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ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

THE JIGSAW AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT "PRESIDENTE ISIDRO AYORA" HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

> Research work as a 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:

To have directed and thoroughly revised this thesis work entitled: THE JIGSAW AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT "PRESIDENTE ISIDRO AYORA" HIGH SCHOOL, 2014 – 2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD, under the responsibility of the student Julio Emanuel Macas Sizalima, undergraduate student pursuing his Bachelor's degree in Science of Education: English Language Specialization. This work complies with the norms and requirements of Universidad Nacional de Loja, therefore I authorize its presentation and defense.

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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my mother, who has always been my support and crucial help to succeed in my studies and in life, for being there and encouraging me every day to be a better person, following her same steps. This is also for my father and grandparents, for their advices and for taking care of me during these years of study and preparation.

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THESIS OUTLINE

a. TITLE

THE JIGSAW AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT "PRESIDENTE ISIDRO AYORA" HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

b. RESUMEN

Este proyecto de investigación se enfocó en el uso del rompecabezas como estrategia de aprendizaje cooperativo en el desarrollo de habilidades de escritura con 6 estudiantes de noveno grado en el Colegio "Presidente Isidro Ayora". Se necesitaron ocho semanas para mejorar la habilidad usando esta estrategia. Pruebas y cuestionarios hechos por el investigador se utilizaron para medir el crecimiento de los estudiantes y la percepción del uso del rompecabezas. También se utilizaron hojas de observación en todas las clases para ver el progreso de los estudiantes. Los resultados del post test revelaron un progreso significativo en la habilidad de escritura usando el rompecabezas, además de las respuestas recibidas en los cuestionarios las cuales demostraron un notable cambio de actitud y comportamiento hacia el desarrollo del aprendizaje cooperativo. Basándose es estos resultados, se concluye que el cambio de actitud y el comportamiento de los estudiantes fueron significativos y sus puntuaciones en la escritura aumentaron considerablemente.

ABSTRACT

This action research work was focused on the use of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in the development of writing skills with 6 ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School. Eight weeks were needed to improve the skill using this strategy. Tests and questionnaires were made by the researcher, they were used to measure the students' growth and perception of the Jigsaw use. Observation sheets were also used every class to see the students' progress. The results of the posttest revealed significant progress in the writing skill using the Jigsaw besides the answers received from the questionnaires that demonstrated a noticeable change of attitudes and behaviors toward the development of the cooperative learning. Based on these results, it is concluded that the change in the students' attitude and behavior was significant and their scores in writing considerably increased.

c. INTRODUCTION

This research work was focused on the use of Jigsaw to develop writing skills with six ninth-grade students. These students had five periods of English classes weekly; however, they did not practice an effective strategy that motivates and facilitates the development of writing skills according to CEFR levels of proficiency. This work involved pre and post writing tests assessed with a writing rubric taking into account five parameters: purpose, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order and punctuation. Moreover, pre and post questionnaires helped to know their attitude and behavior toward the cooperative learning because they were not appropriate when they work in groups or pairs within the classroom.

The reason for undertaking this kind of study is to help students to develop writing skills using the Jigsaw in the class. This study helped six ninth-grade students to communicate effectively by writing accurately and providing some facilities and opportunities to improve it. Besides this action research allowed students to reach to their respective level A1.2 level reference and yield a marked improvement according to grade level and current curriculum guidelines. Similarly, the researcher is beneficiated because he gains experience on how to manage a class environment in order to improve students' knowledge.

Writing skills are a very important part in the world of communication. Having good writing skills allow you to communicate your message clearly, easily and effectively to a much higher audience than other forms of communication. The ability to write well it is usually learned or culturally conducted as a set of

practices in formal instructional settings or other environments; it is not a naturally acquired skill (Dotson, 2001).

Cooperative learning is a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal, students work together to learn and are responsible for their teammates' learning as well as their own (Myles, 2002).

The following general methods were applied along the descriptive research: The Scientific method facilitated the study of the Jigsaw strategy applied in the developing to improve writing skills. It helped in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one also assisted during the prediction of the possible solution; it assisted with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it. Another, the Descriptive method enabled to describe the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation and finally the statistic method was used to make the quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of the data received from the questionnaires and tests.

Additionally, the goal of the current project was to improve the writing skills through the Jigsaw. To complete this goal the researcher investigated the theoretical references about writing skills. Then, the investigator diagnosed the negative issues that limited the writing skills. Through the pretest, the total score mean indicated 3.63 out of 10, which was below the average level. After that, the researcher designed an intervention plan based on the Jigsaw and applied this

strategy with its most suitable techniques as part of the classroom activities in order to solve the limitations in this skill and appreciate the effectiveness that this strategy had in writing skills. The data obtained from administered instruments indicated an important increase in writing skills knowledge after applied the intervention plan besides a significant increment in cooperative learning that the target group achieved. It was verified that the post-test total mean score was 6.75 out of 10, which was an average score, so that it can be noticed a stronger result in the ninth-grade group learners.

The population of this investigation were the ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School. Six students composed this group, one girl and five boys. They were between 15 to 20 years old. It also included the researcher who took part in the intervention plan.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing skills are a very important part in the world of communication. Having good writing skills allow you to communicate your message clearly, easily and effectively to a much higher audience than other forms of communication. Whether you are a student, teacher, academic writing skills are necessary today. Essays, reports, presentations and research papers are just some examples of documents written in the academic style. Academic writing, when properly used, presents a cultured and professional image.

According to the Ministry of Education (2014) the ninth-grade students, which is the target group in which the researcher will be working. They must achieve the level A1.2, in which students are expected to produce expository, transactional and informational texts consisting of a series of simple sentences that have more detail and show more variety in lexical range and sentence structure.

Writing skills

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).

Writing is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Writing and speaking are productive skills. That means they involve producing language rather receiving it, as in listening and reading. Very simply, we can say that writing involves communicating a message by making signs on a page. To write we need to have something to communicate, and usually someone to communicate it too. We also need to be able to form letters and words, to join these together to make sentences or a series of sentences that link together and to communicate our message in such a way as to get our message across (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams, 2011).

Considering writing skill as a mean of communication, this involves expressing yourself clearly, using language with precision; constructing a logical argument; note taking, editing and summarizing; and writing reports.

Now, there are some writing sub-skills within the whole skill, as there are some within the other skills. Moreover, it is important to consider them with the purpose to be effective when writing and to communicate in a proper way. Next, it is shown how these sub-skills are divided and the steps they follow.

Writing sub-skills

According to the British Council the language skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading are often divided into sub-skills, which are specific behaviors that language users do in order to be effective in each of the skills.

One way to get at the sub-skills of writing is to list the standard steps used to describe the process of writing. Those steps are usually defined as:

- ❖ **Prewriting:** normally when asked what they do during the prewriting stage (which is everything you do to get ready to write) students respond: jot down notes/ideas and organize them. It does not come close to employing the variety of subskills available in this stage. It results in the writer attempting to perform a creative step (jot thoughts) and an analytical step (organize) at the same time. Those two acts, which take place in opposite hemispheres of the brain, are best kept separate (Taylor, 1990).

- ❖ **Drafting:** If you have read the assigned essay, "Four Mistakes Writers Make," you are aware of the common problem that new writers face when drafting: being "headwriters." Trying to compose and edit a sentence in your head before getting it down is really an attempt (usually unconscious) to shorten the writing process by combing drafting with revising and editing. But as "Four Mistakes Writers Make" points out, drafting is an especially creative time when you are trying to discover thought and put it into words. Trying to edit/correct those words at the same time is an analytical step that directly inhibits the creative part (Taylor, 1990).

- ❖ **Revising:** means to overlay a distinct structure on the lumpy draft, cutting out what doesn't belong and sharpening the connections between what is left. Shaping also means reworking the structure and wording of sentences so that your meaning comes through clearly and your thoughts flow together to provide the effect you want (Taylor, 1990).

❖ **Editing:** Finally, we have arrived at the thing most new writers associate with writing and writing well: grammar, punctuation and other conventions of standard written English. Sure, grammar is important. Being a good writer is also about a lot more than knowing where the commas go. Redirecting your focus from editing to the real skills involved in writing is the first and most important step you can take from being a new writer to a good writer (Taylor, 1990).

Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are the key in written communications. The reader will form an opinion of you, the author, based on both the content and presentation, and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression.

Common Reference Levels

The Common European Framework provides a scale of six common reference levels for the organization of language learning and recognition of the different securities issued by certified entities. The division is grouped into three sections corresponding to a more traditional division of basic, intermediate and advanced level. They defines skills that students must be controlled in each of the levels for categories, including writing. Each category integrates the skills that students must achieve; writing category, which the target group focuses involves the skill of writing.

The six levels proposed by the CEFR have been described as follows:

❖ A1-A2: basic users of the language;

❖ B1-B2: independent users of the language; and,

❖ C1-C2: proficient users of the language.

During the process and at the end of the course the ninth grade students, the target group of the investigator, they will have reached the communicative competence for A1 proficiency level (basic user). In general, referring to writing skills and level A1.2 exit profile.

Regarding writing, within each level there are many methods and strategies that can be implemented in the classroom in order to develop basic writing skills. In this research process we also focus on the implementation of Jigsaw as cooperative language learning as a crucial part and influential on students' performance. Coming up next, we will see how the cooperative language learning is defined according to some authors, their opinions and their decisive impact on the teaching and learning process.

Cooperative Language Learning

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a more general instructional approach also known Collaborative Learning (CL). Cooperative Learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. It has been defined as follows:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (Olsen, Kagan, 1992).

Cooperative Learning has antecedents in proposals for peer-tutoring and peer-monitoring that go back hundreds of years and longer. The early twentieth century U.S. educator John Dewey is usually credited with promoting the idea of building cooperation in learning into regular classrooms on a regular and systematic basis (Rodgers 1988). It was more generally promoted and developed in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the forced integration of public schools and has been substantially refined and developed since then. Educators were concerned that traditional models of classroom learning were teacher-fronted, fostered competition rather than cooperation, and favored majority students. They believed that minority students might fall behind higher-achieving students in this kind of learning environment. Cooperative Learning in this context sought to do the following: (Rodgers, 1988)

❖ Raise the achievement of all students, including those who are gifted or academically handicapped.

❖ Help the teacher build positive relationships among students.

❖ Give the students the experiences they need for healthy social, physiological, and cognitive development.

❖ Replace the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high-performance organizational structure (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec , 1994).

In second language teaching, CL (where it is often referred to as Cooperative Language Learning-CLL) has been embraced as a way of promoting communicative interaction in the classroom and is seen as an extension of the

principles of Communicative Language Teaching. It is viewed as a learner-centered approach to teaching held to offer advantages over teacher-fronted classrooms methods. In language teaching its goals are:

❖ To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.

❖ To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and the one that can be applied I a variety of curriculum settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms; mainstreaming)

❖ To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.

❖ To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.

❖ To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

CLL is thus an approach that crosses both mainstream education and second and foreign language teaching (Richards, Rodgers, 2001).

Cooperative language learning descriptors

The success of CL required a structured program of learning carefully designed so that learners interact with each other and are more motivated to increase each other's learning. Olsen and Kagan (1992) propose the following key of elements of successful group-based leaning in CL.

❖ Positive interdependence

❖ Group formation

❖ Individual accountability

❖ Social skills

❖ Face to face interaction

Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all. It is created by the structure of CL tasks and by building a spirit of mutual support within the group. For example, a group may produce a single product such an essay or the scores for members of a group may be averaged (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Group formation is an important factor in creating positive interdependence. Factors involved in setting up groups include; deciding on the size of the group: This will depend on the tasks they have to carry out, the age of the learners, and time limits for the lesson. Typical group size is from two to four. Assigning students to groups: Groups can be teacher-selected, random, or student-selected, although teacher-selected is recommended as the usual mode so as to create groups that are heterogeneous on such variables as past achievement. Students' roles in groups: Each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder, or summarizer (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Individual accountability involves both group and individual performance, for example, by assigning each student a grade or his or her portion of a team project or by calling on a student at random to share with the whole class, with group members, or with another group (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Social skills determine the way students interact with each other as teammates. Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Face to face interaction 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 in order to learn (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy

It is important first to establish exactly what we mean by cooperative learning. We could say in essence cooperative learning requires pupils to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others. However, it is not quite so simple, because there are variations on cooperative learning and some severe arguments among academics to the value of each, for example should it include any element of extrinsic reward or should reward be purely intrinsic? (Jolliffe, 2007)

Cooperative learning is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the same group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal. It is an instructional method in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal, while teachers act as guides or facilitators.

This method works to reinforce a student's own learning as well as the learning of his or her fellow group members (Bick, 2005).

Teachers are often afraid to implement cooperative learning in the classroom because it requires them to give up some control. However, this method of instruction has been shown to increase student communication skills and academic achievement if done correctly.

Spencer Kagan (1989) recommends that teachers use the "structural approach" to cooperative learning, which involves "content-free ways of organizing social interaction in the classroom." Kagan explains that structures require a series of steps to be implemented into the group dynamic. Kagan lists well-known structures that have been successfully used in multiple grade levels and subject areas.

Panitz offers a similar definition; he goes on to add that the teacher maintains control of the learning environment, designs learning activities, structures work teams, and, in his view, does not empower students. Kagan (1989) contributes that in cooperative learning the teacher designs the social interaction structures as well as learning activities. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) state that in cooperative learning students can maximize their own and each other's learning when they work together. Slavin (1996) argues that a critical element of cooperative learning is group team work and team goals.

Current strategies of cooperative learning

Blind Sequencing (teambuilding, thinking)

Teams work to sequence cards in their proper order, but there is a catch – each student holds his or her own cards, and no one else can see what is on them.

- ❖ One student on a team will be the dealer. He equally distributes cards among team members face down making sure no one can see what's on the cards.

- ❖ Students mark the back of their cards with initials, a number, letter or geometric shape to identify them as their cards.

- ❖ In turn, each student describes his or her cards as well as possible to teammates in an attempt to make it easy for the team to sequence the cards.

- ❖ After all the cards have been described, the team works together to put the cards in the proper order. Students sequence their cards face down on the table. No card is set on the table unless all teammates agree. If the team gets stuck, only the original card holder can peek at the card and describe it to the team.

- ❖ Once the team thinks they have properly sequenced the cards, they flip over the cars and check to see how they did. If the sequence is correct, they celebrate with a team cheer. If the sequence is incorrect, they correct it and discuss what went wrong and how they could do better next time (Kagan S. , 1988).

Find My Rule (thinking, classbuilding)

This is a great strategy for encouraging logical thinking and inductive/deductive reasoning. This activity works well for introducing a new

unit, grouping students randomly for cooperative learning, and for developing problem-solving and categorizing skills.

- ❖ Teacher prepares identity cards, related to an overall theme and to each other by a "rule" (one per student).

- ❖ Teacher announces that students will need to form groups of a given size by circulating throughout the room to locate students who have identity cards that are connected or related to their own by some commonality or "rule."

- ❖ Teacher gives an example and checks for understanding.

- ❖ Teacher passes an envelope containing all identity cards around the classroom.

- ❖ Students take one card each and circulate around the room to try and find others who have identity cards that are related to theirs.

- ❖ Once all members of the group have been found, the group will find a place to sit together.

- ❖ Group members will articulate the rule that connects all their identities and will try to guess the theme to which all the groups are connected (Kagan S. , 1988).

Find the Fiction (teambuilding, mastery, thinking)

Students pick out the fictitious statement from a set of three statements.

- ❖ Teammates write 3 statements: two true, one false.

- ❖ One student on each team stands, then reads his or her statements to teammates.

- Without consulting teammates, each student writes down his or her own best guess as to which statement is false.

- Teammates discuss and reach consensus on their "best guess."

- Teammates announce their guess.

- The standing student announces the false statement.

- Students celebrate: If the team guessed correctly, the standing student claps for teammates. If the team was stumped and didn't guess correctly, teammates clap for the standing student.

- The next teammate stands to share. The process is repeated from Step 2 (Kagan S. , 1988).

RallyTable (Mastery, thinking, communication)

In pairs, students alternate generating written responses or solving problems.

- Cooperative teams are given one piece of paper and one pen or pencil.

- Teacher poses a problem or provides a task to which there are multiple possible answers, steps, or procedures.

- The teacher provides an example and checks for understanding. A time limit is set.

- The teacher selects a student to begin in each team.

- Students quickly write their word or phrase and pass their paper to the team member on the left.

- The paper continues to go around and around the table as each student adds to the team's list.

- The teacher calls time. All pencils/pens are placed on the team table.

❖ The teams take turns sharing their responses with the rest of the class (Kagan S. , 1998).

Jigsaw

Differentiated but predetermined input – evaluation and synthesis of facts and opinions

❖ Each group member receives a different piece of information.

❖ Students regroup in topic groups (expert groups) composed of people with the same piece to master the material and prepare to teach it:

❖ Students return to home (Jigsaw groups) to share their information with each other.

❖ Students synthesize the information through discussion.

❖ Each student produces an assignment of part of a group project, or take a test, to demonstrate synthesis of all the information presented by all group members.

❖ This method of organization may require team-building activities for home groups and topic groups, long-term group involvement, and rehearsal of presentation methods.

❖ This method is very useful in the multilevel class, allowing for both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping in terms of English proficiency.

❖ Information-gap activities in language teaching are jigsaw activities in the form of pair work. Partners have data (in the form of text, tables, charts, etc.) with missing information to be supplied during interaction with another partner (Coelho, 1992).

The Jigsaw as a current cooperative learning strategy

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy which each member of a group was assigned a different part of material. Then, all the students from different groups who had the same learning material gathered together and formed an "expert group" to discuss and communicate with each other until they all mastered the material. Later, the students returned back to their home group to teach the material to other members of their group (Mengduo; Xiaoling, 2010).

The unique characteristic of jigsaw is that students are given portion of the total learning task master and then teach that segment to the other members of their team (Slavin, 1985).

Jigsaw is said to be able to increase students' learning since "a) it is less threatening for many students, b) it increases the amount of student participation in the classroom, c) it reduces the need for competitiveness and d) it reduces the teacher's dominance in the classroom" (Longman Dictionary, 1998). Consequently, Jigsaw can successfully reduce students' reluctance to participate in the classroom activities and help create an active learner-centered atmosphere. It can be concluded that jigsaw is a teaching method where the students are actively involved and participating in the classroom to increase the students' learning.

Since the only way students can learn sections other than their own is to listen carefully to their team members, they are motivated to support and show interest in one another's work. Jigsaw is primarily used in social studies and other subjects

where learning from text is important (Li, 2005).

Teacher's role in Jigsaw

In a jigsaw classroom, the teacher organizes practice and communicative activities, but this does not mean leaving the students to learn all by themselves. Instead the teacher should try to help the students take greater control over their learning by becoming actively involved. The primary role of the teacher is to choose learning material, structure the groups, explain the cooperative nature of group work, provide an environment conducive for this type of work, monitor group work and assist students in working with the material. "The teacher needs to float from group to group in order to observe the process.

Intervene if any group is having trouble such as a member being dominating or disruptive. There will come a point that the group leader should handle this task. Teachers can whisper to the group leader as to how to intervene until the group leader can effectively do it themselves" (Jigsaw Classroom, Online).

Jigsaw as a Technique

Technique is the method of procedure, or way to use basic skills, regardless to any work or to carry out a methodical or mechanical operation. The aim of technique is the accomplishment of a particular task by implementing several manners or systematic ways which implies a logical order and a final well done arrangement.

It is as a type of information gap technique, in which group of learners have different information that is needed to put together to reconstruct the whole

through class discussion or group interaction (Richards and Schmidt 2002:278). Also, Roger and Johnson (2000, 1-6) define jigsaw as "separate teams of students learn various concepts and then teams are reassembled so that each one of the member can be an expert at a different concept". Felder and Brent (1994:10) said that jigsaw is "one of cooperation techniques". It is problem-solving activity by getting students to listen to different chunks of information, the students have share with other the information has acquired in order to build up a complete picture of that particular situation (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:145). It involves learners combining different pieces of information to form a whole (three individuals or groups may have three different parts of a story and have to piece the story together) (Richards & Rodgers, 2001:134).

The jigsaw technique of teaching is aimed at developing the interactions among members of the class, on processes that help them pursue common goals, and on the give and take of information related to those goals. The teacher plays a facilitative role within the classmate, subtly guiding, reflecting, and helping clarify, but not taking dominant directive stance (Charles, 1983:128).

Jigsaw as a Strategy

Strategy is a detailed plan for accomplishing success in any situation or the skill of planning in advance. In terms of education instructional strategies include all approaches that a teacher may take to actively involve students in learning. These strategies drive a teacher's instruction as they work to meet specific learning objectives. In short, strategy is a term that refers to a group of thoughts or

ideas that provides general guidance for specific actions in educational environment.

As "each member of a group has a piece of information needed to complete a group task" (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 1998) in the EFL classroom, jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique that requires everyone's cooperative effort to produce the final product. Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece—each student's part—is essential for the production and full understanding of the final product. If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential. That is precisely what makes this strategy so effective (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Strategy in practice

- ❖ As with any learning process with independence and interdependence as the goals, effective use of the jigsaw technique begins with teacher modeling. Explain to students that they will be working in different cooperative groups to learn content: a jigsaw or home group, made up of students who have read different texts, and expert group that all reads the same text (Filkins, 1997).

- ❖ Then, with a piece of text appropriate for your group of students, read and think-aloud as if you are working in an expert group, focusing on thought processes such as: How can I put these ideas into my own words? What connections do I see between this material and things we have already learned, or from my own life? How will I tell the members of my jigsaw, or home, group about this material? (Filkins, 1997)

❖ To prepare students for returning to their home, or jigsaw, group, demonstrate thinking they can use to monitor their performance there: Is what I am saying helping the others learn the material? Are people understanding what I am saying and making connections between their reading and mine? (Filkins, 1997)

❖ Based on your knowledge of the students in your classroom, organize a set of texts that students will read in their expert groups and report on to their home groups. You may wish to find texts that complement each other, but offer varying challenges in difficulty. It may be useful to assemble a text set that offers contrasting views on the same topic. Or, you are learning goals may lead you to select text that offer information on various facets of a concept that will become clear only when students come together in their home groups after working with their expert groups (such as three books, each about one of the states of matter) (Filkins, 1997).

❖ Organize students in their home or jigsaw groups and share with them the learning goal or guiding question for the lesson. Remind them of the modeling they saw (Filkins, 1997).

❖ Re-organize students into their expert groups. You may find it useful to use numbers for home groups and letters for expert groups (student 3-B for example, will read text B with a group of students and then report back to group 3, where a student has read text A, C, D, and E). Students in the expert group should read the text and make sure everyone has a strong enough understanding to share with their home groups. It may be a good

idea for students to produce a written summary or short list of ideas they plan to take back (Filkins, 1997).

❖ Throughout the jigsaw process, circulate the room and observe the groups as they read and discuss. When you notice difficulties, try to put the responsibility for finding a solution back on students to enhance the cooperative benefits of working with Jigsaw (Filkins, 1997).

❖ Reconvene the home groups and ask students to share their expertise with one another. Students should write about the way their expert knowledge was changed or enhanced by listening to their peers (Filkins, 1997).

Many benefits were gained when jigsaw strategy was used in the researchers' lessons. However, this does not imply that all classroom activities should be carried out in groups. Rather what is stressed is that group activities should be a regular and significant part of EFL classroom. Implementing jigsaw strategy in the EFL classroom makes it possible to focus on language learners, and thereby language learning becomes "more interdependent than independent" (Benson, 2003: 292). In conclusion, as regards language learners, jigsaw strategy is a suitable way to encourage learners' involvement and active interest as well as a useful technique to focus on the language use to accomplish cooperative learning tasks in the EFL Classroom.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

The materials used in the intervention plan greatly helped the practitioner in scheduled program. Human resources, the ninth-grade students being treated in this case, printed materials such as worksheets and handouts helped students to perform specific tasks required and necessary for the practitioner to improve the process of the development of writing skills. The student book and workbook, as well as the teacher's book served as a guide to practice, revision of grammar and also as an extra help in the development of classes by the practitioner. Finally, electronic materials such as projector, laptop, pen drives were used to develop lesson plans, video projections regarding classes and process electronic information, in this case the tabulation of data necessary for the development and implementation of the intervention program.

Research design

Action research is a practical approach to professional research in any social framework. In this context it refers specifically to education and therefore of greater importance for teachers or teacher candidates in this case, involved in daily contact with students. Action research can vary in context and hence professional research, but the principles and processes involved in the situation are the same regardless of the nature of the practice.

The benefits provided by action research were the immediate action on the solution of a problem in the process of student learning and consequently

intervention that marked a significant improvement result through the planned involvement in a certain period of time. The teacher candidate through the intervention improved the ability in professional training, acquired experience and teaching skills so required in the workplace. In turn, the target group significantly developed the ability to write in a second language and through cooperative learning in the classroom encourages and stimulates the need for learning and overcoming both individually and collectively.

The implementation of the action research was individually developed by each teacher candidates where a social situation within the English language teaching-learning was covered, specifically inside a classroom of educational institutions of the city. The objective and goal of the intervention was improve significantly the educational environment of the ninth-grade students, an increasingly demanding requirement in our social education process. Thus, the Universidad Nacional de Loja also decided that each practitioner must carry out in a practical way the development of action research, interacting with reality and helping the community, the students and their environment in this case.

Steps in action research within the methodological design started with preliminary investigation. The candidate teacher started by observing the English classes in the assigned grade. After this, it was stated the background of the problem, as it is known the deficiencies that the students presented when performing in writing skills. Followed the practitioner described the current situation regarding the need for intervention. Then according to the cooperative strategy and most suitable techniques the researcher located and reviewing the

literature to implement on the students. For this, it was necessary to create a methodological framework for research where all steps were clearly stated to be followed. Finally, one of the most important steps was the design of an intervention plan, which consisted of each activity and procedure that the researcher, as a teacher in this case, assumed and implemented within the class.

Methods

This study made a description of the data resulting from the application of an intervention plan. The following general methods were applied along the research:

The Scientific method facilitated the study of the Jigsaw strategy applied in the developing to improve writing skills. It helped in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one also assisted during the prediction of the possible solution; it assisted with gathering data to make relevant predictions and the analysis of it.

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

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

Techniques and instruments

Data Collection

Since this work was an action research, elements of both quantitative and qualitative research were selected for data collection. Quantitative research considered variables and statistics whereas qualitative researcher considered an understanding of words or actions. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments were self-developed by the researcher taking into account the principles of question construction. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods (test) were used to develop quantitative data collection instruments, observations, and interviews (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative ones.

Tests

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

Pretest - Posttest

A researcher-made pretest provided a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School) received a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or intervention plan, a post-test measured again the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pretest-posttest comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaire

A researcher-made questionnaire was administered to the participants to answer question related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the test, a pre and post questionnaire were administered in order to make comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collection by the questionnaires supported the test results.

Observation

The emphasis during observation was on understanding the natural environment as lived by the ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School during their English classes. There were two types of observations as detailed bellow.

Non-participant observation

In non-participant observation, the researcher was not involved in the situation being observed. He observed and recorded behaviors but did not interact or participate in the setting under study. The objective of this non-participant observation was to identify the issue for this action research project which was supported through the participant observation (Gay, Mills, Airasian, 2012).

Participant observation

In participant observation, the researcher became a part and participant in the situation being observed. The researcher participated deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in

order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher needed an observation sheet to record the participants' behaviors shown on both variables: performance of the writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy. This observation sheet was a self-developed instrument that describes accurately and comprehensible all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it contained the descriptor of the variables of the action research, the issue under treatment (writing skills), and the treatment itself (Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy).

Population

The ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School were the participants of this action research. The number of students was six, distributed in one women and five men in total. Also the candidate teacher of this research work who took part in the intervention plan.

f. RESULTS

In this section, the results of the data collection are presented in tables and figures. A corresponding logical analysis is carried out at the end of each table or figure. As prior mentioned, the data collection sources consist of: 1)Pretest and posttest to measure the cognitive dimension about the performance of writing skills consisting of the following subskills task, organization, vocabulary, tense, word order, and punctuation. 2) Pre and post questionnaire to measure the students' behaviors and attitudes toward the cooperative learning strategies such as Jigsaw. The data were supported by related results obtained throughout the statistical method which includes the mean and percentage calculation of the total scores. Finally, the data were 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 theoretical and methodological references about the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

The researcher looked for the appropriate references, which were studied in depth, taking into account mainly primary sources. It was also necessary that such literature sources were appropriate for students, also related to the Jigsaw in order to improve and focused towards improving writing skills on this target group.

Objective 3. To design an intervention plan based on the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

The researcher conducted an intervention plan that lasted eight weeks with a total of eight macro plans subdivided into micro plans per day according to the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy for improving writing skills in ninth-grade students. Also the implementation of this strategy was developed based on topics in the students' material and the teacher candidate applied the most suitable techniques with the purpose of improve their performance in writing skills.

Objective 2. To diagnose the issues that limits the development of English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

a. Table 1

Pretest Results on the Performance of Ninth-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
CBPIA01S	1,00	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	3,50
CBPIA02S	1,50	1,00	1,00	0,75	1,00	0,50	5,75
CBPIA03S	0,50	1,00	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	3,50
CBPIA04S	0,50	1,00	0,50	0,25	0,50	0,25	3,00
CBPIA05S	0,50	0,50	1,00	0,25	0,50	0,50	3,25
CBPIA06S	1,00	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,25	0.5	2,75
Mean	**0,83**	**0,75**	**0,67**	**0,46**	**0,54**	**0,45**	**3,63**

Note: P=Purpose, **O**=Organization, **V**=Vocabulary, **T**=Tense, **WO**=Word Order, **P**=Punctuation Marks, **CBPIA01S**= Colegio de Bachillerato "Presidente Isidro Ayora" 01 student

b. Interpretation and Analysis

A pretest was administered to measure a starting point or the amount of pre-existing knowledge about writing skills. As we can see in Table 1, the Tense presents the highest score mean (0.46/1); and the lowest score mean was 0.54 for Word Order. Finally the total score mean was 3.63 out of 10, which was below the average level. Consequently, it was noticed that there was a limitation for ninth-grade students to produce a brief simple paragraph consisting of a sequence of simple sentences with verb agreement and punctuation marks. Besides, students showed a limited domain of lexical.

Being this the situation, the total mean represented an issue that concerned the researcher to carry out this action research in this classroom. It was evidenced that the majority of ninth-grade students could not accomplish the given task properly. According to the rubric, the performance of ninth-grade students showed that the majority of them did not accomplished the task including major details that were organized and connected to each other. In addition, students could not introduce the topic in a clear way using vocabulary related to the topic.

Objective 4. To apply the most suitable techniques of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

Pre and post Questionnaire results. The questions were directly targeted to the principles of the cooperative learning.
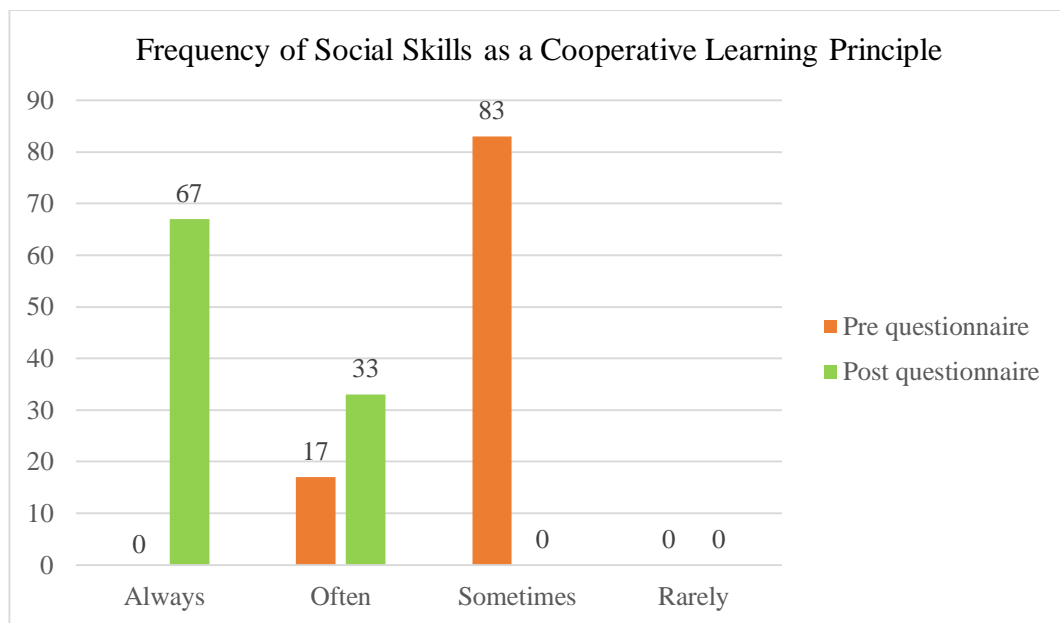
a. Table 2

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

Frequency of Social Skills as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	0	0	4	67
Often	1	17	2	33
Sometimes	5	83	0	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

Frequency of Social Skills as a Cooperative Learning Principle

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As can be seen in Table 2, in the administering of pre questionnaire the researcher found out that none of students responded (always) so that they almost never tended to work in groups or pairs. Consequently, the researcher started to look for a cooperative-based strategy such as the Jigsaw in order to improve the writing skill 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 had 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 67%, which was above the expected level. As a consequence, the applied techniques toward cooperative learning produced a positive effect on students, so that they could work cooperatively.

Social skills determine the way students interact with each other as teammates. Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
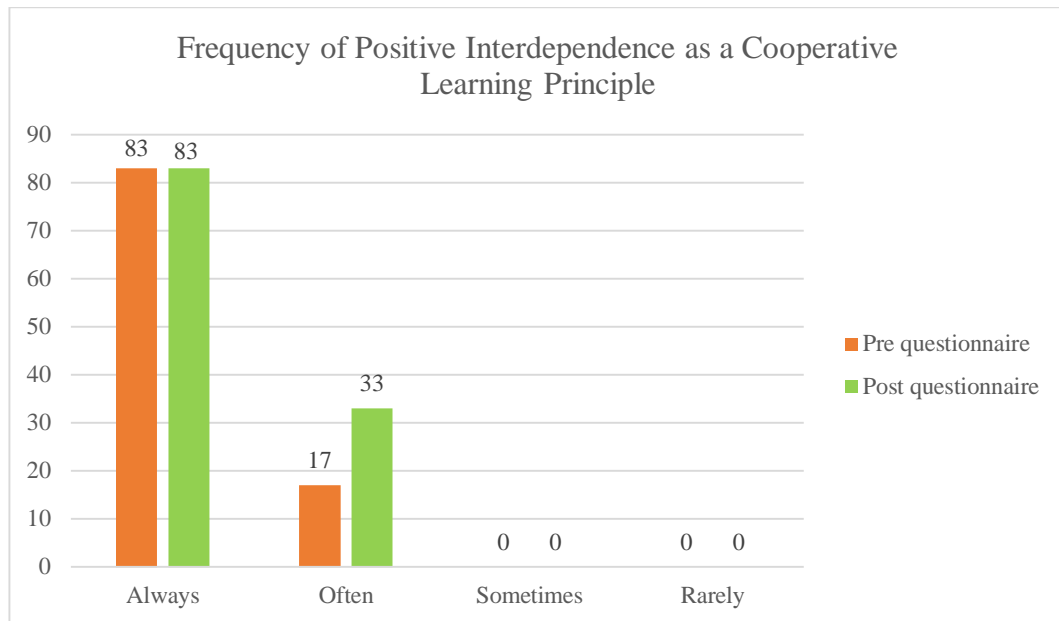
a. Table 3

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

Frequency of Positive Interdependence as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
Always	5	83	5	83
Often	1	17	1	17
Sometimes	0	0	0	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

Frequency of Positive Interdependence as a Cooperative Learning Principle

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it can be seen in Table 3, ninth-grade students developed pre and a post questionnaire. The researcher found out that the majority of students (83%) responded that they worked in a positive and respectful environment. Thus, the researcher realized that ninth-grade students respected each other when developing team activities; therefore, the practitioner continued working on the cooperative- based strategy. After had finished the intervention plan period, students responded to a post questionnaire, and once again 83% of them answered regarding to the importance of working in a positive and respectful environment. This percentage specified at the expected level in working cooperatively among the students.

It is worth to say that cooperative techniques related to positive and respectful environment inside the classroom were very well-handled by students at the beginning, during and at the end of the intervention. This also helped significantly to students work with the Jigsaw strategy and improve their performance on writing skill as well.

Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all. It is created by the structure of cooperative learning tasks and by building a spirit of mutual support within the group (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
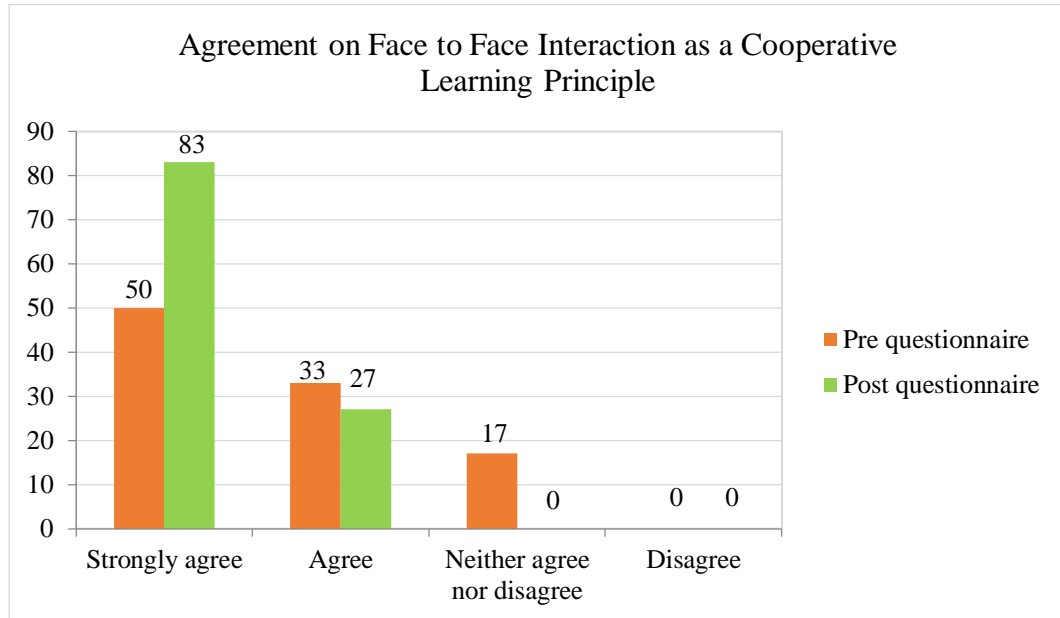
a. Table 4

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

Agreement on Face to Face Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Strongly agree	3	50	5	83
Agree	2	33	1	17
Neither agree nor disagree	1	17	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

Agreement on Face to Face Interaction as a Cooperative Learning Principle

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As shown in Table 4, the researcher administered the pre and a post questionnaire. The data demonstrated that 50% of students responded that having good relationships and positive interactions were essential for group work. Nevertheless, the obtained score was considered below the expected level, so the researcher started to look and apply a cooperative-based strategy. The investigator elaborated group activities in the intervention plan where students were supposed to work having good relationships and interacting positively among them. After finishing the intervention plan period, students responded to a post questionnaire, and the 83% answered that they considered it was very crucial to have good relations and a positive attitude when working in groups. This percentage indicated at the expected level in working cooperatively among the students.

Face to face interaction 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 (Olsen, Kagan, 1992).
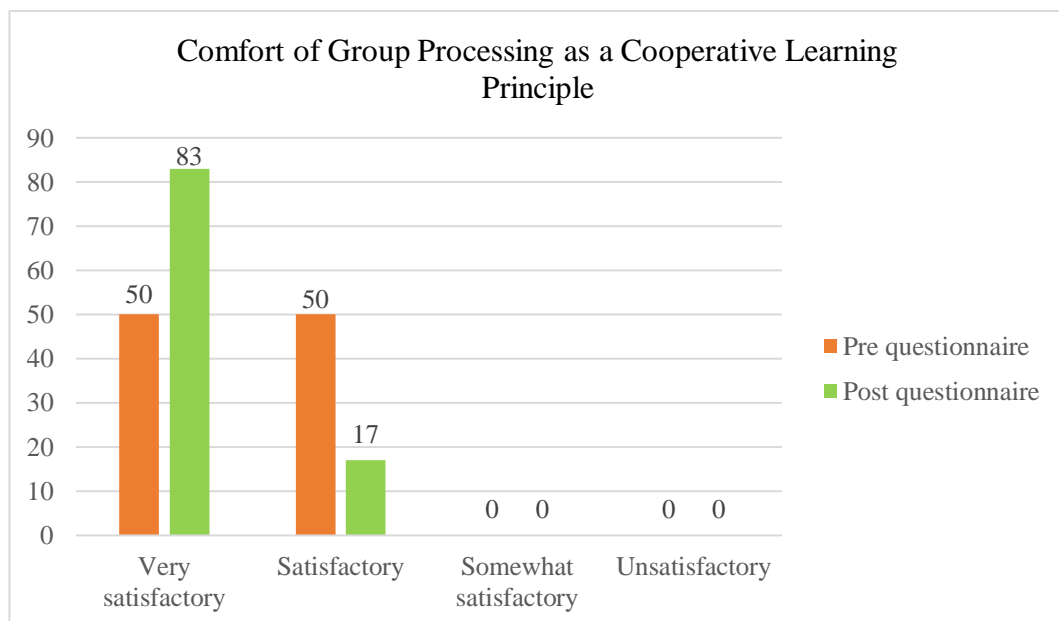
a. Table 5

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

Comfort of Group Processing as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Very Satisfactory	3	50	5	83
Satisfactory	3	50	1	17
Somewhat satisfactory	0	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As shown in Table 5, students developed and answered the pre and a post questionnaire. The researcher found out that 50% of the students responded that they felt comfortable to work in groups. However, the researcher analyzed that this result was below the expected level whereby started to apply a cooperative-based strategy such as Jigsaw in order to improve students' willingness to work in groups. The researcher elaborated group activities through cooperative-based lesson plans in which students participated and were able to work in teams of two or more students. After having completed the intervention plan period, students responded to a post questionnaire and 83% answered that they felt comfortable to work in groups or pairs and as a result students could work satisfactory. This percentage indicated at the expected level in working cooperatively among the students.

Group processing is an important factor in creating positive interdependence. Factors involved in setting up groups include factors such as deciding on the size of the group or assigning students' role in the group (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).
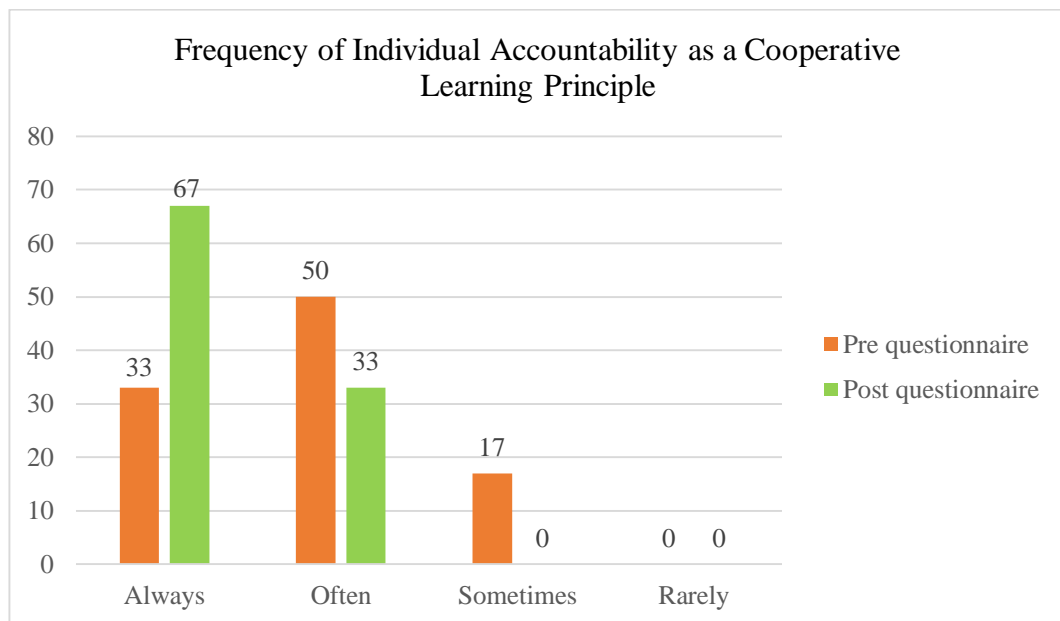
a. Table 6

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

Frequency of Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle

	Pre Questionnaire		Post Questionnaire	
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**
Always	2	33	4	67
Often	3	50	2	33
Sometimes	1	17	0	0
Rarely	0	0	0	0

b. Figure

Frequency of Individual Accountability as a Cooperative Learning Principle

c. Interpretation and Analysis

As it can be seen in Table 6, the students of the target group developed the pre and post questionnaire. In the administering of pre questionnaire, the researcher found out that only 33% of students answered that all members contributed to the development of the cooperative work. Therefore, the researcher started to look for

a cooperative-based strategy such as Jigsaw in order to improve students' willingness to each one provide the necessary information in order to fulfill the task. The researcher elaborated group work activities contained in lesson plans by keeping in mind the Jigsaw strategy as the most suitable for getting students together with the purpose of accomplish a whole task. After having finished the intervention plan period, students answered to a post questionnaire, and 67% showed that they were more willing to cooperate and work together as a whole group. This percentage indicated at the expected level in working cooperatively among the students by using the Jigsaw strategy.

It is noteworthy that the Jigsaw as a cooperative-based strategy helped significantly to students in group activities where each one plays an important role with the purpose of improving their attitude when working in groups and completing a given task. As a result, ninth-grade students' behavior and commitment toward the cooperative learning was appropriate to create a good environment to increase their expected level and to work as a whole to fulfill a task.

Individual accountability involves both group and individual performance, for example, by assigning each student a grade or his or her portion of a team project or by calling on a student at random to share with the whole class, with group members, or with another group (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Objective 5. To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

a. Table 7

Posttest Results on the Performance of Ninth-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
CBPIA01S	1,50	1,50	1,50	1,00	2,00	0,75	8,25
CBPIA02S	2,00	1,50	2,00	1,00	1,50	0,75	8,75
CBPIA03S	0,50	1,00	0,50	0,50	0,50	0,50	3,50
CBPIA04S	1,50	1,50	1,00	0,75	1,00	0,50	6,25
CBPIA05S	1,50	1,00	1,50	0,75	1,00	0,75	6,50
CBPIA06S	1,50	1,50	1,50	0,75	2,00	0.75	7,25
Mean	**1,42**	**1,33**	**1,33**	**0,79**	**1,33**	**0,65**	**6,75**

b. Interpretation and Analysis

In accordance with the results obtained in Table 7, the mean that showed the highest score was Tense (0.79/1), and the lowest score was distributed among Organization, Vocabulary and Word Order, they all got 1.33/2. Furthermore, the total score mean of the results of writing skills was 6.75 out of 10, which indicated an average score and displayed an important progress. One can say that there was no a mayor limitation on ninth-grade students, the means of the posttest showed strong progress and they could complete in a significant way the given assignment, provided adequate details and few mistakes.

The total score mean favored the investigator after had conducted action research in this classroom. It was reflected that the majority of ninth-grade students could accomplish the given task appropriately. Therefore, and more so

the ninth-grade students improved their performance in writing skills. According to the rubric the performance of ninth-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 (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams, 2011).

a. **Table 8**

Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of Ninth-Grade Students' Writing Skills

	Pretest	Posttest
Purpose/task (2/2)	0.83	1.42
Organization (2/2)	0.75	1.33
Vocabulary (2/2)	0.67	1.33
Tense (1/1)	0.46	0.79
Word Order (2/2)	0.54	1.33
Punctuation Marks (1/1)	0.45	0.65
Total Means	3.63	6.75

b. Figure

Pretest and Posttest Means Summary on the Performance of Ninth-Grade Students' Writing Skills
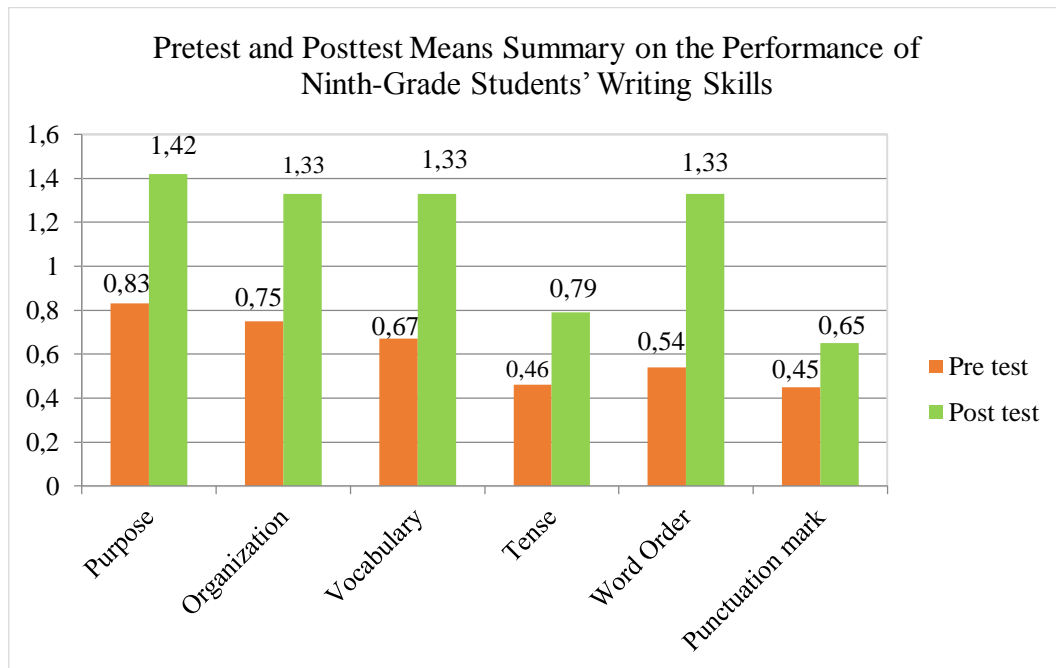
c. Interpretation and Analysis

As we can see in Table 8, the Tense writing skills showed the highest score mean (0.79/1). Whereas, Organization, Vocabulary and Word Order displayed the lowest score (1.33/2). The mean result increased from 3.63 to 6.75 which shows 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.136). Some limitations during the intervention did not permit the ninth-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,

ninth-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

The present research entitled the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy to develop basic writing skills was carried out with ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School. The purpose of the study was to develop students' writing skills by applying an intervention plan designed by the researcher which was based on the use of the Jigsaw as a current effective strategy to increase their knowledge through cooperative learning during class periods. The data obtained from administered instruments such pre and posttests and pre and post questionnaires indicated an important increase in writing skills knowledge after applied the intervention plan plus significant increment in cooperative learning that the target group achieved.

The use of the Jigsaw to improve writing skills was the strategy that facilitated students learning. The research carried out with six students and after an eight-week intervention showed that, their behaviors and attitudes toward the Jigsaw improved and writing skills as well. The pre questionnaire showed that students had problems working in groups and pairs. It was a lack of positive and respectful environment. There were not adequate interactions among students and they were not comfortable enough because not all classmates contributed to the development of working cooperatively. Nevertheless, that situation changed and after have administered the post questionnaire; the findings indicated that students' interactions improved as it is explained by the cooperative learning principles. It is worth to say that the intervention produced positive results on students because

now they are better prepared to work cooperatively and to increase their achievement in the English classes as well.

Finally, some unexpected limitations within the research needed to be considered. First, the lack of experience of the teacher candidate to manage a classroom. Besides, students did not have study habits or habitual practices to help them to learn properly. On the other hand, this experience had a positive impact on the researcher as a teacher candidate. It helped to gain more experience managing a classroom and made students feel motivated learning to work cooperatively. This action research was a great process of study that helped the researcher to analyze issues in the professional field and as a teacher try to solve them through suitable strategies related to the problems found. This allowed the researcher to give a solution to the students' limitations and improve their performance learning skills.

h. CONCLUSIONS

The issues that limited the basic writing skills of ninth-grade students were the lack good study habits by the students, plus a poor exposure to practice writing. In accordance to the students' answers obtained in the pretest demonstrated that they were not sufficiently asked to perform tasks where they had to use writing skills.

The techniques applied in this action research process were constantly mastered and very successful; when implemented during class periods, these helped the students to improve their attitude, behavior and willingness to continuously participate in a cooperative manner when working in pairs or groups.

The Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy was significant appropriated and had a great amount of acceptance by students because they could realize that working cooperatively helped them to achieve any task. They showed through the results of post questionnaire that this strategy was properly applied and changed their attitude toward cooperative learning besides developed writing skills.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

In English classes teachers should encourage students to write as much as they can in order of identify the students' weaknesses to develop a classroom plan based on appropriate strategies depending on students' needs; this greatly helps students to feel confident and write down their ideas in a piece of writing, thus reaching effectiveness and accuracy in the writing skills.

As cooperative learning strategies are appropriate and suitable for the whole process of students' learning, more strategies such as the Jigsaw should be applied within the development of English classes, being this the ninth-grade students' case, this ensures an adequate environment to promote the achievement of their performance in writing skills.

The Jigsaw strategy should be taken into account when thinking on an effective way to encourage students' willingness to work cooperatively as well as to improve their writing skills; such way is one of the best manners to activate students' immersion in the purpose of a task, reducing their bad attitudes and improve their learning environment.

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k. ANEXXES

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME

THE JIGSAW AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT "PRESIDENTE ISIDRO AYORA" HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

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2015

a. THEME

THE JIGSAW AS A COOPERATIVE LEARNING STRATEGY TO DEVELOP ENGLISH BASIC WRITING SKILLS AMONGST NINTH-GRADE STUDENTS AT "PRESIDENTE ISIDRO AYORA" HIGH SCHOOL, 2014-2015 ACADEMIC PERIOD

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

This research project will be developed at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School which was created in 1985 by Mr. Nelson Uchuari, Mrs. Rosaura Pinos and Lic. Efren Quizhpe. Its main authority is Dr. Hugo Chillogallo. It is located in "El Plateado" neigborhood in the city of Loja. This High School proposals from the Eight Year of Basic Education to the Third Year of Bachillerato in the nocturnal section.

Currently, this High School is conformed by 7 teachers, and it is essential to remark that only one of them is an English teacher. Furthermore, the amount of students that are educated in this institution are one hundred in total.

In order to carry out this research project, the investigator has considered taking into account the Ninth Year of Basic Education, which involves six students who are between 15 to 20 years old.

The current situation of the research problem

Currently, the government of Ecuador is determined to strengthen the performance of students of both schools and colleges regarding the English language. Through this, and because as a foreign language the English language needs practice, both students and teachers are committed to conducting quality education and meaningful learning.

One of the major difficulties in the process of learning the English language is that students do not have a good development of writing skills that enable them to have a proper and effective communication through written language. Hence, in order to determine the impact on learning and improving writing skills in English, the researcher made an observation with the group of students chosen to develop this action research. This observation led to the finding that students in the ninth-grade of basic education have a very low level in the skill of writing; therefore, this does not allow them to have a correct written communication. First, among peers and the teacher, and consequently underperforming in testing and requirements of the current system of education in our country.

The observation that allowed to know the causes of the problem were several. One of these causes that prevents the improvement writing skills in English Language is the fact that teachers do not apply suitable pedagogical strategies such as cooperative learning, communicative activities for motivating and arising the students' interest.

Besides motivation and work in the classroom is affected by the lack of appropriate methodology from early education, and therefore students do not show interest and result in poor performance, leading to a low level and use of English language.

Research problem

How does the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014 - 2015 academic period?

Delimitation of the research

Timing

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

Location

This research work will be done at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School which is an educative institution located in Loja.

Participants

The participants of this research work are the ninth-grade students, they are six in total at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School and the candidate teacher of this study who is going to take part in the intervention plan.

Subproblems

- ❖ What theoretical and methodological references about the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for developing English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?

- ❖ What are the issues that delimit the development of English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?

❖ What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?

❖ What Jigsaw techniques as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?

❖ What does the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy reduces the difficulty to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?

c. JUSTIFICATION

At present, the English language is a tool of international communication and one of the most popular and useful languages in the world as people from all or most countries need the English language in several activities and everyday situations, such as: business, education, technology, medicine, and the need to communicate effectively among different cultures. Therefore, learning English and being proficient at this has increased, that is why in our present system of education is mandatory to include this subject as a priority for development and strengthening not only of the country, but also as cultural and personal growth.

Communicating effectively as one of the main issues in a second language it is highly considered in this research, also being able to manage a variety of skills to express themselves correctly and an extensive knowledge of the language skills; as one of them to write correctly. Therefore, educators must find new ways and resources for teaching basic writing skills efficiently; one of these forms could be the implementation of material support or dynamic strategies that encourage students to start their own basic writing. One of the strategies used in this project is the Jigsaw, which help to improve their writing skills. First, cooperative learning and then the proper use of the ability to write correctly and basically implementing the taught knowledge.

Besides mentioned above, the researcher has considered relevant to carry out this research work entitled: "The Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-year students at "Presidente

Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014- 2015 academic period. This research is also significant because it is focused on the implementation of cooperative learning in order to overcome one of the difficulties of the English language that students have to face which is the learning of how to write correctly. The researcher is focused on doing this research work that can be used to solve a problem involved in developing of the English language.

In the educational context the present research project will help students to improve their English basic writing skills because the researcher will use different techniques according to the Jigsaw strategy through the application of suitable strategies and activities.

Finally, the development of this research work is a requirement for the researcher in order to get the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education, English Language Specialization as established in the regulations of the Education, Art and Communication Area of the National University of Loja.

d. OBJECTIVES

General Objective

❖ To develop English basic writing skills through the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

Specifics objectives

❖ To research the theoretical and methodological references about the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

❖ To diagnose the issues that limits the development of English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

❖ To design an intervention plan based on the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

❖ To apply the most suitable techniques of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

❖ To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

e. LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing skills are a very important part in the world of communication. Having good writing skills allow you to communicate your message clearly, easily and effectively to a much higher audience than other forms of communication. Whether you are a student, teacher, academic writing skills are necessary today. Essays, reports, presentations and research papers are just some examples of documents written in the academic style. Academic writing, when properly used, presents a cultured and professional image.

According to the Ministry of Education (2014) the ninth-grade students, which is the target group in which the researcher will be working, they must achieve the level A1.2, in which students are expected to produce expository, transactional and informational texts consisting of a series of simple sentences that have more detail and show more variety in lexical range and sentence structure.

Writing skills

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).

Writing is one of the four language skills: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Writing and speaking are productive skills. That means they involve producing language rather receiving it, as in listening and reading. Very simply, we can say that writing involves communicating a message by making signs on a page. To write we need to have something to communicate, and usually someone to communicate it too. We also need to be able to form letters and words, to join these together to make sentences or a series of sentences that link together and to communicate our message in such a way as to get our message across (Spratt, Pulverness, Williams, 2011).

When a person learns to write properly, more opportunities and benefits in the workplace occur. They can put their thoughts in a journal, write a letter to a friend, and create a story that comes from their own imagination. Although there are rules and formats to basic steps when learning to write, writing can be creative and imaginative as well.

Considering writing skill as a mean of communication, this involves expressing yourself clearly, using language with precision; constructing a logical argument; note taking, editing and summarizing; and writing reports.

There are three main elements to written communication: the first one is **structure** that means way the content is distributed, and then **style,** that is the way the text is written, and finally **content** that refers what you are writing about

within the text. Structure and layout are supposed to be learnt relatively quickly but learning how to write good quality content takes much more time.

Now, there are some writing sub-skills within the whole skill, as there are some within the other skills. Moreover, it is important to consider them with the purpose to be effective when writing and to communicate in a proper way. Next, it is shown how these sub-skills are divided and the steps they follow.

Writing sub-skills

The language skills of speaking, listening, writing and reading are often divided into sub-skills, which are specific behaviors that language users do in order to be effective in each of the skills.

One way to get at the sub-skills of writing is to list the standard steps used to describe the process of writing. Those steps are usually defined as:

- ❖ **Prewriting:** normally when asked what they do during the prewriting stage (which is everything you do to get ready to write) students respond: jot down notes/ideas and organize them.
- ❖ **Drafting:** being "head writers." Trying to compose and edit a sentence in your head before getting it down is really an attempt (usually unconscious) to shorten the writing process by combing drafting with revising and editing.
- ❖ **Revising:** means to overlay a distinct structure on the lumpy draft, cutting out what doesn't belong and sharpening the connections between what is left.

❖ **Editing:** we have arrived at the thing most new writers associate with writing and writing well: grammar, punctuation and other conventions of standard written English (Taylor, 1990).

Correct grammar, punctuation and spelling are the key in written communications. The reader will form an opinion of you, the author, based on both the content and presentation, and errors are likely to lead them to form a negative impression.

Common Reference Levels

The six levels proposed by the CEFR have been described as follows:

❖ A1-A2: basic users of the language;

❖ B1-B2: independent users of the language; and,

❖ C1-C2: proficient users of the language.

Level A1: This is accomplished when language learners are capable of understanding and using everyday expressions that are used frequently to satisfy immediate needs. At this level, for example, learners are able to introduce themselves and introduce others and provide personal information about their home and belongings to people that know them as long as the interlocutor speaks slowly and clearly.

Level A2: This is accomplished when language learners are capable of understanding frequently used phrases in areas in which they are knowledgeable, such as basic information about themselves and their family, shopping, and places of interest. At this level, they are also able to communicate in order to execute

simple tasks and routine activities that do not require much verbal interaction and in which the information is related to habitual activities. These individuals are also able to express ideas in simple terms related to their past activities, surroundings, and immediate needs.

During the process and at the end of the course the ninth grade students, the target group of the investigator, they will have reached the communicative competence for A1 proficiency level (basic user). In general, referring to writing skills and level A1.2 exit profile, students will be able to:

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

- ❖ Take simple notes from a dictated or recorded message within the limits of their vocabulary for the level.

- ❖ Write sequences of simple phrases and sentences about themselves and imaginary people, where they live, and what they do for short informational, transactional and expository texts (e.g. flyers, posters, personal letters, autobiographies, etc.) by using basic appropriate punctuation marks.

- ❖ Carry out correspondence (e.g. personal letter) with a partner, by giving and eliciting information and advice on personal, educational, and public issues.

Regarding writing, within each level there are many methods and strategies that can be implemented in the classroom in order to develop basic writing skills. In this research process we also focus on the implementation of Jigsaw as cooperative language learning as a crucial part and influential on students' performance. Coming up next, we will see how the cooperative language learning

is defined according to some authors, their opinions and their decisive impact on the teaching and learning process.

Cooperative Language Learning

Cooperative Language Learning (CLL) is part of a more general instructional approach also known Collaborative Learning (CL). Cooperative Learning is an approach to teaching that makes maximum use of cooperative activities involving pairs and small groups of learners in the classroom. It has been defined as follows:

Cooperative learning is group learning activity organized so that learning is dependent on the socially structured exchange of information between learners in groups and in which each learner is held accountable for his or her own learning and is motivated to increase the learning of others (Olsen, Kagan, 1992).

Cooperative Learning has antecedents in proposals for peer-tutoring and peer-monitoring that go back hundreds of years and longer. The early twentieth century U.S. educator John Dewey is usually credited with promoting the idea of building cooperation in learning into regular classrooms on a regular and systematic basis (Rodgers 1988). It was more generally promoted and developed in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s as a response to the forced integration of public schools and has been substantially refined and developed since then. Educators were concerned that traditional models of classroom learning were teacher-fronted, fostered competition rather than cooperation, and favored majority students. They believed that minority students might fall behind higher-achieving

students in this kind of learning environment. Cooperative Learning in this context sought to do the following (Rodgers, 1988).

❖ Raise the achievement of all students, including those who are gifted or academically handicapped.

❖ Help the teacher build positive relationships among students.

❖ Give the students the experiences they need for healthy social, physiological, and cognitive development.

❖ Replace the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools with a team-based, high-performance organizational structure (Johnson, Johnson, Holubec , 1994).

In second language teaching, CL (where it is often referred to as Cooperative Language Learning-CLL) has been embraced as a way of promoting communicative interaction in the classroom and is seen as an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. It is viewed as a learner-centered approach to teaching held to offer advantages over teacher-fronted classrooms methods. In language teaching its goals are:

❖ To provide opportunities for naturalistic second language acquisition through the use of interactive pair and group activities.

❖ To provide teachers with a methodology to enable them to achieve this goal and the one that can be applied I a variety of curriculum settings (e.g., content-based, foreign language classrooms; mainstreaming)

❖ To enable focused attention to particular lexical items, language structures, and communicative functions through the use of interactive tasks.

❖ To provide opportunities for learners to develop successful learning and communication strategies.

❖ To enhance learner motivation and reduce learner stress and to create a positive affective classroom climate.

CLL is thus an approach that crosses both mainstream education and second and foreign language teaching (Richards, Rodgers, 2001).

Cooperative language learning descriptors

The success of CL required a structured program of learning carefully designed so that learners interact with each other and are more motivated to increase each other's learning. Olsen and Kagan (1992) propose the following key of elements of successful group-based leaning in CL.

❖ Positive interdependence

❖ Group formation

❖ Individual accountability

❖ Social skills

❖ Face to face interaction

Positive interdependence occurs when group members feel that what helps one member helps all and what hurts one member hurts all. It is created by the structure of CL tasks and by building a spirit of mutual support within the group. For example, a group may produce a single product such an essay or the scores for members of a group may be averaged.

Group formation is an important factor in creating positive interdependence. Factors involved in setting up groups include:

❖ Deciding on the size of the group: This will depend on the tasks they have to carry out, the age of the learners, and time limits for the lesson. Typical group size is from two to four.

❖ Assigning students to groups: Groups can be teacher-selected, random, or student-selected, although teacher-selected is recommended as the usual mode so as to create groups that are heterogeneous on such variables as past achievement, ethnicity or sex.

❖ Students' roles in groups: Each group member has a specific role to play in a group, such as noise monitor, turn-taker monitor, recorder, or summarizer.

Individual accountability involves both group and individual performance, for example, by assigning each student a grade or his or her portion of a team project or by calling on a student at random to share with the whole class, with group members, or with another group.

Social skills determine the way students interact with each other as teammates. Usually some explicit instruction in social skills is needed to ensure successful interaction.

Face to face interaction 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.

The cooperative learning as a communicative language strategy

It is important first to establish exactly what we mean by cooperative learning. We could say in essence cooperative learning requires pupils to work together in small groups to support each other to improve their own learning and that of others. However, it is not quite so simple, because there are variations on cooperative learning and some severe arguments among academics to the value of each, for example should it include any element of extrinsic reward or should reward be purely intrinsic? (Jolliffe, 2007)

Cooperative learning is a student-centered, instructor-facilitated instructional strategy in which a small group of students is responsible for its own learning and the learning of all group members. Students interact with each other in the same group to acquire and practice the elements of a subject matter in order to solve a problem, complete a task or achieve a goal. It is an instructional method in which students work together in small, heterogeneous groups to complete a problem, project, or other instructional goal, while teachers act as guides or facilitators. This method works to reinforce a student's own learning as well as the learning of his or her fellow group members (Bick, 2005).

Teachers are often afraid to implement cooperative learning in the classroom because it requires them to give up some control. However, this method of instruction has been shown to increase student communication skills and academic achievement if done correctly.

Spencer Kagan (1989) recommends that teachers use the "structural approach" to cooperative learning, which involves "content-free ways of organizing social interaction in the classroom." Kagan explains that structures require a series of steps to be implemented into the group dynamic. Kagan lists well-known structures that have been successfully used in multiple grade levels and subject areas.

Panitz offers a similar definition; he goes on to add that the teacher maintains control of the learning environment, designs learning activities, structures work teams, and, in his view, does not empower students. Kagan (1989) contributes that in cooperative learning the teacher designs the social interaction structures as well as learning activities. Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) state that in cooperative learning students can maximize their own and each other's learning when they work together. Slavin (1996) argues that a critical element of cooperative learning is group team work and team goals (Li, 2005).

Cooperative learning changes students' and teachers' roles in classrooms. The ownership of teaching and learning is shared by groups of students, and is no longer the only responsibility of the teacher. The authority of setting goals, assessing learning, and facilitating learning is shared by all. Students have more opportunities to actively participate in their learning, question and challenge each other, share and discuss their ideas, and internalize their learning. Along with improving academic learning, cooperative learning helps students engage in

thoughtful discourse and examine different perspectives, and it has been proven to increase students' self-esteem, motivation, and empathy.

Some challenges of using cooperative learning include releasing the control of learning, managing noise levels, resolving conflicts, and assessing student learning. Carefully structured activities can help students learn the skills to work together successfully, and structured discussion and reflection on group process can help avoid some problems.

Current strategies of cooperative learning

Blind Sequencing (teambuilding, thinking)

Teams work to sequence cards in their proper order, but there is a catch – each student holds his or her own cards, and no one else can see what is on them.

❖ One student on a team will be the dealer. He equally distributes cards among team members face down making sure no one can see what's on the cards.

❖ Students mark the back of their cards with initials, a number, letter or geometric shape to identify them as their cards.

❖ In turn, each student describes his or her cards as well as possible to teammates in an attempt to make it easy for the team to sequence the cards.

❖ After all the cards have been described, the team works together to put the cards in the proper order. Students sequence their cards face down on the table. No card is set on the table unless all teammates agree. If the team gets

stuck, only the original card holder can peek at the card and describe it to the team.

❖ Once the team thinks they have properly sequenced the cards, they flip over the cars and check to see how they did. If the sequence is correct, they celebrate with a team cheer. If the sequence is incorrect, they correct it and discuss what went wrong and how they could do better next time (Kagan S. , 1988).

Find My Rule (thinking, classbuilding)

This is a great strategy for encouraging logical thinking and inductive/deductive reasoning. This activity works well for introducing a new unit, grouping students randomly for cooperative learning, and for developing problem-solving and categorizing skills.

❖ Teacher prepares identity cards, related to an overall theme and to each other by a "rule" (one per student).

❖ Teacher announces that students will need to form groups of a given size by circulating throughout the room to locate students who have identity cards that are connected or related to their own by some commonality or "rule."

❖ Teacher gives an example and checks for understanding.

❖ Teacher passes an envelope containing all identity cards around the classroom.

❖ Students take one card each and circulate around the room to try and find others who have identity cards that are related to theirs.

❖ Once all members of the group have been found, the group will find a place to sit together.

❖ Group members will articulate the rule that connects all their identities and will try to guess the theme to which all the groups are connected (Kagan S. , 1988).

Find the Fiction (teambuilding, mastery, thinking)

Students pick out the fictitious statement from a set of three statements.

❖ Teammates write 3 statements: two true, one false.

❖ One student on each team stands, then reads his or her statements to teammates.

❖ Without consulting teammates, each student writes down his or her own best guess as to which statement is false.

❖ Teammates discuss and reach consensus on their "best guess."

❖ Teammates announce their guess.

❖ The standing student announces the false statement.

❖ Students celebrate: If the team guessed correctly, the standing student claps for teammates. If the team was stumped and didn't guess correctly, teammates clap for the standing student.

❖ The next teammate stands to share. The process is repeated from Step 2 (Kagan S. , 1988).

RallyTable (Mastery, thinking, communication)

In pairs, students alternate generating written responses or solving problems.

❖ Cooperative teams are given one piece of paper and one pen or pencil.

❖ Teacher poses a problem or provides a task to which there are multiple possible answers, steps, or procedures.

❖ The teacher provides an example and checks for understanding. A time limit is set.

❖ The teacher selects a student to begin in each team.

❖ Students quickly write their word or phrase and pass their paper to the team member on the left.

❖ The paper continues to go around and around the table as each student adds to the team's list.

❖ The teacher calls time. All pencils/pens are placed on the team table.

❖ The teams take turns sharing their responses with the rest of the class (Kagan S. , 1998).

Jigsaw

Differentiated but predetermined input – evaluation and synthesis of facts and opinions

❖ Each group member receives a different piece of information.

❖ Students regroup in topic groups (expert groups) composed of people with the same piece to master the material and prepare to teach it:

❖ Students return to home (Jigsaw groups) to share their information with each other.

❖ Students synthesize the information through discussion.

❖ Each student produces an assignment of part of a group project, or take a test, to demonstrate synthesis of all the information presented by all group members.

❖ This method of organization may require team-building activities for home groups and topic groups, long-term group involvement, and rehearsal of presentation methods.

❖ This method is very useful in the multilevel class, allowing for both homogeneous and heterogeneous grouping in terms of English proficiency.

❖ Information-gap activities in language teaching are jigsaw activities in the form of pair work. Partners have data (in the form of text, tables, charts, etc.) with missing information to be supplied during interaction with another partner (Coelho, 1992).

The Jigsaw as a current cooperative learning strategy

Jigsaw is a cooperative learning strategy which each member of a group was assigned a different part of material. Then, all the students from different groups who had the same learning material gathered together and formed an "expert group" to discuss and communicate with each other until they all mastered the material. Later, the students returned back to their home group to teach the material to other members of their group (Mengduo; Xiaoling, 2010).

The unique characteristic of jigsaw is that students are given portion of the total learning task master and then teach that segment to the other members of their team (Slavin in Anonymous, 2010:30).

Jigsaw is said to be able to increase students' learning since "a) it is less threatening for many students, b) it increases the amount of student participation in the classroom, c) it reduces the need for competitiveness and d) it reduces the teacher's dominance in the classroom" (Longman Dictionary, 1998). Consequently, Jigsaw can successfully reduce students' reluctance to participate in the classroom activities and help create an active learner-centered atmosphere. It can be concluded that jigsaw is a teaching method where the students are actively involved and participating in the classroom to increase the students' learning.

❖ Each student being assigned a particular section of text, which can be a reading comprehension passage, short story, biography or a chapter from a book. For groups of four, the expert sheet consists of four questions each of which focuses on one of the four themes of the reading materials. Every member of each group is responsible to answer one of the questions in the sheet from reading the relevant parts in reading materials. Questions in the expert sheet can be randomly assigned to the group members. Every student reads the relevant materials alone. Alternatively, the reading of the materials can be done as homework prior to coming to class to save lesson time, if the materials are lengthy.

❖ Students working in the same question in the expert sheet for man expert group. Four expert groups are thus formed. Students with the same topics meet in expert groups to discuss them. In order to facilitate discussion, guiding questions can be provided to each expert group. Every member is

encouraged to take notes of what they have discussed so that they can teach their teammates in their home group after the discussion. Whenever a problem arises, students should try to find their own solution before seeking help from the teacher. Conflicts should be resolved using different social skills. Depending on the type of questions, it may not require a group consensus for the question discussed.

❖ Then, students go back to the home group from the expert group to teach one another the things they have discussed. They are reminded to help each other to master the materials as much as possible. Teachers can conduct a short whole class discussion after the teaching task in all home groups ended. The aim of the class discussion is for clearing up doubts, if any, as well as for provoking further discussion of the topic.

❖ Students take an individual short test of quiz after mastering the reading materials. Immediately after the test, members exchange their paper for marking, referring to an answer sheet provided by the teacher. The score of each student is entered under the column of test score on the group score sheet. The test scores are then computed as improvement scores by comparing with each member's base score that represents his/her past performance.

❖ The group with the highest group improvement score or with score reaching a pre-determined level can receive a certificate or group reward.

Since the only way students can learn sections other than their own is to listen carefully to their team members, they are motivated to support and show interest in one another's work. Jigsaw is primarily used in social studies and other subjects where learning from text is important (Li, 2005).

Teacher's role in Jigsaw

In a jigsaw classroom, the teacher organizes practice and communicative activities, but this does not mean leaving the students to learn all by themselves. Instead the teacher should try to help the students take greater control over their learning by becoming actively involved. The primary role of the teacher is to choose learning material, structure the groups, explain the cooperative nature of group work, provide an environment conducive for this type of work, monitor group work and assist students in working with the material. "The teacher needs to float from group to group in order to observe the process.

Intervene if any group is having trouble such as a member being dominating or disruptive. There will come a point that the group leader should handle this task. Teachers can whisper to the group leader as to how to intervene until the group leader can effectively do it themselves" (Jigsaw Classroom, Online).

Jigsaw as a Technique

Technique is the method of procedure, or way to use basic skills, regardless to any work or to carry out a methodical or mechanical operation. The aim of technique is the accomplishment of a particular task by implementing several manners or systematic ways which implies a logical order and a final well done arrangement.

It is as a type of information gap technique, in which group of learners have different information that is needed to put together to reconstruct the whole through class discussion or group interaction (Richards and Schmidt 2002:278). Also, Roger and Johnson (2000, 1-6) define jigsaw as "separate teams of students learn various concepts and then teams are reassembled so that each one of the member can be an expert at a different concept". Felder and Brent (1994:10) said that jigsaw is "one of cooperation techniques". It is problem-solving activity by getting students to listen to different chunks of information, the students have share with other the information has acquired in order to build up a complete picture of that particular situation (McDonough & Shaw, 2003:145). It involves learners combining different pieces of information to form a whole (three individuals or groups may have three different parts of a story and have to piece the story together) (Richards &Rodgers, 2001:134).

The jigsaw technique of teaching is aimed at developing the interactions among members of the class, on processes that help them pursue common goals, and on the give and take of information related to those goals. The teacher plays a facilitative role within the classmate, subtly guiding, reflecting, and helping clarify, but not taking dominant directive stance (Charles, 1983:128).

Jigsaw as a Strategy

Strategy is a detailed plan for accomplishing success in any situation or the skill of planning in advance. In terms of education instructional strategies include all approaches that a teacher may take to actively involve students in learning. These strategies drive a teacher's instruction as they work to meet specific

learning objectives. In short, strategy is a term that refers to a group of thoughts or ideas that provides general guidance for specific actions in educational environment.

As "each member of a group has a piece of information needed to complete a group task" (Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics, 1998) in the EFL classroom, jigsaw is a cooperative learning technique that requires everyone's cooperative effort to produce the final product. Just as in a jigsaw puzzle, each piece—each student's part—is essential for the production and full understanding of the final product. If each student's part is essential, then each student is essential. That is precisely what makes this strategy so effective (Longman Dictionary, 1998).

Strategy in practice

❖ As with any learning process with independence and interdependence as the goals, effective use of the jigsaw technique begins with teacher modeling. Explain to students that they will be working in different cooperative groups to learn content: a jigsaw or home group, made up of students who have read different texts, and expert group that all reads the same text.

❖ Then, with a piece of text appropriate for your group of students, read and think-aloud as if you are working in an expert group, focusing on thought processes such as: How can I put these ideas into my own words? What connections do I see between this material and things we have already

learned, or from my own life? How will I tell the members of my jigsaw, or home, group about this material?

❖ To prepare students for returning to their home, or jigsaw, group, demonstrate thinking they can use to monitor their performance there:

- Is what I am saying helping the others learn the material?

- Are people understanding what I am saying and making connections between their reading and mine?

❖ Based on your knowledge of the students in your classroom, organize a set of texts that students will read in their expert groups and report on to their home groups. You may wish to find texts that complement each other, but offer varying challenges in difficulty. It may be useful to assemble a text set that offers contrasting views on the same topic. Or, you are learning goals may lead you to select text that offer information on various facets of a concept that will become clear only when students come together in their home groups after working with their expert groups (such as three books, each about one of the states of matter).

❖ Organize students in their home or jigsaw groups and share with them the learning goal or guiding question for the lesson. Remind them of the modeling they saw.

❖ Re-organize students into their expert groups. You may find it useful to use numbers for home groups and letters for expert groups (student 3-B for example, will read text B with a group of students and then report back to group 3, where a student has read text A, C, D, and E). Students in the

expert group should read the text and make sure everyone has a strong enough understanding to share with their home groups. It may be a good idea for students to produce a written summary or short list of ideas they plan to take back.

❖ Throughout the jigsaw process, circulate the room and observe the groups as they read and discuss. When you notice difficulties, try to put the responsibility for finding a solution back on students to enhance the cooperative benefits of working with Jigsaw.

❖ Reconvene the home groups and ask students to share their expertise with one another. Students should write about the way their expert knowledge was changed or enhanced by listening to their peers (Filkins, 1997).

Many benefits were gained when jigsaw strategy was used in the researchers' lessons. However, this does not imply that all classroom activities should be carried out in groups. Rather what is stressed is that group activities should be a regular and significant part of EFL classroom. Implementing jigsaw strategy in the EFL classroom makes it possible to focus on language learners, and thereby language learning becomes "more interdependent than independent" (Benson, 2003: 292). In conclusion, as regards language learners, jigsaw strategy is a suitable way to encourage learners' involvement and active interest as well as a useful technique to focus on the language use to accomplish cooperative learning tasks in the EFL Classroom.

f. METHODOLOGY

Design of the research

Action research 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 is going to intervene in a deliberate way in the problematic situation by means of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

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 Jigsaw.

Methods techniques and instruments

Methods

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

The *Scientific method* will facilitate the study of the Jigsaw strategy applied in the developing to improve vocabulary. 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 *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 observations, interviews and teacher's diary.

This work will use the research spiral cycles proposed by (Kemmis, 2000) since the process is likely to be more fluently, 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 him/her reflect upon his 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 his/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 consider variables and statistics whereas qualitative researcher considers an understanding of words or actions. Both quantitative and qualitative instruments are self-developed by the researcher taking into account the principles of question construction. Being this the case, paper and pencil methods (test) will be used to

develop quantitative data collection instruments, observations, and interviews (questionnaire, observation sheet) for the qualitative ones.

Tests

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

Pretest - Posttest

A researcher-made pretest will provide a measure on the performance of writing skills before the participants (ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School) receive a treatment through the intervention plan designed in this research project. After the treatment or intervention plan, a post-test will measure again the performance of the writing skills in order to make a pretest-posttest comparison of the cognitive dimension of the performance of writing skills of the participants being treated.

Questionnaire

A researcher-made questionnaire will be administered to the participants to answer question related to their attitudes and feelings toward the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy. Likewise the test, a pre and post questionnaire will be administered in order to make comparison between the results. Furthermore, the data collection by the questionnaires will support the test results.

Observation

The emphasis during observation will be on understanding the natural environment as lived by the ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School during their English classes. There will be two types of observations as detailed bellow.

Non-participant observation

In nonparticipant observation, the researcher is not involved in the situation being observed. He observes and records behaviors but does not interact or participate in the setting under study. The objective of this non-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 participant in the situation being observed. The researcher will participate deliberately in the problematic situation by means of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.

Observation sheet

Whether in the participant and non-participant observation, the researcher will need an observation sheet to record the participants' behaviors shown on both variables: performance of the writing skills and the attitudes and feelings toward the linking language as a cooperative-based strategy. This observation sheet is a

self-developed instrument that describes accurately and comprehensible all the relevant aspects of the situation. In other words, it contains the descriptor of the variables of the action research, the issue under treatment (writing skills), and the treatment itself (Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy).

Procedures

The process of this action research work will include the following stages:

First, the problematic was detected in advance through the observation, where the researcher could realize that the students do not have a satisfactory level of the English writing skills because of the lack didactic resources.

After that, the researcher investigated the strategies and activities that can be applied using the Jigsaw strategy; this allowed the researcher to have enough information to plan the teaching activities that will be developed through the working plan.

The intervention plan will start with the application of the questionnaire and the test, which will allow finding out the strategies and activities carried out with didactic resources by the teacher and to identify the level of writing that the students have. These results will also help the researcher to reflect about the best teaching practices, the motivation, the evaluation process and the attitude that a teacher should have in order to catch students' attention, and in this case, to get students develop a good range of writing skills.

Then, the teacher will apply the most suitable strategies and activities with the Jigsaw strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills of the students, this process will be done with the help of other didactic resources and teaching aids that provide a good classroom environment, motivation and taking advantage of time at maximum. Once finished the teaching activities, a second questionnaire and test will be applied in order to verify if the strategies and activities with the use of the Jigsaw strategy have improved the English writing skills of the students.

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

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

Tabulation

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

Organization

The researcher will organize the research work with the information received in all the stages applied in order to compare and analyze the impact of the

intervention. A report of the intervention will be disseminated with the findings and ideas among the teachers, the partners and the school.

Description

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

Population Sample

The ninth grade of basic education, at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School has six students. They are among 15 to 20 years old. They receive five periods of English class per week; each class is about 35 minutes. All of them are attending to English classes.

Intervention plan and observation plan

WEEK ONE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High school, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Presentation and Pre-test
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to listen to their classmates' presentations. **Speaking** Students will be able to introduce themselves. **Writing** Students will be able to create biography cards about themselves. **Key Vocabulary:** First name, last name, age, birthday, family members, favorite sport, favorite activity, favorite kind of music, favorite food.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** • Teacher introduces the learning outcomes for the class. • To get started, teacher introduces himself and applies a strategy called *name circle*, the procedure consist on get all the students to stand in a large circle. Then each student must say his or her name clearly. One student points to another student, calls out his name and the two students change places. The second student calls points, calls out the name of another student and they change places. As a variation, the students stand in a circle. One student calls out someone's name and throws a ball to that person. They call out someone else's name and throw the ball to them. • In order to active students´ prior knowledge teacher uses the Guess who you are strategy, in which students will work in pairs. Each student writes the name of a famous person on a post-it note or piece of masking tape without letting their partner see. Then they place the tape/post on their partners back. One student will start by asking yes-or-no questions to try to figure out who they are. Once one student has discovered who they are, the next student asking questions to figure out who

they are. Teacher has to do some modeling first show them what you want to do. Teacher put some examples questions they can use to help the process along.

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

Connection

- After the warm-up activity, teacher applies a pre-test in order to know and analyze the level of writing skills that students have.
- After the pre-test, teacher develops a mystery person game material: withe board, chair facing the board. Have a student goes to sit in the chair that is facing the board. Their back will be to the rest of the class. Teacher puts on the board words, phrases, or saying. Etc. then teacher will choose a 2nd student by pointing to them (not using their name because the student in the chair is going to guess who say the word). That student will have to say the word the teacher indicates. The teacher can have the words on the boar numbered and say which number the 2nd student will say. The 1st student in the chair will then try to guess who it was that said the word. If they are correct hen that student will take their place in their chair, if they are not, they remain in the chair and another student is selected to say different word.
- After the game students work creating a individually which must contain name, age, birthday, hobbies, cellphone, profession, grade, city, favorite sport, favorite movie, favorite music, favorite food, favorite famous people, family finally add a photo.

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 to take notes about each

	presentation and write it down in a paper.
	• As homework, students create and write a biographical card of a friend or family.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Biography cards Visual aids: biography cards Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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WEEK TWO	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Parts of the house
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand the dialogue and the new vocabulary about the parts of a house. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce orally about their favorite parts in the house. **Writing** Students will be able to individually create vocabulary about their favorite parts of the house by writing a biographical card. **Key Vocabulary:** Bathroom, bedroom, dining room, garage, kitchen, living room, stairs, downstairs, upstairs.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** • I am building a lesson based on the most well-known parts of a house. • I will introduce the Content and Language objectives for the lesson on construction paper. • To get started, Teacher will present to the class about some partsof the house. Then, ask students, one by one, the following question: *What is your favorite part of thehouse?* Finally these answers are written on the board, helping the class with all the vocabulary they need. **Connection** • After the warm-up activity, I will present flashcards of the new vocabulary in context. Each part of the house must be represented in a card with the specific picture in one side and the definition in the other side. • Students will have to write about the information of each part of the house by taking the information in cards using both sides. • Teacher will encourage the students to change their seats in order to have them work with different peers. • Teacher will monitor the students to check if they

	are right or wrong, providing them the appropriate feedback.
	Once they have agreed on a definition for each part of the house, they have to go back to their own seats.
	Affirming
	• Once the students have gone back to their positions, they have to work with a new partner who is next to them.
	• At this time, I will hand out cards with the parts of the house shown on them.
	• The new partners should follow some steps to work with the cards that they already given plus the Jigsaw strategy.
	• Students will have to write one idea according to each picture they were given. They should use the new learnt vocabulary and then pass the card to the next group, and so on.
	Teacher will be observing the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• Once the pairs have done the one idea, teacher will assess the whole class by asking them to describe the whole picture by telling all the previous written ideas.
	• As homework, students will write a biographical card to express the part of the house they like most (at least 3). Students will write the description of the part of the house as well as the reasons they like most. (four or five sentences)
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Jigsaw cards Visual aids: Flash cards Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

WEEK THREE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	What someone is doing now and describe what is happening right now.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand the dialogue. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce the dialogue in pairs. **Writing** Students will be able to individually compose a list of the new vocabulary. **Key Vocabulary:** Bathroom, bedroom, dining room, garage, kitchen, living room, stairs, downstairs, upstairs, bother, grumpy.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	**Activation** - I am building a lesson based on most usual parts of the house. - I will introduce the Content and Language objectives for the lesson on construction paper. - Review verbs by asking students *What verbs can you remember from the last few units?* Elicit as many as students can recall and write them on the board. Give hints for any important ones they have missed. - Tell students *You can use these verbs to talk about the things you usually do. Now you will learn how to use them in a different way. You will learn how to talk about what you are doing right now.* Introduce the unit title. Explain that by using be and adding -ing to do, you can ask what someone is doing right now. **Connection** - Using the large photo, have students look at the pictures. Ask Who do you see in the pictures? (Andy, Liza, and Brian) Where are Andy and Liza? (at home; in the living room) Is Brian at home? (Yes, he is at the computer.) Using the board, help students construct present continuous statements to answer these questions: What is Andy doing right now? (He is watching TV.) What is Liza doing right now? (She is talking.)

	Affirming Have students cover the dialogue. • Read the directions aloud. Using the example, make sure that students understand *cross out*. Then call on a volunteer to read the sentences aloud. • Play the audio two or more times and have students work independently to complete the exercise. If helpful, pause after each answer on the second or third listening to give students time to write. • Have students uncover the dialogue. Play the audio again as students read along. To check, have volunteers read aloud the original sentences first before reading the corrected sentences. • Select key vocabulary, structures, and communicative phrases to discuss more fully, such as the present continuous forms: Is he reading? No, he is not. He is writing an e-mail. Who is he writing to? Is he e-mailing his parents?). Go over phrases such as bothering, just, I know, Gee, and I'm out of here (I'm leaving right now). • Have the class repeat the dialogue, then have students practice in pairs, changing roles after each reading. Finally, select a pair to perform for the class.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Jigsaw cards Visual aids: Flash cards Student's notebook Student's textbook
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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WEEK FOUR	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Expressions with similar meanings and your favorite places in the house
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand some new expressions with similar meanings. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce orally the new expressions and their similar meanings. Students will be able to produce orally the rooms and parts of a house. **Writing** Students will be able to individually write a sentence with their favorite part of the house. **Key Vocabulary:** What is your favorite place in your house? Why is it your favorite? What is in that room? Sounds awesome/cool, me too, no way, really?
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** - Read the instructions aloud, then play the audio. Pause after each line and have students repeat. Encourage them to mimic the tone. - Have students work individually to match the expressions. - Check by having volunteers read each Useful expression and its equivalent. **Connection** - Play the audio and help students pronounce these words. Elicit the meanings of any terms students may not be able to guess. - Have students work individually to label the parts of the house. - Check answers by pointing to each room and eliciting the number and name. - Teach or elicit the vocabulary for the furniture in the house. Write the words on the board. Then have students classify them according to which room they belong in. - In pairs, students quiz each other on the room and furniture vocabulary. One student points to

	a room or item, and the other student names it.
	• Lead a discussion of how the house in the picture is the same as or different from houses in the students' country.
	Affirming
	• **PAIRS.** Read the instructions and go over the Useful language with the class. Model a conversation with a student, incorporating as much of the Useful language as possible. Then have students work in pairs. Walk around to monitor as students talk.
	• To check, ask students to share which room or rooms were the most popular.
	• Walk around, helping when necessary.
	• Call on pairs to present their conversations to the class.
	Teacher will be observing the students during the activity to provide information either about the instructions or about the content.
	• Call on several students to present their conversations the class.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Jigsaw cards Visual aids: Flash cards Student's notebook Student's textbook
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

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WEEK FIVE	
RESEARCH PROBLEM	*How does the Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Affirmative and negative statements with present continuous.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand the present continuous. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce orally statements with present continuous. **Writing** Students will be able to individually create short sentences with present continuous. **Key Vocabulary:** Play, study, fix, show, write, use, leave, make, plan, run, shop, get.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** - On the board, write: *He is writing an e-mail.* - Say *In the sentence* He is writing an e-mail, is writing *tells me that the action is happening now. He is doing it now, right at this very moment. The verb is in the present continuous.* - Draw separate boxes around *is*, the main verb *(write)*, and *-ing*. Above it, write *Present Continuous.* **Connection** - Have students look at the grammar chart. Read the affirmative statements aloud as students say them after you. Then read the affirmative statements again and have the class read the negative statements. - Point out the spelling information at the bottom of the chart. Tell students that verbs can sometimes change their spelling when *-ing* is added. Say *The spelling of* listen *and* play *do not change.* Ask *Does the spelling of* smile *change when you add* -ing*?* (Yes, you drop the *e* and add *-ing*.) Ask the same question about *sit*. - Have students work individually to complete the grammar rules. Check answers orally.

	• Use the board to elicit other key points about the grammar chart, such as the spelling rules for adding *-ing*. **Affirming** • Read the instructions aloud for the first group and elicit the spelling change for the first item. Then have students work individually to write the present continuous forms of the other verbs in the group. Follow the same procedures for the following groups. • Check by calling on students to come to the board and spell the continuous forms of items 2–4 in each group. • Call on a student to read the instructions. Elicit the answer to the first item. Before having students work individually to complete the sentences, remind them to use the spelling rules that they have just learned. • Check by asking volunteers to read the answers and spell out the verbs ending in *-ing*.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Jigsaw cards Visual aids: Flash cards Student's notebook Student's textbook
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from ABBS, Brian. BARKER, Chris. FREEBAIRN, Ingrid, English Book level 3, First Edition 2008, Pearson Education Inc. 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 Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Statements with present continuous
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to understand the present continuous. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce orally statements with present continuous. **Writing** Students will be able to individually create short sentences with present continuous. **Key Vocabulary:** Play, study, fix, show, write, use, leave, make, plan, run, shop, get.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** • On the board, write: *He is writing an e-mail.* • Say *In the sentence* He is writing an e-mail, is writing *tells me that the action is happening now. He is doing it now, right at this very moment. The verb is in the present continuous.* • Draw separate boxes around *is*, the main verb *(write)*, and *-ing*. Above it, write *Present Continuous*. • As you point to the first picture, ask *What is the girl in the picture doing?* Remind students that they are talking about what the people are doing right now, so they should answer with the present continuous. Encourage students to use contractions. Call on a student to answer. **Connection** • Have students work individually to write sentences about the pictures. Walk around to monitor as students are working. • Have students check their answers with a partner before you elicit them for the class. **Affirming** • Have students look at the photograph. Ask Where's Brian? (He's in front of the Gibsons' house.) What's he doing? (He's smiling.) Tell

	students that this is a photo of Brian that he is sending to his parents in Australia. Introduce the verb attach by asking students whether they sometimes attach pictures to their e-mail messages. • Read the instructions and elicit the answers for the first two items. Tell students to complete the e-mail, using contractions when possible. Have students work individually to complete the text. • When students have finished, ask if there are any words in the letter that they do not understand. Elicit or explain the meanings. • Call on volunteers to read the completed paragraphs. After each answer, ask the student to spell the verb ending in -ing. Then have students form pairs and take turns reading the paragraphs. • Read the instructions and elicit the answer to the first item. Point out that students should first write a negative statement and then write an affirmative statement with the correct information. Point out the use of a subject pronoun in the second sentence. (He instead of Brian) Then elicit the answer to the second item orally. • Have students work individually or in pairs to complete the exercise. Check orally
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Jigsaw cards Visual aids: Flash cards Student's notebook Student's textbook Rubric
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 1: Observation checklist Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from ABBS, Brian. BARKER, Chris. FREEBAIRN, Ingrid, English Book level 2, First Edition 2008, Pearson Education Inc. 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 Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Statements with be in present continuous tense.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to identify the present continuous tense with be. **Speaking** Students will be able to produce orally statements with present continuous. **Writing** Students will be able to write short sentences or conversations using the present continuous. **Key Vocabulary:** Play, study, fix, show, write, use, leave, make, plan, run, shop, get.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** - On the board, write the heading Present continuous and under it, *Yes/No questions.* Under *Yes/No questions*, write *you/study?* Elicit how to form a *Yes/No* question with these words and write the answer on the board. (Are you studying?) - To the right of *Yes/No questions*, write *Affirmative answers* and *Negative answers*. Elicit the affirmative and negative answers to *Are you studying?* (Yes, I am; No, I'm not.) Write the answers under the appropriate heading. - Next, write the heading *Information question* and underneath write *What/you/do?* Elicit how to form a present continuous information question. (What are you doing?) **Connection** - Have students look at the grammar chart. Read the *Yes/No* questions aloud and have students say them after you. Then read these questions again and have students read the affirmative and negative short answers aloud. Follow the same procedures with the information questions. - Have students complete the Discovering grammar questions individually. Check orally. - Use the board to elicit other key points about the

	grammar chart, such as how to form information questions with other *Wh-* question words. **Affirming** • **PAIRS.** Have students look at the picture. Elicit or explain the vocabulary students will need to talk about the picture, such as teaching, taking notes, talking, and listening to music. Then quickly read the names and have students pronounce them after you. • Read the instructions aloud. Assign pairs. Give students thirty seconds to study the picture. • **PAIRS.** Read the instructions and example aloud. Call on a pair to model asking and answering Yes/No questions about the people in the picture. • Assign pairs. Tell pairs to switch roles. • Have all students close their books. Ask questions about the picture.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Visual and audio aids: Flash cards and power points with vocabulary, music Student's notebook Student's textbook
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from ABBS, Brian. BARKER, Chris. FREEBAIRN, Ingrid, English Book level 2, First Edition 2008, Pearson Education Inc. 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 Jigsaw as cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?*
TOPIC	Statements with be in present continuous tense.
LEARNING OUTCOMES	**Listening** Students will be able to identify the stress on important words. **Speaking** Students will be able to ask what someone is doing now. **Writing** Students will be able to write instant messages about the weekend. **Key Vocabulary:** Play, study, fix, show, write, use, leave, make, plan, run, shop, get.
INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	(Procedures / Teaching techniques) **Activation** - Read the directions and example aloud. Model if helpful. - Play the audio, pausing for students to repeat. If helpful, use hand gestures to indicate stressed words. - Have pairs practice the exchanges. - Play the audio and have students listen and repeat with stress on important words. **Connection** **PAIRS.** First, have pairs practice the conversation in Exercise A, switching roles after the first reading. Then read the instructions aloud for Exercise B. Call on a pair to model. Suggest they use their real names, think of an activity they are doing and ask their partner about brothers or sisters. Have students exchange names of family members before they begin. - Have students role-play several times; tell them to change roles after each round. Circulate and monitor, helping as needed. - Check by calling on one or more pairs to perform. **Affirming** **PAIRS.** Read the instructions aloud and tell

	students to read the instant message conversation. Then assign pairs. Tell them to work together to complete the conversation. • Call on several pairs to read their messages aloud. • Read the instructions aloud and explain or elicit the meanings of inventions, scientists, and the environment. Then read the statements and check that students understand robot, makes clothes, and eats garbage. • Play the audio two or more times. Then elicit the answers orally. • Read the instructions and each statement aloud. Go over the meanings of saving energy, saving water, and stopping pollution. • Play the audio again once or twice. Elicit the answers orally. If helpful, play the audio once more, pausing to elicit the gist of the conversation; then play the audio again for confirmation.
CLASSROOM RESOURCES	Visual and audio aids: Flash cards and power points with vocabulary, music Student's notebook Student's textbook
DATA COLLECTION	Data source 2: Students' writing samples, weekly Date source 3: Sub-tests on writing, bi-weekly Data collection source: sub-test on writing, bi-weekly
SUPPORT	Coaching and guidance from our university professor.

Adapted from ABBS, Brian. BARKER, Chris. FREEBAIRN, Ingrid, English Book level 2, First Edition 2008, Pearson Education Inc. 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.

ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE RESEARCH

Resources

Human

* The researcher: Julio Emanuel Macas Sizalima

* Students of ninth year of Basic Education at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period

Material

* Printed materials

* Books and eBooks

* Journals

* Video record

* Laptop

Technical

* Computer

* Printer

* Internet connection

g. BUDGET AND FINANCING

Resources	Cost
Internet connection	$40.00
Print of the project	$70.00
Video records	$10.00
Other	$30.00
TOTAL	$150.00

Financing

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

h. 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					
	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 x

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ANNEXES

Annex 1. Observation Sheet

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

CLASSROOM OBSERVATION CHEKLIST

OBSERVATION SHEET							
Observation #: **Topic:** **Objective of the session:**	**Date:** **Class size:** **Participants:** Ninth-grade students	**Location:** **Duration of the observation** (start/end times)**:** **Observer Involvement:** Participant / Non participant					
Independent variable: The Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy.							
Rating scale: 4 = always 3 = usually 2 = sometimes 1 = rarely 0 = not observed							
Descriptors		4	3	2	1	0	
All students clearly understand which group they belong to before the activity							
All students have opportunities to learn with and from peers							
All students take advantage of the given time to make or prepare their responses/report for the group´s							
Students ask their teacher/classmates for clarification to assist their peers during the performance of the academic activities							
Students listen to one another							
Students question to one another							
Assume personal responsibility being involved in the group							
Students disagree politely							
Shy pupils contribute to group work							
Students help other with the work when needed							
Students work well with other group members							
Students share ideas and opinions with the group							
Students consistently stay focused on the task and what needs to be done							
Students enjoy writing and respond favorably to written activities							

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.			
Spelling is 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.			

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE TEST / POST TEST

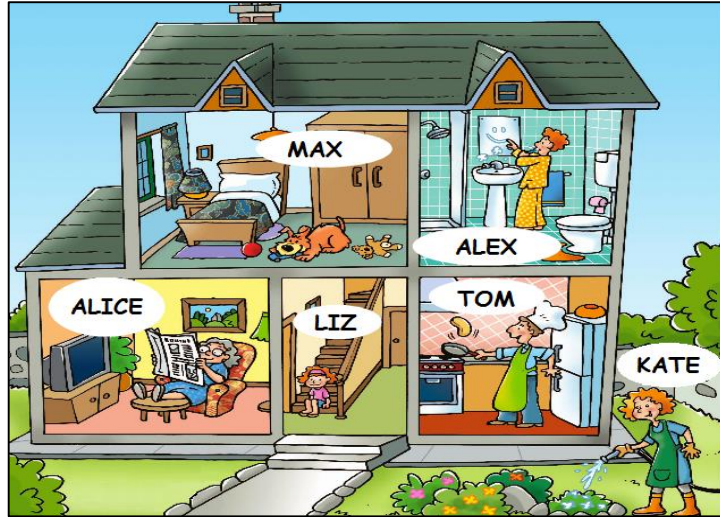**Student's code:** _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

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

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

Duration of the task: 30 minutes

Length of the paragraph: 6 – 10 lines

Alex's House

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you.

RUBRIC FOR THE PRE – POST TEST

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

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

Annex 3. Pre and Post Questionnaire

UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

DATA COLLECTION SOURCE: PRE QUESTIONNAIRE / POST

QUESTIONNAIRE

Student's code: _____

Date: _____

Instructions:

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.

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

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

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

   Working in groups   (   ) 4 Very Important
   Working in pairs   (   ) 3 Important
   Working alone   (   ) 2 Somewhat Important
   Working 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 group work.**

   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 the 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 Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period

Problem	Objectives	Theoretical frame	Methodological design (Action Research)	Techniques and instruments
General How does the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?	**General** To develop English basic writing skills through the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period	**Basic Writing Skills** ♦ Writing skills ♦ Writing sub-skills. ♦ Common reference levels ♦ Cooperative language learning ♦ Cooperative language learning descriptors	**Preliminary investigation** ♦ Observing the English classes ♦ Stating the background of the problem ♦ Describing current situation ♦ Locating and reviewing the literature ♦ Creating a methodological framework for research ♦ Designing an intervention plan	♦ Observation Sheet (Participant and Nonparticipant Observation) ♦ Pre and Post-test ♦ Pre and Post Questionnaire

Specific	Specific	The Jigsaw as a Cooperative Learning Strategy	Intervention and observation	
• What theoretical and methodological references about the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy are adequate for developing English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period? • What are the issues that limit the development of English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period? • What are the phases of the intervention plan that help the current issues to achieve a satisfactory outcome on developing the English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period? • Which Jigsaw techniques as a cooperative learning strategy are implemented to develop	• To research the theoretical and methodological references about the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy and its application on English basic writing skills. • To diagnose the issues that limit the development of English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period. • To design an intervention plan based on the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School,	♦ Jigsaw ♦ The Jigsaw as a current cooperative learning strategy. ♦ Teacher's role in jigsaw ♦ Jigsaw as a technique ♦ Jigsaw as a strategy ♦ Strategy in practice ♦ Cooperative learning descriptors: -Positive interdependence -Group formation -Individual accountability -Social skills -Structuring and structures	♦ Administering tests and questionnaires ♦ Observing and monitoring students´ performance according to the intervention plan **Presentation of research findings** ♦ Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquiries ♦ Organizing the final report	

English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period? • How does the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy reduce the difficulty to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period?	2014-2015 academic period. • To apply the most suitable techniques of the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy in order to develop English basic writing skills amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period. • To reflect upon the effectiveness that the Jigsaw as a cooperative learning strategy had amongst ninth-grade students at "Presidente Isidro Ayora" High School, 2014-2015 academic period.	♦ Current strategies of cooperative learning - Blind sequencing - Find my rule - Find the fiction - Rally table		

ANNEX GRADING SCALES

Pre and Post test

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

Pre and Post questionnaire

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

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