expected to have center roles along the process.

Genre-based approach: The focus of this approach is on the students' ability to formulate communicative writing. The emphasis is not about how grammatical their writing works are, but how well they organize their writing to be understood by the readers. Dealing with the genre-based approach, Hyland (2003) proposes a five-stage concept that enables the teacher to arrange suitable tasks during the teaching and learning process.

In the first stage, all of the activities are expected to lead the students to recognize the text and gain the understanding of the context. After that, in the modeling and deconstructing stage, the students are presented with examples of the texts, introduced to certain parts in the text, and involved in the activities related to the text-feature analysis. Meanwhile, in the third stage, they start to build their understanding through practicing writing. Here, they are allowed to collaborate with their teacher and peers. Soon after the independent construction

of the text stage is implemented, guidance for the students is officially removed. They are expected to create their own drafts which depend on their own understanding and summary. Furthermore, the last stage enables the students to make connections between the discussed materials with other context that can lead them to have deeper and wider understanding.

How to teach writing

Harmer (2004) in his book *how to teach writing* describes a number of tasks to be performed by teachers when teaching writing. These are the following:

Demonstrating – since, students need to be aware of writing conventions and genre constraints in specific types of writing; teachers have to be able to draw these features to their attention. In whatever way students are made aware of layout issues or the language used to perform certain written functions, for example, the important issue is that they are made aware of these things – that these things are drawn to their attention.

Motivating and Provoking – student often find themselves ‘lost for words’, especially in creative writing tasks. This is where the teacher can help, provoking the students into having ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, and persuading them what fun it can be. It helps, for example, if teachers go into class with prepared suggestions so that when students get stuck they can immediately get help rather than having, themselves, to think of ideas on the spot. Students can be asked to complete task on the board or reassemble jumbled text as a prelude to writing; they can be asked to exchange ‘virtual’ e-mail or discuss ideas

before the writing activity starts. Sometimes teachers can give them the words they need to start a writing task as a way of getting them going.

Supporting –Students need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going, both with ideas and with the means to carry them out. Teachers need to be extremely supportive when students are writing in class, and prepared to help students overcome difficulties.

Responding –When responding, teachers react to the content and construction of a piece supportively and often (but not always) make suggestions for its improvement. Teachers will not be grading the work or judging it as a finished product, instead, teachers will be telling the student how well it is going so far.

When students write journals, teachers may respond by reacting to what they have said (e.g. ‘your holiday sounds very interesting, Silvia. I like the bit about running out of petrol but I didn’t understand exactly who went and got some petrol. Could you possibly write and tell me in you next journal entry?’) Rather than filling their journal entry full of correction symbols. Teachers might also make comments about their use of language and suggest ways of improving it (e.g. ‘be careful with your past tenses, Nejadi. Look at the verbs I’ve underlined and see if you can write them correctly.’) But this is done as part of a process rather than part of an evaluation procedure.

Evaluating –When evaluating students’ writing for test purposes, it can be indicated where they wrote well and where they made mistakes, and grades may be awarded. When marked scripts are handed back to students they can look at the highlighted errors and try to put them right - rather than simply stuffing the

corrected pieces of work into the back of their folders and never looking at them again.

Feedback on Writing

According to Harmer (2004), when feedback is applied upon written works, it should affect the learners' language use in future. Furthermore, feedback can be focused on both content and form. Feedback on content emphasizes on text organization, ideas, and a number of details. Meanwhile, feedback on form focuses on grammatical principles and writing mechanics. Considering the way how a teacher gives written feedback, Harmer divides the techniques into two:

Responding: responding is different from assessing or evaluating since it focuses on the thought of the writing work; for example, the teacher can say how good the works are or how successfully the students can deliver the intended meaning. Furthermore, dealing with the progress, the teacher can suggest the things that the students should do to make their writing better. The important thing in responding is that the feedback has to support the students' writing improvement and raise their motivation instead of increasing their anxiety towards writing.

Additionally, there are other practical issues that can be applied to respond to the students' writing. One of them is *peer feedback* that gives encouragement to the students to have cooperative and collaborative learning in the classroom (Brown, 2004). In addition, through peer feedback, the quality of writing as well as the understanding of good writing can be developed (Hyland, 2003)

Coding: This technique enables the students to realize their mistakes and errors. By using certain codes, the correction seems to be neater, more understandable, less threatening, and more helpful compared with the use of random marks.

DIALOGUE JOURNALS

History

According to Staton and Peyton, (2010) dialogue journals have existed since the mankind learned to write, but we do not know exactly when and where the first dialogue journal, as we know it today, was used in a class. We can just describe how the idea was born. It was in 1964 in Los Angeles that Leslee Reed first began writing a daily written conversation with her sixth grade students. The main reason for starting dialoguing with her students was a principal's order. He wanted the children to realize and remember what they had learnt every day at school. Every afternoon Leslee Reed carried on twenty six written conversations which were written on a piece of paper in the beginning and then to be more practical these loose pieces of paper turned into bound notebooks. In the course of time, thanks to students' questions and complaints this practice allowed her to help them "in solving personal as well as academic problems and to share feelings. In fact, the dialogue journals soon became the core of her instruction." This writing activity started to spread very quickly by word of mouth, because dialogue journals were not described as a concrete educational practice.

Another point of view states that the term dialogue journal is firstly introduced by Nancie Atwell in 1987 in her book entitled “In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents” (Wells, 1992) interestingly, her book inspired another teacher and now it has not only been used but also widely documented as a pedagogical tool and written conversation between student and teacher (Schwarzer, 2004).

Types

According to Cobine (2010) there are many types of journals as many teachers and students who are writing them. The journals can be adapted to teachers and students needs and be more useful for different purposes. All types of journal have in common the fact that teachers do not interfere in a student’s entry. They can just respond to it or comment on it. She highlights three types of journals with their own primary purpose:

The primary purpose of the dialogue journal is to foster communicativeness in students. “Every student and his or her teacher keep an individual written dialogue frequently and over a certain period of time about whatever interest them” (Godev, 2010)

The primary purpose of the literary journal is “to foster thoughtfulness in students”. Students are asked to read a passage and then after choosing one of several literary topics, which are suggested by the teacher, they write their personal opinion about it. In the end, after a class discussion, students can elaborate their first entry.

The subject journal or “a content area journal” has the primary purpose of “to help students identify and clarify troublesome terms and concepts.” There are three sections. Section A is dedicated to students for writing responses to background readings. In Section B students have a chance to compose a personalized dictionary of literary and linguistic terms. In Section C students create a personalized stylebook in which they comment on their progress with language usage.

Definition

Dialogue journals (DJ) have been defined as journals “in which each student carries on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time (Staton, 1988). DJ are also defined as a kind of journal students use to carry on conversations with their teacher for a set period of time. These journals are subjective, meaning that the student gets to choose what subject he or she wants to write about in the journal. (Garmon, 2001).DJ are coined to represent written communication that may come in the form of letters that are given back and forth between students and teacher as instructional tool (Gebhard, 2000; Dionisio, 1991).DJ are an informal conversation either among peers or between teachers and students (Wells, 1992). Peyton (2000) and Kim (2005) named DJ to an ongoing written communication in which language learners and teacher participate and communicate on a regular basis. Brown (2001) defines DJ as a written communication between students and teacher on an agreed topic by using prompt as initiator to write, in which the students are asked to move from writing to themselves or his/her words are depicted as “self-writing or writing the only the

self in mind as audience” to a written conversation as the teacher reads and responds to students’ thoughts, feeling and reaction. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2005) define DJ as written discussion between teacher and students. Moon (2006) defines DJ as a written conversation between two or more people, each responding to the other’s entries, usually around an agreed topic.

Purpose

Linnell (2010) mentions that dialogue journals help teachers see what their students are interested in, which is always a helpful asset to teachers. These journals help teachers become familiar with their students' personalities. Besides that, she argues that dialogue journals are suitable to use when teaching writing and writing mechanics. If done correctly, commenting on writing mechanics can aid this conversation. Dialogue journals help students with writing conventions because they can see their writing on paper. They also help students develop voice because they are allowed to write about their own chosen topics.

On the other hand, Godev (2010) points out that, dialogue journals have the goal to communicate in writing, to exchange ideas and information.

Moreover, Garmon (2001) states that dialogue journals improve the teacher-student relationship; because dialogue journals provide teachers with the opportunity to meet with students one-on-one. This interaction make students feel cared for, and they also feel like what they have to say is important. This positive correlation increases their motivation and attitude towards school. He also defend that dialogue journals are useful for , enhancing writing abilities, reading comprehension, and creating a positive relationship between students

and teachers.

Benefits

According to Harmer, (2004) dialogue journals have the following benefits:

The value of reflection: When we try to put our thoughts into words we have to work out what those thoughts are. This, in turn, makes us reflect on what has happened, what we think or how we feel. And when we reflect on things we often reach conclusions that we might not have thought of when an event was taking place or when, as learners, we were engaged in the learning process itself. Journals are highly useful resources for everybody to have a chance to go back and compare what we were thinking about something that happened a few weeks ago with what we are thinking now about it. It is a chance for us to stop for a while and take a little time to think about our feelings or attitudes. The most positive aspect is that students are pushed to think more deeply about the lesson.

Freedom of expression: Thanks to the privacy that the dialogue journals offer to students, they allow them to express feelings in a freer way than they might do in front of their classmates. Students are told that except their teacher no one else could read their entries. It is obvious they will write more openly in that case. This is the most pleasant tool to help especially those students who are shy to speak in front of their classmates or with the teacher face to face. “Journal writing is a genre in its own right. The authors can decide what and how much they want to include, and they can write at their own speed.”

Development of writing ability: As many authors highlight that writing should be practiced to be more developed we cannot do anything but to agree with the idea

that if we want to be better in writing we have to write and write as often as we can. Harmer wrote that “just as reading a lot helps students to become better readers, so the more students write the better and more fluent they become as writers. They expand their range of written expression and write with greater ease and speed.” Dialogue journal writing is a good way how to practice.

Student - teacher dialogue: It is amazing for a student to have this new possibility to communicate with the teacher through the dialogue journal which is so private and original. Almost every student appreciates the possibility to be in a contact with his or her teacher in this easy and new personal way. When a teacher writes to a class and says, „You can write to me on any subject and I will reply. But do not worry, I will not show to anybody else“, the students know they have a channel of communication that was not there. When a student writes in a journal, he or she knows that the teacher will read what is written with, perhaps, a different eye from the normal evaluative one. It is a kind of relief for students that their teacher does not correct the mistakes in the entry. In other words, students can see their teacher more as a partner than an evaluator. Student journals are a useful resource for teachers, too. When students say how they feel about things, teachers often find responses to lesson segments that they had not anticipated. Learner perceptions are often different from teacher perceptions. Thanks to the dialogue journal we can help students; we can make suggestions and offer them advices.

Why to use the dialogue journals

Godev, (2010) describes two main reasons why using dialogue journal writing:

Firstly, the main principle of the conversation class is to give students as many opportunities as possible to express themselves in the target language. Unfortunately, the characteristic feature of most language classes is heterogeneity. It shows also “in the readiness to speak on the part of students. It is often the case that students will say far less than what is on their minds just because they are embarrassed to talk, afraid to be laughed at or not able to control the flaws in their speech.” It limits them a lot. In the case the teacher is confronted with one or more students who rarely speak at all, dialogue journal writing gives an equal chance for all students – mainly for the shiest ones – to participate.

Secondly when we are speaking it is more difficult for us to deal with the process of hypothesis testing. There are two main factors which do not give us enough space for hypothesis elaborating when we are speaking. These are time pressure and stress. When we integrate dialogue journal writing in the language class, students get a chance to reflect on the language, they get a chance to go back and think about what they have written, they can rewrite it and they do not feel the time pressure so intensively.

Another reason of using dialogue journals is that they can be used with very young learners as well as with adults according to Collins (2003)

Where to use the dialogue journals

Students can write their dialogue journal at home as a part of their homework. It means they would not be stressed by the time limit and they could write as long

as they want and class time could be utilized for any other activity or for explaining new grammar.

They can also write their dialogue journals in a class. There are several reasons why it is beneficial to write the dialogue journal in a class: When students write the dialogue journal during the last minutes of the lesson, they “still have fresh in their minds the vocabulary, structures and content that came up in class” and they can use them in their entry. It helps them with remembering new expressions or grammar and practices them. When writing the dialogue journals students can concentrate on writing better in a class than at home, because “they do not feel this activity is taking away time they could use in leisure activities.” For this reason they could also be enthusiastic and motivated about dialogue journal writing. Writing the dialogue journals in a class enables students to use more sources of information for their entry. They can cooperate with their classmates, they can ask their teacher for advice or use dictionary if they need it, of course. If dialogue journal writing is practiced during the class period, time is limited and every student has the same amount of time. That is why we can observe students’ progress in writing “by comparing their first entries to the last ones as well as to compare progress across students.”

Dialogue journal writing can successfully be integrated into a conversation class, because the dialogue journal is interactive. Typical for this kind of writing is a close collaboration of at least two writers. Furthermore, the interaction that is present in the dialogue journals allows both writers to share an equal effort to keep the communication flow going quite easily.

The writers can put in practice many of the functions which are typical for conversation. These functions are for example: “informing, requesting, thanking, expressing regret, and expressing opinions and feelings”. This is one of the features which make dialogue journal writing interactive in almost the same way as a conversation. What also makes this writing activity close to the conversational discourse is the fact that the reader is a concrete individual that the writer knows. “There is no abstract audience.” (Godev, 2010)

How to use the dialogue Journals

According to Peyton, (1993) dialogue journals can be used as a warm-up, as an exit slip (last activity before the class ends), or as a regular writing activity during a certain day of the week. Every day (or as often as possible), students take time to write in a journal about anything of interest or concern to them (e.g., what they are learning, problems they are experiencing, or events at home and in the community). Each night, the teacher takes the journals home and responds to student entries, extending the dialogue. The following day, the student reads the teacher's entry and responds in order to continue the conversation. Because the focus of dialogue journals is on meaningful communication, the teacher corresponds with the student without correcting any mistakes in the child's entry. Instead, the teacher models good writing such as correct spelling and usage of written conventions (punctuation, capitalization) in his or her response to the student.

On the other hand, Linnell (2010) suggests two things to keep in mind when implementing the dialogue journals. Firstly, corrections should not be done

immediately. This wait time allows students to associate these journals with a red pen. This process will help build the conversation aspect of the journal. Secondly, feedback does not have to completely end the communication between the student and teacher. Most students will request corrective feedback on writing conventions. Lastly, corrective feedback can be incorporated into the conversation between the student and teacher. Such feedback can become a natural part of the conversation. One way is to make the comment as a post script. When making the comment in this way the main focus is still on the dialogue and not the errors. Another way is through the student initiating the correction. With this method, teachers can give suggestions of stems the students can use to ask for corrections. The teacher also can address common errors in whole-group instruction. This method allows the teacher to avoid association of a negative connotation with the dialogue journals because a student does not feel singled out.

Similarly, Harmer (2004) suggests three strategies which should be adopted by teachers who consider using dialogue journal writing in class:

Be enthusiastic – it is essential for every new activity we want to try with our students. When we are introducing something new, students need to know that we really consider this idea to be both fun and useful. So when students see us to be deeply involved in a new activity, it is a strong impulse for them to share our enthusiasm for it.

Explain why and what – To tell students why we are asking them to write journals and to impress on them our belief that journal writing is good for learning (because it gives us time to reflect on what we have been studying),

good for writing (because the more we practice, the better we become), good for flexing our creative muscles (due to have the freedom to experiment with different forms of expression), and good for being able to communicate with the teacher.

Topics – when students have understood what the dialogue journals are and why we are persuaded that writing this kind of journals is the best for them, we should discuss with them the topics of their writings. They can write about any interests or whatever they enjoy doing. They can write about any difficulties they have with grammar or with the language in general. They can make complaints or ask questions. They can talk about anything that has happened to them or they can express their personality.

Challenges of the Dialogue Journals

Peyton (2000) states that in Dialogue journal writing teachers have some challenges to deal with, these are the following:

Correctness of students' writing: it is one of the challenges teachers have to deal with when want to carry out the dialogue journals with his or her students. Fortunately, there are several possibilities how we as teachers might correct thoughtfully students' grammatical mistakes, without interrupting the flow of conversation or disturbing the meaning: We can help students to realize their mistakes by modelling grammatically correct responses to students' entries. Students can compare their teacher's correct model with their own writing and learn from that. Another possibility how we could correct students' errors is to add „grammatical P.S.“ to the end of the message and let learners know that

they can check that area for correction.” In the case that there are several students who are always making the same grammatical mistakes, it is obviously beneficial for us to point out these mistakes and carry out a brief class discussion to explain these mistakes to the students and show them their correct usage. It is also possible to discuss repeated mistakes individually with the students. It is extremely important for us to keep in our minds that the students should be told “that their errors are not being pointed out because they are expected to write perfectly.” What is important is the meaning of their writings.

Time to respond to students’ entries: Doubtlessly, some teachers would not be willing to use dialogue journal writing in their class. They might claim that it would be too time-consuming for them to respond frequently to students’ entries. The truth is that the teachers, who really want the dialogue journals to be an important part of their classes, can work out how to manage this challenge. We can learn about students’ backgrounds, their needs and interests. We can help them with individual problem they have with the language and we can observe and document students’ developing knowledge of the language. These are all reasons why the time we dedicate to responding to students’ entries is well spent. Peyton mentions a few possibilities how teachers can manage the process and save time:

- Respond during class while learners are working on an assignment or test.
- Respond regularly but not to all entries, or to some classes and not others, or to different classes at different times.
- Create writing groups among learners who write and respond to each other, with the teacher entering in from time to time.

Overly personal writings: It can happen that some students' writing can become more personal than it is comfortable for the teacher. The teacher and students should point out limits to not cross the line.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

Three kinds of resources were helpful to accomplish this research work. The human resources that participated and played an active role during the intervention plan were 29 students from tenth year considered as the target population, the English teacher who helped providing general information about these target students, the researcher who worked enthusiastically at executing the intervention, and the thesis advisor who gave suggestions in the development of the stages of this study. The technical resources used were: a computer that served to type the work, internet as a mean to look for useful information, removable memory stick to save important data. And, material resources such as: paper to print or to make copies of stimulating pictures, and students' textbooks to review the content were helpful resources as well.

Design of the research

This research work was based on the Action Research as a methodological technique that connects research with practice, the design helped to understand, to evaluate and then to change a situation. Therefore, the spiral model of an action research proposed by Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) was followed in this study; it involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting, observing the process and reflecting upon the findings. This process helped the researcher to see if any needed change or adjustment was necessary to develop student's writing. Besides that, the process was carried out

systematically, by collecting data on everyday practice and analyzing it in order to draw up recommendations about how future practice should be done.

Methods

The *Scientific method* facilitated the theoretical study of both variables: writing and dialogue journals. This method supported with gathering data to design the data collection instruments, lesson plans and also to analyze the results obtained from the instruments applied. Also it helped in the observations done before and during the intervention.

The *Descriptive method* enabled to describe the different stages before, during and after the intervention plan. It also served to explain and analyze the object of this research that was the writing skill. Additionally, this method served to describe the tables and figures considering the information pre and post intervention.

The *Analytic-synthetic method* was used to make a logical analysis with the results obtained from the pre/post tests and pre/post questionnaires. It also helped to draw up the conclusions and recommendations. Besides that, it served to organize the research work with the information received to compare and analyze the impact of the intervention plan.

The *Statistic method* was used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and the qualitative data from questionnaires, the observation sheets, and teacher's diary. This particular method served to tabulate the data of the results obtained from the tests and questionnaires. The results were translated into tables and figures and a mean for each test section was calculated

taking into account the formula $x = \frac{x}{n}$; these calculation provided an overall view of students` writing.

Techniques and instruments

To collect the data, a pre/posttest and a pre/post questionnaire were applied. Besides that, observation sheets and a field diary were used. These instruments, which were designed by the researcher, were useful at the beginning, during and after the intervention plan.

Test

Two kinds of tests were used to measure students` knowledge about writing. At the beginning of the intervention plan, a pre-test in order to diagnose the level of writing on students was applied; the same pre-test was used as a post-test and applied at the end of the intervention plan, to obtain information about students` progress on writing during the intervention done. The tests were conducted in class and the researcher gave students clear instructions and clarified all queries raised.

Questionnaire

It consisted of four closed questions and three multiple choice questions. This was applied at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan serving to verify students` perception of the implementation of the dialogue journals. It also allowed to find out if dialogue journals caught students` attention and had a positive influence on their attitude toward writing.

Observation sheet

It was used to determine what happened in class and then analyze and reflect upon the findings when the plan ended. Moreover, through the observation sheet the researcher could detect students' participation during class, technique's appropriateness, objectives' accomplishment, and wrote down suggestions.

Field Diary

It serves to record what happened in each lesson. It helped to write up the findings during the intervention, relevant events or particular situations that happened such as students' effort, motivation or weaknesses faced on the development of classes.

Population

The students of tenth year of Basic Education are the ones who participated in the development of this action research. They were 29 students between boys and girls. They were between fourteen and fifteen years old. The students received five hours of English per week with a certified teacher. They are placed in A1 level.

f. RESULTS

This section details how the specific objectives of this research were achieved. The objective number one that was to research the theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals and its application to develop writing was accomplished with the theoretical study of both variables of the research that supported the design of the data collection instruments, lesson plans and the analysis of the results obtained.

The objective number two which was to diagnose the issues that limit the development of tenth year students' writing was fulfilled with the pre-test results that are shown below in table 1.

The objective number three that was to design an intervention plan by implementing dialogue journals to develop writing was achieved as a result of a two month program that included eight lessons. Furthermore, a selection of activities was developed with students, such as free-associating of stimulating pictures, individual controlled practice and writing entries weekly.

The objective number four that was to apply the dialogue journals as a technique to solve writing limitations was accomplished through the questionnaires results that are presented below in tables 2 to 8

The objective number five which was to reflect upon the effectiveness of the implementation of dialogue journals was fulfilled with the post-test results that are shown below in table 9.

Pre-test Results

Objective Two

To diagnose the issues that limit the development of tenth year students' writing at "Pío Jaramillo Alvarado" High school.

a. Table 1

Pretest Scores of Tenth Year Students in Writing Skill

Students' code	C	P	S	G	V	TOTAL
	/2	/2	/2	/2	/2	/10
CPJA01	1.5	1	1	0.5	1	5
CPJA02	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	7
CPJA03	1.5	1	1	1	0.5	5
CPJA04	1.5	1.5	1	0.5	1	5.5
CPJA05	1	1	1	1	1.5	5.5
CPJA06	1	1.5	1	1	0.5	5
CPJA07	1	1	1.5	1	1	5.5
CPJA08	1	1	1	1	1.5	5.5
CPJA09	1	1.5	1	1	1	5.5
CPJA10	1	1	1	1	1.5	5.5
CPJA11	1	1	1	1.5	0.5	5
CPJA12	1	1	1	1	1	5
CPJA13	1	1	1.5	1.5	1	6
CPJA14	1	1	0.5	1	1	4.5
CPJA15	1	1.5	1	1	0.5	5
CPJA16	1	1	1.5	1.5	1	6
CPJA17	1	1	1	1	1	5
CPJA18	1	1	1	1	0.5	4.5
CPJA19	1	1	1	1	1	5
CPJA20	1	1	1	1	1.5	5.5
CPJA21	1.5	1.5	0.5	0.5	1	5
CPJA22	1	1	1.5	1	1	5.5
CPJA23	1	1	1	1	1	5
CPJA24	1.5	1	1	0.5	1.5	5.5
CPJA25	1	1	1	1	1	5
CPJA26	1	1.5	1	1	1	5.5
CPJA27	1.5	1.5	1	1	1.5	6.5
CPJA28	2	1	1	0.5	1.5	6
CPJA29	1	1.5	1	1	1	5.5
Mean	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.0	1.1	5.4

Note. CPJA= Colegio Pío Jaramillo Alvarado; 01= students' code; C= Capitalization; P= Punctuation; S= Spelling; G= Grammar; V= Vocabulary

b. Interpretation and analysis

The total data obtained in table 1 which is 5.4/10 show scores below the average expected that was 7.5/10 which place students within a bad level in all aspects of writing. (See rubric, page 116) The aspects in which students obtained the highest score mean were both capitalization and punctuation 1.2/2, and the lowest score mean was in the grammar aspect which was 1/2. It indicates that when writing students actually used capital letters, but not accurately, that is, capital and lower case appear mixed up throughout the pieces of writing. Besides, students used punctuation marks arbitrarily, it means, there is unsuitable placement of commas, periods, colons, semicolons, and other end punctuation. Moreover, students were aware of using grammatical rules, but they had a lot of mistakes, that is, sentences are not well-structured. It can be assumed that students have not had the chance to write continuously so that their pieces of writing can have coherence and cohesion. The nonexistence of any convenient writing technique was a matter that leads to the failure of students writing skills development. Therefore, students' limits in writing were concerning writing conventions such as capitalization, punctuation and spelling as well as vocabulary and grammar aspects. All the writing components lead readers to understand or recognize immediately what the writer expresses, the conveying ideas and other messages stated in the writing. Based on that, Jacobs (2004), suggests main five components for writing. They are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

Comparison of the Pre and Post Questionnaires Results

Objective Four

To apply the dialogue journals as a technique to solve writing limitations among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school

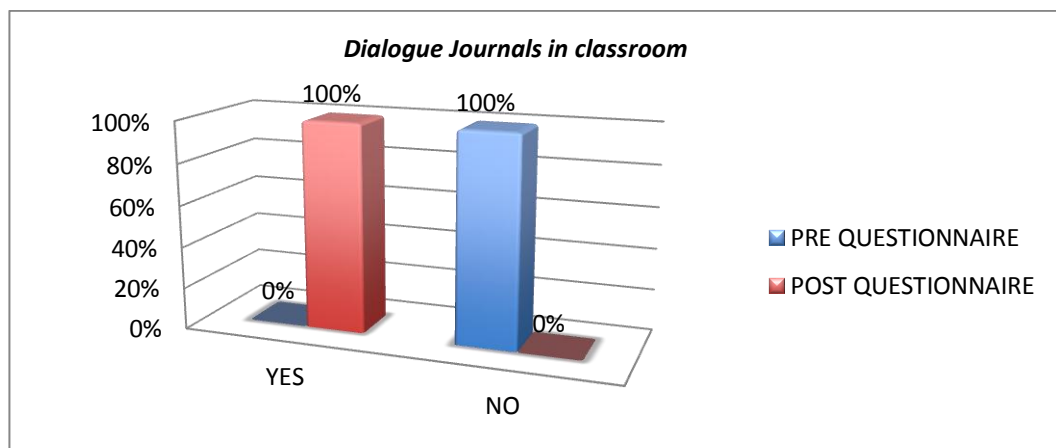
Question 1: Have you ever worked with dialogue journals?

a. Table 2

Dialogue Journals in classroom

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
YES	0	0	29	100
NO	29	100	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

According to table 2, all students reported they have never had the chance to work with dialogue journals in their classroom, which did not allow them neither to practice their writing nor to experiment a contextualized activity that dialogue journals put forward. However, after the intervention plan all students situation changed as they all stated to have the opportunity for working with dialogue

journals since they teacher incorporated this kind of journals as part of writing activities in each lesson as it proposed by Rachel D, (2011) who suggests the idea of using dialogue journals in the classroom to help educators get to know students and help them improve their writing.

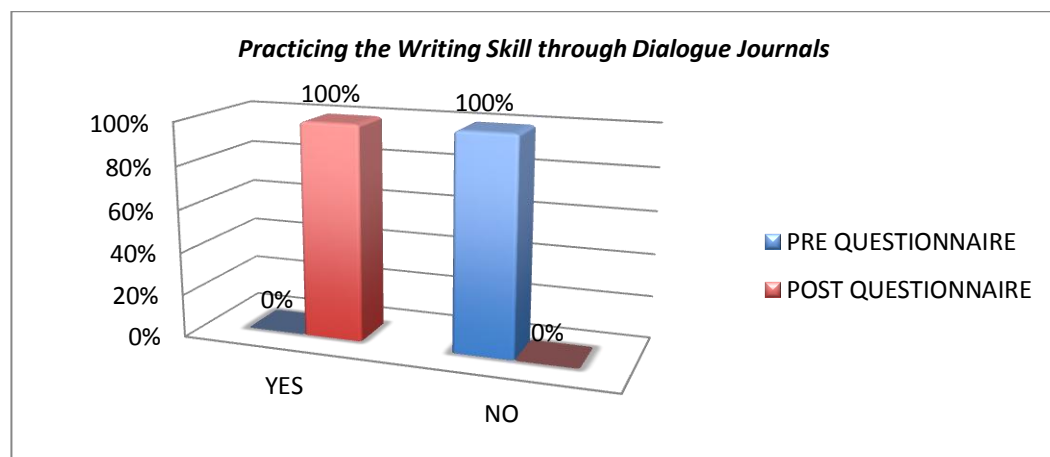
Question 2: Have you practiced writing through dialogue journals?

a. Table 3

Practicing the Writing Skill through Dialogue Journals

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
YES	0	0	29	100
NO	29	100	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

As it can be seen in table 3, before the intervention plan no one student have used dialogue journals for practicing writing; this indicates that students were not given tasks as well as activities addressed to reduce writing troubles. Nevertheless, after the intervention plan all students used the dialogue journals for

specific writing purposes: it indicates that since dialogue journals were taken into account all students had opportunities to develop activities that engaged them in an everyday writing; it is in accordance with Moon (2006) who points out that dialogue journal allow practicing writing as they kept a written conversation between two or more people, each responding to the other’s entries, usually around an agreed topic.

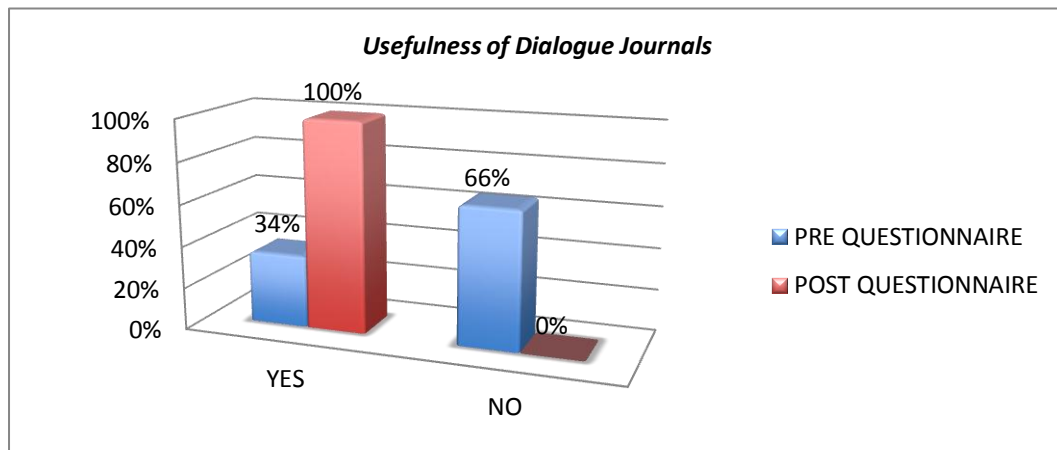
Question 3: Do you think dialogue journals help you to develop writing skills?

a. Table 4

Usefulness of Dialogue Journals

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
YES	10	34	29	100
NO	19	66	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

The data in table 4 shows that several students which correspond to 34% were aware of the usefulness of the dialogue journals toward writing skills development; but more than a half of them which is the 66% did not consider

dialogue journals valuable. It indicates that 34% students have not been exposed to the benefits this new technique offers. However, at the end of the intervention all students were conscious of the effectiveness of dialogue journals toward developing the writing skills. It could be said that dialogue journals caught students' attention and kept them engaged in writing activities. That is why Godev (2010) gives so much importance to dialogue journals as they have the goal to communicate in writing and to exchange ideas as well as information.

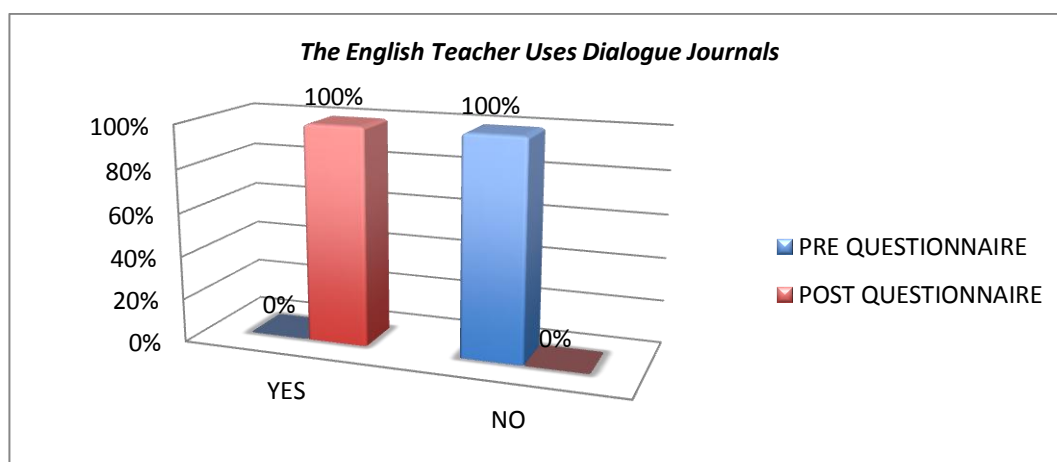
Question 4: Does the English teacher use dialogue journals to develop writing skills?

a. Table 5

The English Teacher Uses Dialogue Journals

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
YES	0	0	29	100
NO	29	100	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

In table 5 it is noticed that the English teacher was not used to seek for new ideas to develop the writing skill in a stimulating way. Thus dialogue journals were not taken into account before the intervention plan. However, after the intervention plan all students reported that the teacher did use of this new technique proposed. It indicates that teacher rapidly realized about the benefits of using dialogue journals for both students and teachers. Linnell (2010) mentions that dialogue journals help teachers see what their students are interested in, which is always a helpful asset to teachers due to they become familiar with their students' personalities.

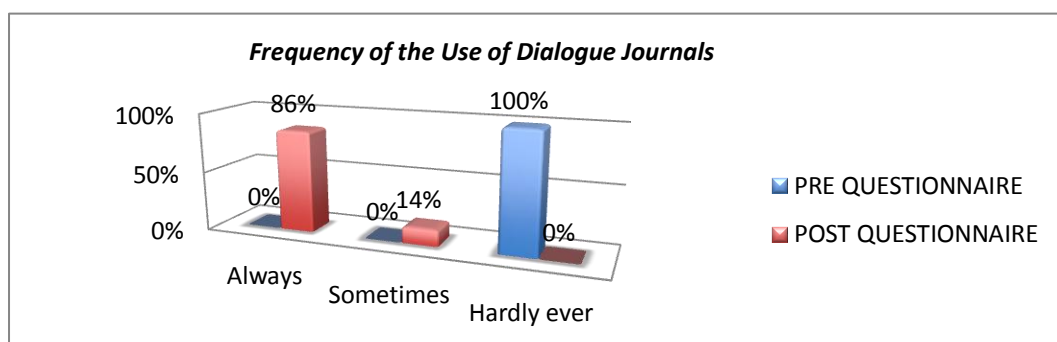
Question 5: How often does the teacher use dialogue journals to improve writing skill?

a. Table 6

Frequency of the Use of Dialogue Journals

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	25	86
Sometimes	0	0	4	14
Hardly ever	29	100	0	0
Total	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

The data in table 6 shows that the teacher did not use dialogue journal writing. But, it changed after the intervention plan as 86% of students answered that the teacher always uses dialogue journals in writing development and the 14%, reported that sometimes the teacher does it. It means that the teacher changed her mind respect to the frequency of practicing writing as she could notice the value of dialogue journals in developing writing skills. It is supported whit Harmer (2004) who says writing should be practiced to be more developed; to be better in writing we have to write and write as often as we can.

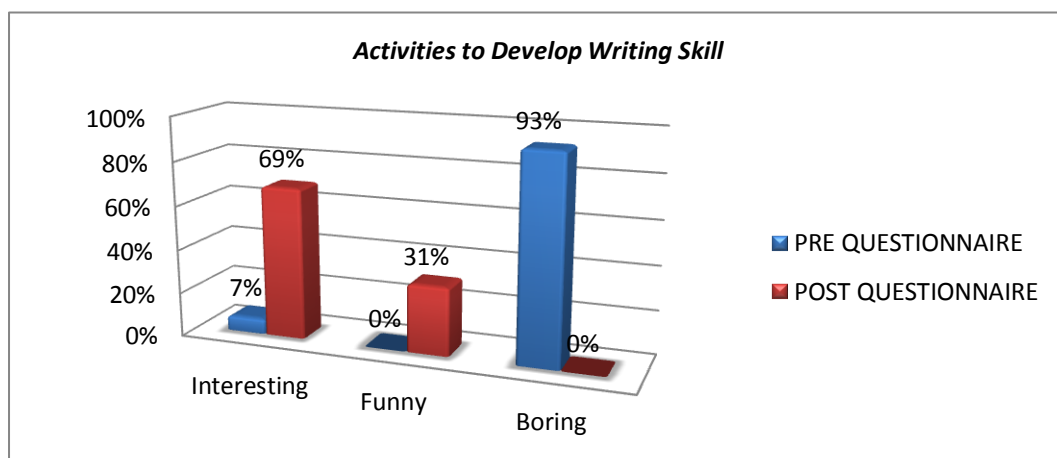
Question 6: In the English class, the activities to develop writing skill are:

a. Table 7

Activities to Develop Writing Skill

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Interesting	2	7	20	69
Funny	0	0	9	31
Boring	27	93	0	0
Total	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

The data in table 7 shows that in the pre questionnaire only 7% students considered interesting writing and the majority of them considered the activities boring. But, in the post questionnaire all students sated the writing activities are either interesting or funny. It indicates that the free chance students have to write on each journal entry changed their mind finding it thought-provoking when developing writing activities. According to Rachel (2011) dialogue journals provided a way for learners to write freely, which has a positive effect on their writing habits.

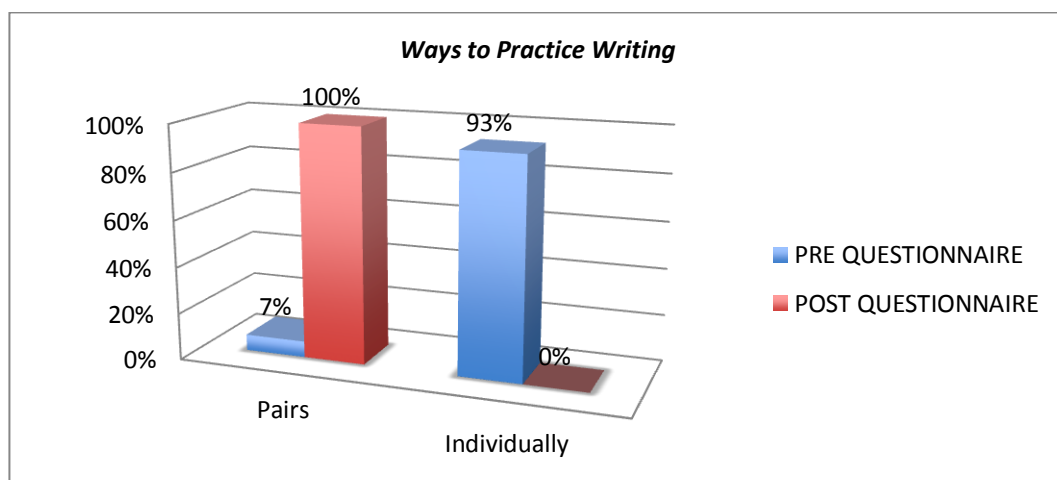
Question 7: What way would you like to practice your writing in?

a. Table 8

Ways to Practice Writing

	Pre questionnaire		Post questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Pairs	2	7	29	100
Individually	27	93	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	29	100

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

As it is illustrated in table 8, at the beginning of the intervention plan only 7% students liked to practice writing in pairs and the majority of the preferred to write individually. It seemed that students did not feel comfortable sharing their writing as they were not used to do this. But, after the implementation of the dialogue journals on their classroom all students showed preference to practice writing in pairs. It indicated that the feedback provided by the teacher on their journals entries had a good perception on students as they all wanted to continue the written conversation. It is supported by Kim (2005) who named Dialogue Journals to an ongoing written communication in which both language learners and teacher participate and communicate on a regular basis.

Post-test Results

Objective Five

To reflect upon the effectiveness that dialogue journals had on students writing skills

a. Table 9

Post-test Scores of Tenth Year Students in Writing Skill

Students' code	C	P	S	G	V	TOTAL
	/2	/2	/2	/2	/2	/10
CPJA01	2	1.5	1	1	1.5	7
CPJA02	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	2	8.5
CPJA03	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	7.5
CPJA04	2	2	1.5	1	1,5	8
CPJA05	1	1.5	1	1.5	2	7
CPJA06	2	2	1.5	1	1	7.5
CPJA07	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	7
CPJA08	1.5	2	1	1.5	2	8
CPJA09	1.5	2	1.5	1	1	7
CPJA10	1.5	1	1.5	1	2	7
CPJA11	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	1	6.5
CPJA12	1	1.5	1.5	1	1	6
CPJA13	1.5	1.5	2	1.5	1.5	8
CPJA14	1	1.5	1,5	1.5	1	6.5
CPJA15	1.5	2	1,5	1	1	7
CPJA16	1	1	2	1.5	1	6.5
CPJA17	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	7
CPJA18	1.5	1.5	1	1	1	6
CPJA19	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	8
CPJA20	1	1	1.5	1	2	6.5
CPJA21	2	1.5	1.5	1	1.5	7.5
CPJA22	1	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	6.5
CPJA23	1.5	1.5	1	1	1.5	6.5
CPJA24	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	8
CPJA25	1	1	1	1.5	1.5	6
CPJA26	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	6.5
CPJA27	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	1	7.5
CPJA28	2	1	2	1	2	8
CPJA29	1	1.5	1	1.5	1.5	6.5
Mean	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.3	1.4	7.1

Note: CPJA= Colegio Pío Jaramillo Alvarado; 01= students' code; C= Capitalization; P= Punctuation; S= Spelling; G= Grammar; V= Vocabulary.

b. Interpretation and analysis

As it is illustrated in table 7, the total score mean was 7.1/10, which was slightly below the expected level that was 7.5/10 (See rubric, page 116) The aspects in which students obtained the highest score mean were both capitalization and punctuation 1.5/2, and the lowest score mean was in the grammar aspect which was 1.3/2.

It can be said that students had the opportunity to practice writing constantly so that their pieces of writing showed coherence and cohesion: it means that when writing students used capital letters accurately, that is, beginning of all sentences, all pronouns “I” and proper nouns are capitalized. Also, students used punctuation marks properly, it means, there was suitable placement of commas, periods, colons, semicolons, and other end punctuation. Besides, students were aware of using grammatical rules correctly, that is, sentences are well-structured.

. Therefore, the implementation of a convenient technique was worthy for students, to overcome difficulties related to writing such as: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, vocabulary and grammar.

According to Orwig (2010) writing involves “use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions or “use the style appropriate to the genre and audience” or “make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas” and many others. That is why even native speakers of the language find writing difficult.

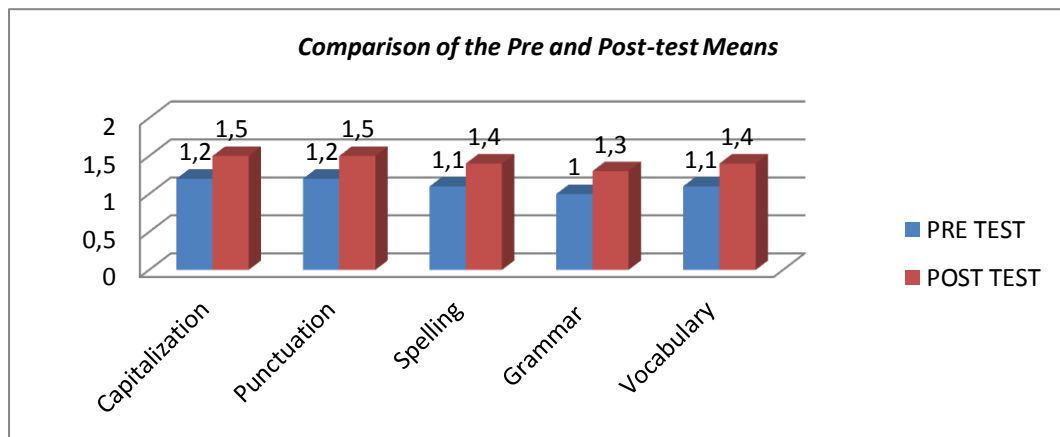
Comparison of the Pre and Post-test Results

a. Table 10

Comparison of the Pre and Post-test Means

Aspects	Pre-test	Post-test
Capitalization	1.2	1.5
Punctuation	1.2	1.5
Spelling	1.1	1.4
Grammar	1	1.3
Vocabulary	1.1	1.4
Mean	5.4	7.1

b. Figure



c. Interpretation and analysis

Table 10 shows that the results of the total mean changed in advance from 5.4 to 7.1/10. The aspects of capitalization and punctuation increased from a bad level 1.2/2 to an acceptable one 1.5/2. Besides that the aspects of spelling and vocabulary increased from 1.1 to 1.4/2; and the aspect of grammar increased from 1 to 1.3 out of two. It can be stated that the implementation of dialogue journals was good for students to overcome problems they had before the development of the intervention plan.

g. DISCUSSION

The implementation of dialogue journals as a technique to develop writing skill was the strategy applied to students of tenth year at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school which results of the pre and posttests indicated a relevant progress that students got after the intervention. The findings in the observation sheets and researcher’s field diary also revealed a positive effect that the implementation of dialogue journals had on students. These results were consistent with Garmon, (2001) who states that Dialogue journals can be used for numerous reasons in the classroom for enhancing writing abilities and for creating a positive relationship between students and teachers.

This intervention based on the implementation of dialogue journals reached considerable changes on students’ writing. These changes can be seen in the improvement of the students’ mean from the pretest that was 5.4/10 to the posttest mean which was 7.1/10. The pretest results showed that the majority of students were facing problems in different aspects of writing; in capitalization, punctuation and spelling along with poor vocabulary and grammatical disagreements. Then, after applying the posttest, results indicated that students improved best in writing mechanics such as coherent use of capital letters, suitable use of punctuation marks, and good spelling as well as vocabulary and grammar.

At the beginning of the intervention plan students were curious about the implementation of dialogue journals in their classroom. Considering the writing troubles that students were facing, their attitude toward the strategy and their

participation during the development of the strategy was worthy. At the end of the intervention they felt confident to create pieces of writing coherently and logically. This is using correctly grammar along with rich vocabulary. Therefore Dialogue journals create not only willingness to write but also develop positive attitude toward writing in English.

This research work had some strengths and limitations which enhance and affect the intervention. Some strengths were that students were agreeable to participate and were no longer bored about writing, they were receptive to all the instructions given and the teacher provided the necessary support. But, there was also drawbacks such as difficulties to manage the time provided for developing each lesson since students needed constant individual feedback in order to overcome their writing troubles, and the classroom size that was very small to have 29 students working.

It is important to note that the implementation of dialogue journals was worthy for ten year students because this strategy facilitated their writing development and improved communication between students and teacher.

h. CONCLUSIONS

- The issues that limited the development of writing skills among tenth year students were linked to writing conventions, mainly the aspects of capitalization, punctuation and spelling as well as grammar and vocabulary. Another issue which led to the failure of coherent and logical pieces of writing was the students' indifference toward writing as they found it boring because of the nonexistence of convenient techniques.
- The implementation of dialogue journals as an original technique in the teaching-learning process reduced students' limitations in the writing skill considerably. The application of this technique encouraged students to be prepared for writing in an understandable way. Moreover Dialogue Journal writing kept students engaged in each activity; thus, they participated actively writing coherent and logical pieces of writing.
- The findings of this research work showed that the implementation of dialogue journals in the classroom was effective, not only due to the progress students made in the aspects considered in the writing skill but also because students felt more comfortable while writing in English. Students' motivation toward writing both inside and outside the classroom in a foreign language was greater than before.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should pay more attention to students' weaknesses in the English subject mainly in the area of writing, in order to overcome students' troubles in learning. It can be achieved through planning activities directed to solve writing problems. Moreover, it is recommended for teachers to observe students' work and keep a record of their performance to determine if students succeed in the components of writing as it is expected by educator.
- Teachers should try out new techniques that are suitable to encourage students to write coherently. Moreover, the activities carried out need to be attention-grabbing and thought-provoking such as the dialogue-journal-writing technique in order to engage students with writing. Dialogue journals can be used as a warm-up, as an exit slip (last activity before the class ends), or as a regular writing activity during a certain day of the week. Thus, it is suggested for teachers to take advantage of the benefits dialogue journals have.
- Teacher should make the dialogue-journal-writing an everyday activity in order to develop students' writing appropriately. There is much anecdotal evidence to support the use of dialogue journals. Because it is a highly individualized technique, teachers can expect to find diverse outcomes. In general, dialogue journals have been found to improve students' ease of writing, increase student motivation to write, and develop

students' use of different functions of language. Dialogue journal writing can also result in better teacher-student relationships, instructional feedback for teachers, and improved classroom management.

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k. ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A
TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG
TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT “PÍO JARAMILLO
ALVARADO” HIGH SCHOOL IN LOJA CITY, ACADEMIC
PERIOD 2014–2015.**

Thesis project as a previous
requirement to obtain the
Bachelor's Degree in Sciences
of Education, English Language
Specialization

AUTHOR

LEIDY KARINA GUAMÁN CUMBICOS.

1859
LOJA – ECUADOR

2015

57

a. THEME

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A TECHNIQUE TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT “PÍO JARAMILLO ALVARADO” HIGH SCHOOL IN LOJA CITY, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2014 – 2015.

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

This work will be undertaken at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school, which was created by the executive decree N. 17, on December 9th, 1966. The institution started in 1967, with 7 teachers; there was basic education, evening section and feminine sector only. In 1978, the afternoon section was created due to the increase of students. Then, in 1994, the morning section was established. Currently, the head of the institution is Dr. Susana Chamba, the teaching staff is integrated by 80 teachers distributed in different areas and 8 of them work in the English language subject. Also it has a modern laboratory that responds to social and labor expectations of the students.

Its **mission** is to train competent professionals with a high grade of academic work, competitiveness and quality for answering the educative needs of students, and to attend students demand from the southern region of Ecuador. Its **vision** is to form professionals with psycho-pedagogical training and humanistic orientation that can offer national and international exchange opportunities, and to promote the interactive participation in today’s world.

Description of the current situation of the research problem

At present, the educational world of the English Language is dealing with an excessive number of concerns inside of the establishments, the majority related directly with the teaching and learning process. One of the greatest challenges for English Language Learners is writing. Although the language barrier affects students' understanding and performance across all subject areas, the area in which students experience the most difficulty is writing. According to The Nation's Report Card: Writing, (2008) only 5% of English Language learners assessed got or higher scores in writing and 42% got scores below basic.

Correspondingly, it can be said that after observing some English classes at Pio Jaramillo high school it was noticed that students were having difficulties on the writing skill. One of them is how to generate ideas or how to formulate sentences to convey through writing. Dealing with grammatical rules, they made several mistakes such as deciding the tenses to use and the grammatical agreements. Also, since they had poor vocabulary knowledge they often chose incorrect words to represent their ideas. What is more, they were not really aware of mechanical aspects such as capitalization, punctuation, and they also misspelled the words quite often.

Several factors have contributed to increase these problems; one apparent issue that leads to the failure of writing development is the lack of useful writing strategies and techniques; another issue is that due to the limited practices, the students writing tend to be low.

Therefore, this research intends to build up students' writing; especially, at mechanical aspects along with vocabulary and grammar. So, in addition to their regular instruction they will receive instruction geared to meeting their goal for improvement. In other words, a new technique needs to be introduced. For that reason, this work proposes the implementation of Dialogue journals as they are a perfect vehicle for teaching and modeling good writing. Linnell (2010)

Research problem

HOW DOES THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIALOGUE JOURNALS AS A TECHNIQUE DEVELOP WRITING SKILL AMONG TENTH YEAR STUDENTS AT "PÍO JARAMILLO ALVARADO" HIGH SCHOOL IN LOJA CITY, ACADEMIC PERIOD 2014–2015?

Delimitation of the research

Temporal

This research work will be developed during the academic period 2014-2015.

Spatial

This research work will be carried out at "Pío Jaramillo Alvarado" high school.

Observation units

The participants of this project are the tenth year students, parallel “E” and the candidate teacher of this work who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Sub problems

- What theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals are adequate to develop writing skill?
- What are the issues that limit the development of writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School?
- What are the phases of the intervention plan that address the current issues of writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School?
- How do dialogue journals are implemented to solve writing limitations among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School?
- How do dialogue journals reduce the difficulties to develop writing skill on students?

c. JUSTIFICATION

Currently, English Language is known as the official language of new era worldwide, it represents an everyday use of the English in many different fields to communicate amongst people from different cultures and parts of the world that are starting to globalize with the social change that people are experiencing today with the advanced use of the high technology.

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education has seen the English language as a significant instrument that must be included in the curricular planning for students to learn at different levels of education; besides that, the demand of professional people with the mastery of the language and the capacity to teach it to students, is something essential that is required from teachers. The impact that it represents focuses on the development of the writing skills, where teachers have to find the adequate and innovative strategies and techniques to work with the students.

The researcher has selected to implement dialogue journals as a technique to develop writing skill on tenth year students because dialogue journals are not only suitable when teaching writing but also they improve the relationship between students and teacher.

Moreover, the researcher has considered highly important all the facts and benefits of using dialogue journals with students and the relevance of carrying out the present research. A relevant matter is that the research will present students a

stimulating technique, in order to make writing enjoyable and encourage students to improve this skill.

Finally, the development of this action research project 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 Área de la Educación, el Arte y la Comunicación of the Universidad Nacional de Loja.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

To develop writing skill through the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015.

Specific

- To research the theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals and its application to develop writing.
- To diagnose the issues that limit the development of tenth year students writing at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school
- To design an intervention plan by implementing dialogue journals to develop writing skills among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school.
- To apply the dialogue journals as a technique to solve writing limitations among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school
- To reflect upon the effectiveness that the implementation of dialogue journals had on students writing skills.

e. THEORETICAL FRAME

Writing

Definition of writing

Writing skills are defined as an important part of communication which allows communicating a message with clarity and easing to a far larger audience than through face-to-face or telephone conversations. (SkillsYouNeed, 2015)

A.P Jim (2010) defines writing as a complex skill. He states that requiring mastery on writing is not only grammatical patterns but also the rules such as high degree of organization in the development of ideas and information and also choosing the appropriate vocabularies and sentence structure to create a style which is appropriate to subject matter.

Writing is “the use of letters, symbols or other conventional characters, for the recording by visible means of significant sounds.” (Classic encyclopedia, 2006)

According to Meyers (2005) writing is an action-a process of discovering and organizing ideas, putting them on a paper, reshaping and revising them.

Harmer (2004) referred to writing skill as an important skill that need to be learnt to reinforce the language skills. Writing a text is recognized as a little complicated skill; because it is necessary take into account all the types of text that exist.

Importance of writing

According to Frost (2010) writing is so important for communication. She states that if people don't have good writing skills they will have a hard time communicating with their readers. The author describes the importance as follow:

Good writing skills can help you in life. If you're trying to get a job, good writing skills make you more desirable to the employer. One of the first things an employer looks at is your cover letter or resume. If you have an interesting cover letter it could lead to an interview. It is supported by Brown (2004) who states that, writing is important for achieving employment in this global era. Thus, how to write for students is crucial as input for them to face the future.

Good writing skills can lead to a monetary value. It is to make a living writing; it is not only for people who write books. There are technical writers, copywriters, software writers the list goes on and on. Even if you are not a professional writer there is ways to make money with your good writing skills. You could write a blog on the side. There are endless ways to make some extra money on the internet with endless amounts of content. It's rare to find good content on the internet and when you do sometimes it's worth paying for.

Without good writing skills the world would be in anarchy and chaos. Bad writing skills can lead to misinformation. Bad writing skills can lead to the wrong or ambiguous message. Good writing skills can lead to a much needed confidence boost.

On the other hand, writing is so important due to it enables students to practise and improve new grammatical structures, vocabulary or expressions they have learnt. When writing, students have a chance to take risks. They are learning by attempts and mistakes. “They necessarily become very involved with the new language, the effort to express new ideas and the constant use of eye, hand and brain is a unique way to reinforce learning.” (Raimes, 1983)

Types of Writing Skills

There are five different types of writing, including expository, narrative, descriptive, persuasive and creative. These are discussed below in detail.

- 1. Expository Writing:** the writer tries to inform and explain the concept thoroughly to the readers with required fact and figures. It is used in essay writing. Moreover, with this style of writing, a person can easily acquire essay writing skills.
- 2. Narrative writing:** it is about describing a story or sharing an experience with readers. The 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 style is used in biographies, novels, poems, etc.
- 3. Persuasive writing:** It has the purpose to persuade a reader for performing an action. It aims to convince the reader completely. The advertisement you often see in television or hoardings are examples of persuasive writing.

4. **Descriptive writing:** This style 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.
5. **Creative writing:** this is usually enjoyed by the writer, who 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. (Edurite, 2015)

The components of writing

Jacobs (2004), argues that there are main five components of Writing. They are content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics.

- a. **Content:** The content of writing should be clear, so that, readers can understand the message conveyed and gain the information from it. The content should be well unified and completed.

Then, the term is usually known as unity and become completeness characteristics of good writing. Besides that, the main idea has to be explained and developed fully. Completeness is the conditioning ideas which are developed through particular information. Unity means that every part of sentences contributes to one principle by unifying thought. Moreover, unity is the first quality of an effective sentence. Unity means that everything in it has logical relation to the purpose of the sentences as a whole and nothing is omitted which is necessary to that purpose.

b. Organization: The process of organization in writing involves:

Coherence: Coherence means all the ideas stick together. The ideas are part in the right order and it does not make the reader confuses. This makes the writer's thought easy to follow from sentence reader paragraph.

Order of importance: beginning with the important and building up the most important. The advantages of building up to the most important ideas stem from the suspense involved and tendency for readers to remember best what they read last. A conclusion with surprise, a clever moment, and appeal acting or with some order strong endings is more likely to be useful successfully.

General to specific: it begins with the topic sentence that makes a general statement followed by a series of supporting sentences which supply specific details, examples and facts.

Chronological order: the events are arranged in order in which they occurred, usually moving from the first and the earliest to the last and which latest. Some give direction or explanation of a process, other sum which historical events, and the steps or action are taken by individual or organization.

Spatial pattern: descriptions such as: neighborhood, a room or buildings are written. In describing a house or a building, the writer probably firstly describe the exterior and interior. By moving systematically rather than irregularly over the scene we convey the viewer to overall plan or scene. Moreover, the reader has a mental picture of what is described.

- c. Vocabulary:** One of the requirements of good writing always defines on the effective use of words. In personal description, words play dual roles; to communicate and to evoke, to let the readers to perceive and feel. These two fold purposes are evident even such a practical and common form of writings as an advertisement. The effective use of words also deals with connotative or figurative language. They are all important nearly all forms of writing but particularly in personal description. Word rich in association are more effective than those mainly transmit transformation. However, words and phrases enrich the ability to convey experiences imaginatively but they do not have place in factual description. In scientific and technical writing, language should be exact and precise to convey specific meaning and design to communicate information but not the writer's feeling.
- d. Language use/grammar:** Language use of writing involves correct usage endpoints of grammar. There are many points of grammar such as: verbs, nouns, and agreement. Specific nouns and strong verbs give a reader a mental image of description. This specific noun can be characterized by using modifier of adjectives, adverbs and participle form. There are many opportunities for errors in the use of verbs and mistake in arrangement are very common. Mistakes in written work are much serious since we have an opportunity to re-read and to correct what we have written. We should avoid errors in verbal forms, subject-verb agreement and pronoun antecedent agreement in a case of a noun or pronoun.

e. **Mechanics:** The use of mechanics is due to capitalization, punctuation, and spelling appropriately. This aspect is very important since it leads reader to understand or recognize immediately what the writer means to express definitely. The use of favorable mechanics in writing will make readers easy to understand the conveying ideas and other messages stated in the writing.

Capitalization: The use of capitalization in the writing can clarify the ideas. If the sentences are capitalized correctly, ambiguous meaning and misunderstanding would not be appeared. Besides, through correct capitalization of a sentence will help the reader to differentiate one sentence to others.

Punctuation: It can be used as a unit of meaning and suggest how the units of its relation go to each other.

Spelling: There are three important rules followed in using spelling appropriately. They are suffix addition, plural formation and handling error within the words.

Micro- and Macro-Skills of Writing

According to Orwig (2010) there are several micro-skills which are involved in writing such as “use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions ” or “use the style appropriate to the genre and audience” or “make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the

development of the ideas” and many others. That is why even native speakers of the language find writing difficult.

Brown (2004) says there is a taxonomy that can be the guidance to set writing assessments. The classification includes micro-skills which are exactly appropriate to be applied in imitative and intensive writing performance, and macro-skills which are necessary to be applied in responsive and extensive ones.

Micro-skills of writing include:

- Produce graphemes and orthographic pattern in English.
- Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purposes.
- Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate order patterns
- Use acceptable grammatical system (e. g., tense, agreement, and pluralization), patterns, and rules.
- Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.
- Use cohesive devices in writing discourse.

Macro-skills of writing include:

- Use the rhetorical forms and conventions of written discourse.
- Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.
- Convey links and connection between events, and communicate such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization, and exemplification.
- Distinguish between literal and implied meaning when writing.

- Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.
- Develop and use battery of writing strategies, such as accurately assessing the audience's interpretation, using prewriting devices, writing with fluency in the first drafts, using paraphrases and synonyms, soliciting peer and instructor feedback, and using feedback for revising and editing.

Teaching Writing

Kern (2000) proposes three main approaches to teach writing:

- 1. Product-oriented approach:** This approach concerns with the internal and structural patterns of writing. The focus is dealt with grammatical rules, sentence arrangements in the text, and other writing structural aspects.
- 2. Process-oriented approach:** Instead of drilling students to produce well-organized writing works, process-oriented approach emphasizes on leading the students to express their creativity and guiding them to reconstruct and to reorganize their writing to be better. In this approach, the students are expected to have center roles along the process.
- 3. Genre-based approach:** The focus of this approach is on the students' ability to formulate communicative writing. The emphasis is not about how grammatical their writing works are, but how well they organize their writing to be understood by the readers. Dealing with the genre-based approach, Hyland (2003) proposes a five-stage concept that enables the teacher to arrange suitable tasks during the teaching and learning process.

In the first stage, all of the activities are expected to lead the students to recognize the text and gain the understanding of the context. After that, in the modeling and deconstructing stage, the students are presented with examples of the texts, introduced to certain parts in the text, and involved in the activities related to the text-feature analysis. Meanwhile, in the third stage, they start to build their understanding through practicing writing. Here, they are allowed to collaborate with their teacher and peers. Soon after the independent construction of the text stage is implemented, guidance for the students is officially removed. They are expected to create their own drafts which depend on their own understanding and summary. Furthermore, the last stage enables the students to make connections between the discussed materials with other context that can lead them to have deeper and wider understanding.

How to teach writing

Harmer (2004) in his book *how to teach writing* describes a number of tasks to be performed by teachers when teaching writing. These are the following:

Demonstrating – since, students need to be aware of writing conventions and genre constraints in specific types of writing; teachers have to be able to draw these features to their attention. In whatever way students are made aware of layout issues or the language used to perform certain written functions, for example, the important issue is that they are made aware of these things – that these things are drawn to their attention.

Motivating and Provoking – student often find themselves ‘lost for words’, especially in creative writing tasks. This is where the teacher can help, provoking the students into having ideas, enthusing them with the value of the task, and persuading them what fun it can be. It helps, for example, if teachers go into class with prepared suggestions so that when students get stuck they can immediately get help rather than having, themselves, to think of ideas on the spot. Students can be asked to complete task on the board or reassemble jumbled text as a prelude to writing; they can be asked to exchange ‘virtual’ e-mail or discuss ideas before the writing activity starts. Sometimes teachers can give them the words they need to start a writing task as a way of getting them going.

Supporting –Students need a lot of help and reassurance once they get going, both with ideas and with the means to carry them out. Teachers need to be extremely supportive when students are writing in class, , and prepared to help students overcome difficulties.

Responding –When responding, teachers react to the content and construction of a piece supportively and often (but not always) make suggestions for its improvement. Teachers will not be grading the work or judging it as a finished product, instead, teachers will be telling the student how well it is going so far.

When students write journals, teachers may respond by reacting to what they have said (e.g. ‘Your holiday sounds very interesting, Silvia. I like the bit about running out of petrol but I didn’t understand exactly who went and got some petrol. Could you possibly write and tell me in you next journal entry?’) Rather

than filling their journal entry full of correction symbols. Teachers might also make comments about their use of language and suggest ways of improving it (e.g. ‘Be careful with your past tenses, Nejadi. Look at the verbs I’ve underlined and see if you can write them correctly.’) but this is done as part of a process rather than part of an evaluation procedure.

Evaluating –When evaluating students’ writing for test purposes, it can be indicated where they wrote well and where they made mistakes, and grades may be awarded. When marked scripts are handed back to students they can look at the highlighted errors and try to put them right - rather than simply stuffing the corrected pieces of work into the back of their folders and never looking at them again.

Feedback on Writing

According to Harmer (2004), when feedback is applied upon written works, it should affect the learners’ language use in future. Furthermore, feedback can be focused on both content and form. Feedback on content emphasizes on text organization, ideas, and a number of details. Meanwhile, feedback on form focuses on grammatical principles and writing mechanics. Considering the way how a teacher gives written feedback, Harmer divides the techniques into two:

- 1. Responding.** Responding is different from assessing or evaluating since it focuses on the thought of the writing works, for example the teacher can say how good the works are or how successfully the students can deliver the intended meaning. Furthermore, dealing with the progress, the teacher can

suggest the things that the students should do to make their writing better. The important thing in responding is that the feedback has to support the students' writing improvement and raise their motivation instead of increasing their anxiety towards writing.

Additionally, there are other practical issues that can be applied to respond to the students' writing. One of them is *peer feedback* that gives encouragement to the students to have cooperative and collaborative learning in the classroom (Brown, 2004). In addition, through peer feedback, the quality of writing as well as the understanding of good writing can be developed (Hyland, 2003)

- 2. Coding:** This technique enables the students to realize their mistakes and errors. By using certain codes, the correction seems to be neater, more understandable, less threatening, and more helpful compared with the use of random marks.

Dialogue journals

History of Dialogue Journals

According to Staton and Peyton, (2010) dialogue journals have existed since the mankind learned to write, but we do not know exactly when and where the first dialogue journal, as we know it today, was used in a class. We can just describe how the idea was born. It was in 1964 in Los Angeles that Leslee Reed first began writing a daily written conversation with her sixth grade students. The main reason for starting dialoguing with her students was a

principal's order. He wanted the children to realize and remember what they had learnt every day at school. Every afternoon Leslee Reed carried on twenty six written conversations which were written on a piece of paper in the beginning and then to be more practical these loose pieces of paper turned into bound notebooks. In the course of time, thanks to students' questions and complaints this practice allowed her to help them "in solving personal as well as academic problems and to share feelings. In fact, the dialogue journals soon became the core of her instruction." This writing activity started to spread very quickly by word of mouth, because dialogue journals were not described as a concrete educational practice.

Another point of view states that the term dialogue journal is firstly introduced by Nancie Atwell in 1987 in her book entitled "In the Middle: Writing, Reading and Learning with Adolescents" (Wells, 1992) interestingly, her book inspired another teacher and now it has not only been used but also widely documented as a pedagogical tool and written conversation between student and teacher (Schwarzer, 2004).

Types of Journals

According to Cobine (2010) there are many types of journals as many teachers and students who are writing them. The journals can be adapted to teachers and students needs and be more useful for different purposes. All types of journal have in common the fact that teachers do not interfere in a student's entry. They can

just respond to it or comment on it. She highlights three types of journals with their own primary purpose:

The primary purpose of the **dialogue journal** is to foster communicativeness in students. “Every student and his or her teacher keep an individual written dialogue frequently and over a certain period of time about whatever interest them” (Godev, 2010)

The primary purpose of the **literary journal** is “to foster thoughtfulness in students”. Students are asked to read a passage and then after choosing one of several literary topics, which are suggested by the teacher, they write their personal opinion about it. In the end, after a class discussion, students can elaborate their first entry.

The subject journal or “a content area journal” has the primary purpose of “to help students identify and clarify troublesome terms and concepts.” There are three sections. Section A is dedicated to students for writing responses to background readings. In Section B students have a chance to compose a personalized dictionary of literary and linguistic terms. In Section C students create a personalized stylebook in which they comment on their progress with language usage.

Definition of Dialogue Journals

Dialogue journals (DJ) have been defined as journals “in which each student carries on a private written conversation with the teacher for an extended period of time (Staton, 1988). DJ are also defined as a kind of journal students use to carry

on conversations with their teacher for a set period of time. These journals are subjective, meaning that the student gets to choose what subject he or she wants to write about in the journal. (Garmon, 2001).DJ are coined to represent written communication that may come in the form of letters that are given back and forth between students and teacher as instructional tool (Gebhard, 2000; Dionisio, 1991).DJ are an informal conversation either among peers or between teachers and students (Wells, 1992). Peyton (2000) and Kim (2005) named DJ to an ongoing written communication in which language learners and teacher participate and communicate on a regular basis. Brown (2001) defines DJ as a written communication between students and teacher on an agreed topic by using prompt as initiator to write, in which the students are asked to move from writing to themselves or his/her words are depicted as “self-writing or writing the only the self in mind as audience” to a written conversation as the teacher reads and responds to students’ thoughts, feeling and reaction. Mastropieri and Scruggs (2005) define DJ as written discussion between teacher and students. Moon (2006) defines DJ as a written conversation between two or more people, each responding to the other’s entries, usually around an agreed topic.

Purpose of the dialogue Journals

Linnell (2010) mentions that dialogue journals help teachers see what their students are interested in, which is always a helpful asset to teachers. These journals help teachers become familiar with their students' personalities. Besides that, she argues that dialogue journals are suitable to use when teaching writing

and writing mechanics. If done correctly, commenting on writing mechanics can aid this conversation. Dialogue journals help students with writing conventions because they can see their writing on paper. They also help students develop voice because they are allowed to write about their own chosen topics.

On the other hand, Godev (2010) points out that, dialogue journals have the goal to communicate in writing, to exchange ideas and information.

Moreover, Garmon (2001) states that dialogue journals improve the teacher-student relationship; because dialogue journals provide teachers with the opportunity to meet with students one-on-one. This interaction make students feel cared for, and they also feel like what they have to say is important. This positive correlation increases their motivation and attitude towards school. He also defend that dialogue journals are useful for , enhancing writing abilities, reading comprehension, and creating a positive relationship between students and teachers.

Benefits of the dialogue journals

According to Harmer, (2004) dialogue journals have the following benefits:

The value of reflection: When we try to put our thoughts into words we have to work out what those thoughts are. This, in turn, makes us reflect on what has happened, what we think or how we feel. And when we reflect on things we often reach conclusions that we might not have thought of when an event was taking place or when, as learners, we were engaged in the learning process itself. Journals are highly useful resources for everybody to have a chance to go back

and compare what we were thinking about something that happened a few weeks ago with what we are thinking now about it. It is a chance for us to stop for a while and take a little time to think about our feelings or attitudes. The most positive aspect is that students are pushed to think more deeply about the lesson.

Freedom of expression: Thanks to the privacy that the dialogue journals offer to students, they allow them to express feelings in a freer way than they might do in front of their classmates. Students are told that except their teacher no one else could read their entries. It is obvious they will write more openly in that case. This is the most pleasant tool to help especially those students who are shy to speak in front of their classmates or with the teacher face to face. “Journal writing is a genre in its own right. The authors can decide what and how much they want to include, and they can write at their own speed.”

Development of writing ability: As many authors highlight that writing should be practiced to be more developed we cannot do anything but to agree with the idea that if we want to be better in writing we have to write and write as often as we can. Harmer wrote that “just as reading a lot helps students to become better readers, so the more students write the better and more fluent they become as writers. They expand their range of written expression and write with greater ease and speed.” Dialogue journal writing is a good way how to practice.

Student - teacher dialogue: It is amazing for a student to have this new possibility to communicate with the teacher through the dialogue journal which is so private and original. Almost every student appreciates the possibility to be in a

contact with his or her teacher in this easy and new personal way. When a teacher writes to a class and says, „You can write to me on any subject and I will reply. But do not worry, I will not show to anybody else“, the students know they have a channel of communication that was not there. When a student writes in a journal, he or she knows that the teacher will read what is written with, perhaps, a different eye from the normal evaluative one. It is a kind of relief for students that their teacher does not correct the mistakes in the entry. In other words, students can see their teacher more as a partner than an evaluator. Student journals are an useful resource for teachers, too. When students say how they feel about things, teachers often find responses to lesson segments that they had not anticipated. Learner perceptions are often different from teacher perceptions. Thanks to the dialogue journal we can help students; we can make suggestions and offer them advices.

Why to use the dialogue journals

According to Godev, (2010) there are two main reasons why using dialogue journal writing:

Firstly, the main principle of the conversation class is to give students as many opportunities as possible to express themselves in the target language. Unfortunately, the characteristic feature of most language classes is heterogeneity. It shows also “in the readiness to speak on the part of students. It is often the case that students will say far less than what is on their minds just because they are embarrassed to talk, afraid to be laughed at or not able to control the flaws in their speech.” It limits them a lot. In the case the teacher is confronted with one or

more students who rarely speak at all, dialogue journal writing gives an equal chance for all students – mainly for the shiest ones – to participate.

Secondly when we are speaking it is more difficult for us to deal with the process of hypothesis testing. There are two main factors which do not give us enough space for hypothesis elaborating when we are speaking. These are time pressure and stress. When we integrate dialogue journal writing in the language class, students get a chance to reflect on the language, they get a chance to go back and think about what they have written, they can rewrite it and they do not feel the time pressure so intensively.

Another reason of using dialogue journals is that they can be used with very young learners as well as with adults according to Collins (2003)

Where to use the dialogue journals

Students can write their dialogue journal at home as a part of their homework. It means they would not be stressed by the time limit and they could write as long as they want and class time could be utilized for any other activity or for explaining new grammar.

They can also write their dialogue journals in a class. There are several reasons why it is beneficial to write the dialogue journal in a class:

- When students write the dialogue journal during the last minutes of the lesson, they “still have fresh in their minds the vocabulary, structures and content that came up in class” and they can use them in their entry. It helps

them with remembering new expressions or grammar and practices them.

- When writing the dialogue journals students can concentrate on writing better in a class than at home, because “they do not feel this activity is taking away time they could use in leisure activities.” For this reason they could also be enthusiastic and motivated about dialogue journal writing.
- Writing the dialogue journals in a class enables students to use more sources of information for their entry. They can cooperate with their classmates, they can ask their teacher for advice or use dictionary if they need it, of course.
- If dialogue journal writing is practiced during the class period, time is limited and every student has the same amount of time. That is why we can observe students’ progress in writing “by comparing their first entries to the last ones as well as to compare progress across students.”

Dialogue journal writing can successfully be integrated into a conversation class, because the dialogue journal is interactive. Typical for this kind of writing is a close collaboration of at least two writers. Furthermore, the interaction that is present in the dialogue journals allows both writers to share an equal effort to keep the communication flow going quite easily.

The writers can put in practice many of the functions which are typical for conversation. These functions are for example: “informing, requesting, thanking, expressing regret, and expressing opinions and feelings”. This is one of the features which make dialogue journal writing

interactive in almost the same way as a conversation. What also makes this writing activity close to the conversational discourse is the fact that the reader is a concrete individual that the writer knows. “There is no abstract audience.” (Godev, 2010)

How to use the dialogue Journals

According to Peyton, (1993) dialogue journals can be used as a warm-up, as an exit slip (last activity before the class ends), or as a regular writing activity during a certain day of the week. Every day (or as often as possible), students take time to write in a journal about anything of interest or concern to them (e.g., what they are learning, problems they are experiencing, or events at home and in the community). Each night, the teacher takes the journals home and responds to student entries, extending the dialogue. The following day, the student reads the teacher's entry and responds in order to continue the conversation. Because the focus of dialogue journals is on meaningful communication, the teacher corresponds with the student without correcting any mistakes in the child's entry. Instead, the teacher models good writing such as correct spelling and usage of written conventions (punctuation, capitalization) in his or her response to the student.

On the other hand, Linnell (2010) suggests two things to keep in mind when implementing the dialogue journals. Firstly, corrections should not be done immediately. This wait time allows students to associate these journals with a red pen. This process will help build the conversation aspect of the journal. Secondly,

feedback does not have to completely end the communication between the student and teacher. Most students will request corrective feedback on writing conventions. Lastly, corrective feedback can be incorporated into the conversation between the student and teacher. Such feedback can become a natural part of the conversation. One way is to make the comment as a post script. When making the comment in this way the main focus is still on the dialogue and not the errors. Another way is through the student initiating the correction. With this method, teachers can give suggestions of stems the students can use to ask for corrections. The teacher also can address common errors in whole-group instruction. This method allows the teacher to avoid association of a negative connotation with the dialogue journals because a student does not feel singled out.

Similarly, Harmer (2004) suggests three strategies which should be adopted by teachers who consider using dialogue journal writing in class:

1. **Be enthusiastic** – it is essential for every new activity we want to try with our students. When we are introducing something new, students need to know that we really consider this idea to be both fun and useful. So when students see us to be deeply involved in a new activity, it is a strong impulse for them to share our enthusiasm for it.
2. **Explain why and what** – To tell students why we are asking them to write journals and to impress on them our belief that journal writing is good for learning (because it gives us time to reflect on what we have been studying), good for writing (because the more we practise, the better we become), good

for flexing our creative muscles (because we have the freedom to experiment with different forms of expression), and good for being able to communicate with the teacher.

3. **Topics** – when students have understood what the dialogue journals are and why we are persuaded that writing this kind of journals is the best for them, we should discuss with them the topics of their writings. They can write about any interests or whatever they enjoy doing. They can write about any difficulties they have with grammar or with the language in general. They can make complaints or ask questions. They can talk about anything that has happened to them or they can express their personality.

Challenges of the Dialogue Journals

Peyton (2000) states that in Dialogue journal writing teachers have some challenges to deal with:

Correctness of students' writing: it is one of the challenges teachers have to deal with when want to carry out the dialogue journals with his or her students. Fortunately, there are several possibilities how we as teachers might correct thoughtfully students' grammatical mistakes, without interrupting the flow of conversation or disturbing the meaning: We can help students to realize their mistakes by modelling grammatically correct responses to students' entries. Students can compare their teacher's correct model with their own writing and learn from that. Another possibility how we could correct students' errors is to add „grammatical P.S.“ to the end of the message and let learners know that

they can check that area for correction.” In the case that there are several students who are always making the same grammatical mistakes, it is obviously beneficial for us to point out these mistakes and carry out a brief class discussion to explain these mistakes to the students and show them their correct usage. It is also possible to discuss repeated mistakes individually with the students. It is extremely important for us to keep in our minds that the students should be told “that their errors are not being pointed out because they are expected to write perfectly.” What is important is the meaning of their writings.

Time to respond to students’ entries: Doubtlessly, some teachers would not be willing to use dialogue journal writing in their class. They might claim that it would be too time-consuming for them to respond frequently to students’ entries. The truth is that the teachers, who really want the dialogue journals to be an important part of their classes, can work out how to manage this challenge. We can learn about students’ backgrounds, their needs and interests. We can help them with individual problems they have with the language and we can observe and document students’ developing knowledge of the language. These are all reasons why the time we dedicate to responding to students’ entries is well spent. Peyton mentions a few possibilities how teachers can manage the process and save time:

- Respond during class while learners are working on an assignment or test.
- Respond regularly but not to all entries, or to some classes and not others, or

to different classes at different times.

- Create writing groups among learners who write and respond to each other, with the teacher entering in from time to time.

Overly personal writings: It can happen that some students' writing can become more personal than it is comfortable for the teacher. The teacher and students should point out limits to not cross the line.

f. METHODOLOGY AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Design of the research

The present Research work is based on the Action Research as a constructive enquiry, which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change a situation, at the time the research is conducting and improve educational practice. This study is an educational research that will allow the practitioner to study and practice a variety of aspects making use of dialogue journals with the purpose to improve the writing skills.

Methods, techniques and instruments

Methods

The *Scientific method* will facilitate the study of appropriate resources to improve writing. Also it will help in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one will support with gathering data to make relevant predictions about the possible solutions.

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 and interpret the obtained results through the tests. It also will help to draw up conclusions.

The *Statistic method* will be used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and the qualitative data from the observations, and teacher's diary.

This research work also will follow the process of an action research which includes planning, acting, observing and reflecting suggests proposed by (Kemmis, 2000). This process will help the researcher to see if any necessary modification or amendment would be necessary to improve student's writing. The process of the research will be carried out systematically, by collecting data on one's everyday practice, analyzing it in order to draw conclusions about how future practice should be.

Techniques and instruments

Data Collection

To collect the data, questionnaires, pre/posttests, observation sheets, and a field diary will be design and applied at the beginning, during and after the application of the intervention plan.

Questionnaire

The questionnaire consists of 7 closed questions. It will be applied at the beginning and at the end of the intervention plan. The questionnaire will allow finding out students' perception of the implementation of dialogue journals.

Test

Two kinds of tests will be used. A pre-test, in order to diagnose the level of students' knowledge about writing, will be applied at the beginning of the

intervention plan. The same pre-test will be used as post-test and applied at the end of the intervention plan, to obtaining information about students' progress on writing during the intervention. The test will be conducted in class and the researcher will give students a clear explanation and clarify all queries raised.

Observation sheets

Through the observation sheet the researcher will observe the students' performance during the lessons. It also will be used to determine what has happened in class and then analyze and reflect upon the findings when the plan ends.

Field Diary

The researcher will use a diary to record what happens in each lesson. It will help to write up the findings during the intervention, relevant events during the observation or particular situations that happen.

Procedures

The action research work process will involve the following stages: The intervention plan will start and end with the application of two tests and two questionnaires. The first ones will be applied at the beginning of the study to collect data from students. And the other ones will be applied at the end to verify if students improve or not their writing. During the development of the lessons the proposed technique will be implemented to develop students' writing. Likewise, the observation checklist and a field diary will be used to record particular situations and to observe students' performance. The findings

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

Tabulation

The tabulation of data will be done with the results obtained in the tests and questionnaires. A logical analysis will be done with the information received.

Organization

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

Description

The obtained data will be described in tables and figures considering the information pre and post intervention. The description of each question will be completed to facilitate the interpretation of the information shown; and also do the logical analysis of the data received.

Population

The students of tenth year of Basic Education are the ones who will participate in the development of this action research. They are 29 students between boys and girls. They are between fourteen and fifteen years old. The students receive five hours of English per week with a certified teacher.

Intervention and observation plan

Alternative: The implementation of dialogue journals as a technique to develop writing skill

Objective: To develop writing skill through the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, during the academic period 2014 – 2015.

Introduction: This intervention plan is a 2 month program which contains 8 lessons which are related to topics from the book level 3 from the ministry of education that is being used in the institution. By using the dialogue journals, tenth year students will be prepared to write in an understandable way.

Goal: To encourage students to develop their writing skill by:

- Looking stimulating pictures for giving opinions about them
- Learning of vocabulary and grammar including controlled practice
- Creating and keeping personalized dialogue journals, to write entries addressed to the teacher, who provides feedback through modeling good writing in his/her responses.

Additionally, each lesson plan will be developed taking into account the three ESA elements that teaching sequences need to have according to Jeremy Harmer

Engage (E): at this point, the teacher must have the students’ attention and involve them emotionally. Activities and materials for engaging include: games

(depending on the age of the learners and the type of game), music, discussions (when handled challengingly), stimulating pictures, dramatic stories, amusing anecdotes, etc. Where these activities and materials are not used, teachers can ask them to make predictions, or relate classroom materials to their own lives.

So, it will be done by showing stimulating pictures which will be adapted according to the topics, in order to engage students to give opinions or answering questions the teacher will do.

Study (S): During this part of the lesson, the focus is on language and how it is constructed. New information or a revision of previously learned information can be included. After focusing on grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation, controlled practice (where students repeat many phrases using the language they are focusing on) is designed to make students think about language construction.

Thus, it will be developed through introduction of vocabulary or explanation of grammar for the students, demonstrating right use of writing mechanics and providing examples for better understanding. Controlled practice of the language will be also included.

Activate (A): This element describes exercises and activities which are designed to get students using language as freely and communicatively as they can. The objective is to use *all* and *any* language which may be appropriate for a given situation or topic. In this way, students get a chance to try out real language use with little or no restriction - a kind of rehearsal for the real world. Activate exercises include role-plays (where students act out, as realistically as

possible, an exchange between a travel agent and a client, for example), advertisement design (where students write and then record a radio commercial, for example), debates and discussions, *Describe and draw* (where one student tries to get another to draw a picture without that other student being able to see the original), story and poem writing, email exchanges, writing in groups, etc.

Therefore, it will be done by asking students to write an entry in their dialogue journals using the language acquired to communicate freely in a written form with the teacher.

Period: This intervention plan will be developed throughout the months of April and may during the academic period 2014 –2015.

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: pretest and pre questionnaire

Week one	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
2 hours	Application of data collection instruments.	Students will be able to: take the pre-test and answer the pre questionnaire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces herself and asks politely students to answer a pretest and then a pre questionnaire. • Teacher gives the sheets (pretest) to students • Teacher reads aloud and explains the instructions. • Students answer the pretest. • Teacher collects the sheets (pretest). • Teacher gives the sheets (questionnaire) to students • Teacher reads aloud and explains the instructions. • Students answer the questionnaire. • Teacher collects the sheets (questionnaire). • Teacher thanks students and tell them that an intervention plan is going to be applied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretest sheets • Questionnaire sheets
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

W e e k t w o 2 h o u r s	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Sports and activities	Students will be able to write a dialogue journal entry about sports and activities with correct use of writing mechanics.	<p>Dialogue journal writing: sports and activities</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture of sports events and ask them some questions about it • Students participate explaining what the activity involves, who is participating, what the rules or goals seem to be, etc. <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces a bunch of sporting vocabulary, explains the meaning of unknown words and provides examples. • Students write sentences with the sporting vocabulary learned. • Teacher monitors students practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing sporting vocabulary learned. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student’s book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals, • Colorful markers
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

W e e k t h r e e 2 h o u r s	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Adverbs of frequency	Students will be able to write a dialogue journal entry using adverbs of frequency with correct use of writing conventions.	<p style="text-align: center;">Dialogue journal writing: adverbs of frequency</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture of everyday activities and asks them to describe it. • Students describes each activity people are doing along with the regularity they are commonly done. <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher familiarizes students with the frequency adverbs by drawing a vertical percentage line from 100 % to 0 % next to the list of adverbs. Examples are also given. • Students write a sentence with each adverbs of frequency. • Teacher controls students’ practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing the adverbs learned. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student’s book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

Week For 2 hours	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Expressions of frequency	Students will be able to write a dialogue journal entry using expressions of frequency with correct use of writing conventions.	<p>Dialogue journal writing: expressions of frequency</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture of daily routines and ask them some questions about it • Students participate explaining what the activities are about <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher introduces the most common expressions of frequency such as every day, once a week etc... explains the use of them in sentences by giving examples. • Students write sentences with the learned expressions. • Teacher monitors students practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing the expressions of frequency learned. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student’s book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

Week	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
Five 2 Hours	How often	Students will be able to write an entry using how often with correct use of writing conventions.	<p>Dialogue journal writing: how often</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture of a mixture of free time activities and ask them to give opinions about it • Students describe each activity, including the concurrence in which they happen. <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher explains the grammatical structure to formulate questions and answers about frequency. • Students formulate questions with how often. • Teacher controls students practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing questions addressed for the teacher. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student’s book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

W e e k S i x 2 h o u r s	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Gerunds after verbs	Students will be able to write a dialogue journal entry using gerunds after verbs with correct use of writing conventions.	<p>Dialogue journal writing: gerunds after verbs</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture representing love, likes, dislikes and preferences such as a red heart and ask them to describe each picture • Students participate saying what each picture represents <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher explain the grammatical structure of using gerunds after the verbs love, like, hate, prefer and don't mind. Examples are also given. • Students write sentences combining verbs with gerunds • Teacher monitors students practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing the verbs learned. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student's book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: Observation sheet, field diary

W e e k S e v e n 2 h o u r s	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Would rather-to express preferences.	Students will be able to write a dialogue journal entry using would rather with correct use of writing conventions.	<p>Dialogue journal writing: would rather</p> <p>Engage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher shows students a picture with 2 kind of sports and 2 free time activities to ask them to express preferences. • Students express their preferences giving reasons to support their choices. <p>Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher provides grammar explanation about would rather, indicates the structure and provide examples. • Students write sentences expressing preferences. • Teacher monitors students practice <p>Activate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students write an entry on their dialogue journals personalizing preferences by using “would rather”. Prompts are provided as a guide. • Teacher collects the journals to respond, modeling good writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed pictures, • Student’s book-level 3 • Handout with prompts • Dialogue journals
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

Research problem: How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?

Data collection instruments: posttest and post questionnaire

W e e k e i g h t 2 h o u r s	Topic	Learning outcomes	Instructional focus	Resources
	Post-test and questionnaire	Students will take the post-test and questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give the post-test to students • Explain and clarify each instructions of the post tests • Monitor students’ work • Collect the handouts • Call on students to answer to a questionnaire • Collect the questionnaire sheets. • Thanks students for their academic cooperation 	Post-test sheets Post Questionnaire sheets
SUPPORT: Coaching and guidance from our university professor.				

g. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH

Resources

Human

- The researcher, Leidy Karina Guamán Cumbicos.
- Students of tenth year of Basic Education, parallel “B”

Material

- Printed pictures
- Dialogue Journals
- Colorful markers
- English Book level 3

Technical

- Computer
- Internet connection
- Printer
- Digital Camera

Budget

Resources	Cost
Internet connection	60.00
Printed project	15.00
Printed reports	15.00
Printed of final report and thesis	50.00
Others	60.00
Total	200.00

Financing

The financing of the expenses derived from the present work will be assumed entirely by the researcher who is conducting the research.

h. TIME LINE

PHASES	ACTIVITIES	2015												2016		
		Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	De	Jan	Feb	Mar	
PROJECT	Project presentation	x														
	Appointment of the teacher advisor		x													
	Project approval		x													
	Appointment of thesis advisor		x													
INTERVENTION ACTION	Application of the instruments		x													
	Act-observe			xxxx	xxxx											
THESIS PROCESS	Data organization and tabulation					xx										
	Interpreting and reflecting					xx										
	Writing up and reporting						xx									
	Presenting the thesis report						x									
	Thesis revision						x									
	Submission of the folder								xxxx	xxxx	xxxx					
	Thesis presentation											xxxx				
	Private review and thesis approval												xxxx			
	Corrections													xxxx		
	Public presentation and incorporation															xxxx

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ANNEXES

Questionnaire



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

As an undergraduate of the English Language Career, the researcher is doing an action research with dialogue journals as a technique to develop writing skills. For this reason, I ask you politely to answer the question in a responsible way.

1. Have you ever worked with dialogue journals?
Yes ___ No ___
2. Have you practiced the writing skill through dialogue journals?
Yes ___ No ___
3. Do you think dialogue journals help you to develop writing skill?
Yes ___ No ___
4. Does the English teacher use dialogue journals to develop writing skills?
Yes ___ No ___
5. How often does the teacher use dialogue journals to improve writing skill
6. ?
Always ___ Sometimes ___ Hardly ever ___
7. In the English class, the activities to develop writing skill are:
Interesting ___ Funny ___ Boring ___
8. What way would you like to practice your writing in?
Pairs _____ Individual _____

Test



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

Student's name:

Date:

Year:

Instructions:

Write a brief paragraph about *sports and activities you like and don't like doing in your free time*. Ask yourself the following questions: What? Why? Who with?

Where? How often?

Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

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Be careful about: capitalization, punctuation, spelling, grammar and vocabulary.

Score: _____ **out of 10**

Writing rubric

CRITERIA	EXCELLENT 2	ACCEPTABLE 1.5	BAD 1	UNACCEPTABLE 0,5	SCORE
Capitalization	Outstanding use of capitalization. Beginnings of all sentences, All "I", and Proper nouns are capitalized. Uses capital and lowercase letters correctly throughout the sentence.	Tolerable use of capitalization. Almost all: Beginnings of sentences, "I", and Proper nouns are capitalized. Use capital and lowercase letters almost correctly throughout the sentence.	Wrong use of capitalization. Rarely: Beginnings of sentences, "I", and Proper nouns are capitalized. Use capital and lowercase letters incorrectly throughout the sentence.	Don't use capitals when it is needed. Almost the entire group of words is in lowercase.	2
Punctuation	Accurate use of punctuation marks such as periods and other end punctuation, quotation marks, apostrophes, and/or commas.	Suitable use of punctuation marks such as periods and other end punctuation, quotation marks, apostrophes, and/or commas.	Use punctuation marks but some periods and other end punctuation, quotation marks, apostrophes, and/or commas are place at random without sense.	Lack of use of punctuation marks or incorrect placement of them.	2
Spelling	Well written words. No misspelled words, even the most difficult ones.	Few if any misspelled words.	Several words are misspelled, they are understandable by context.	There are many misspelled and unknown words that makes difficult to understand the writing.	2
Grammar	No grammatical errors at all. No mistakes in agreement, number, tense.	Few if any grammatical errors and mistakes in agreement, number, tense.	Several grammatical errors and some mistakes in agreement, number, tense.	Many grammatical errors. Lot of mistakes in agreement, number, tense.	2
Vocabulary	Use a bunch of words and the right vocabulary for the topic.	Use the key vocabulary related to the topic.	Attempt to use good vocabulary.	Very limited or poor basic vocabulary used.	2

10/10

***Expected level to be achieved before and after the intervention**

Observation sheet

OBSERVATION SHEET				
Observer:		Date:		
Things to be observed	ACTIVITIES	YES	NO	REMARKS
Have all the students participated during class?				
Was the activity appropriated for the class?				
Were the objectives for the activities accomplished?				
Suggestions to the activities done				

Researcher field diary

Lesson					
Activity					
Objective:					
Materials:					
Timing:					
Procedure:					
Grouping:					
Do students like it?	Yes		For a while		Not really
Are they bored?	Yes		No		
Do they make an effort?					
Comments					

Matrix

Theme: *The implementation of dialogue journals as a technique to develop writing skill among tenth year students, at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school, academic period 2014 – 2015*

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (action research)	Instruments
<p>Main (Research) problem How does the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique develop writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015?</p>	<p>General To develop writing skill through the implementation of dialogue journals as a technique among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high school in Loja city, academic period 2014–2015.</p>	<p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of writing • Importance of writing • Types of Writing Skills • The components of writing • Micro- and Macro-Skills of Writing • Teaching Writing • How to teach writing • Feedback on Writing <p>Dialogue journals</p>	<p>Preliminary investigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observing the English classes • Stating the background of problem • Describing current situation • Locating and reviewing the literature • Creating a methodological framework for research • Preparing an intervention plan 	<p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Test</p> <p>Writing Rubric</p> <p>Observation sheet</p> <p>Field diary</p>
<p>Sub-problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals are adequate to develop writing skill? • What are the issues that limit the development of writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School? 	<p>Specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To research the theoretical and methodological references about dialogue journals and its application to develop writing • To diagnose the issues that limit the development of tenth year students writing at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school. 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the phases of the intervention plan that address the current issues of writing skill among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School? • How do dialogue journals are implemented to solve writing limitations among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” high School? • How do dialogue journals reduce the difficulties to develop writing skill on students? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To design an intervention plan by implementing dialogue journals to develop writing skills among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school. • To apply the dialogue journals as a technique to solve writing limitations among tenth year students at “Pío Jaramillo Alvarado” High school • To reflect upon the effectiveness that the implementation of dialogue journals had on students writing skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History of Dialogue Journals • Types of Journals • Definition of Dialogue Journals • Purpose of the dialogue Journals • Benefits of the dialogue journals • Why to use the dialogue journals • Where to use the dialogue journals • How to use the dialogue Journals • Challenges of the Dialogue Journals 	<p>Intervention and observation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • applying, observing and monitoring students’ performance according to the intervention plan <p>Presentation of research findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquiries • Organizing the final report. 	
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INDEX

COVER PAGE.....	i
CERTIFICATION	ii
AUTORÍA.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION.....	vi
MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO.....	vii
MAPA GEOGRÁFICO Y CROQUIS	viii
THESIS OUTLINE.....	ix
a. TITLE.....	1
b. RESUMEN	2
ABSTRACT	3
c. INTRODUCTION	4
d. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
WRITING.....	7
Definition.....	7
Types	9
Components	9
Micro- and Macro-Skills	12
Teaching Writing	14
How to teach writing	15
Feedback on Writing	17
DIALOGUE JOURNALS.....	18
History	18
Types	19
Definition.....	20
Purpose	21
Benefits.....	22
Why to use the dialogue journals	24
Where to use the dialogue journals	24
How to use the Dialogue Journals.....	26

Challenges of the Dialogue Journals.....	28
e. MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	31
f. RESULTS.....	35
g. DISCUSSION.....	49
h. CONCLUSIONS	51
i. RECOMMENDATIONS	52
j. BIBLIOGRAPHY	54
k. ANNEXES.....	57
Project.....	57
INDEX.....	121