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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 -2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

Research work as previous requirement to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education English Language Specialization.

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CERTIFICATION

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CERTIFIES:

That the present thesis entitled **THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS, AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 -2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD** under the responsibility of the undergraduate student Leticia Piedad Valdiviezo Puglla has been thoroughly been revised. Therefore, I authorize its presentation for the corresponding legal purposes.

Loja, January, 2016

Dra. María Lorena Muñoz Mg.Sc

THESISADVISOR

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Yo, Leticia Piedad Valdiviezo Puglla, declaro ser autor de la tesis intitula: EL LIBRO MÁGICO COMO ESTRATEGIA DE APRENDIZAJE COOPERATIVO PARA DESARROLLAR HABILIDADES DE ESCRITURA DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE 8 GRADO EN EL COLEGIO 27 DE FEBRERO,PERIODO ACADÉMICO 2014-2015,como requisito para optar al grado de Licenciada en Ciencias de la Educación, mención Idioma Inglés; autorizó al Sistema Bibliotecario de la Universidad Nacional de Loja para que con fines académicos, se dé a conocer a la comunidad Lojana la producción intelectual de la Universidad Nacional de Loja, a través de esto tengan acceso a la consulta en el Repositorio Digital Institucional . Los usuarios pueden consultar el contenido de este trabajo en el Repositorio Digital Institucional, en las redes informáticas del país y del exterior, con las cuales tenga convenio la Universidad. La Universidad Nacional de Loja no se compromete por si existe el plagio o copia de la tesis por gente particular.

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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

At first time, I want dedicate to my God, because he has always been with me in all time and thank to him my dream comes true.

As second time, I want to dedicatethis research work to my family, because all the time they were being the engine that move my life, they were with me in each step of my career and of the life.

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a. TITLE

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b. RESUMEN

Este trabajo de investigación tuvo el propósito de determinar como el uso del libro mágico influyo en las habilidades de escritura de los estudiantes de octavo grado en el colegio "27 de Febrero'' durante el periodo académico 2014-2015.

Para el estudio se aplicó los siguientes métodos: científico, analítico-sintético, estadístico, descriptivo, los instrumentos seleccionados para este estudio fue la prueba, cuestionario y la observación, que se aplicó a la población del colegio 27 de Febrero. Durante ocho semanas se llevaron a cabo para mejorar las habilidades de escritura a través de la implementación de los planes de intervención.

Los estudios revelaron que el libro mágico como estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo es útil para mejorar las habilidades de escritura, por esta razón es importante que los profesores trabajen en una manera cooperativa, a través de esto, los estudiantes mejoran sus habilidades de escritura.

ABSTRACT

This research work had the purpose of determining how the use of the magicbook influenced on the writing skills among eight-grade students at 27 de Febrero high school 2014-2015 academic period.

In order to carry out this study, it was necessary the application of the following methods: scientific, analytic-synthetic, statistic, and descriptive.The instruments selected for this study were the test, questionnaire and observation, which were applied to the population from 27 de Febrero high school.

The findings revealed that the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills is useful to improve the writing skills, for this reason is important that the teachers work in a cooperative way, through of this, students writing skills will improve.

c. INTRODUCTION

The last years there were a lot of issues specially in the English language, into the English the most difficult for the teachers and the students is the writing, because inside of the writing I can notice there are a lot of descriptors such as: purpose/task, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order and punctuation, but nowadays teachers are applying different strategies in order to develop writing skills.

This research work is focused on the Magic Book as a cooperative learning to improve writing skills with a population of fourteen students in a public institution. These students have eight periods of English classes weekly; however they do not practice a specific strategy that motivates and facilitates the development of writing skill. Also, their English book does not offer them as a part of the class to practice this important skill. In this way they are afraid of writing, because they think that they can make many mistakes in the moment that they are writing a simple sentence or paragraph.

The reason to carry out this kind of study is to helped students to improve writing skill through the Magic Book strategy in the class. This study helped to eight-grade students to communicate effectively providing some facilities and opportunities to improve it. Moreover, this action research increased the educational level and prestige of this institution, contributing to the improvement of the learning process among the students. Similarly, the researcher was beneficiated because she gained experience on how to use the Magic Book to improve the writing skill.

Also, the main goal of the current study was to improve the writing skill through The Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy. To complete this goal the researcher investigated the theoretical references about writing skill and Magic Book strategy. Then, the investigator diagnosed the negative issues that limited the writing skill and designed the Magic Book to improve it. After that, the researcher applied the Magic Book strategy as part of the classroom activities in order to solve the limitations in this skill and appreciate the effectiveness that the Magic Book had in writing skill.

In order to the study of the data, the description, analysis and interpretation of results; similarly to the development of the field research and the stating of conclusions, it was necessary the application of the following methods: scientific, analytic-synthetic, statistic and descriptive. The instruments selected for this study were the test, questionnaire and observation, which were applied to the population from 27 de Febrero high school, it was fourteen students.

The researcher worked with two variables; writing skills and the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy, the information was gathered through primary sources, databases through internet.

This research work was accomplished with the help of three main resources. The human resources that participated during the different stages were: The target population, eighth –grade students at 27 de Febrero; Another human resource was the English teacher who facilitated general information about target students. The thesis advisor who tutored along the stages of the study and the researcher that worked motivated and eager to learn from relevant moments which were active

subjects in the development of this work. Technical resources like the personal computer, internet, removable memory stick, and multimedia.

Similarly, analyzing the materials and methods that helped to design of the action research work and the points that are considered in the study. The action research work is supported with an intervention plan of eight lesson plans. It involved pre and posttests assessed with a writing rubric taking into account six parameters: consisting of purpose/task, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order and punctuation. A pre and post questionnaires helped to know the attitude toward the writing skill.

This research work contains four parts distributed in the following way:

The first part is Review of Literature that includes all the theoretical frame references which helped the researcher to understand better the importance of developing the speaking skill.

The second part involves the methodology used in this research work. It includes: methods, techniques and the detailed population to which the researcher applied this study.

The third part contains the results with the respective charts and graphs, which represents the obtained data; it also has the corresponding analysis of each question.

The fourth part refers to the conclusions that the researcher obtained after carried out the respective analysis and interpretation of results because it was a base to generate the recommendations given to the researched institution.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

The researcher through an observation of the eight-grade students, she realized that the writing skills is an issue, for this reason the researcher is going to apply the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop writing skills.

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education acknowledges the following three key issues:

- The importance of the English language as a tool which equips individuals to understand people and cultures beyond linguistic and geographic boundaries;

- The need to align the English curriculum to standards like the Common European Framework of Re-ference: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)—which is internationally recognized and provides a Common basis for the elaboration of language curriculum guidelines and syllabi; and

- That the Communicative Approach is currently the most recognized, accepted norm in the field of language teaching and learning worldwide because it comprises a theoretically well-informed set of principles about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching.

Furthermore, and in agreement with Richards and Rodgers (2001), the MinEduc recognizes that the main objective of the present English curriculum

design is to help students develop their communicative language skills through the consideration of the following principles:

- Language is a system for the expression and conveyance of meaning.

- The primary function of language is interaction and communication.

- The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

The Ministry of Education in our country had the responsibility to improve English as a second language had implemented the Common European Framework in order to become has a high level with other countries.

The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern language arising from the different educational system in Europe.

The CEFR describes language ability on a scale of levels from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing (learners, teachers, teacher trainers, etc.) to see the level of different qualifications.

The eight.-grade students' level according to National Curriculum guidelines should reach the level A1. 1 The learners should be able to understand and use common expressions and basic phrase aimed at satisfying immediate needs ,where learners are able to introduce themselves, and ask and give personal information

and also the learners can to participate in a conversation if people talk very slowly and clear and is prepared to help.

Descriptors of A1.1 level for writing skills (MinEduc)

- Spell personal and educational details.

- Take down in writing a dictated or recorded message within the limits of their repertoire for the level.

- Write insolate phrase and sentence for simple informational texts such as labels, messages, forms, cards, etc. by using basic appropriate marks.

- Conduct a correspondence with a partner, giving and eliciting personal and educational information.

The Common European Framework works with the Communicative Language Teaching in order to improve English as a model that helps to improve their level in writing skills.

Writing is the one of the essential abilities of the English language. It is generally considered one of the most troublesome that other skills for foreign language students. Indeed local speakers feel trouble in showing a good command of writing. (Johnstone, Ashbaugh, & Warfield, 2002). The ESL educators incorporate composition abilities in the syllabus on the grounds that this is a vital component for understudies' scholarly achievement. (Kellogg, 2008)Since composing serves to

- reinforce the grammatical structure,

- enhance the students' vocabulary,

- Assist other language skills such as reading, listening and speaking. Writing success is used multifarious purposes at school level. Helping the understudies' students inside and outside the classroom, awarding a grade, selection of students. For appropriate courses, evaluations of programs are considered important aspects of assessment in writing skill.

The procedure of appraisal of composed proficiency ought to be decently sorted out and decently figured out how to make it straightforward and important.

Ramelan, (1992) said that writing is critical as a piece of man`s culture because it can be utilized to preserve thought, ideas and also speech sound. In addition, Hyland, (2004) states that writing is a way of getting things done.

Micro skills and macro skills of writing

In writing, some aspects have to be considered Brown (2004). Has summarizing all those aspects into two main skills; they are the micro skills and macro-skills of writing. Those skills are described as follows:

Micro Skills:

Here are some of the micro-skills involved in writing .The writer needs to:

- Use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions.
- Use the correct forms of words .This may mean using forms express the right tense, or case or gender.
- Put words together in correct word order.

- Use vocabulary correctly.

- Use the style appropriate to the genre and audience.

- Make the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader.

- Make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas.

- Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what it is assumed they don`t know.

- Produce graphemes and orthographic patter in English.

- Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.

- Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.

- Use acceptable grammatical systems, patterns, and rules.

- Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

- Use cohesive devices in written discourses.

Macro-skills:

- Use the rethorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

- Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose Brown (2004).

- Conveys links and connections between events, and communicative such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification.

- Distinguish between literal and implied meanings of writing.

- Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text Brown (2004).

- Develop and use a battery of writing strategies such as accurately assessing audiences'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.

Conventions of written

Purpose is the reason for which something exists or is done

Organization refers to the act of putting things into a logical order or the act of taking an efficient and orderly approach to tasks, or a group of people who have formally come together.

Vocabulary is the set of words within a language that are familiar to that person.

Tense: An inflectional form of verbs; it express the time at which the action described by the verb takes places. The major tenses are past, present and future.

Word order, typology is the study of the order of the syntactic constituents of a language, and how different languages can employ different orders.

Punctuation is the set of marks used to regulate texts and clarify their meanings, principally by separating or linking words, phrases, and clauses. (Donald Hirsch, F.Kett, & S.Trefil, 2002)

The stage of the learning process of EFL writing

Akhand (2010) offers the following eight interrelated stage for implementing a process approach to writing based on Arndt, 1991 model.

- The first stage is idea generation, which can take place through brainstorming, discussion, and so on.

- Following this stage, students then begin to plan and structure their ideas in an organized form and to assess their potential usefulness.

- The third stage of the process approach posited by Hasan and Akhand is mind –mapping in which learner use various forms of conceptual techniques, such as spider grams and others kinds of mind maps, to form hierarchical relationship between ideas. The bridging of ideas in this stage assists learners with forming the initial structure of the written text.

- The fourth stage of the model of the process involves students in writing their first drafts followed by exchanging drafts in order to receive and offer peer feedback.

- This stage, the authors contend, helps increase awareness of reader expectations and text purpose and also moves beyond and exclusive focus on the teacher as audience.

- The sixth stage of this model involves learners editing their drafts based on peer feedback, before a final draft is produced in stage seven.

- The final stage involves teachers evaluating their learner`s writing and providing feedback on it for further revision. (White & Arndt, 1991)

They are a lot of strategies to develop writing skills. The present research has taken into account Magic book strategy as the main one.

The Magic Book as a current cooperative learning strategy

Magic Book is a strategy that consists in helping students connect to the vocabulary words through a focus on their background knowledge and prior experiences. In addition, this strategy provides learners with a study tool that list the words on one side and their definitions on the other. This study tool can be used with core instruction and as part of tiered learning. For intensive instruction, the strategy can be tailored for individuals students' needs by giving each student a chance to interact with the words at his or her academic and linguistic level. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Magic Book is a strategy that can be especially meaningful for students at the early literacy level who are working to understand sound −symbol associations. Young students may need help with creating the magic books; however, once they have been put together, students can also take them home to work with their parents on literacy skills.

The Magic Book serves as an excellent tool for activities such as shared reading and shared writing. Some early childhood teachers have shared with us the following techniques for developing the magic book strategy:

Ideas that support the magic book

*Show and tell.*Place students in pairs and give each pair a magic book. Student A from the pair writes a letter or a word on one side of the magic book. Student B

then shares /draws a picture that represents that letter or word on the other side of the magic book .Students A and B together read the letter of the word and think of two or three things that begin with the same letter and write the words on the side flap in their native language or draw pictures that represents the words/letters. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Spell it.This activity helps students focus on each word as a whole and provides an opportunity for assessing how well students understand the letters within a word. Choose five or six words and give each student a magic book. Instead of saying each word, and have students write the letters on one side of the magic book. After students have written the letters, have them talk to a partner about what word the letters might represent .After this discussion have students share their thoughts with the whole group. This allows you to make sure that everyone has associated the correct word with the letter. After the word has been identified, have students spell it out loud. Continue this process with all the words, next, have students draw a picture representing the word on the other side of the Magic Book. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Instruction: Creating your Magic Book

Materials: A single magic book will require two piece of construction paper in different colors and a pair of scissors.

Step 1: take a piece of construction paper, make sure it is landscape orientation, and fold it in half from left to right, making a sharp crease.

Step 2: Once again, fold it in half from left to right, making another sharp crease.

Step 3: Fold the paper in half again, but this time fold from the bottom of the paper up. Make another sharp increase. Repeat this step a second time .

When the paper is unfolded you should have 16 squares.

Step 4: then take a pair of scissors and on the fold side cut along the three folds, making sure you cut only to the middle fold of the paper. When your open the paper, you should have three horizontal slits in the middle of your paper.

Step 5: Using the second piece of construction paper repeat step 1 and 2 .then open the paper and cut along the folds lines. You will end up with four strips of paper, but each student will need only two the strips.

Step 6: take one of the strips of paper and weave it under the bottom slit in the first piece of construction paper, up through middle slit, and then back under the top slit.

Step 7: take the another strip of paper and weave it up through the bottom slit in the first piece of construction paper, under the middle slit , and up through the top slit.

Step 8: fold each outside flap toward the middle.

Step 9: to crack open your Magic Book, fold it loosely and place each thumb into the center fold.

Voila! You have cracked open your Magic Book and created endless possibilities for student's information learning and retention! To return to the starting point, simply pull on the outside flaps that are now tucked under the checkered part. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011)

Step 10: The magical thing is that you can turn your Magic Book over and then repeat step 8 and 9 to crack it open on this side as well! (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011)

Here are some techniques that can help you apply the Magic Book strategy in order to be more successful in the learning process:

• Two truths and a lie: in which a student starts by telling the group two truths and a lie about himself in any order. He /She must try to mix them up and use a "poker face" so that all three try to guess could be believable "truths". The rest of the students try to guess which was the lie. This is probably easiest done by a show of hands. In this game all student should participate.

• Broken telephone: in which students will chose a leader. The leader first must think of a sentence or phrase and whisper it to the person beside his/her that person will then whisper what she heard to the next person. Each person can only say, "Can you please repeat that?" one time. When the message reaches the end of the chain that person must write on the board. Oftentimes the message will be completely different when it reaches the end. Try to find out where the chain broke! In a big group you can send the message two ways and find out which team comes closest to the real message.

• Called time to speak: in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a word. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the word. Then that student will throw the ball to another. This process will have to repeat with some students. This will take 3 or 4 minutes.

• Tingo-Tango-Tingo: T sits with students in a circle after teaching any topic. Give a bean bag to one student in the circle to start passing around when another student (sitting in the middle) begins to chant "tingo, tingo, tingo, tango". When s/he says "tango" the student who ends up with the bean bag must either answer a question or ask one about the topic learned.

• Time to speak in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a word. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the word. Then that student will throw the ball to another. This process will have to repeat with some students. This will take 3 or 4 minutes.

The Magic Book strategy is a cooperative –based learning that shows some principles such as:

Social skills refer to the skills such as giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, communication accurately and unambiguously and involving every member in the learning process. The teacher is not a person who measures the capacities of the students in terms of the final product, but somebody who acts as a friend, coordinator, director, guide, counselor, and facilitator (Cowie, 1994).

Positive interdependence through it students perceived that they need each other in order to complete the group's task (Benner, 2009).

Individual accountability. Each members of the group is accountable to help in the work, not only one student.There are a lot of advantages of working cooperatively according to Wendy Jolliffe, (2007)

Face to face interactions ensure that students interact to help each other accomplish the task and promote each other's success. Students are expected to solve problems, encourage and support each other's efforts to learn as a whole (Ri chards, Rodgers, 2001).

Group processing is an important aspect because it requires group members to assess their functions and contribution to the success of all tasks. It focuses on positive behaviors and actions rather than on negative ones and involves students thinking about how they learn. The teacher can then monitor the different groups during the learning activities and provide feedback on what has been observed (Johnson & Johnson, 2008)

Cooperative learning marks the beginning of a major paradigm shifts within language teaching in the twentieth century, one whose ramifications continue to be felt today. The general principles of Communicative Language Teaching are today widely accepted around the world.

Using cooperative learning, students are continuously discussing, debating and clarifying their understanding of the concepts and materials being considered during the class. They are constructing their own knowledge base. The emphasis is on understanding the material as evidenced by the student's ability to explain ideas to their peers. This leads to a sense of content mastery versus a passive acceptance of information from an outside expert. This further promotes a sense of helplessness and reliance upon others to attain concepts.

Researchers found that learners involved in cooperative learning activities developed skills for interpersonal communications more readily than learners who

were in other classroom settings did. They were more considerate of others feelings, worked in cross-cultural situations more easily, liked their classmates and liked their teachers more than other learners. Researchers found that they developed friends from other cultures and kept these friends outside of class. They had positive expectations toward future interactions. They had more accurate understanding of others' perspectives(Slavin,1990).The magic book as a cooperative learning is very important in the student´s learning and also in the teacher´s life, because it serves as an excellent tool for activities such as shared reading and shared writing and also , this strategy help to improve writing skills and also help to students work in a cooperative learning in this way the students can share some information with the class and also the students can to learn easier this language, because through the creativity they can to develop writing skills.

e. MATERIALSAND METHODS

Materials

This research work was accomplished with the help of three main resources. The human resources that participated during the different stages were: The target population, students of eight year of Basic Education at 27 de Febrero; Another human resource was the English teacher who facilitated general information about target students. The thesis advisor who tutored along the stages of the study and the researcher that worked motivated and eager to learn from relevant moments which were active subjects in the development of this work. Technical resources like the personal computer, internet, removable memory stick, and multimedia. And office supplies like handouts, flashcards, folders and paper clips.

Research Design

Action research in education involves finding out immediate solutions in the teaching-learning environments. According to Burns (2010), the main aim of action research is to identify a problematic situation or issue that the participants – who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators and even parents- consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically. Additionally, AR can be undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students, assisted or guided by professional researchers with the aim of improving their strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within which they practice.

The benefits of action research to teachers show that teachers can become more reflective, critical, and analytical about their work in the classroom and also has been found to help pre-service teachers gain awareness of the needs and

perspectives of their students within the classroom, and also teacher to find a practical solution to a specific issue. The benefits of action research help to students understand very well, they develop their critical thinking.

The individual teacher action research approach was implemented for studying and addressing a practical problem or issue within a single classroom, to improve the educational setting (8th grade) and also the University encouraged the teacher candidate to get involved in real-life teaching practices.

The steps of this action research process involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change acting and observing the processes , that is why action research was applied to this study it has assisted the practitioner researcher of this thesis development. This process facilitated her reflection upon her teacher and importance her students' situation.

Population

The High school´s name is 27 de Febrero, which is a public institution, it is located at John F Kennedy and Jose J. Palacios Street in Loja. It was selected through an observation and also because some people in previous years, they did their project in this institution and told me that the students had problems on writing skills and it would be very useful to work with them. She got a legal permission to the Principal, through the Universidad Nacional de Loja.

The research participants are the 8th –grade students. They were selected and assigned after of an observation. The English level of proficiency according to the CEFR, they are in the level A. 1.1.They usually use for their daily English class English book that is granted by the government in this way they are helping to

learn this language that is very important nowadays. And also other materials that her parents give them in order to help understand in a good way this subject.

Methods

The scientific method facilitated the study of Magic book applied to improve writing skills learning of 8th year. It helped in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one also assisted during the prediction of the possible solution; it assisted with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

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

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

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

Techniques and instruments

Data Collection

Since this work is an action research ,elements of both quantitative and qualitative research will be selected for data collection .Quantitative research considered variables and statistics whereas qualitative research consider understanding of word or action Both qualitative and quantitative instrument self-developed by the researcher ting into account the principle of question

construction. Being this case, paper and pencil method (test) was used to develop quantitative data collection instrument, and observation and interview (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative one.

Tests

Test allowed participants to perform cognitive task in relation to the writing skills additionally, test yielded a numerical score by which the researcher calculated the mean to compare the pre-and posttest results.

Pretest –Posttest

A research-made pretest was provide a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School) received a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or intervention plan, posttests measured again the performarse of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaire

A research –made questionnaire was administered to the participants to answer questions related to their attitudes and feelings toward the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the test, a pre and posttest questionnaire was administered in order to make a comparison between results. Furthermore, the data collected by the questionnaires will supported the test results.

Observation

The emphasis during observation was on understanding the natural environment as lived by the –grade eighth students at 27 de Febrero High school during their English classes. There were two types of observation as detailed below.

Nonparticipant observation

In nonparticipant observation, the researcher was not involved in the situation being observed. She observed and recorded behaviors but did not interact or participant observation is to identify the issue for this action research project which was supported through the participant observation (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012).

Participant observation

In participant observation, the researcher was become a part and a participant in the situation being observed. The researcher participated deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst the eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High School during 2014-2015 school year.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and nonparticipant observation, the researcher needed an observation sheet to record the participants `behaviors shown on both variables: performarse of the writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the magic book as a cooperative –based strategy. This observation sheet was a self-developed instrument that described accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it contained the descriptors of the variables of the action research; the issue under treatment (writing skills), and the treatment itself (magic book as a cooperative learning strategy).

f. RESULTS

This section displays the results obtained from the following data collection sources: pretest and posttest to measure the cognitive dimension about the performance of writing skills consisting of the following subskills purpose /task, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order, punctuation.Pre and post questionnaire to measure the students´ behaviors, attitudes toward the cooperative learning strategies such as the Magic Book. The data was supported by results obtained throughout the statistical method which includes the mean and percentage calculation of the total means. Finally, the data was analyzed in accordance with 3 of the 5 research objectives of the investigation because they supported and reflected emphatically the investigation.

Objective 1.To research the methodological and theoretical references about the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on the writing skills.

The implementation of the most suitable techniques of the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy in the classroom reduced the student´s limitation in the writing skills. Students participated in aneffective way in the activities. The students always work in pairs or groups in order to share opinions or ideas with the class.

Objective 3.To design an intervention plan based on the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth- grade students at 27 de Febrero High School 2014-2015 Academic Period.

This objective helped the researcher to elaborate an intervention plan, which was divided into 8 macro plans with 24 lesson plans based on the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to solve the limitations in this skills. Each lesson plan has different activities of work based on Magic Book. As a displayed in the following pages (from 97 to 108)

Other objectives correspond to the figure and tables that are presented below

Objective 2.To diagnose the issues that limits the development of writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School 2014-2015 academic period.

Table 1
    a. Pretest Results on the Performance of Eighth –Grade Students´ Writing Skills

Students´ Code	P 2/2	O 2/2	V 2/2	T 1/1	WO 2/2	PM 1/1	Total /10
27F8E01	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	**4,00**
27F8E02	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	**4,25**
27F8E03	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,50	**4,50**
27F8E04	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0.50	**4,00**
27F8E05	1,00	1,00	0,50	1,00	1,00	0,25	**4,75**
27F8E06	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	**4,25**
27F8E07	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,50	**4,50**
27F8E08	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	**4,25**
27F8E09	0,50	1,00	1,00	0,25	1,00	0,25	**4,00**
27F8E010	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,25	1,00	0,25	**4,00**
27F8E011	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,25	0,50	0,25	**2,50**
27F8E012	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	**4,25**
27F8E013	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,25	1,00	0,25	**4,00**
27F8E014	1,00	1,00	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,50	**4,50**
Mean	**0,88**	**0,96**	**0,54**	**0,46**	**0,96**	**0,31**	**4,13**

Note: These are the parameters evaluated through the writing skills: P= Purpose, O= Organization, V= Vocabulary, T= Tense, WO= Word order, PM= Punctuation, 27F8E01= 27 de Febrero eighth grade parallel "e" first student

b. Interpretation and Analysis

A pretest was administered to measure a starting point or the amount of pre-existing knowledge about the writing skills. As It is seen in Table 1, the organization and word order got the highest score mean (0.96/2); and the lowest score means were 0.54/2 and 0.31/1 for vocabulary and punctuation respectively. Finally, the total score mean was 4.13 out of 10 which was below the expected level. Therefore, it was reflected that there was an obvious limitation for eighth-grade students to produce or create a brief and simple paragraph consisting of a sequence of simple sentences with verb agreement and punctuation marks. In addition, they did not show a variety in lexical range Consequently, this serious issue concerned the researcher to conduct this research in the single classroom.

Being this the situation, the total mean represented an issue that concerned the researcher to carry out this action research in this classroom.

Objective 4. To apply the most suitable techniques of the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015.

Pre & Post Questionnaire results. The questions were directly addressed to the principles of the cooperative learning.
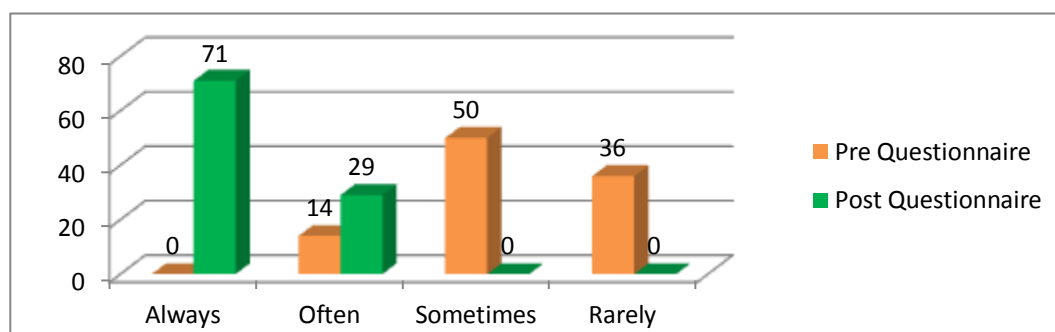
Table 2

Question 1. How often are English classes developed in groups or pairs?

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

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	10	71
Often	2	14	4	29
Sometimes	7	50	0	0
Rarely	5	36	0	0

b.Figure

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is observed in table 2, it reflected on the environment in which cooperative learning strategies were put into practices. During the pre-intervention plan phasethe researcher found out that none of students responded that they tend to work in groups or pairs almost never. Consequently, the researcher started to look for a cooperative-based strategy such as the Magic Book in order to improve this issue since this percentage was below the expected level.

The researcher elaborated an eight-week intervention plan through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students participated and were able to work in teams of two or more students. Moreover, after have finished the intervention plan period the researcher administered a post questionnaire and the same indicator (always) of the pre questionnaire significantly increased from 0% to 71% of students, which was above the expected level. As a consequence, theapplied

techniques toward cooperative learning produced that students worked together in order to achieve a common goal.

Social skills refers to the skills such as giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, communication accurately and unambiguously and involving every member in the learning process. The teacher is not a person who measures the capacities of the students in terms of the final product, but somebody who acts as a friend, coordinator, director, guide, counselor, and facilitator (Cowie, 1994).
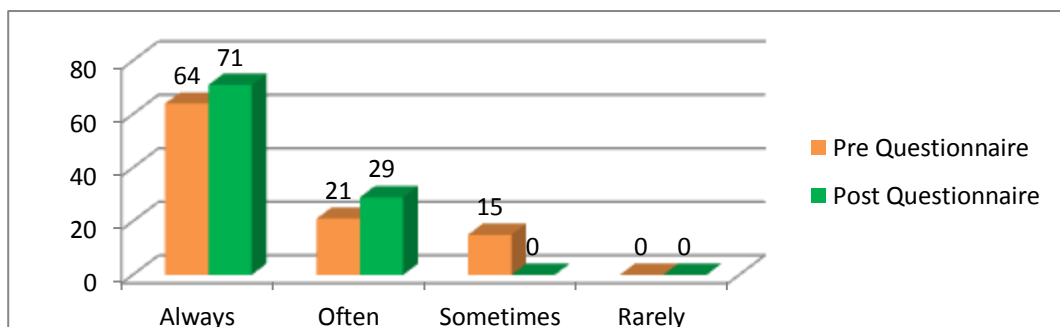
Table 3
Question 2. How often is the group or pair wok conducted in a positive and respectful environment?

a. **Frequency of Positive Interdependence as a Cooperative Learning Principle**

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	9	64	10	71
Often	3	21	4	29
Sometimes	2	15	0	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0

b. **Figure**

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is detectedin table 3, eight-grade students developed pre and a post questionnaire. During the pre-intervention plan phase, 64% of students perceived that pair and group activities were developed in a positive and respectful environment. This percentage was close to the above expected level. On the other hand, after the intervention plan, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and the same indicator of the pre questionnaire increased from 64% to 71% of students, which was above the expected level. In consequence, the Magic Bookstrategy helped significantly to students improve their performance on writing skills as well.

Positive independence refers to the interaction of students in order to help each other accomplish the task and the group's shared goals. Students are required to interact verbally with one another on learning tasks (Johnson & Johnson, 2008).
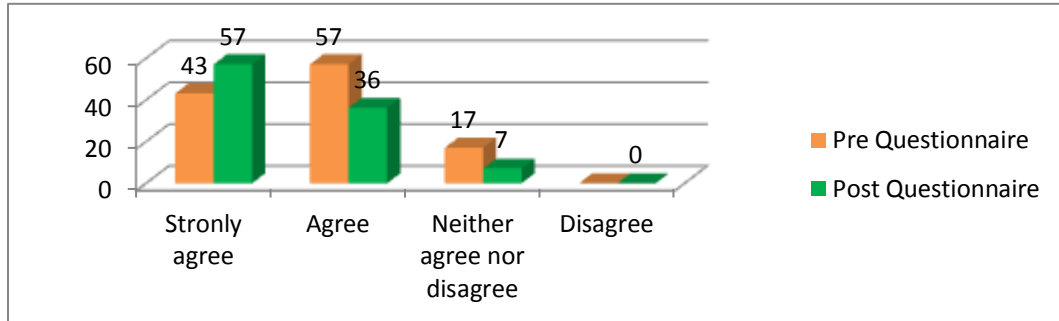
Table 4

Question 3. Do you agree with the statement: Having good relationships and positive interactions are essential for group work activities?

a. **Agreement on Face to Face Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle.**

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	6	43	8	57
Agree	8	57	5	36
Neither agree nor disagree	1	17	1	7
Disagree	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is viewed in table 4, eighth-grade students developed pre and a post questionnaire. During the pre-intervention plan phase, 43% of students perceived that having good relationships and positive interactions are essential for group work. This percentage was below the expected level. On the other hand, after the intervention plan, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and the same indicator of the pre questionnaire increased from 43% to 57% of students, which was below the expected level. The results might not above the expected level, but the students were aware of the importance that had good relationship and positive interaction among them.

Face to face interactions ensure that students interact to help each other accomplish the task and promote each other's success. Students are expected to solve problems, encourage and support each other's efforts to learn as a whole (Richards, Rodgers, 2001).
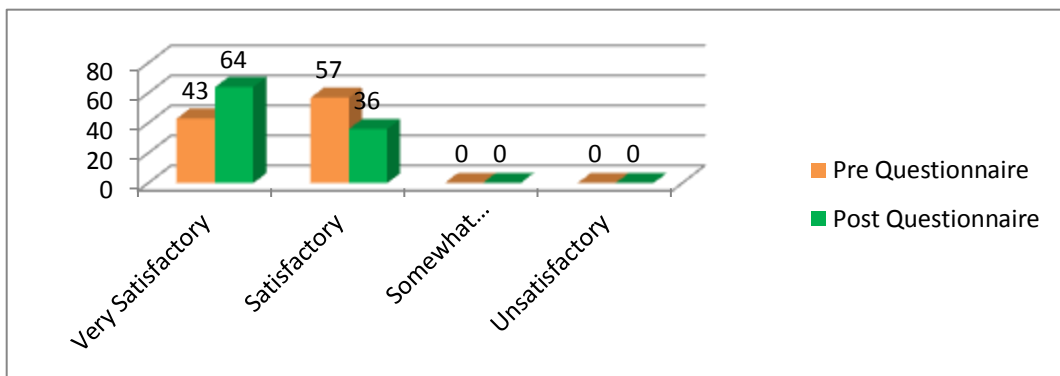
Table 5

Question 4. How satisfying is it for you to work in groups?

a. Comfort of Group Processing as a Cooperative Learning Principle

32

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Very Satisfactory	6	43	9	64
Satisfactory	8	57	5	36
Somewhat Satisfactory	0	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0

b. **Figure**

c. **Interpretation and Analysis**

As it is noticed in table 5, eighth -grade students developed pre and a post questionnaire. During the pre-intervention plan phase, 43% of students perceived that working in groups was not very satisfactory. This percentage was below the expected level. On the other hand, after the intervention plan, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and the same indicator of the pre questionnaire increased from 43% to 64% of students, which was at the expected level.

Group processing is an important aspect because it requires group members to assess their functions and contribution to the success of all tasks. It focuses on positive behaviors and actions rather than on negative ones and involves students thinking about how they learn. The teacher can then monitor the different groups during the learning activities and provide feedback on what has been observed (Johnson & Johnson, 2008)
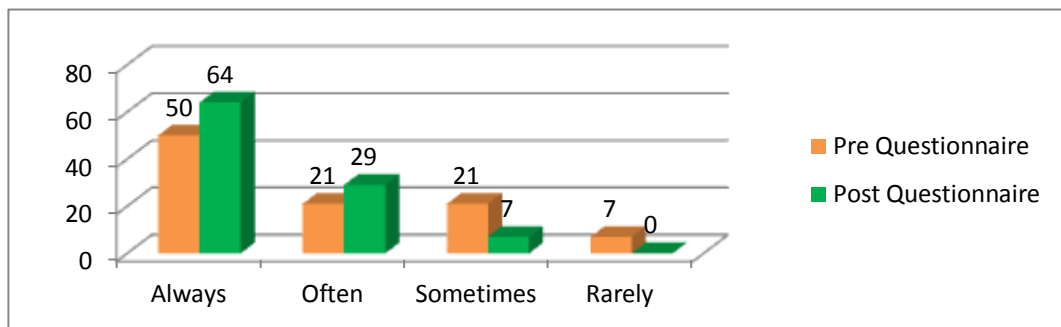
Table 6

Question 5. How often do all members in a group contributed to work cooperatively?

a. Frequency of Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	7	50	9	64
Often	3	21	4	29
Sometimes	3	21	1	7
Rarely	1	7	0	0

b. Figure

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it is noticed in table 6, eighth -grade students developed the pre and post questionnaire. During the pre-intervention plan phase, 50% of students considered that not always the members of the group contributed to the developed of a collective work. This percentage was below the expected level. On the other hand, after the intervention plan, the researcher administered a post questionnaire and the same indicator of the pre questionnaire increased from 50% to 64% of students, which was approximated to the above expected level. In consequence, the technique for applying the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy produced an important factor that helped students to contribute to work cooperatively.

Individual accountability implies that each team member is responsible for his/her fair share to the group's success. It is important that the group knows who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the task. (Jolliffe, 2007).

Objective 5. To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015.

Table 6

a. Posttest Results. Performance of Eighth –Grade Students´ Writing Skills

Students´ Code	P 2/2	O 2/2	V 2/2	T 1/1	WO 2/2	P 1/1	Total /10
27F8E01	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	0,75	0,75	7,25
27F8E02	2,00	1,50	2,00	0,75	1,00	0,75	8,00
27F8E03	2,00	1,50	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,50
27F8E04	2,00	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0.75	7,25
27F8E05	2,00	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	1,00	8,25
27F8E06	1,50	1,50	1,50	0,75	0,75	0,75	6,75
27F8E07	1,50	1,50	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,00
27F8E08	2,00	2,00	1,50	1,00	1,00	0,75	8,25
27F8E09	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,50
27F8E010	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,50
27F8E011	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,50
27F8E012	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	0,75	0,75	7,25
27F8E013	1,50	2,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	7,50
27F8E014	1,50	2,00	1,50	1,00	1,00	0,75	7,75
Mean	**1,56**	**1,86**	**1,54**	**0,79**	**0,95**	**0,77**	**7,52**

Note: Writing skills: P= Purpose, O= Organization, V= Vocabulary, T= Tense, WO= Word order, PM= Punctuation, 27F8E01= 27 de Febrero eighth grade parallel "E" first student.

a. Data Analysis

According to the results displayed in Table 6, the mean for the writing skill Organization got the highest score(1.86/2), and the writing skill Word order got the lowest mean (0,95/2). Additionally the total score mean was 7,52 out of 10 , which is an average score and displays an important progress. Therefore, the posttest means presented a strong indication that eighth –grade students could be able to include more details and also was generally connected with the topic(Purpose).

The total score mean favored the investigator after have conducted action research in this classroom. It was reflected that the majority of eighth-grade students could accomplish the given task appropriately.

Therefore, and more so the eighth-grade students improved their performance in writing skills. According to the rubric the performance of eighth -grade students showed that the majority of them accomplished the task including some details that were organized and connected to each other. Also, students introduced the topic in nearly a clear way using new vocabulary related to the topic. The tense of the verbs was an essential factor and all of them performed well at this section. Finally, all sentences followed a logical word order showing good sequence and appropriate punctuation.

Writing is a form of communication that allows students to put their feelings and ideas on paper, to organize their knowledge and beliefs into convincing arguments, and to convey meaning through well-constructed text. In its most advanced form, written expression can be as vivid as a work of art. As children

learn the steps of writing, and as they build new skills upon old, writing evolves from the first simple sentences to elaborate stories and essays. Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, and organization come together and grow together to help the student demonstrate more advanced writing skills each year (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams, 2011).

Table 8

a. **Pretest and posttest means summary. Performance of eighth –grade student´s writing skills.**

	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/task(2/2)	0.88	1.56
Organization(2/2)	0.46	1.86
Vocabulary(2/2)	0.54	1.54
Tense (1/1)	0.96	0.79
Word Order(2/2)	0.96	0.95
Punctuation (1/1)	0.31	0.77
Means	**4.13**	**7.52**

b. **Figure**
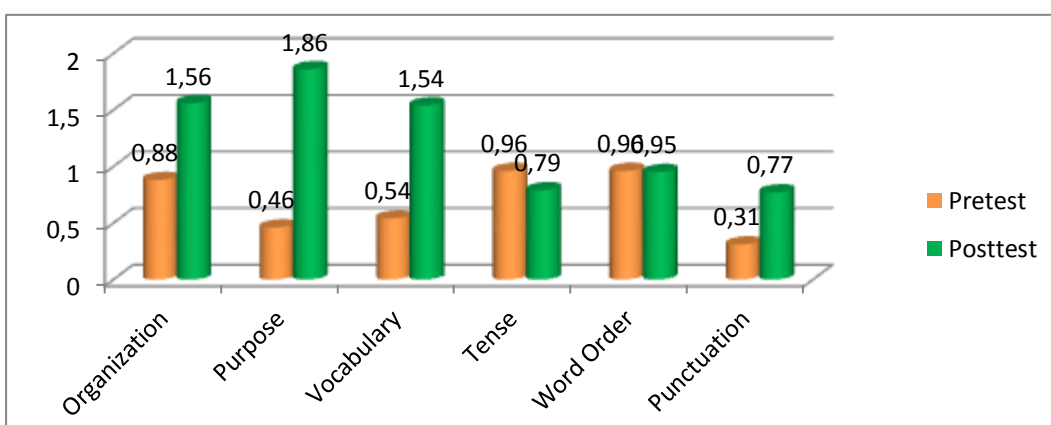
c. **Data Analysis**

As we can see in table 8, the Organization writing skills showed the highest score mean (1.86/1). Whereas, Purpose, Vocabulary, Tense and Word Order displayed the lowest score. The mean result increased from 4.13 to 7.52 which show some

reasonable improvement in the students' achievement attributed to the intervention plan according to the implementation of cooperative-based learning activities. Nevertheless, it is obviously to realize that the posttest mean is not high enough and below the expected average (see grading scale p. 115). Some limitations during the intervention did not permit the eighth -grade students to achieve a higher score. Certain limitations founded in this study were that the teacher candidate was not an expert yet in classroom management. Additionally, eighth -grade students did not have good study behaviors and the time needed for the intervention plan was not enough to make students get higher scores.

In cooperative learning each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating atmosphere of achievement. According to Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) state that in cooperative learning students can maximize their own and each other's learning when they work together.

Cooperative learning strategies could be used during the process of writing that is planning, translating and reviewing, so that the product produced by the group is good. During the process of drafting a composition lot of discussions takes place. It encourages the students to think in the language. But the teachers should motivate the students to participate in good discussions. Hence teachers adopt and adapt various methods in the writing classrooms to ensure that the students excel in writing. One of the methods recommended in teaching writing is the incorporation of cooperative learning (Kagan 2002). Briefly, cooperative learning strategies had positive effects on the students' writing performance during the

intervention plan phase. Therefore, teachers should consider this learning approach as a practical alternative for them in teaching writing.

g. DISCUSSION

To develop writing skills was necessary to use the Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy; this strategy was a guide to carry out the teaching learning process during the intervention plan. The research was carried out with eighth – grade students at 27 de Febrero high school. The researcher through two variables as a writing skills and cooperative learning students developed writing skills. At the end of this research, the level acquired by each one of the students was notorious during the intervention plan. The finding in the pre and posttest and pre and post questionnaire showed the significant progress students got.

The first thing, the finding in the pre and posttest showed an important change in developing writing skills among eight-grade students. The pretest revealed that most of the students did not produce or create a brief and simple paragraph according to the parameters evaluated through the writing rubric. In the post test after the intervention plan, the results indicated that difficulties that the students had changed like it is explained in the means (4.13) from the pretest and the posttest (7.52).

The second thing, the researcher through the observation could notice that the majority of the students have issues in the writing skills as a cooperative learning strategy, an obvious limitation to this study was that the students did not participate cooperatively in order to develop writing skills, but through the intervention plan the students participated very well with their classmates sharing ideas and opinions. At the end of the intervention the researcher could notice that students were able to work in a cooperative learning in this way to get the goal.

Also, the limitations of the research did not allow the eighth –grade students to reach a higher score .Some limitations in this research were that the teacher candidate was not an expert yet in classroom management and the period of time to apply the intervention plan was too short to reach the results.

h. CONCLUSIONS

The difficulties that limit the development of writing skills amongst eight-grade students at 27 de Febrero high school were that they had problems in the following aspects related with the writing skills: In purpose/task they could not accomplished the task; includes few details, some of which may be only loosely connected to the task, they use many irrelevancies. In organization they could not introduce the topic in an expected way. Students showed limited vocabulary and most vocabulary was inaccurate or unrelated to the topic. In verb tense some verbs do not agree with one another and there is little to no fluidity within writing because of verb tense confusion. In word order sentences students didn´t make sense at all. Finally, in punctuation they could write a good paragraph, it was not clear, since it was very difficult to understand and punctuationwas not presented.

The implementation of the most suitable techniques of the magic book such as two truths and lie, broken telephone, called time to speak and tingo-tango as a cooperative learning strategy in the classroom reduced the students´ limitation in the writing skills .Students participated in an effective way in the activities. The students always work in pairs or groups in order to share opinions or ideas with the class.

The Magic Book as a cooperative learning strategy was effective to develop writing skills in the sub skills: Purpose/task, organization, vocabulary, verb tense, word order and punctuation. Students at the end of the intervention plan reached a high score. They felt more confident and comfortable working cooperatively.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers should diagnostic the knowledge of the students to the weaknesses that students have in the English language learning and specially in the writing skills, in order to plan activities based on students' needs and writing problems to overcome them objectively. In addition to that, teachers should monitor students´ work by using observation sheet and keeping a record of students' scores to determine if learners are improving in the writing aspects as it is expected.

Teachers should apply effective writing techniques such as two truths and lie, broken telephone, called time to speak and tingo-tango as a cooperative learning strategy, this is because; they catch students` attention and engage them to become an active learner in the teaching learning process, furthermore; these techniques help students to reduce their limitation in the moment that they are developing this important skill. Also there are other strategies which can be put into practice for example magic book, picture and words, and mind maps which increase students' learning, motivation to work cooperatively, and students` writing performance.

Teachers should validate the applied strategy, which can be done through a post test, questionnaire, and observation sheet; in order to know the results obtained during the intervention plan. These findings are used to make teaching decisions and analyze if the model has contributed to improve the levels of the students in the developed of the English language skills

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K. ANNEXES

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME:

THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

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

Author

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LOJA – ECUADOR

2015

a. THEME

THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH–GRADE STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

This research work was developed at 27 de Febrero High school, which was created in October 22^{th,} 1958. It is located In John F Kennedy and Jose J. Palacios Street in the city of Loja. Actually, the main authority of the institution is the Ec.Vicente Ruales.

The vespertine period that offers the 27 de Febrero high school is the one in which this research will be carried out which is comprised of two English Language Teacher. Moreover, the amounts of students which are educated in this educational facility are three hundred forty five in total.

In order to carry out this research work, the researcher has considered taking into account the eighth grade of Basic Education, which involves fourteen students who are between 13 and 15 years old.

Current situation of the research problem.

This action research project was developed with 8th "A" year students at 27 de Febrero Public High schools. The group observed is made up of 14 students, boys and girls who are between 13 and 15 years old; they have five English lessons per week, each lesson lasts 40 minutes. The young people are very motivated to use English in their communication.

Writing is the most difficult skill for language learners to acquire in academic contexts. Now as in the past, writing learning in English Language has been a challenge that the majority of learners should face in the learning process. It is the

current situation in our country; it is evident that this problem is related to a lack of application of effective strategies and techniques, which would help teachers to improve writing skills in students who want to have a good level.

Other reason related to the problem is that students have a little background of rules of grammar this part is the most important part taken into account now to write well.

The relevance of this research is focused on the magic book used to known the causes for the research problem are and help these students to improve writing skills in the English Language. Because their level of writing in English Language is very basic, that is why it is important to improve their writing so they can get a good level in their homework and other activities.

Improve their writing so they can get a basic communication in the English class with the teacher and students. Applying magic book activities is going to help them to improve writing skills.

Research problem.

HOW DOES THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMIC PERIOD 2014 – 2015?

Delimitation of the research

Timing

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

Location

This research work will be done at the 27 de Febrero High school, which is a public institution, located in the city of Loja.

Participants

The participants of this research work are the eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school, who are all about thirteen to fifteen years old; they are fourteen, seven girls and seven boys and the candidate teacher of this study who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Sub problems

- What theoretical and methodological references about the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?

- What are the issues that limit the development writing skills amongst eighth -grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?

- What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year?

- Which magic book techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year?

- How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year?

c. JUSTIFICATION

The present research will be carrying out in order to improve writing skills through magic book strategy with eighth year of basic education students at 27 de Febrero High school, the development of this research is a requirement for the researcher to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Specialization established in the regulations of the Área de la Educación el Arte y la Comunicación.

This work will assist the researcher to learn more about writing skills, it will allow the teacher to support students to improve their process based on writing skills and finally this strategy will help the researcher to gain practice and learn more from the experience. The strategy that the researcher is going to use is magic book. It also lets students activate background knowledge about writing they will need for new learning. Therefore, the strategy supports the researcher to practice their teaching in a modern and successful way.

The reason to improve writing skills becomes meaningful if it is complemented with magic book; because the students can feel excited and, after they participate with the rest of the class also they seem emotionally because want to fill all the pages of the magic book The magic book is an appropriate way to provide writing skills because this strategy can be employed practically in any lesson or topic and at every level of learning.

To sum up, it is justified enough because it is a previous requirement for an English Career undergraduate student, in order to get the Bachelor's in Arts

Degree in Sciences of the Education, English language specialization. The researcher has the skills to be part of it and she counts with enough resources to finish it successfully English career.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

To improve writing skills through the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school .Academic Period 2014-2015.

Specific:

- To research the theoretical and methodological references about the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on writing skills.

- To diagnose the issues that limits the development writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School 2014-2015 school year.

- To design an intervention plan based on the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school. Academic Period 2014-2015.

- To apply the most suitable techniques of the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015.

- To reflect upon the effectiveness that the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015.

English is very important in the overcoming of every person and it contains four basic language skills, listening, speaking, reading and writing, but in case I'll focus me more about writing skills, because this skill help me to develop my research project the same as explained below.

e. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

The researcher through an observation of the eight-grade students, she realized that the writing skills is an issue, for this reason the researcher is going to apply the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop writing skills.

Writing skills

The Ecuadorian Ministry of Education acknowledges the following three key issues:

• The importance of the English language as a tool which equips individuals to understand people and cultures beyond linguistic and geographic boundaries;

• The need to align the English curriculum to standards like the Common European Framework of Re-ference: Learning, teaching, assessment (CEFR)—which is internationally recognized and provides a Common basis for the elaboration of language curriculum guidelines and syllabi; and

• That the Communicative Approach is currently the most recognized, accepted norm in the field of language teaching and learning worldwide because it comprises a theoretically well-informed set of principles about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching.

Furthermore, and in agreement with Richards and Rodgers (2001), the MinEduc recognizes that the main objective of the present English curriculum design is to help students develop their communicative language skills through the consideration of the following principles:

• Language is a system for the expression and conveyance of meaning.

• The primary function of language is interaction and communication.

• The structure of language reflects its functional and communicative uses.

The Ministry of Education in our country had the responsibility to improve English as a second language had implemented the Common European Framework in order to become has a high level with other countries.

The Common European Framework is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern language arising from the different educational system in Europe.

The CEFR describes language ability on a scale of levels from A1 for beginners up to C2 for those who have mastered a language. This makes it easy for anyone involved in language teaching and testing (learners, teachers, teacher trainers, etc.) to see the level of different qualifications.

The eight.-grade students' level according to National Curriculum guidelines should reach the level A1. 1 The learners should be able to understand and use common expressions and basic phrase aimed at satisfying immediate needs ,where learners are able to introduce themselves, and ask and give personal information and also the learners can to participate in a conversation if people talk very slowly and clear and is prepared to help.

Descriptors of A1.1 level for writing skills (MinEduc)

• Spell personal and educational details.

• Take down in writing a dictated or recorded message within the limits of their repertoire for the level.

• Write insolate phrase and sentence for simple informational texts such as labels, messages, forms, cards, etc. by using basic appropriate marks.

• Conduct a correspondence with a partner, giving and eliciting personal and educational information.

The Common European Framework works with the Communicative Language Teaching in order to improve English as a model that helps to improve their level in writing skills.

Writing is the one of the essential abilities of the English language. It is generally considered one of the most troublesome that other skills for foreign language students. Indeed local speakers feel trouble in showing a good command of writing. (Johnstone, Ashbaugh, & Warfield, 2002). The ESL educators incorporate composition abilities in the syllabus on the grounds that this is a vital component for understudies' scholarly achievement. (Kellogg, 2008)Since composing serves to

i)   reinforce the grammatical structure,

ii)   enhance the students' vocabulary,

iii)   Assist other language skills such as reading, listening and speaking. Writing success is used multifarious purposes at school level. Helping the understudies' students inside and outside the classroom, awarding a grade, selection of students. For appropriate courses, evaluations of programs are considered important aspects of assessment in writing skill.

The procedure of appraisal of composed proficiency ought to be decently sorted out and decently figured out how to make it straightforward and important.

Ramelan, (1992) said that writing is critical as a piece of man`s culture because it can be utilized to preserve thought, ideas and also speech sound. In addition, Hyland, (2004) states that writing is a way of getting things done.

Micro skills and macro skills of writing

In writing, some aspects have to be considered. Brown (2004) has summarizing all those aspects into two main skills; they are the micro skills and macro-skills of writing. Those skills are described as follows:

Micro Skills:

Here are some of the micro-skills involved in writing .The writer needs to:

• Use the orthography correctly, including the script, and spelling and punctuation conventions.

• Use the correct forms of words .This may mean using forms express the right tense, or case or gender.

• Put words together in correct word order.

• Use vocabulary correctly.

• Use the style appropriate to the genre and audience.

• Make the main sentence constituents, such as subject, verb, and object, clear to the reader.

• Make the text coherent, so that other people can follow the development of the ideas.

• Judge how much background knowledge the audience has on the subject and make clear what it is assumed they don`t know.

Micro skills:

1. Produce graphemes and orthographic patter in English.

2. Produce writing at an efficient rate of speed to suit the purpose.

3. Produce an acceptable core of words and use appropriate word order patterns.

4. Use acceptable grammatical systems, patterns, and rules.

5. Express a particular meaning in different grammatical forms.

6. Use cohesive devices in written discourses.

   Macro-skills:

7. Use the rethorical forms and conventions of written discourse.

8. Appropriately accomplish the communicative functions of written texts according to form and purpose.

9. Conveys links and connections between events, and communicative such relations as main idea, supporting idea, new information, given information, generalization and exemplification.

10. Distinguish between literal and implied meanings of writing.

11. Correctly convey culturally specific references in the context of the written text.

12. Develop and use a battery of writing strategies such as accurately assessing audiences'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.

The stage of the learning process of EFL writing

   Akhand (2010) offers the following eight interrelated stage for implementing a process approach to writing based on Arndt, 1991 model.

• The first stage is idea generation, which can take place through brainstorming, discussion, and so on.

• Following this stage, students then begin to plan and structure their ideas in an organized form and to assess their potential usefulness.

• The third stage of the process approach posited by Hasan and Akhand is mind – mapping in which learner use various forms of conceptual techniques, such as spider grams and others kinds of mind maps, to form hierarchical relationship between ideas. The bridging of ideas in this stage assists learners with forming the initial structure of the written text.

• The fourth stage of the model of the process involves students in writing their first drafts followed by exchanging drafts in order to receive and offer peer feedback.

• This stage, the authors contend, helps increase awareness of reader expectations and text purpose and also moves beyond and exclusive focus on the teacher as audience.

• The sixth stage of this model involves learners editing their drafts based on peer feedback, before a final draft is produced in stage seven.

• The final stage involves teachers evaluating their learner`s writing and providing feedback on it for further revision. (White & Arndt, 1991)

The magic book as a current cooperative learning strategy.

   The researcher is going to work with the eight-grade students using the magic book as a current cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills which is going to help learners reach the level A 1.1. In this strategy, the magic book

serves as a common thread from the beginning of the lesson to the end of the lesson; the magic book helps to work efficiently in pairs or in groups.

Magic book is a strategy that can help students connect to the vocabulary words through a focus on their background knowledge and prior experiences. In addition this strategy provides learners with a study tool that list the words on one side and their definitions on the other. This study tools can be used with core instruction and as part of tiered learning. For intensive instruction, the strategy can be tailored for individuals students' needs by giving each student a chance to interact with the words at his or her academic and linguistic level. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Magic book is a strategy that can be especially meaningful for students at the early literacy level who are working to understand sound –symbol associations. Young students may need help with creating the magic books; however, once the have been put together, students can also take them home to work with their parents on literacy skills.

The magic book serves as an excellent tool for activities such as shared reading and shared writing. Some early childhood teachers have shared with us the following techniques for developing the magic book strategy:

Ideas that support the magic book

Show and tell. Place students in pairs and give each pair a magic book. Student A from the pair writes a letter or a word on one side of the magic book. Student B then shares /draws a picture that represents that letter or word on the other side of the magic book .Students A and B together read the letter of the word and think of

two or three things that begin with the same letter and write the words on the side flap in their native language or draw pictures that represents the words/letters. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Spell it. This activity helps students focus on each word as a whole and provides an opportunity for assessing how well students understand the letters within a word. Choose five or six words and give each student a magic book. Instead of saying each word, and have students write the letters on one side of the magic book. After students have written the letters, have them talk to a partner about what word the letters might represent .After this discussion have students share their thoughts with the whole group. This allows you to make sure that everyone has associated the correct word with the letter. After the word has been identified, have students spell it out loud. Continue this process with all the words, next, have students draw a picture representing the word on the other side of the Magic Book. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011).

Techniques that support the magic book.

• Two truths and a lie: in which a student starts by telling the group two truths and a lie about himself in any order. He /She must try to mix them up and use a "poker face" so that all three try to guess could be believable "truths". The rest of the students try to guess which was the lie. This is probably easiest done by a show of hands. In this game all student should participate.

• Broken telephone: in which students will chose a leader. The leader first must think of a sentence or phrase and whisper it to the person beside his/her that person will then whisper what she heard to the next person. Each person can only

say, "Can you please repeat that?" one time. When the message reaches the end of the chain that person must write on the board. Oftentimes the message will be completely different when it reaches the end. Try to find out where the chain broke! In a big group you can send the message two ways and find out which team comes closest to the real message.

• Called time to speak: in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a word. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the word. Then that student will throw the ball to another. This process will have to repeat with some students. This will take 3 or 4 minutes.

• Tingo-Tango-Tingo: T sits with students in a circle after teaching any topic. Give a bean bag to one student in the circle to start passing around when another student (sitting in the middle) begins to chant "tingo, tingo, tingo, tango". When s/he says "tango" the student who ends up with the bean bag must either answer a question or ask one about the topic learned.

• Time to speak in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a word. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the word. Then that student will throw the ball to another. This process will have to repeat with some students. This will take 3 or 4 minutes.

Instruction: Creating your magic book

Materials: A single magic book will require two piece of construction paper in different colors and a pair of scissors.

Step 1: take a piece of construction paper, make sure it is landscape orientation, and fold it in half from left to right, making a sharp crease.

Step 2: Once again, fold it in half from left to right, making another sharp crease.

Step 3: Fold the paper in half again, but this time fold from the bottom of the paper up. Make another sharp increase. Repeat this step a second time .

When the paper is unfolded you should have 16 squares.

Step 4: then take a pair of scissors and on the fold side cut along the three folds, making sure you cut only to the middle fold of the paper. When your open the paper, you should have three horizontal slits in the middle of your paper.

Step 5: Using the second piece of construction paper repeat step 1 and 2 .then open the paper and cut along the folds lines. You will end up with four strips of paper, but each student will need only two the strips.

Step 6: take one of the strips of paper and weave it under the bottom slit in the first piece of construction paper, up through middle slit, and then back under the top slit.

Step 7: take the another strip of paper and weave it up through the bottom slit in the first piece of construction paper, under the middle slit , and up through the top slit.

Step 8: fold each outside flap toward the middle.

Step 9: to crack open your Magic Book, fold it loosely and place each thumb into the center fold. Open the crease by pulling the woman sections apart.

Voila! You have cracked open your Magic Book and created endless possibilities for student's information learning and retention! To return to the starting point,

simply pull on the outside flaps that are now tucked under the checkered part. (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011)

Step 10: The magical thing is that you can turn your Magic Book over and then repeat step 8 and 9 to crack it open on this side as well! (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011)

Here are some techniques that can help you apply the Magic Book strategy in order to be more successful in the learning process:

Current strategies of cooperative learning

These strategies provide a context for modeling and deliberating issues and practices of student assessment and evaluation in cooperative group work. Dr. Spencer Kagan proposes the following strategies as the most feasible tools for students of English as a Foreign Language Learning:

Topic in pictures and words

It`s a strategy that teacher can scaffold student`s understanding of literature .As Marzano points out, students are better able to comprehend the content information that they hear and read during the lesson when they understand the essential vocabulary. However, just knowing the vocabulary does not ensure that students will comprehend the author`s message.

Tri-fold

It's strategy that help to students understand multiple text patterns, it is designed specifically to target temporal sequence and cause effect, also it helps students identify main ideas.

Jigsaw

It is a cooperative learning structure applicable to team assignments that call for expertise in several distinct areas. For example, in a laboratory exercise, areas of expertise might include experimental design, equipment calibration and operation, data analysis (including statistical error analysis), and interpretation of results in light of theory, and in a design project the areas might be conceptual design, process instrumentation and control, safety and environmental impact evaluation, and cost and profitability analysis.

Foldables

The foldables strategy allows teacher to provide students with structured opportunities for practicing language through listening, speaking, and writing. This strategy have access to partners and small groups so they can both listen to the structures being used by native English speakers.

Vocabulary Quilt

It`s a strategy where the students record thoughts and imagines that they immediately associate with the target words, a process that prompts them to draw from their background knowledge.

In order to develop my research project the researcher chose the magic book strategy to improve writing skills in eight-grade students.

The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy.

Cooperative learning requires that students to work together in order to learn in a good way and also help each other to get the goal. Wendy Jolliffe, (2007).

Most researchers agree that cooperative learning should have two important keys that are particularly vital:

1. Positive interdependence.

It is very important because each student have to contribute to the learning of the group in order to complete the task.

2. Individual accountability.

Each members of the group is accountable to help in the work, not only one student.

There are a lot of advantages of working cooperatively according to Wendy Jolliffe, (2007)

Improvements in learning have been shown through:

• Greater productivity

• Higher process gain.

• Greater transfer of learning from one situation to another

• More time on task

• Greater problem-solving

Improvements in interpersonal relationships have been shown through:

• Promoting the development of caring and committed relationships.

• Establishing and maintaining friendships between peers.

• A greater sense of belonging and mutual support.

• Improved morale.

Improvements in psychological health and social competence have included:

• Higher self-esteem

• Improved self –worth

• Increased self-confidence

• Greater independence

• Supporting sharing of problems

• Increased resilience and ability to cope with adversity and stress.

Cooperative learning marks the beginning of a major paradigm shifts within language teaching in the twentieth century, one whose ramifications continue to be felt today. The general principles of Communicative Language Teaching are today widely accepted around the world.

According to Hymes (1972).Communicative Language Teaching is considered an approach rather than a method .It refers to a diverse set of principles that reflect a communicative view of language and language learning and that can be used to support a wide variety of classroom procedures (Hymes, 1972).Learners in cooperative learning classrooms liked the subject areas more than other learners. They also had developed peer norms in favor of doing well academically.

Critical thinking is stimulated and students clarify ideas through discussion and debate. The level of discussion and debate within groups of three or more and between pairs is substantially greater than when an entire class participates in a teacher led discussion. Students receive immediate feedback or questions about their ideas and formulate responses without having to wait for long intervals to participate in the discussion.

Using cooperative learning, students are continuously discussing, debating and clarifying their understanding of the concepts and materials being considered

during the class. They are constructing their own knowledge base. The emphasis is on understanding the material as evidenced by the student's ability to explain ideas to their peers. This leads to a sense of content mastery versus a passive acceptance of information from an outside expert. This further promotes a sense of helplessness and reliance upon others to attain concepts.

• Skilled communication

Researchers found that learners involved in cooperative learning activities developed skills for interpersonal communications more readily than learners who were in other classroom settings did. They were more considerate of others feelings, worked in cross-cultural situations more easily, liked their classmates and liked their teachers more than other learners. Researchers found that they developed friends from other cultures and kept these friends outside of class. They had positive expectations toward future interactions. They had more accurate understanding of others' perspectives. In conflict s

Situations, they were more able to negotiate and solve conflicts in a win-win manner.

Reason for using cooperative learning.

Learners bring with them their own negative attitudes and prejudices.

Population diversity is becoming more the norm than the exception in many places. When there is a mix of learners in the same class there is the potential to diminish negative attitudes and to develop positive ones depending how interaction is structured. Cooperative learning structures can be used to develop constructive and supportive peer relationships.

Students nowadays should be all-rounded in order to increase their competitiveness. Cooperative learning offers a proven, practical means of creating exciting social and engaging classroom environment to help students to master traditional skills and knowledge as well as develop the creative and interactive skills needed in today's society and economy. (Dumont, Istance, & Benavides, 2010)

How to apply cooperative learning? What are the methods for applying it?

Various cooperative learning methods and models have been developed over the years by different scholars and put into actual practice in the classroom.

Cooperative learning methods fall into 2 main categories:

• Structured Team Learning

It involves rewards to teams based on the learning progress of their members, and they are also characterized by individual accountability, which means that team success depends on individual learning, not group products.

Basic Components of Cooperative Learning Language there are five key components which differentiate CL from simply putting students into groups to learn (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, Active learning: Cooperation in the college classroom., 2006).

The first one is positive interdependence. It refers to the idea that students are required to work together in order to achieve common learning objectives. In this case, students must believe that they are linked and that they either sink or swim in such a way that one cannot succeed if others do not succeed. Students need

each other for support, explanations, and guidance. Without the help of one member, the group will not able to achieve the desired objective.

The second one is individual accountability. It implies that each team member is responsible for his/her fair share to the group's success. It is important that the group knows who needs more assistance, support, and encouragement in completing the task. It is also vital that group members know they cannot "hitchhike" on the work of others (Jolliffe, 2007) it requires each student in the group to develop a sense of personal responsibility to learn and help the rest of the group to learn also.

The third component is promoted interaction. It refers to the interaction of students in order to help each other accomplish the task and the group's shared goals. Students are required to interact verbally with one another on learning tasks (Johnson & Johnson, Social interdependence theory and cooperative learning, 2008)They are also expected to explain things to each other, teach others, and provide each other with help, support, and encouragement.

The fourth component is interpersonal and social skills. It refers to the skills such as giving constructive feedback, reaching consensus, communication accurately and unambiguously and involving every member in the learning process. However, not all students know these skills. They must be taught and practiced such skills before the groups tackle a learning task. Therefore, teachers should carefully and explicitly teach their students the required skills. The teacher is not a person who measures the capacities of the students in terms of the final product,

but somebody who acts as a friend, coordinator, director, guide, counselor, and facilitator (Cowie, 1994).

 Finally, group processing is an important aspect of CL. It requires group members to assess their functions and contribution to the success of all tasks. It focuses on positive behaviors and actions rather than on negative ones and involves students thinking about how they learn. Additionally, the teacher may choose to spend time specifically focusing on improving a skill such as speaking.

The teacher´s role in cooperative learning in the classroom

The role of the teacher is very important in the success of the cooperative learning in the classroom, the teacher´s role is the key to success.

The following roles the basis of the teacher ´s repertoire in the cooperative learning activities:

1. Explicit instruction

In this part is very important the teacher ´s role because students doesn´t have the necessary experience to make the work in a effective way.

2. Modelling

In the modelling is very important to teach through the practice, because students learn more from what teacher do than what they say.

3. Feedback

Feedback is very good similarly as modelling because through of this help to keep students mindful of what is expected, promotes accountability, helps to develop skills and enable students to set individuals and group work.

4. Intervention

The teacher's role is to give a little of freedom to the students but they have to be monitoring to the class, because students can need that support them. (Murdoch & Jeni, 2014)

The researcher is aware that in a communicative class is necessary the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. But the researcher is focused on the writing skills which are an issued observed in the 8th –grades students who are the research participants. In addition the researcher works with the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy because it improves the level of the writing skills among 8th- grade learners which is the target group of this research.

f. METHODOLOGY

Design of the research

Action research in education involves finding out immediate solutions in the teaching-learning environments. According to Burns (2010), the main aim of action research is to identify a problematic situation or issue that the participants – who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators and even parents- consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically. Additionally, AR can be undertaken by undergraduate and postgraduate students, assisted or guided by professional researchers with the aim of improving their strategies, practices and knowledge of the surroundings within which they practice.

The choice for this action research design is to help to promote cooperative learning in English as a foreign language classes. Furthermore, AR will allow the candidate teacher become a participant in the research because he/sheis going to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation by means of the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve the writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero during 2014-2015 school year.

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

Methods, techniques and instruments

Methods

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

The scientific method will facilitate the study of magic book applied to improve writing skills learning of 8th year. It will help in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one will also assist during the prediction of the possible solution; it will assist with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

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

The analytic-syntheticmethod will be used to analyze the obtained results through the questioners, and checklists. It will be used also to make the interpretation of the data, the logical analysis and draw up the conclusions.

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

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

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

It involves a self-reflective cycle of identifying a situation or problem, planning a change, acting and observing the processes and consequences, and then re-planning, and so forth. It offers a valuable opportunity for teachers or practitioners to be involved in the research to collect first-hand information (McNiff, 1993; Atweb, Kemmis & Weeks, 1998).

Action research will be applied in this study because it will enable the practitioner or researcher of this project to follow the steps in the spiral that helped her reflect upon her teaching and improve his/her students' situation. The researcher intends to see if the plan would work well or if any necessary modification or amendment would be needed to improve her students' language learning.

Techniques and instruments

Data Collection

Since this work is an action research ,elements of both quantitative and qualitative research will be selected for data collection .Quantitative research considers variables and statistics whereas qualitative research consider n understanding of word or action .Both qualitative and quantitative instrument re

self-developed by the researcher ting into account the principle of question construction. Being this case, paper and pencil method (test) will be used to develop quantitative data collection instrument, and observation and interview (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative one.

Tests

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

Pretest –Postest

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

Questionnaire

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

Observation

The emphasis during observation will be on understanding the natural environment as lived by the –grade eighth students at 27 de Febrero High school

during their English classes. There will be two types of observation as detailed below.

Nonparticipant observation

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

Participant observation

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

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and nonparticipant observation, the researcher will need an observation sheet to record the participants `behaviors shown on both variables: performarse of the writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the magic book as a cooperative –based strategy. This observation sheet is a self-develop instrument that describes accurately and comprehensively all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it contains the descriptors of the variables of the action research; the issue under treatment (writing skills), and the treatment itself (magic book as a cooperative learning strategy).

Intervention and observation plan

WEEK ONE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Getting to know each other**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Student will be able to listen to their teacher while she is introducing herself. Student will be able to hear their classmate while he or she is introducing himself or herself. **Speaking** Student will be able to introduce themselves and the others effectively. **Writing** Students will be able to take notes about their classmates' presentation. Students will be able to create a short biography card choosing one classmate. **Key Vocabulary:** Hello, name, age, favorite artist, family, favorite sports, favorite food, birthday.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	Before the warm-up activity, teacher administers a pre-test in order to know the writing skill levels that the students and pre-questionnaire in order to know students' attitudes towards cooperative learning. **Activation** • Teacher builds a lesson based on a biography card. • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. • To get started, this is a two truths and a lie warm-up in which a student starts by telling the group two truths and a lie about herself in any order. He /She must try to mix them up and use a "poker face" so that all three try to guess could be believable "truths". The rest of the students try to guess which the lie was. This is probably easiest done by a show of hands. In this game all students should participate. For instance. I am a doctor. I live in Loja, My name is Leticia. • During this warm up stage, teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge, which allows the teacher

to know students' diverse linguistic background.

Connection

- To find a partner teacher applies the technique Simon says, to switch positions. Teacher will say Simon says: stand up; Simon says: stretch your arms and legs; Simon says, switch positions; Simon says, sit down; Simon says, work with your classmate who is closer to you.
- After the technique the students say to the pairs the most important things about himself /herself.
- While they are sharing, teacher monitors them to check if they are right or wrong. In the case they are right, I will affirm their discussion. If they are wrong, teacher helps them to get the correct information.
- Once that they share their information teacher asks them to create an individual biography card like this:

1. Introduce yourself	2. Write about where you live.
3. Write about your school.	4. Write about your favorite singer,

- While they are creating a biography card, teacher monitors them to check if they are right or wrong and give support needed.

Affirming

- Once the students have finished creating their own biography cards then they have to introduce themselves to the class using the biography card, the other students take notes about each presentation using their notebooks.
- As homework, students have to edit their own biography cards.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Biography cards
	Visual aids: biographical cards
	Student's notebook
	Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet.
	Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
	Date source 3: Pre-test
	Date source collection 4:Pre-questionnaire
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

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

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

WEEK TWO	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Membership application form**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to say information about themselves. **Writing** Students will be able to write specific facts about themselves. **Key Vocabulary** Last name, first name, date of birth, street address, city, home phone.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher builds a lesson based on membership application form. • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. • To get started, teacher applies a warm up, this is a broken telephone teacher thinks of a phrase, and whispr it to the student nex her.that student will then whisper what she/he heard to the next student.when the message reaches the end of that students says the phrase aloud.For example: The name of the President of Ecuador is Rafael and his last name is Correa. • During this warm up stage, Teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background

	Connection • After the warm-up activity, Teacher presents the new vocabulary about specific information. • Students repeat the new vocabulary after the teacher. • Once,they have familiarized with the new vocabulary,teacher says the students that work individually to create a picture and works.For example : In the first column they will drawn themselves and the second column they will write about all the things last name,name etc,acording to the picture that they drawn in the first column. **Affirming** • Each student works on his/her personal information about himself /herself in their picture and words cards. • Teacher monitors the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content. • Once the students have finished their work, teacher assesses the whole class by asking and shows their works. • As homework students create their own picture and words cards using personal information about their favorite person.

CLASSROOM **RESOURCES**	Picture and words. Student's notebook Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Rubric.
DATA **COLLECTION**	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
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WEEK THREE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Talk and write about personal information**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to ask for personal information to the classmates. Students will ask for clarification or make resquests about personal information (can your reapeat that, please). **Writing** Students will be able to write simple sentences using personal information. (My name is Leticia. My last name…) **Key Vocabulary:**, Wh-words: what, when, how old, first name, date of birth, street address, country.
	Activation • Teacher builds a lesson based on the personal information. • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. • To get started, **a warm up called time to speak** in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a phrase. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the phrase.For example I´m …..Years old, then that student will throw the ball to another. • During this warm up stage, Teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background.

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Connection**
	• After the warm-up activity, Teacher shows some examples of questions using wh-words with their corresponding answer.for example: What is your name? My name is Leticia.
	• As students are learning the new vocabulary, they individually have to ask for personal information to the classmates in order to be able to develop the following activity.
	• Once,they have familiarized with the new vocabulary, teacher says the students that work individually to create a magic book
	Affirming
	• Each student writes personal information about themselves in their magic book.For example:what is your name?My name is Leticia.What is your last name? My last name is Valdiviezo etc.
	• Teacher monitors the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• Once the students have finished their work, teacher assesses the whole class by asking and shows their works.
	• As homework students will write a simple sentence using the personal information themselves.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Magic book Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Sheet of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet. Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

WEEK FOUR	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Magic book as cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Ask for requests**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to produce sentence using can for requests. **Writing** Students will be able to create a simple sentence applying the correct use of can. **Key Vocabulary:** Can I ask you a question? Can you spell that, please? Can you please help me? Can he/she apply for a guest pass?
	Activation - Teacher builds a lesson based on the grammar contained in the present unit. - Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. - To get started, **a warm up called time to speak** in which students must make a circle. Then I will give them a small card with a phrase. After I will start by throwing a ball to whomever student and he/she immediately will have to say the phrase.For example Can I ask you a questions ?, then that student will throw

	the ball to another.
	• During this warm up stage, Teacher also assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background.
	Connection
	• After the warm-up activity, Teacher explains on the board using examples about can for requests.
	• As students are learning the new grammar, they individually have to take notes in their notebook about can for requests.
	• Once,they have familiarized with the new vocabulary ,teacher says the students that work individually to create a magic book
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Affirming**
	• Each student writes sentences using can in their magic book.
	• Teacher monitors the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• Once the students have finished their work, teacher assesses the whole class by asking and shows their works.
	• As homework students write a short sentences using can for requests.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Magic book Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Sheet of paper Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

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

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

WEEK FIVE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Talk and write using ordinal numbers.**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to express dates using ordinal numbers. **Writing** Students will be able to create sentence applying the correct use of ordinal numbers. **Key Vocabulary:** First- thirty- first.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher carries out a lesson based on the simple present tense with the verb to be. • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. • To get started, Teacher applies a warm up called *"tingo-tingo-tango".* Students make a circle and teacher will give a ball to a student to pass to the next classmate while teacher is saying *tingo tingo* and when she says *tango* the passing of the ball stops and the student who handle it, is who remembers to the class what learned the last class. • During this warm up stage, Teacher assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background. **Connection** • After the warm-up activity, teacher explains the rules about ordinal numbers. • Also, teacher plays a video to the class about this gramar.

	• At this time, students develop a writing activity. It consists of writing simple sentence using ordinal numbers. To start the activity teacher hands out a card with a grid like this; In the space of the sheet students write a simple sentence, well organized previously. **Affirming** • Once the students have finished writing their sentences, students share their sentences with other partners and after that they design a magic book about the learned knowledge. • Teacher observes students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Magic book Visual and audio aids: Videos Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition.
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet. Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

	WEEK SIX
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Use prepositions of time with wh-words.**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to produce questions using prepositions of time. **Writing** Students will be able to create a simple sentence including preposition of time with wh-words. **Key Vocabulary:** When/What time/What day? , in , on and at
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher carries out a lesson based on days, months and the ordinal numbers to express dates correctly. • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. • Teacher applies a warm up called bananas in this activity teacher choose one student, the student go to the front of the class and the classmates say some questions for example:when´s her/his birthday Etc.The student in the front of the board only answer with the word bananas, and the student who laugh loses the game. • During this warm up stage, Teacher assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background. **Connection** • After the warm-up activity, Teacher presents a power point presentation about information questions explaining the rules of this unit. • As students are learning the new vocabulary, they individually have to take notes in their notebook about information questions. • Students repeat the new expression after the teacher.

	Affirming • Once the students have understood about the presentation, they have to work with a partner who is next to them. • At this time, ask the members of each group to work together and then have to write information question where your partner have to answer the questions. • Once the groups have finished their sentences with the partner information, after them share the sentences with the class. • Teacher allow students to put their pictures on the wall, and after they describe about their picture. • Teacher observes students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content. • As homework, Students will write 5 question with your answer about mother information.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Picture and words Visual and audio aids: power point Student's notebook Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

WEEK SEVEN	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Talk about favorite TV shows.**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Speaking** Students will be able to produce a short presentation about their favorite TV shows. **Writing** Students will be able to create a briefly paragrap about their favorite TV shows. **Useful language:** What's your favorite TV show? What channel is it on? What time and day is it on?
	Activation - Teacher builds a lesson based the new useful language about their favorite TV show. - Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper. - To get started, Teacher applies a warm up called *"tingo-tingo-tango"*. Students make a circle and teacher will give a ball to a student to pass to the next classmate while teacher is saying *tingo tingo* and when teacher says *tango* the passing of the ball stops and the student

	who handle it, is who say to the class your favorite Tv show.
	• During this warm up stage, Teacher assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background.
	Connection
	• After the warm-up activity, Teacher presents the new useful language and explain the meaning.
	• As students are learning the new useful language, they individually have to take notes in their notebook about the meaning of this expressions.
INSTRUCTIONAL	• Once,they have familiarized with the new expressions ,teacher says students that work individually using tic-tac-toe sentence.
FOCUS	**Affirming**
	• Each student work to write in their tic-tac-toe sentence this strategy consist that teacher gives students 4 black index cards and after students fill the index cards about their favorite TV show.
	• Teacher monitors the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• Once the students have finished their work,

	teacher assesses the whole class by asking and shows their works. • As homework students write a brief paragraph about their favorite TV shows.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Tic-tac-toe sentence Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Sheet of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet. Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

WEEK EIGHT	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year?*
TOPIC	**Can you repeat that, please?**
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand the dialogue about can you repeat that, please? **Speaking** Students will be able to produce the dialogue in order to improve their pronunciation. **Writing** Students will be able to individually to create a short dialogue using the new phrases. **Key vocabulary:** Here you go, can you repeat that? Yes, please, sure, no, that´s it.Is there anything else?
	Activation • Teacher builds a lesson based on dialogue can you repeat that, please? • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the lesson on construction paper.

	• To get started. Warm-up Broken Telephone teacher thinks of a phrase, and whisper it to the student nex her.that student will then whisper what she/he heard to the next student.when the message reaches the end of that students says the phrase aloud.For example: Can I ask you a question?
	• During this warm up stage, Teacher assesses the students' prior knowledge which allows her to know students' diverse linguistic background.
	Connection
	• After the warm-up activity, Teacher presents the new vocabulary and expressions for specific information.
	• Students repeat the new expression after the teacher.
	• Teacher plays the audio and the students listen the dialogue.
INSTRUCTIONAL **FOCUS**	• Teacher plays the audio again, pausing for students to repeat after the tape.
	• Once,they have familiarized with the new vocabulary ,teacher says the students that work individually to create a magic book
	Affirming
	• Each student writes a dialogue in their magic book about the learned in this unit.
	• Teacher monitors the students during the activity to provide information either about the

	instructions or about the content.
	• Once the students have finished their work, teacher assesses the whole class by asking and shows their works.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Vocabulary quilt Student's textbook Postcards 1A, Second Edition. Sheet of paper
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation sheet. Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Prosttest.
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from:

D'Ann Rawlinson & Mary Little. (2004). Improving Student Learning through Classroom Action Research. Daytona Beach: Project CENTRAL.
Herrera, S., Holmes, M. & Kavimandan, S. (2011). Crossing the vocabulary bridge. New York: Teacher college press.

g. TIME LINE

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

h. BUDGET AND FINANCING

Resources

Human
The researcher: Leticia Piedad Valdiviezo Puglla

Students of eighth-grade at 27 de Febrero High school, academic period 2014-2015

Material
- Printed materials

- Books and eBooks

- Video record

- Laptop

Technical
- Computer

- Printer

Budget

Resources	Cost
Internet connection	$40.00
Print of the Project	$30.00
Video records	$20.00
Other	$10.00
TOTAL	100.00

i. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Annexes

Annex 1.Observation sheet.

OBSERVATION SHEET		
Observation #: Topic: Objective of the session:	Data /time: Class size: Participants: Eighth grade students.	Location: Colegio 27 de Febrero Duration of the observation (star/end times): Observer Involvement :Participant/Not participant:

Independent variable: basic writing skills.					
Rating scale:4=always 3=usually 2=sometimes 1=rarely 0=not observed					
Descriptors	4	3	2	1	0
All students clearly understand which group they belong to for both parts of the magic book					
All students have opportunities to learn with and from their peers.					
All students take advantage of the given time to make or preparate their responses/report for the group´s.					
Students ask their teacher/classmates for clarification to assist their peers during the performance of the academic activities.					
Students listen to one another.					
Students question to one another.					
Assume personal responsibility being involved in the group.					
Students disagree politely.					
Shy pupils contribute to group work					

DEPENDENT VARIABLE: BASIC WRITING SKILLS			
CATEGORIES	Below the expected level 1	At expected level 2	Above the expected level 3
Mechanics Students provide well-organized and complete sentences.			
Students use capital letters at the beginning of each paragraph.			
Students wrote proper nouns with capital letters.			
Students separate sentences using a period, colon or semi-colon.			
Students use question marks in interrogative questions.			
Is the spelling accurate			
Students use appropriate word order and vocabulary			
Written ideas follow a logical sequence			
Grammar Sentences contained correct grammar structure.			
Students used verbs in the correct form			
Tenses in sentences are well applied			
No errors			
Style Students use meaningful vocabulary.			
Written work is understandable, coherent and uses meaningful expressions.			
Written work is legible			
Redundant words are avoid.			

Annex 2.Pre and Posttest

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

Student'scode:……………………………………………………………………

Date:……………………………………………………………………………

Instructions:

Write a brief paragraph about personal information.Answer yourself the following questions to include in your paragraph. What is your name? What is your surname / last name? What do you do? How old are you? When is your birthday? Where were you born? What is your phone number? What do you do in your free time? Do you have a favourite TV show?

Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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

RUBRIC FOR THE PRE – POST TEST

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

Dimension	1 = Weak	2 =Moderately Weak	3 = Average	4 = Strong	Total
Purpose/Task	Accomplishes the task; includes **few** details, some of which may be only **loosely connected** to the task. There are many irrelevancies.	Accomplishes the task; includes **few** details, some of which may be only **loosely connected** to the task. There are many irrelevancies	Accomplishes the task; includes **some** details that are generally connected to the development of the task, but there may be some irrelevancies.	Accomplishes the task; includes **many** details that are clearly connected to the development of the task, but there may be minor irrelevancies.	
Organization	The topic is not introduced in an expected way.	Introduce the topic in a non-clear way.	Introduce the topic in a fairly way	Introduce the topic in a clear and interesting way	
Vocabulary	Includes **limited** vocabulary and /or most vocabulary is inaccurate or unrelated to the topic.	Includes **basic** vocabulary; some vocabulary may be inaccurate or Unrelated to the topic.	Includes a **variety** of vocabulary related to the topic.	Includes a **wide variety** of vocabulary that expands the topic but there may be minor inaccuracies	

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		Verbs do not agree with one another and there is little to no fluidity within writing because of verb tense confusion.	Little to no verb agreement. Fluidity of writing is affected by verb tenses.	Some verb tenses agree and fluidity is slightly affected by verb tenses.	No verb disagreement. Fluidity of writing is not affected by verb tenses.	
Struct ure/Co nventi ons	Tense					
	Word Order	The sentences don't make sense at all.	Few sentences follow the logical and word sequential order	Some sentences do not follow a logical word order.	The facts are presented in a sequential word order	
	Punctuation	The paragraph is not clear, and very difficult to understand, not punctuation is presented.	The paragraph is not clear, sometimes difficult to understand, only with few punctuation	The paragraph is somewhat neatly handwriting. With some punctuation.	The paragraph is neatly handwriting, with most of the appropriate punctuation	
TOTAL SCORE						

Pre and Post test

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

Pre and Post questionnaire

Quantitative Score Range	English approximation
10	above the expected level
9	Close to above the expected level
7-8	At the expected level
5-6	Below the expected level
4	Under the expected level

Annex 3.Pre and Post Questionnaire.

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: QUESTIONNAIRE

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

Student´s Code: _____

Date: _____

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

    4. Always   ( )

    3. Often   ( )

    2. Sometimes   ( )

    1. Rarely   ( )

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

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

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

4. Always   (   )

3. Often   (   )

2. Sometimes   (   )

1. Rarely   (   )

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

4. Strongly Agree   (   )

3. Agree   (   )

2. Neither agree nor disagree   (   )

1. Disagree   (   )

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

4. Very satisfactory   (   )

3. Satisfactory   (   )

2. Somewhat satisfactory   (   )

1. Unsatisfactory   (   )

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

4. Always   (   )

3. Often   (   )

2. Sometimes   (   )

1. Rarely   (   )

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Annex 4. Research Matrix

Theme: THE MAGIC BOOK AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP WRITING SKILLS AMONGST EIGHTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT 27 DE FEBRERO HIGH SCHOOL. 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (Action Research)	Techniques and instruments
General	**General** • To improve the writing skills through the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy amongst eighth -grade students at 27 de Febrero High School during the 2014-2015 school year. **Specific** • To research the theoretical and methodological references about the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on writing skills.	**Writing Skills** Micro and macro skills of writing. The stage of the learning process of EFL writing etc. **The magic book as a Cooperative Learning Strategy** Show and Tell. Spell it. Instruction: creating your magic book	**Preliminary investigation** • Observing the English classes. • Starting the background of the problem. • Describing current situation. • Locating and reviewing the literatura. • Creating a methodological framework for research • Designing an intervention plan. **Intervention and observation**. • Administering test and questionnaires. • Observing and and monitoring students´performarce according to be intervention plan.	Observation Sheet (Participant and Nonparticipant Observation) • Pre and Posttest. • Pre and Post Questionnaire. •
How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy to develop writing skills amongst eighth -grade students at 27 de Febrero high school. Academic period 2014 – 2015? **Specific** • What theoretical and methodological	• To diagnose the issues that			

references about the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for improving writing skills amongst eighth -grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014-2015 school year? • What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year? • Which magic book techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to improve writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de	limits the development writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High School 2014-2015 school year. • To design an intervention plan based on the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015. • To apply the most suitable techniques of the magic book as a cooperative learning		**Presentation of research findings.** • Reflecting , analyzing and answering the proposed inquiries • Organizing the final report.	

Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year? • How does the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop writing skills amongst eighth-grade students at 27 de Febrero High school during the 2014 - 2015 school year?	strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015. • To reflect upon the effectiveness that the magic book as a cooperative learning strategy in order to improve writing skills amongst eighth- grade students at 27 de Febrero High school Academic Period 2014-2015.			

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