WRITING PROCESS APPROACH TO ENHANCE STUDENTS´ WRITING SKILL IN ENGLISH IN IV CYCLE OF ATABANZHA SCHOOL (BOGOTÁ)

FARIDY CAÑAVERAL CAÑON

SARA YEITH CASTAÑEDA SERRATO

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BOGOTA D.C.

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Research Project in option to the title of Master in Education

Tutor

PhD. JULIO CESAR TORRES ROCHA

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Bogotá, D.C., October 2nd of 2013

DEDICATION

To God for giving me this opportunity in this stage of my life.

To my parents and my son, you are the center of my universe,

my inspiration, my support and my everything.

To you… my Gabe

Ever yours, ever mine, ever ours.

Faridy

I dedicate it to my God for giving me patient and intelligence in this stage of my life.

To my mother, my father and my brother

for helping me when I need it, you are my life.

Thanks to you, in this moment, I am master in education.

Sara…

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ABSTRACT

The ability to write effectively allows people to communicate. It is a central part in the students' learning process and it is a skill that requires appropriate strategies that might be acquired gradually.

This research registers in the theoretical framework the main concepts of the writing ability, the most important elements for design writing activities and some different writing process models to guide students' written production.

This study, based on Action Research, reports the results of the design, implementation and evaluation of a proposal. It was carried out in a public school with ninth graders who followed specific steps of the writing process approach: first draft, second draft, peer editing and final version to write a short narrative paragraph.

Its methodology included theoretical methods as analysis and synthesis, historical and logical and induction and deduction; empirical methods to design and implement the proposal and for data collection three instruments were applied: participant observation chart, questionnaire and a sample of students' written papers.

The results of this study indicate the importance of having a writing process model with defined steps to guide students' writing in English. Writing is a relevant part of students' learning that must be developed through interesting and enjoyable activities which involve learners within the process and to build a writing habit.

Key words: writing ability, narrative paragraph, defined steps, learning process, writing habit.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays it is necessary to learn a foreign language for economics, education, entertainment, politics and social life reasons. The global world where we are living needs people to develop a fluent communicative competence in order to have a good interaction in any context where the language is used.

In Colombia, most of educative institutions have adopted English as the foreign language to be taught and learned, from early school grades to university level. According to the Colombian General Education Law (Ley General de Educación 115), a foreign language is a basic area of knowledge and the institutions must include it in their curriculum or plan of studies.

English teachers (primary and secondary levels) must base their plans or syllabus for each grade, on "Basic standards of competences in foreign language: English" given by Ministry of Education in 2006. This document is an orientation for teachers, directives and parents, about the communicative competence expected to be developed in children and young learners in order to get new knowledge and use English in real communicative situations. These standards are supported in the Bilingualism National Plan contained in the Decennial Plan 2006 – 2016; they propose the development of basic communicative skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) by cycles or groups of grades where they specify some indicators that students must accomplish.

English is a basic area in public schools but in some institutions, there are only 2 or 3 hours per week, there is not a specialized English teacher and the classes are taught by other teachers who do not have the adequate training to teach English. Due these factors, it is difficult to

develop a good communicative competence and students cannot achieve the standards required by the Bilingualism Plan suggestions.

In Atabanzha School, the P.E.I proposes three cross curricular areas to be developed by students through all the subjects that they study. They are: Communicative skills, Entrepreneurship and Project of life. Teachers of different subjects, including English, must plan objectives, methodology, activities and evaluation, for each academic term focusing in these areas. Pointing to the first one, it is necessary to develop the basic communicative skills related to an Institutional Generative Topic. The Institution has as a pedagogical approach, Teaching for Understanding, which states three moments in all subjects to develop the Generative Topic. These moments are: Exploration stage, Guided practice and Project of life. In this last moment, students must present a written final project as evidence to show and practice of what they have learned in classes. According to these requirements, students must have a basic level in the four communicative skills, according to standards, especially in "writing" because they need to present their final project written in English. Also "writing" is one of the productive skills in which students have the opportunity to communicate what they learn and interact with others in different contexts with personal or academic purposes.

The *problem* is the contradiction that exists between the way writing skill is taught in the classes and what to expect students to write as the final project. At the moment writing is worked with some kind of activities only for practicing some aspects of the language as grammar or vocabulary as reinforcement to students. At the end of academic term they need to present a written text but there is not a process that students follow to learn how to write the final project and develop their writing skill. So, eighth and ninth graders present difficulties when they are doing the writing project for narrating or describing experiences because they

do not know how to do it. As consequence, they write meaningless sentences without a communicative purpose; they do not know how to organize ideas and how to make a short paragraph. As we describe in the following paragraphs.

The *population* used to evidence the problem was eighty (80) students from eighth and ninth grades (IV cycle). Two instruments were applied: An observation chart used by teachers to describe the specific situations that students showed when they were working on a writing activity (Appendix 1). Some situations were: students used the dictionary in a wrong way, they tried to translate word by word, and they felt frustrated because they did not know how to write their ideas; they did not write complete sentences, they did not do the activity completely and they did not achieve to do the writing activity.

The other instrument applied was a diagnostic activity (Appendixes 2 and 3). Students had to write a short paragraph about a specific topic or situation following a model text which was taken from English plan of the school. The papers were analyzed under five aspects: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling and capitalization. Students present lack of vocabulary and they are not careful with spelling of words; they do not know how to use grammar that they have practiced previously when they are writing sentences. Their ideas are incomplete or confused and they are not connected; there was not a closing sentence for finishing the text. Also, they do not use punctuation at the moment to separate or conclude ideas, neither capitalization for example at the beginning of the composition, after period or names of people or places. They use the dictionary in a wrong way because they try to translate literally.

For these reasons, it is necessary to implement a writing process in order to teach students how to write ideas and connect them to form a paragraph taking into account writing is essential role not only for getting information but also to get new knowledge. It is a relevant skill in academic and foreign language programs, and in a certain way to achieve P.E.I proposals of Atabanzha school.

For this reason we set ourselves the following *scientific question: How does the implementation of a writing process approach based on Teaching for Understanding, affect students' writing skill in English in IV cycle of Atabanzha school (Bogotá)?*

Looking for background on this kind of study, we found a research paper called "An overview of research on teaching writing as a process" on teaching writing process in schools from Department of Kamehameha, Hawaii (2007). Its objective was to analyze the progress and effectiveness of the writing process. In this work some important implications are mentioned: Teaching students to use one or two stages of the writing process enhances their writing abilities; reading and writing require specific training; the writing process is one effective way to teach students to be good writers and, when students are taught how to communicate their ideas, feelings and experiences through words, they can recognize the value of writing and the purpose in creating a substantial work.

As a result of research of some experts, a guide for teachers called "Teaching Elementary schools students to be effective writers" was presented in a panel in U.S.A. (2012) by Graham, Bollinger, Booth, D'Aoust, MacArthur, McCutchen and Olinghouse. It provides an overview of the importance of teaching writing. It explains some parameters and summarizes some recommendations based on the best available research evidence, as well as the combined

experience and expertise of the panel members on how to develop students' writing skill. One of those recommendations is to teach students the writing process which must be gradually guided by the teacher using appropriate strategies, but, at the same time, being flexible in the use of the components or stages of the writing process. The authors conclude that students who develop writing skill acquire a valuable tool for learning, communication, and self-expression.

On the other hand, Raimes, A. (1983) and Brooks, A., Grundy, P (1998) suggest that the writing process is not only a product. This skill should be developed in a meaningful or real context for students, with some defined steps which mean producing written texts based on the spontaneous, creative and motivational students' experiences and allowing them to express different opinions, feelings or ideas.

Another author Hedge, T. (1988) mentions that the development of writing in a foreign language must take into account important steps like: motivation – organization – planning – taking notes – doing the first draft – reviewing – replanning – doing second draft – edit and publish.

In Colombia, there is a research by Rangel, A. (2010) who wrote some reflections about writing skill in his work titled "The role of short stories in eight graders' writing skill". The purpose was to develop students' writing through stories as a methodological resource in which students had to read and understand the story and then they did some writing activities.

Jaramillo, M. (2008) made a project about the effect of Peer and Self-Assessment in students' written performance. She refers the influence of peer and self-assessment on the grammatical and discourse components underlying the writing competence. She focused on

two aspects related to writing assessing; she considered some steps of the writing process to develop different activities in the classroom and described the results during the research.

There is a work by Jaramillo, L, and Medina, A. (2011). They made a proposal to help students to write short descriptive texts in English. The project was developed with ninth graders about environmental topics in three stages: motivation, vocabulary, making up sentences and developing paragraphs. In the last two stages teachers applied some components of writing process and, at the end, students published their written productions in the school newspaper. Some conclusions expressed in the work were that guiding students in the writing process through the development of controlled and focused activities is a good way to sensitize students towards environmental issues; the workshops used in the project are guides and tools for students to improve their writing productions. The teacher's action is important during the writing process because there is the possibility of identifying problems, providing suggestions and offering alternatives to promote students' writing skill.

Hernández, M. (2006) conducted a study focused on short texts to develop the communicative competence in students from grade ninth. He wanted to help students to improve their communicative competence through writing short texts related to their age, interests and language level. This proposal was based on Action Research where researcher could participate directly in order to reflect and give alternatives to improve in the mentioned aspect.

Studies in English didactics have never been done in Atabanzha institution, and much less in orientation of the development of writing skill. If this problem or situation is not attended,

the students will not produce written texts with the basic level expected and the Teaching for Understanding will not be applied in the area as it is required by the Institution.

This project is based on these important theories in Second language which are taken as Foreign language: 1) Communicative competence defined by different authors 2) the writing ability and its assessment; 3) different types of texts to be produced by learners in the development of the writing skill; 4) The theory of the writing process and different writing models; 5) teaching for understanding that is the pedagogical approach of Atabanzha school; 6) Description of the characteristics of teenagers offered by Piaget (1980) and Egan (1982); 7) The recognition of some concepts about the importance of feedback of second language writing.

Based on the previous considerations and information, we designed a teaching proposal to guide the students to enhance writing skill in English.

The object of study in this research is *the orientation of the English writing process* and the *field of action of study, the orientation of the English writing process to students from IV cycle of Atabanzha School (Bogotá).*

Therefore we have as *general objective: to design, implement and evaluate a writing process approach based on Teaching for Understanding to guide students from IV cycle of Atabanzha school, towards the development of English writing production.*

Specific objectives are:

1. To determine the actual learners' writing production.
2. To identify the theoretical basis implicated in the development of the writing skill in English in young learners.

3.   To design a teaching proposal focused on writing process approach towards the development of writing production in English.

4. To Implement and evaluate the designed teaching proposal.

5. To draw conclusions and implications from the application of the teaching proposal.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, it is necessary to fulfill the following *tasks:*

- Determining the actual learners' writing production.

- Identifying the theoretical basis implicated in the development of the writing skill in English in young learners.

- Designing a teaching proposal focused on writing process approach toward the development of writing production in English.

- Implementing and evaluating the designed teaching proposal.

- Drawing conclusions and implications from the application of the teaching proposal.

The project is based on Action Research and to achieve the tasks theoretical methods are applied like analysis and synthesis which have been used with the purpose of describing students' actual situation. Historical –logical method helped to know and analyze the similar antecedents of the phenomenon. Induction and deduction were useful to review and study some theories and general information to build up the theoretical framework. Furthermore, empirical methods are used to diagnose, plan and implement the proposal.

No proposal has been found in Atabanzha school related to developing writing skills and contributing in the solution of the current problem, and then our work constitutes a *scientific novelty.* And the *practical contribution* which this research project makes is to articulate aspects about the development of writing production in the teaching – learning process of a

foreign language, based on international and national laws, and the analysis of the real situation and context which students of IV cycle of Atabanzha school present. For this reason, with the design of a teaching proposal, it is our intention to contribute to the improvement of the detected problem in English writing production. This proposal reveals its scientific character and relevance for the specific educational institution.

The components considered for the design of the proposal are:

- Social: necessities, characteristics of the teacher and student. Profiles mentioned in P.E.I. of the school.
- Didactics: object, objective (overcoming necessity), contents, methods, didactic resources, setting (time and space) and evaluation (results – products).

The research project is structured in the following way: the introduction describes the problem; it includes the background and the methodological design. The first chapter presents concepts about communicative competence, theory about the writing process, teaching for understanding approach, characteristics of teenager learners, narrative texts in English and recognition of the information necessary for the English writing production. The second chapter presents the didactic proposal based on writing process approach to enhance students' English writing production in IV cycle students of Atabanzha school and the analysis of results of the proposal. Finally, conclusions and implications are drawn, bibliography and appendixes.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This project is based on the following important theories in Second language but they can be adapted to Foreign language learning: 1) Canale and Swain (1980) and Hymes (1996), with their contribution about communicative competence; 2) Cushing (2002) who talks about the writing ability and its assessment mentioning important concepts of Grabowsky (1996); Bernhardt (1991) who classifies the learners in five principal groups; 3) Vahapossi (1982 mentioned by Cushing, 2002), Horning (1987) and Collis (2009) who mention different types of texts to be produced by learners, essential elements in the development of the writing skill; 4) The theory of the writing process of Pincas (1982), Hayes (1990), Harmer (1998) and Hatcher and Goddard (2005) who mention some important considerations of a good writing and specific steps in their different writing models; 5) teaching for understanding according to Perkins (1998) that is the pedagogical approach of the Institution; 6) Description of the characteristics of teenagers offered by Piaget (1980) and Egan (1982); 7) The recognition of some concepts about the importance of feedback of second language writing.

Canale and Swain (1980) said that *communicative competence* is a synthesis of an underlying system of knowledge and skill needed for communication. Knowledge refers to the conscious and skill for unconscious knowledge of a person. And, Bachman (1990) raised the necessity to develop the imaginative function on language. It refers to the users' ability to creatively handle the language and the opportunity of enjoying themselves.

Communicative competence is the ability to use the language correctly and appropriately to accomplish communication goals. This concept was introduced by Hymes (1996) and redefined by other authors who said that a communicative competence requires taking into

account linguistic and pragmatic aspects. Linguistic aspects are all about the systems of a language as phonetics, grammar, spelling, vocabulary. Pragmatic aspects are all about functions, variations, cultural framework. So achieving a communicative competence efficiency is necessary to develop the four skills, (receptive skills: listening and speaking; productive skills: reading and writing), in order to be able to communicate effectively in a language with a motive or objective in a specific context.

Focusing on one of productive skills, *writing,* we can refer that it is a special part of language teaching. It is an exciting process of creation for students at all levels and it is more than the production of graphic symbols. It is important to share ideas, feelings and opinions. Writing requires intellectual effort and time for effective communication (White & Arnolt, 1996). It is relevant to know how to organize the ideas in such a way the reader can understand (Byrne, 1982) also, it is one of the most interesting and, at the same time, one of the most difficult instructional activities a language teacher faces.

So, we can say that writing is the ability to express ideas and communicate with each other with different purposes. Nowadays, writing is essential role not only for getting information but also to get new knowledge. It is a relevant activity to students in academic and second language programs and also, it has become an important skill for educational, business and personal reasons (Cushing, 2002).

It is necessary to let clear what writing is in first language and second language. In first language the ability to write has a very close relationship to academic and professional success. Grabowski (1996 mentioned by Cushing, 2002) notes that: *"Writing, as compared to speaking, can be seen as a more standardized system which must be acquired through special*

instruction. The fact of writing is more standardized than speaking allows for a higher degree of sanctions when people deviate from that standard:" (Grabowski, 1996:75)

Otherwise, in second language it is a different situation. Bernhardt (1991) considers five main groups of second language learners among children and adults. One group is children who need to learn to read and write a language that is not their first one to be successful in school. Second group of children are those who belong to immersion programs or learn a second language in school with the purpose to enhance their education.

In adults the facts are: One group is the immigrants to a new country. In this group writing is an essential for survival in the workplace. Second group of adults are those who are following university degree and their writing needs are of a very high level. Finally, third group is the learners who are learning a second language for personal interest or career or educational purpose.

Summarizing this part, according to groups of second language learners, writing can be different by age, level education and needs. Thus the differences between first – second language writing are considerable because of backgrounds, experiences, needs and purpose for writing which are important implications for designing and evaluating writing activities.

Another important implication to take into account for designing writing activities is the *types of texts* produced by second language learners. If we are going to have a model of writing, it is important to know the characteristics and the categories of the texts.

One model is given by Vahapossi (1982 mentioned by Cushing, 2002) reproduced in the table1. He proposes two major dimensions: Cognitive processing and dominant intention or purpose. In the cognitive processing, there are three fundamental levels. The least demanding

task is to reproduce information, the next level is organizing information and the most demanding level is inventing or generating new ideas or information. In each level we can see some examples of writing that could be produced by learners of second language. Along the vertical axis, the author lists six different dominant intentions or purposes. They are to learn, to convey emotions, to inform, to convince or persuade, to entertain and to keep in touch. There is no hierarchy among these purposes; it means that to achieve one or more of them, it depends of the writer's ability. Although a persuading text is more difficult than informing because of complexity.

	Cognitive processing	I. REPRODUCE	II. ORGANIZE/ REORGANIZE	III. INVENT/ GENERATE	
Dominant Intention/ Purpose	Primary content	Linguisticallpre coded/ predetermine d information	known spatial/ temporal Phenomena, concepts or mental states	new or alternative Spatial/ temporal Phenomena concepts or mental states	
1. To learn (meta-lingual / mathetic)	Self	Copying taking	Retell a story (heard or read) Note, resume, summary, outline, paraphrasing	Comments on book margins, Metaphors, Analogies	The traditional literary genre and modes can be placed under one or more of these four purposes
2. To convey emotions, feelings (emotive)	Self Others	Stream of consciousness	Personal story, Portrayal, Personal diary, Personal letter	Reflective writing-personal essays	
3. To inform (referential)	Others	Quote. Fill in a form	Narrative, report News, Instruction, Telegram, Announcement, Circular, Directions, Description, Technical description, Biography, Science report/ experiment	Expository writing-Definition, Academic essay/ article, Book review, Commentary	
4. To convence, persuade (conative)	Others	Quotation of poetry and prose	Letter of application, Advertisement, letter or advice, Statement of personal views, opinions	Argumentative/ persuasive writing, editorial, critical essay/ article	

5. To entertain, delight, please (poetic)	Others		Given an ending, create a story, create an ending, Retell a story, word portrait or sketch	Entertainment writing, Parody, Rhymes	
6. To keep in touch (phatic)	Others	Postcards	Postcards, letters		
	DOCUMENTATIVE DISCOURSE		REPERTORIAL DISCOURSE	EXPLORATORY DISCOURSE	

Table 1 *General model of writing discourse (Vahapassi, 1982)*

According to Horning (1987), there are three types of writing. Number one is unplanned discourse found in spontaneous conversation; it requires more study and investigation. Number two is planned discourse that is informal written narrative and description; it is acquired during the school years. Number three is well planned discourse, or formal expository writing; it is acquired later because is more difficult. Also, the author said that for obtaining a good writing it is important to teach and develop clear stages as organization, development and coherence, and writing ability's acquisition comes through the input of reading.

Another model was published by Department of Education of Australia (2011) in a useful document for teachers about text types for different purposes and audiences for writing activities at school. The document explains two major groups of texts: Factual texts inform, instruct or persuade by giving facts and information. Literary texts entertain or elicit an emotional response by using language to create mental images. Within Factual texts we can find eight texts: description, recount, information report, procedure, procedural recount, explanation, exposition and discussion. Within Literary texts are: literary description, literary

recount, personal response, review and narrative. Some texts are more complex than others because some ones require students to have a high level of language (grammar, vocabulary, coherence, transition between paragraphs and more). Some examples of writing are listed in the table 2 for each text types.

FACTUAL TEXTS	LITERARY TEXTS
Description: landscape descriptions	Literary description: description of a character or setting within a story
Recount: historical report	
Information report: facts about whales	Literary recount: A recount of a traditional story
Procedure: recipes, instructions, manual	Personal response: What did you like about that artwork and why? Describe.
Procedural recount: documentaries, retelling a science experiment and its results	
	Why you do or do not like this story or poem.
Explanation: the life cycle of a butterfly	Review: commentary on a film, play, book
Exposition: a team's argument for a debate	Narrative: picture books, cartoons, mystery, fantasy, adventure, science fiction, historical fiction, fairy tales, myths, legends, fables, plays.
Discussion: Should cars be banned from the inner city?	

Table 2 Types of texts (Department of Education of Australia 2011)

Focusing in one of text type, the purpose of writing activities developed in the lesson plans for this study are based on narrative texts.

According to Collis (2009), the purpose of narrative text is to entertain, to gain and hold a readers' interest. However narratives can also be written to teach or inform, to change attitudes or social opinions. In narrative sequences or texts differ from recounts in that through the sequencing, the stories set up one or more problems, which must eventually find a way to be resolved and people or characters are placed in their proper time and space.

Collis proposes different types of narrative texts; they can be imaginary, factual or a combination of both. Narrative texts may include fairy stories, mysteries, science fiction,

romances, horror stories, adventure stories, fables, myths and legends, historical narratives, ballads, part of life, personal experiences, etc. they need to have different features as:

- Characters with defined personalities or identities.

- Dialogue often included - tense may change to the present or the future.

- Descriptive language to create images in the reader's mind and enhance the story.

The texts developed in this research with ninth grade students are based on narrative nonfiction because they include biographies, news and personal experiences; the topic is true or imaginary, the order of events is clear, even though the information may or may not be presented in a direct chronological manner.

Writing is different in second language; it requires time to plan, review and revise words, sentences and ideas before the text is finished. It is essential to have a process with some useful steps to address tasks in order to develop writing skills in learners in an effective way. A number of researchers have proposed models of *writing process* that provide information about the differences between skilled and unskilled writers and some factors that influence the process. (Cushing, 2002)

Hayes and Flower (1980) described the writing process as a task environment in that learner needs memory, knowledge of topic, knowledge of audience, stored writing plans and have a number of cognitive processes as planning, translating and revising. Thus authors explained that writing is a recursive and not a linear process, and the instruction in the process is more effective than providing models and asking students to follow these models in their own writing.

Hayes (1996) included in his model of writing process: text interpretation, reflection and text production. Text interpretation includes listening, reading and scanning graphics. Reflection is a process by which new texts (written or spoken) are produced emerging from internal representations. Hayes emphasizes the importance of reading as a central process and he classified the reading in three types: Reading to evaluate, reading source texts and reading instructions.

Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) proposed two models description of writing: Knowledge Telling that involves little planning or revision and is accessible for children and teenagers who are considered inexperienced writers; the second model is Knowledge Transforming that involves much more effort and skill, it is not achieved without practice and it is perfect for better writers.

Another influential model of writing is proposed by Pincas (1982). She states that the writer needs some competence in each of the following areas:

1. Communication between people

2. Suiting a specific subject　　　　　COMMUNICATION

3. Presenting ideas

4. Constructing sentences

5. Using paragraphs　　　　　COMPOSITION

6. Using linking devices (cohesion)

7. Writing in the four major styles:

   Narrative, descriptive, expository,

   Argumentative

8. Achieving the desired degree of   STYLE

   Formality

9. Creating the desired emotive tone

They are essential writing skills in order to be selected for specific lessons by the teacher and to be developed with the students.

According to Cassany (1999), writing is not only to write letters or signs on white paper but to develop a global and precise meaning about a topic and make it understandable to an audience, using the written code. He proposed that for teaching of writing it is necessary to fulfill three main aims:

- Genuine practical and relevant kinds of writing that go beyond unrealistic compositions. Students should practice as many varieties of topics as possible.

- The writing should be communicative and functional; it is used in everyday life.

- Writing can be used to improve the communicative competence where the grammar and vocabulary should be integrated in the process but it should not be only for practicing them.

If the teacher can follow these statements, it is possible for students to learn to write appropriately with a communicative purpose or interaction.

On other hand, it is important to make a distinction between writing for learning and writing for writing (Harmer, 1997). In the first case, writing is used as a relevant tool to help students to practice and to work with the language they have been studying. For example, writing activities with a given structure, new words or phrases with the objective to give reinforcement to students. In the second case, writing for writing is directed to develop student's skills as a writer. There are good real life reasons for getting students to write about reports, experiences and letters. Grammar and vocabulary are included in the process but they are not the main purpose. When students are in the second case, the process involves *planning* what they are going to write, *drafting* it, *reviewing* and *editing* what they have written and then producing a *final version*. Teachers need to encourage students to follow the previous steps during the writing process to help them to be better writers and to communicate; they can do it through easy and enjoyable activities which involve the students in the writing process with enthusiasm, considering their age, level, learning styles and interests and in this way building a writing habit.

Hatcher and Goddard (2005) consider that is necessary to take into account some essential elements for a good writing. Clarity; if you can understand the writing in one reading, it will be clear to others. Conciseness; you need to write only the more important ideas and develop it. Accuracy; the writing has to be reasonably free of errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling of words.

In view of the above, Hatcher and Goddard proposed the seven following steps in the writing process:

1. ESTABLISH YOUR PURPOSE AND IDENTIFY YOUR READER: it is important to identify the topic and write short and simple statements of your purpose.

2. GET ORGANIZED: The writing process can be boiled down to two steps, planning and organizing, writing and rewriting. In this step, it is important to organize the structure or skeleton, for obtaining a good and clear writing. And, the plan must be developed with two things in mind: what your purpose is and who your readers are.

3. WRITE A FIRST DRAFT: Organizing and writing the first draft thinking in the readers and developing all the ideas.

4. AGE THAT FIRST DRAFT: Aging the draft means letting go of it, putting it away and forgetting about it for a while - preferably overnight, at least. Make the time to put that draft away. You may be surprised at how much it changes.

5. REREAD YOUR DRAFT: It is necessary that you read it from beginning to end, to check the purpose on the organization and to identify the mistakes to correct them.

6. REVISE THIS STEP INVOLVES THE SPELLING, PUNCTUATION OR NICETIES OF WORD CHOICES: In this, you may move or delete whole segments that are in the wrong place or are unnecessary to your purpose.

7. EDIT: You must read and comment on your writing, re-organize the ideas if it is necessary and finish the writing.

Continuing with the implications at the moment to design writing activities, it is important to think carefully about the feedback within the writing process and final product. The *feedback in second language writing* is very essential because the teacher can revise the

student's text and make commentaries; with this objective in mind, the student can understand the mistakes and correct them.

In conclusion, we consider that for students' age, level of English, interests, purposes and type of writing, it is feasible to design lesson plans based on a writing process with the next steps: *first draft, second draft, peer editing and final version* which can be flexible depending on students' progress; it is essential to consider all the mentioned aspects about the writing process, but at the same time, it is compulsory to plan and develop the lesson plans based on the Teaching for Understanding approach.

Teaching for Understanding has been adopted in Atabanzha School, for all subjects in the curriculum. It is an approach in which, according to Perkins (1998), knowledge and skill are the traditional main principles in education which means students are able to know concepts and practice them in any moment, in a real context or in their own lives. Knowledge and skill in them do not guarantee understanding. People, in general, can acquire knowledge and skill but without understanding when or how to use them. So in our institution, we expect to teach for understanding and students can use the knowledge and skill in other contexts.

The perspective of this approach says that understanding a topic is a matter of being able to perform in different ways with it. Understanding a topic means building up performances of understanding around it. Moreover, when students really do understanding performances, they can interpret a poem, design an experiment, find new applications, making good use of knowledge and skill, etc.

Teaching for understanding requires:

- Making learning in a long term, thinking – centered process with a few goals on a main topic or theme.

- Assessing process from the beginning to the end; sometimes it may involve feedback from the teacher, peer and student's self – evaluation.

- Supporting learning with powerful representations in conceptual models usually in the form of diagrams.

- Teaching for transfer, it means that students acquire some concepts, facts or principles and they can apply them in other contexts.

- Teaching generative knowledge, a connected curriculum to future insights or applications in students' life. We must understand a generative knowledge as a matter of powerful conceptual systems, systems of concepts and examples that yield insight and implications in many circumstances.

For planning a program of any area of knowledge, including English, it is required to choose the topic. The topic must be significant because it relates important ideas or concepts in the subject to students' experiences and interests in the real world. The topic is called "Generative topic", a new term introduced in the Teaching for Understanding approach. Generative topics are the target of learning or target of difficulty. They are issues, themes, concepts, and ideas that provide enough depth, significance, connections, and variety of perspectives to support students' development of powerful understandings.

Some characteristics of Generative topics are that they focus on one or more skills, domains or disciplines; they are interesting to students and to the teacher; offer opportunities

for multiple connections and are accessible, authentic, fascinating and approachable. For planning them, a first step is to brainstorm ideas, preferably with colleagues; second, to think about what is interesting for students and teachers; next, to select for ideas; finally, to look for topics that are steeped in controversy, that are open to considerations from many different perspectives and that require students to formulate their own opinions. In this way deciding the Generative topics help students to get the knowledge in that skill, domain or discipline.

The Generative Topic must be interesting for students, so teacher must know them. What they like and expect, who they are, how they are, how they behave in some situations and how they learn a foreign language. It is recommended to know the *characteristics of the learners*, in this case teenagers.

Jean Piaget (1980) identified four stages of cognitive and affective development in childhood and adolescence. The child develops cognitively through active involvement with the environment and each new step in development builds on and becomes integrated with previous steps.

Because two of the four shifts in developmental stage normally occur during the elementary school years, it is important for language teachers working with children to keep the characteristics of each cognitive stage in mind. They are as follows:

1. The stage of sensory-motor intelligence (age 0 to 2 years). During this stage, behavior is primarily motor. The child does not yet internally represent events and "think" conceptually, although "cognitive" development is seen as schemata are constructed.

2. The stage of preoperational thought (age 2 to 7 years). This stage is characterized by the development of language and other forms of representation. The children tend to be very

egocentric and they focus on a single feature of a situation at a time. For example, they may be able to sort by size or by color but not by both characteristics at once.

3. The stage of concrete operations (age 7 to 11 years). During these years, the child develops the ability to apply logical thought to concrete problems. Children understand new concepts and ideas, using language to exchange information and they become more social and less egocentric.

4. The stage of formal operations (age 11 to 15 years or older). During this stage, the child's cognitive structures reach their highest level of development. The child becomes able to apply logical reasoning to all classes of problems, including abstract problems either not coming from the child's direct experience or having no concrete referents.

Therefore, young people have a higher mental function that they develop through social and cultural interaction that helps to support the thinking and understanding knowledge as an interactional process between the subject and the environment. The younger have the following characteristics:

- They think of possibilities.
- They think of the abstract.
- They think of the thought process.
- They see knowledge as relative.

The previous characteristics help to develop the thinking and motivate young people to interact with everything around them; it is important that the teacher interacts with the learners in appropriate ways.

Another author who describes important characteristics in young learners is the Canadian educator Kieran Egan (1982) who provides reflections about educational development that are especially applicable to the elementary and middle school language program. Egan describes development in terms of the characteristics that determine how the learner makes sense of the world. He thinks of educational development as a process of accumulating and exercising layers.

Egan said that the learners present the following characteristics:

- They have integrated their inner world with the outer world. They now understand the world to be a unit, of which they are a part.
- Learners in the Philosophic Layer try to organize the facts and details they collected in the Romantic Layer, creating their own systems for making sense of the world.
- Once they have developed a system of organization, these learners tend to believe
- They become (over)confident that they know the meaning of everything.

With the previous literature we have the foundations to design a teaching proposal to enhance students' writing skill in English. The lesson plans are designed based on Teaching for understanding, (Institution´s pedagogical approach), a writing process with the next steps: first draft, second draft, peer editing and final version, narrative texts and with the purpose to write one paragraph.

2. RESEARCH PROPOSAL

2.1 Methodology of Research

The project is focused on Action Research with some clear stages towards the implementation of the study. Action Research is an important approach which gives teachers the opportunity to reflect on their teaching performance, specifically in difficult situations of students, and to try to find solutions to these problems. Cohen and Manion (1985) offer a definition: *"Action research is first and foremost situational, being concerned with the identification and solution of problems in a specific context".* A research teacher can have an impact in the students' learning, using different instruments as interviews, observation charts, reports and more for a specific classroom context.

In this kind of project, Action Research is used because it is associated with the study of classroom actions and it includes social problems related to language teaching. Action Research identifies collaboration as an important feature with the aim to improve the current state of affairs within the educational context in which the research is being carried out.

Furthermore Bailey (2001 mentioned by Cummins & Davidson, 2007) maintains that Action Research for language teachers is *"an approach to collection and interpreting data which involves a clear, repeated cycle of procedures".* It has usually been associated with the study of classroom actions rather than addressing social problems associated with language teaching. Action Research is conducted by practicing language teachers because they are valuable sources of knowledge regarding their own classroom situations and as a result changes can be implemented because practicing teachers will find the results more credible and valid for their needs.

Moreover, according to Johnson and Christensen (2011), research teachers choose qualitative research method because in it, the researcher attempts to understand one or more individual experiences or a phenomenon. And, the goal is to enter the inner world of each participant to understand his or her perspectives and experiences. Also, qualitative research is concerned with qualitative phenomenon that is descriptive, applies reasoning, uses words and it is not numerical. It has as a main objective to get the meaning, feeling and describe the situation that happens during the research.

On the other hand, Johnson and Christensen (2011) said that in qualitative research it is necessary to collect qualitative data. It includes observations that yield detailed, thick description; inquiry in depth; interviews that capture direct quotations about people´s personal perspectives and experiences, taking into account the research process. It is also important that the researcher has direct contact and gets closed to the people, situation and phenomenon under study; the researcher's personal experiences and insights are an important part of the inquiry and critical to understand the research problem.

As consequence, this study is based on the research cycle. Figure 1: it starts with *Identification* which states the research problem through analyzing the evidences, choosing the topic, defining the research question, objectives and tasks. On second stage it is *Planning* which is important taking into account the theory previously read and its relation to students' needs, defining the instruments to be used during the study, designing the lessons plans with the resources to be implemented in the classroom in order to carry out the research proposal. Then, third stage is about the implementation of the proposal (piloting and final intervention), *Action*, Research teachers apply the designed lesson plans during English classes, they make data collection and at the same time a process of *Observation* occurs with the purpose to

analyze data and make a feedback. After this point, *Reflection* allows to build interpretations, report the outcomes with the objective to make the necessary changes and go back at the beginning of the cycle. After having made the adjustments, researchers start the final implementation of the project, following the same steps of the piloting and at the end they analyze data and draw implications and conclusions.
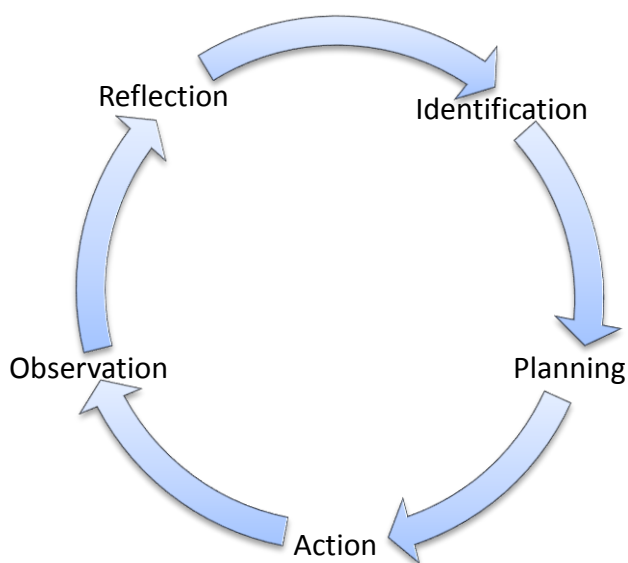
Figure 1 Research cycle (Cohen & Manion, 1982)

Likewise, to achieve the main objective of this study, researchers applied some methods which helped to fulfill the tasks stated in the research.

For this study, Theoretical methods like analysis and synthesis have been used with the purpose of describing students' actual situation. This was done through a participant observation in which the results were registered in an instrument (Appendix 1) and a diagnostic writing activity (Appendixes 2 - 3) for analyzing the data collected and determining the problem to be treated. Historical –logical method helped to know and analyze the similar

antecedents of the phenomenon. It was necessary to be informed about some previous studies as International and National levels. Induction and deduction were useful to review and study some theories, general principles and information to build up the theoretical framework which is the foundation to make a correlation between the theory and the research proposal.

Furthermore, empirical methods are used to plan and implement the proposal. The first technique is for data collection. It is an observation chart (Appendix 4) that is used during the writing process of learners which allows teachers to take notes about the situations that are occurring with students, and in this way, analyze the results, reflect on methods and writing tasks and finally, make a feedback to draw implications and conclusions. The second one is the chart below showing the writing process implemented in the lesson plans to analyze students' papers; it is an adaptation of writing process purposed by Harmer (1998), but with a difference in the Editing stage. In this part students make a Peer editing as a collaborative activity to help each other before the final version (Appendix 5).

SAMPLE	FIRST DRAFT	SECOND DRAFT	PEER EDITING	FINAL VERSION

Table 3 Writing process steps (adaptation of Harmer's model, 1998)

The third one is a questionnaire (Appendixes 7) answered by students at the end of the writing process implemented, with the objective to ask about their ideas, opinions or experiences regarding the writing activities that they developed. It is designed in a clear and simple language, in Spanish to be more comprehensible for students. It has a set of four closed questions with multiple option answers, so students read the questions and pick their responses according to their personal opinions or experiences. Researchers use this technique

to obtain data for reflecting and making adjustments in the writing assignments planned in the lessons (Appendixes 5 and 6). And the third technique used: a sample of collection of papers written by students throughout the writing process from "first draft" until "final version" step, described previously in the chart.

To validate the data, researchers triangulate the information to analyze the outcomes or findings. This procedure of getting more than one perspective on the topic being researched is sometimes called "triangulation". Data triangulation involves using different "*sources*" of information in order to increase the reliability and validity of the study. Researchers use the methodological triangulation because it involves the use of multiple qualitative methods. For example, results from the questionnaire, observation and documents' analysis are compared to see if there are similar results. If the conclusions from each of the methods are the same, then validity is established.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  Findings of observation │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                         /              \
                        /                \
┌──────────────────────────┐      ┌──────────────────────────┐
│   Questionnaire about     │──────│   Collection of students' │
│    students' opinions     │      │      written papers       │
└──────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────┘
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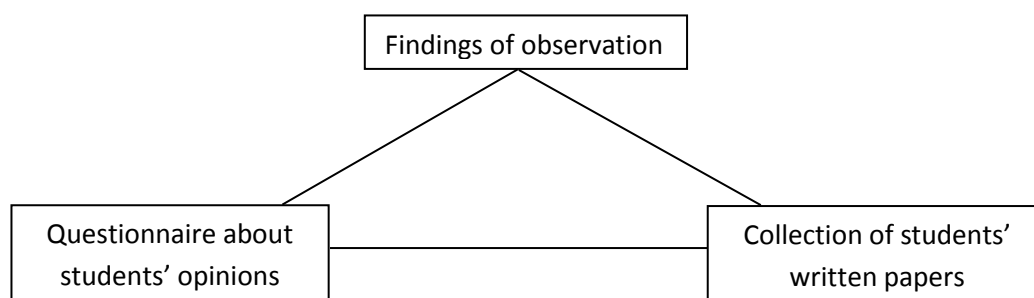
Figure 2 Methodological triangulation

These methods helped teachers to be informed and keep a defined structure on the tasks; in this way they can achieve the proposed objective for the research.

Research proposal is oriented to design, implement and evaluate the writing process approach to guide students from IV cycle of Atabanzha school, towards the development of English writing production.

The project of study was carried out at Atabanzha School I.E.D. It is a Public school in Bogotá, D.C. Usme zone; it offers from Pre – school to eleventh grades, in two shifts (morning and afternoon). English classes run on average of 2 to 3 hours in secondary level. In general, students have little English vocabulary and low levels in basic communication skills.

The problem is the contradiction that exists between the way writing skill is taught in the classes and what to expect students to write as the final project. At the moment writing is worked with some kind of activities only for reinforcement to students some aspects of the language as grammar or vocabulary. At the end of academic term they need to present a written text but there is not a process that students can follow to write the final project and develop their writing skill. As consequence, they write meaningless sentences without a communicative purpose; they do not know how to organize ideas and how to make a short paragraph.

The universe of this research are (136) students from IV cycle, grades 8th and 9th, (morning shift); 14 to 16 years old within which a population of eighty (80) students was taken to evidence the problem through two instruments. Teachers could observe, in a participant way, some situations presented by students when they were asked to write; they were described in a registration chart (Appendix 1). Some situations were: Students used the dictionary in a wrong way, they tried to translate word by word, and they felt frustrated because they did not know how to write their ideas; they did not write complete sentences; they did not do the

activity completely and they did not achieve to do the writing activity. Also, students took a diagnostic writing activity in which they had to narrate an experience according to a specific topic (Appendixes 2 and 3). In this diagnostic, the participants showed a lack of writing competence at basic level, especially in what concerned capitalization, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary. The mistakes, made by students, were analyzed in five aspects vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling- capitalization, coherence and cohesion. Some of them are: students present lack of vocabulary and they are not careful with spelling of the words; they do not know how to use grammar that they have practiced previously. Their ideas are incomplete or confused and they are unconnected; there is not a close sentence for finishing the text; they do not use punctuation to separate or conclude ideas, they do not capitalize words at the beginning of the composition, after period or for names of people or places; they use the dictionary in a wrong way because they try to translate literally.

For these reasons, it is our intention to contribute towards English writing production through a didactic proposal and make an intervention about the current problem. Didactic proposal was worked with a sample of 36 students from ninth grade and developed through six lesson plans based on the institution's pedagogical approach (Teaching for Understanding). This approach suggests three moments in the class: Exploration stage, Guided practice and Final project of synthesis. The Generative topic is the target of learning and it is given by Institution for the corresponding academic term; A general writing objective is stated for the lesson plan; Contents, writing process activities, resources and feedback are focused on the Generative topic.

The lesson plan (Appendix 8) starts with *Exploration stage* which consists of reading a text that is the model of writing, so students guided by English teacher, analyze and understand the

ideas, key vocabulary and grammar structures used. Then *Guided practice* is carried out to help students to practice and to work with the language. For example, writing activities with a given structure, new words or sentences; Students complete sentences or some information related to the text, organizing sentences and practicing the vocabulary with the objective to give reinforcement. *Final project of synthesis* is the moment when students follow the steps defined in the Writing process approach to get their final version of writing assignment. But it is necessary to emphasize that the writing process can be flexible depending on students' progress.

The writing process has the following steps: *First draft*: Before starting to write the first draft, students choose the topic and have a plan or an organized structure or skeleton. Then they develop their ideas trying to follow the text model, forgetting for a while some grammar, spelling and vocabulary mistakes.

Second draft: After receiving the teacher's feedback, learners read the text from beginning to the end to check the purpose on the organization and to identify the mistakes and teacher's suggestions in order to correct them in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, capitalization and coherence and cohesion aspects.

Peer editing: In a Collaborative activity, students work with a partner to review and to comment on their writing production, re-organize the ideas if it is necessary and finish the writing.

Final version: Students must publish their final version on a poster, brochure, mini-book or album in a creative way as a final writing assignment.

It is important to think carefully about the feedback within the writing process. The feedback in second language writing is very essential because the teacher can revise the student's written texts and make commentaries on it. So the student can understand the mistakes and correct them. Therefore Teacher makes the feedback in the first two steps of the process with some comments in Spanish pointing out the student's mistakes on linguistics aspects: vocabulary, grammar, punctuation, spelling- capitalization and communicative aspects: coherence and cohesion. It is not necessary to have special symbols to avoid students to get confused about what they need to review or correct. In Peer editing step, students work together to review their writing production, underlining the mistakes and using the next chart (Table 4) in which they check the aspects to be edited. Finally, they can write some comments in Spanish to help their partner before the final version.

PARTNER'S COMMENTS	YES	NO
• **¿Tu compañero escribió la frase de introducción?**	☐	☐
• **¿El texto es fácil de entender?**	☐	☐
• **¿Las ideas u oraciones son completas?**	☐	☐
• **¿Hay una oración para finalizar o concluir el texto?**	☐	☐
• **¿Utiliza correctamente mayúsculas y signos de puntuación?**	☐	☐
• **¿Tu compañero necesita corregir la ortografía de las palabras?**	☐	☐
• **¿Identificas errores en la estructura de las oraciones?**	☐	☐

Table 4 Peer editing stage

In the *final version*, the teacher writes some conclusions about student's writing assignment and gives some advice to remember for the next activities.

2.2 Data analysis

Piloting stage (lesson plan 1, 2 and 3)

Following all the steps of Action research, it was relevant to apply first three lesson plans (Appendix 9) as a piloting phase; after the whole process, researchers analyzed the implementation and made some necessary changes to do the final intervention. The analysis of data is analytic because our research is qualitative. The researchers attempted to analyze the situation and made a critical evaluation. Thirteen samples were chosen to be analyzed from students who fulfilled these characteristics:

1. Students who attended all the classes.

2. Students who finished all the activities.

3. Students without special education needs.

4. Students who wrote the paragraphs with few mistakes at the end of the process.

5. Students who achieved the writing objective for the lesson plan.

The writing objective for the piloting was: Students will be able to write a short biography of a famous person in past simple, using the model text given, with minimum mistakes. "Life of a famous person"

On the other hand, to analyze students' papers, five significant aspects were taken into account during the writing process. These are:

1. *GRAMMAR:* According to Calkins (1990), grammar is a set of rules to organize the sentences or ideas correctly. It helps to organize the communicative competence according the culture. She also said that research strongly suggests that the most

beneficial way of helping students improve their command of grammar in writing is to use students' writing as the basis for discussing grammatical concepts.

2. *VOCABULARY:* Vocabulary according to Saddleback (2000) is a skill that is based on a clear understanding of language itself. The language must be appropriated to the situation. Appropriate language is like appropriate clothing; it shows that you understand the requirements of different occasions and circumstances. In this case, all the vocabulary is related to a short biography with specific information.

3. *CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION:* Taking into account to Collins (1990). Capitalization is used to give emphasis to or call attention to certain words to distinguish them from the context. It has many uses; some of these are: The first word of every sentence, every direct quotation and question, words derived from proper nouns. And punctuation, taking into account that it is used to separate words into sentences, clause and phrases in order to clarify their meaning; punctuation is important because it helps to understand the paragraph or the text.

4. *SPELLING*: According to Lobb (2001), spelling is as the writing of one or more words. Spelling matters because it is the key to writing fluently and communicating effectively; it is important because it helps to communicate the different ideas in paragraphs or in a text.

5. *COHERENCE AND COHESION*: According to Tanskanen (2006), cohesion refers to connections between sentences and paragraphs; it focuses on the grammatical aspects of writing. Coherence can also refer to the organization of discourse with all elements present and fitting together logically; developing and supporting the argument,

synthesizing and integrating readings, organizing and clarifying ideas. Coherence and cohesion help the listener or reader to follow along easily.

This is the compilation of students' written papers where researchers show the most relevant aspects in the different steps of the writing process.

SAMPLE	FIRST DRAFT	SECOND DRAFT	PEER EDITING	FINAL VERSION
1	The student organizes the information about her favorite actress; she makes spelling mistakes because she confuses the gender of the character. She has punctuation problems.	Student reorganizes her actress' information. She has good grammar, punctuation, coherence and cohesion.	Peer editing seems to be useful for her because she could correct the spelling mistakes.	We can understand the text. In spite of a few mistakes in spelling, her paper is understandable and she got to do the writing activity.
2	Student organizes the information about his favorite actor "Mr. Bean". It's necessary that he reviews punctuation, spelling and vocabulary in his text, but the idea is understandable.	He does not make mistakes; He rewrites the information and he corrects his mistakes taking into account teacher's suggestions.	He points out mistakes in capitalization of some words. His coherence and cohesion are good.	He develops the principal idea. It has one or two grammar mistakes and he tries to write the two paragraphs. Coherence and cohesion are good.
3	She writes about Leonardo Dicaprio's life. He must review punctuation and grammar; the capitalization, vocabulary and spelling are good and the ideas are understandable.	The text is comprehensible but it's necessary that she reviews spelling in some words.	The partner marks capitalization mistakes.	She organizes the paragraphs. The text is very good; it is comprehensible and she must correct only two grammar mistakes and the use of adjectives.

4	He writes about Jim Carrey's life. He has some mistakes about punctuation, spelling, coherence and cohesion so it is difficult to understand the paper.	He reorganizes his text and he corrects some mistakes in spelling of some words, capitalization and punctuation.	The partner corrects some spelling mistakes	The text is understandable; he uses grammar and vocabulary correctly, coherence, cohesion and spelling of words are right. Although he has a few punctuation and capitalization mistakes, he achieved the writing activity.
5	Student has many punctuation and grammar mistakes. For example he confuses the use of Present tense with Past Simple tense, there are some spelling, coherence and cohesion mistakes; it's difficult for the reader to understand it.	Student reorganizes his text and he completes the ideas to do it more comprehensible. But there are still mistakes in capitalization and punctuation.	Student corrects capitalization and punctuation. He writes the information complete and understandable.	He does not have relevant mistakes. He followed the teacher's suggestions and his partner's too. It is a good text according to the writing objective.
6	Student has much information about his favorite actor; coherence and cohesion are good but it is necessary to review the spelling of many words.	Student reorganizes the information. He has good grammar, coherence and cohesion. He must use correctly punctuation in the paragraphs.	He continues with some punctuation mistakes. The text is understandable for the reader.	The text is understandable; It is very organize, striking and creative.
7	She writes the first draft with several capitalization, vocabulary and grammar mistakes. It hinders the comprehension of the ideas. The text lacks of coherence and cohesion.	She corrects her mistakes to make the text more understandable. She writes all the information necessary.	The partners marks that the text does not have essential mistakes. It is very good and it has all the elements that the teacher asked.	The final version is very organized, creative and comprehensible. Student differentiates the paragraphs and she presents only one grammar mistake (The order of one sentence).

8	Student has many punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, coherence and cohesion mistakes. Some ideas are incomplete are confused.	Student rewrites the text more comprehensible, he corrects the mistakes but he must review the punctuation in his text.	His partner identifies capitalization and punctuation mistakes again.	The final version is very striking, creative and understandable. He differentiates the paragraphs in the text he has one capitalization and one spelling mistake, he achieved the writing objective.
9	He writes about Jim Carrey's life. He has many vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes. The text is difficult for the reader to understand.	The student reorganizes the information; the text is more comprehensible and makes a few mistakes in capitalization or punctuation.	The partner writes that the text does not have important mistakes and is more understandable.	The final version is comprehensible, it has coherence and cohesion but it has a few punctuation and spelling mistakes. He achieved the writing objective.
10	She writes about Robert Pattinson's life. She has many punctuation, spelling, grammar, and coherence and cohesion mistakes and in certain way it is difficult to read and understand the text.	She completes the information about the actor, she rewrites the text and it is more comprehensible.	The partner marks that she has capitalization and punctuation mistakes.	The final version has a few spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes but the text is understandable, creative and she writes the two paragraphs.
11	The text is lacking of use of grammar and it is difficult to understand the text. Spelling and punctuation are good.	She rewrites the information and she corrects the mistakes.	The partner identifies only two missing words in the text; he marks the space where these words are missing.	She corrects the mistakes but she still has two grammar mistakes. (The use of *in* and *on*; *a* and *an*)

12	He writes about Will Smith's life. The text has spelling, punctuation, grammar, coherence and cohesion mistakes. And, the ideas are confused.	The student reorganizes and rewrites the information. He must improve the handwriting to make the text understandable.	The partner identifies capitalization and punctuation mistakes.	The text is comprehensible. But, it has a few spelling, punctuation and capitalization mistakes that do not interfere with the understanding of the text.
13	The student writes about Leonardo Dicaprio's life; she has much information. It is necessary to review the punctuation.	The student reorganizes the information. She has good grammar, punctuation, coherence and cohesion in the text.	The partner does not identify mistakes. The text is very comprehensible for the reader.	She writes the two paragraphs. The text is more understandable, creative and striking. She must only, correct one mistake (The use of adjectives).

Taking into account the evidences showed in the students' papers, researcher teachers concluded in each step of the writing process the following:

FIRST DRAFT: ten samples present coherence and cohesion mistakes, because it is necessary that students complete, organize the information and reorganize the principal idea of the biography. Six samples have grammar mistakes; for example, they include words in Spanish, the order of the elements of the sentences is incorrect, and the use of adjectives is not the appropriate. Five samples show vocabulary mistakes, these students do not use the dictionary to look for the right word because they try to use the known vocabulary, and they include words in Spanish in their text. Seven samples demonstrate spelling mistakes; they skip and include vowels or consonants in the words. Nine samples show capitalization and punctuation mistakes; they do not know how to use comma and period, they do not use of capitalization correctly.

SECOND DRAFT: In the second draft, the idea of the different biographies are understandable, they improve in coherence and cohesion; only five out of thirteen samples need to clarify the principal idea of the biography. Also, they improve in grammar and vocabulary; three students have grammar mistakes, they do not use the adjectives correctly and they repeat words in the text. Four samples show spelling, capitalization and punctuation mistakes, they do not separate ideas with commas or periods.

PEER EDITING: In peer editing, students points the mistakes in their partners' drafts. They find spelling, capitalization and punctuation mistakes. Peer editing is very effective for the students because they help each other.

FINAL VERSION: At the end, nine samples improve in the different aspects in order to get the objective. All final versions are striking and creative; they differentiate the ideas and paragraphs. The four samples show a few grammar mistakes (they include words that they are not necessary, they do not use adjectives in a correct way and the order of the sentences is not the appropriate) and, they present some spelling mistakes. But the texts are complete and comprehensible; students try to use punctuation correctly; the ideas in general are clear and they are successful in communicating them.

At the beginning of the process, they show several mistakes as for example: they write information that the teacher do not request because they look for information in internet and they do not read and analyze it (coherence); they write sentences in incorrect order; in the sentences, the subject is missing; the use of the verb tenses is incorrect according to the objective; the adjective is not in a correct place; they confuse present with past simple (grammar), they omit letters in different words (spelling); they do not use capitalization in names and they do not use comma and period in the text (punctuation); the vocabulary is according to the text.

The evidences in the students' papers show that they improved in different aspects because they followed the writing process model and they achieve the writing objective; they demonstrated that they organized the information according to the teacher asked.

Extracts of sample

FIRST DRAFT	FINAL VERSION
He was born in <u>december</u>…	He was born in <u>December</u>… (Capitalization)
In <u>september</u> 1996, married twice with <u>alejandra wosman.</u>	In <u>September</u> 1996, <u>Jim Carrey</u> married twice with <u>Alejandra Wosman</u>. (Grammar and capitalization)
He <u>grewn</u> up <u>whith</u> his brother.	He <u>grew</u> up <u>with</u> his brother. (Spelling)
In 2005 he made his first movie called Harry Potter <u>y</u> the calice of fire.	In 2005<u>,</u> he made his first movie called Harry Potter <u>and</u> the Calice of fire. (Vocabulary and punctuation)
His mother <u>caroline smith,</u> teacher.	His mother, <u>Caroline Smith, is</u> a teacher. (Grammar, punctuation and capitalization)

While students were following the writing process steps, researchers were observing the most relevant situations in the classroom. They were registered in an observation chart (Appendix 4) and were synthetized in a mind map (Appendix 11) with the purpose to reflect

and evaluate the lesson plans of the piloting stage in order to make some changes for the final implementation. These are:

- The activities previous to the implementation of the writing process should be shorter and focused in practicing the writing skill.
- The writing activities must be designed to start with the word exercises and finish with the practice of sentences before doing the writing assignment.
- The writing objective is changed to get students to write one paragraph.
- One activity is designed where students can identify some principal parts of the paragraph in the model text as: title, introducing sentence, developing of the ideas and closing sentence.

Intervention stage (lesson plan 4, 5 and 6)

Thirteen samples were chosen with the same characteristics from the samples of the piloting. These are:

1. Students who attended all the classes.
2. Students who finished all the activities.
3. Students without special needs of education.
4. Students who do paragraphs with few mistakes at the end of the process.
5. Students who achieved the writing objective for the lesson plan.

The writing objective for the intervention is: Students will be able to write a short paragraph about a movie in past simple with few mistakes, using the text given as a model (Appendix 10).

This is the compilation of students' written papers where researchers show the most relevant aspects in the different steps of the writing process.

SAMPLE	FIRST DRAFT	SECOND DRAFT	PEER EDITING	FINAL VERSION
1	Student organizes the information about her favorite movie; she has spelling, punctuation and capitalization mistakes. The information is incomplete and unreal. She uses words in Spanish and she does not identify the conjugation of the verb TO – BE.	Student reorganizes her movie information. She still makes punctuation and capitalization mistakes.	Her partner marks the grammar mistakes (She confuses present with past), the use of comma and period.	In the final version, it is possible to understand the information. The text is very comprehensible, creative and striking for the reader. Student corrects the most important mistakes pointed in the previous steps.

2	Student organizes the information about her favorite movie. It is necessary that she rewrites the sentences. She needs to review punctuation, spelling and vocabulary because the ideas are not understandable.	She has capitalization and punctuation mistakes; she makes grammar mistakes, she does not know the order of the sentences.	Her partner marks mistakes in the use of the past of the verbs; Students must reorganize the ideas and write the title of the movie.	The final version is very creative; coherence and cohesion are good. She develops the principal idea. The text has a few vocabulary and punctuation mistakes that do not interfere with the communicative purpose.
3	Student writes about his favorite movie "Ciudad de Dios". He confuses present simple with past simple; and he writes incomplete characters information.	The text is comprehensible but student needs to review of punctuation.	The partner indicates and marks capitalization and punctuation mistakes.	In the final version, he organizes all the information. The text is very comprehensible and it has good vocabulary, punctuation and capitalization. He achieves the writing objective.
4	Student writes about Apocalipto movie. She has some mistakes in punctuation, spelling, coherence and cohesion. It is difficult to understand some information because it is unreal and incomplete.	She reorganizes her text and she corrects the mistakes. She needs to review spelling and capitalization in some words; she does not use punctuation in the text.	The partner corrects the spelling mistakes; he says that the title is missing.	The text is understandable, but it is necessary that student reviews a few punctuation and capitalization mistakes that do not interfere with the communicative purpose.
5	Student writes about Van Helsing movie. He has many punctuation and grammar mistakes; he confuses Present tense with Past tense; he has some spelling mistakes; the closing sentence is missing.	Student reorganizes his text and he completes the ideas to do it more comprehensible. He includes words in Spanish.	The partner marks capitalization and punctuation mistakes. He indicates that the information is complete and understandable.	The text is very creative and striking; the information is complete and understandable for the reader.
6	Student writes about the movie "Ciudad de Dios". He has unreal and incomplete information. In some sentences, the subject is missing and he does not identify the use of Past simple.	Student reorganizes the information. He has capitalization, punctuation and grammar mistakes, he does not write the plural of some words. He does not use Past Simple in some sentences correctly.	Student corrects some mistakes but he continues with capitalization and punctuation mistakes. The text is understandable for the reader but he uses some words in Spanish.	The final version is very creative and comprehensible. He uses colors to identify the different sentences in the paragraph but he must review the capitalization of names.

7	He writes the first draft with many capitalization, vocabulary, punctuation and grammar mistakes. The text lacks of coherence and cohesion because the information is incomplete.	He corrects his mistakes to make it more understandable. He still has spelling and capitalization mistakes.	The partner reviews the draft and points out punctuation and capitalization mistakes. The text is very good and it has all the elements.	The final version is very creative and comprehensible. He needs to review the use of capitalization of names and after period.
8	Student writes about the movie "Wrath days". In the first draft, she has many punctuation, vocabulary, grammar, coherence and cohesion mistakes; many ideas are incomplete and she does not know the use of adjectives.	She corrects the mistakes and makes the text more comprehensible for the reader. But, she needs to review the punctuation; she does not use comma, she only uses periods.	Her partner identifies punctuation mistakes. Good vocabulary and spelling.	The final version is very striking, creative and understandable. She uses more pictures to illustrate the ideas. The text does not have relevant mistakes.
9	Student writes about the movie "Blood Diamond". She has many vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes; she confuses present simple with past simple. The information is incomplete and, it is difficult for the reader can understand the text. (Coherence and cohesion)	Student reorganizes the information. Some ideas are not still understandable. She confuses the use of comma with the use of period and she includes words in Spanish.	The partner indicates capitalization, vocabulary and punctuation mistakes but, the idea is understandable.	The final version is creative and comprehensible; The text has coherence and cohesion but it has a few punctuation, spelling and capitalization mistakes that do not interfere with the communicative sense.
10	Student writes about the movie "Terminator 2". The information is incomplete, he has many punctuation, spelling, grammar (subject is missing), coherence and cohesion mistakes.	He completes the information; he does not use punctuation and capitalization.	The partner indicates vocabulary, capitalization and punctuation mistakes; students must rewrite the paragraph.	The final version has a few spelling, punctuation and capitalization mistakes but it is understandable. And student accomplished the writing objective.
11	The paper is lacking of coherence (Incomplete information). She uses words in Spanish and student does not use Simple Past tense correctly.	She rewrites her text but has spelling and vocabulary mistakes; some ideas are not understandable for the reader.	The partner identifies grammar mistakes, the subject is missing in some sentences and the closing idea is missing.	In the final version, she corrects the mistakes identified by her partner. Her text is very creative, complete, understandable and without relevant mistakes.

12	She writes about the movie "No le temas a la oscuridad". The text has incomplete information, spelling, punctuation, grammar, coherence and cohesion mistakes. The ideas are confused.	Student reorganizes and rewrites the information. She has to improve the capitalization and punctuation.	The partner identifies spelling and vocabulary mistakes to be corrected.	The final version is very creative and understandable. She identifies the different ideas with colors. The text has a few capitalization mistakes. She achieved the writing objective.
13	Student writes about the movie "Ciudad de Dios"; she has incomplete and unreal information. It is necessary that she reviews the punctuation, capitalization, vocabulary and spelling.	Student reorganizes the information. She has capitalization mistakes, she does not use punctuation and she uses words in Spanish.	The partner marks that the text has vocabulary mistakes, incomplete sentences, the subject is missing in some sentences and the closing idea is missing.	She corrects the mistakes identified by her partner. The text is very creative, striking and understandable. The paper does not have relevant mistakes.

Researchers analyzed the different writing process steps in the intervention:

FIRST DRAFT: In this step, twelve samples demonstrate coherence and cohesion mistakes, it is necessary that they complete the information about their favorite movie and write real information; six students do not have real information and they should organize it. Seven samples have grammar mistakes, for example, they include words in Spanish, the order of the elements of the sentences is incorrect, and the use of adjectives is not the appropriate; they confuse Simple Present tense with Simple Past tense. Four samples show vocabulary mistakes, these students do not ask teacher and do not use the dictionary to look for the correct word and they include words in Spanish in their text. Seven samples demonstrate spelling mistakes; they skip and include vowels or consonants in the words. Eight samples show capitalization and punctuation mistakes; they do not differentiate the use of comma and period; they do not know the use of capitalization specifically in the names and after period.

SECOND DRAFT: the ideas of the different texts are understandable; they improve in coherence and cohesion; only four of thirteen samples need to clarify the principal idea of the movie. Also, they need to improve in grammar (the subject is missing in different sentences, they confuse Present Tense with Past Simple tense, the use of adjectives in different sentences is not appropriate); four samples should improve vocabulary (they include words in Spanish). Three samples show spelling, capitalization and punctuation mistakes, they do not separate ideas with commas or periods or they do not use them in a correct way. It is necessary that one or two students improve the handwriting to make the text more understandable.

PEER EDITING: students correct the mistakes that they find in their partners' drafts. They point out spelling, capitalization and punctuation mistakes. In three samples, the closing sentence and the title are missing. Learners begin to improve in their writing process. The peer editing is very effective for students because they have the opportunity to help each other for correcting the mistakes.

FINAL VERSION: At the end, all the samples improve their writing; they use good sentences structure in a short paragraph. All final versions are striking and creative; they differentiate the ideas with colors, use periods to make text more understandable for the reader. Although, three students still have few punctuation mistakes and six students have a few capitalization mistakes. But, in general, students accomplished the writing objective.

At the beginning of the writing process, they show many mistakes as for example: they write incomplete and unreal information because they do not read and analyze it (coherence); they write sentences with missing subject, they confuse Present Simple tense with Past Simple tense, they use verbs in Present or in Infinitive, the adjective is not in a correct way (cohesion

and grammar); they omit letters in different words (spelling); they do not use capitalization in names and punctuation as comma and period; the vocabulary is according to the text.

With the writing process implemented in the Intervention, the students improve in different aspects from the first draft to the final version; they demonstrate that they can organize real information according to the teacher's instructions and they learn to use punctuation (comma and period), they use capitalization in a names and dates; they use the dictionary or ask when they do not know the appropriate vocabulary.

Extracts of sample

FIRST DRAFT	FINAL VERSION
The movie is about Ann traveled to <u>isla.</u>	The movie is about Ann traveling to <u>Island</u>. (Vocabulary)
The movie is about Dadinho <u>kill to</u> Marreco. The <u>American</u> director…	Dadinho <u>killed</u> Marreco. (Grammar) The <u>Brazilian</u> director... (Coherence – Real information)
I liked this movie because it had a <u>vision true</u> of the law.	I liked this movie because it had a <u>true vision</u> of the law. (Grammar)
The character in the film were: _____ (incomplete information)	The characters in the film were: Salomon Vandy<u>,</u> a fisherman; Maddy Bowen, she is journalist<u>. I</u> liked this movie… (Punctuation, capitalization and coherence – Incomplete information).

In the intervention stage, researchers observed the most relevant situations in the classroom while students were following the writing process steps. These situations were registered in an

observation chart (Appendix 4) and were synthetized in a mind map (Appendix 12) with the purpose to reflect and evaluate the results of the activities of the lesson plans implemented.

Results of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was answered by 13 students (sample) at the end of the writing process with the objective to ask about their ideas, opinions or experiences in the writing activity. It is designed in a clear and simple language, in Spanish to be more comprehensible for students. It has a set of four closed questions with multiple choice answers where students read the questions and pick their responses according to their personal opinions or experiences. Researchers use it to obtain data for reflecting and making adjustments in the writing process planned in the lessons.

The first question: 1. what do you think about the final writing activity? The results are shown in the next chart.

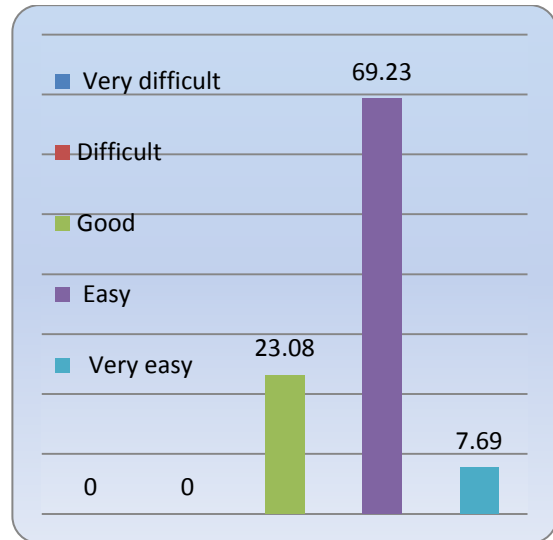| OPTIONS	%	NUMBER OF ANSWERS
Very difficult	0	0
Difficult	0	0
Good	76,92	10
Easy	15,38	2
Very easy	7,69	1
TOTAL	100	13

Table 5 Results of first question of questionnaire
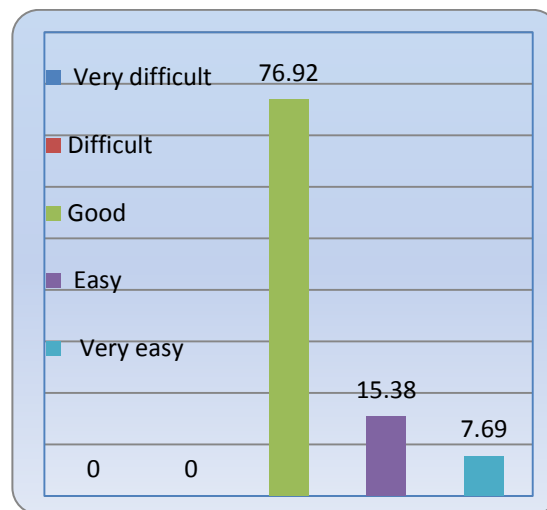
Graphic 1 Results of first question

The second question: 2. It was _____ for me to understand and follow the steps of the writing process.

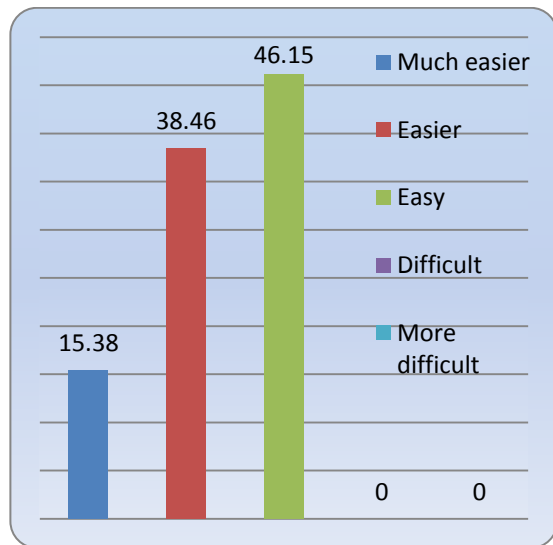| OPTIONS	%	NUMBER OF ANSWERS
Very difficult	0	0
Difficult	0	0
Good	23,08	3
Easy	69,23	9
Very easy	7,69	1
TOTAL	100	13

Table 6 Results of second question

Graphic 2 Results of second question

The third question: 3. I think that writing in English is _____ when I follow the steps of the writing process.

| OPTIONS	%	NUMBER OF ANSWERS
Much easier	15,38	2
Easier	38,46	5
Easy	46,15	6
Difficult	0,00	0
More difficult	0,00	0
TOTAL	100	13

Table 7 Results of third question

Graphic 3 Results of third question

The fourth question: 4. my perception of peer editing feedback that my partner made was _____ to help me to finish my final writing activity.

OPTIONS	%	NUMBER OF ANSWERS
Excellent	46,15	6
Very useful	0	6
Useful	7,69	1
Little useful	0,00	0
Very bad	0,00	0
TOTAL	100	13

Table 8 Results of fourth question
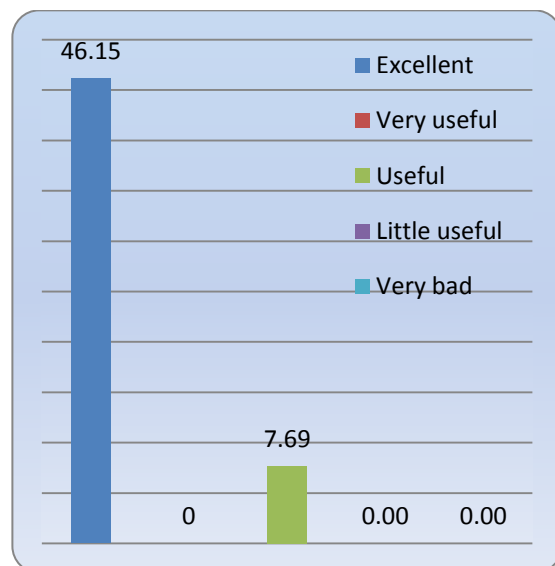
Graphic 4 Results of fourth question

According to the results obtained from the questionnaire applied to students, researchers can infer that students think that writing activity is easier if they follow the steps in the writing process. They express that each step of the writing process was easy to understand because it had clear steps. Some important conditions in the writing ability's acquisition stated by Horning (1987) and researchers took them into account when they designed the writing process model developed in the lesson plans. Also students' opinion about the final writing activity was good for them and researchers infer that when teachers have an organization and a planning before starting the writing assignment, it is easier for students to accomplish the writing objective. Other important fact in the results is that students think that writing in English is definitely easy, and much easier if they follow the steps of the writing process. So

it is evident that for teaching writing and helping students to be better writers, it is necessary to encourage students to follow steps during the writing process and in this way to build a writing habit (Harmer, 1997). Finally, students' experience about peer editing was excellent for them. This result is a great fact because it shows that a writing task can be worked as a collaborative activity and creates a better classroom atmosphere for making feedback during the process where students can be active in their own writing process.

CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to design, implement and evaluate a writing process approach based on Teaching for Understanding, with the purpose to enhance students' English writing production in Atabanzha School, Bogotá. Previous information showed that writing is a special part of language teaching and it requires an intellectual effort and time for effective communication (White & Arnolt, 1996). It is a relevant activity to students in academic and second language programs and also it has become an important skill for educational and personal reasons (Cushing, 2002). But at the same time it is a skill that must be acquired through special instruction based on the purposes of second language learners because writing can be different by age, level education and needs (Bernhardt, 1991).

Since writing is different in second language, it requires time to plan, review and revise words, sentences and ideas before being the text is finished. There are a number of different models of writing process with different characteristics and information, proposed by some researchers who take into account learners' age, level, learning styles and interests with an important teacher's action providing an effective feedback.

The results of the current study show that the implementation of the writing process model based on Teaching for Understanding, the pedagogical approach of the school, is a good way to enhance students' writing production, because they improve their writing skill and at the same time, they can present their final project of synthesis according to the writing objective. The lesson plans are developed in accordance with the Institution's demands, with designed activities that involve students in the writing process with enthusiasm, considering their age, level, and interests and, in this way, building a writing habit (Harmer, 1997). On the other

hand, the teacher can identify strengths and weaknesses, make relevant changes in the lesson plans and implement a writing process model suitable for students' characteristics and context. Furthermore, the proposal provides students a reading text as a model and students follow it in their own writing through defined stages of the writing process (first draft, second draft, peer editing and final version).

According to aforementioned theory, it is important to have a previous organization before asking students to write. This organization includes some clear and defined steps of writing process that students need to follow and in this way to help them to be better writers and communicate (Harmer, 2007). The implemented writing process model in the proposal gave students the opportunity of going through different stages in order to do their writing text. At the beginning of the process (first draft), students made several mistakes in different aspects as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, capitalization, coherence and cohesion, but at the end (final version) they could fulfill the writing objective, they made few mistakes that did not interfere with the sense of the text, and their papers were understandable. Ninth graders demonstrated improvement specially after the second draft and peer editing stages because they took into account teacher's and partner's suggestions (feedback) in order to get a good writing production before the final version.

The outcomes of the questionnaire indicate that students can follow and understand the steps of the writing process because they are clear and help students to write their text easier. Most students think that writing in English is easy if they follow the steps; it is essential to have a process with some useful steps to address writing tasks in order to develop writing skills in learners in an effective way (Cushing, 2002). Also, peer editing step has a positive impact on students because they can help each other and they feel more confident to receive

any kind of suggestions from their partners when they are writing the text. It shows that a writing task can be worked as a collaborative activity. In a certain way, it is an experience that helps students to realize their weaknesses and strengths in some aspects of their writing skill and it gives students the opportunity to be active in their own writing process.

It is necessary to highlight that writing skill is ability that it must be developed continuously and must be an active part of students' learning process through enjoyable and interesting writing activities or tasks, following an organization with some stages established in a writing process model.

The most important implication of this study might be the implementation of a writing process model based on the school's pedagogical approach (Teaching for Understanding). It is relevant to have a systematic and organized writing process suitable for learners with the purpose of enhancing their writing production. It was important for students in all the aspects mentioned before, but also it provided a useful element for the teachers, because they could follow and monitor students' progress in their writing skill.

As a personal reflection, this study was important not only for students but also for researcher teachers. Writing skill must be worked out all the time from the beginning of the school grades until university where it is essential to write academic texts. To achieve the objective of writing down the project in this document it was necessary to read models, to look for information about how to write texts in higher levels and to follow the same steps of the writing process established for students.

Recommendations

In spite of the evidences of the research, this study has some limitations that need addressing. Firstly, it is evident that students should follow the steps of the writing process in order to get the writing objective. Some students could not do it for factors as class attendance, behavior problems or learning problems. Secondly, teachers faced a time problem because they had only two hours per week to implement the proposal and it took longer than planned. Thirdly, Some Institution's demands must be followed by the teacher in the English lesson planning and they could not be changed to do other adjustments in the research proposal.

It would be interesting to incorporate this writing process approach, with the necessary changes suitable for students from different grades, in English programs at school with defined types of text for each level. It is relevant to enhance students' writing skill in a progressive and continuous way in order to create a habit, including teacher's feedback and peer editing as useful elements within the process and face the learning in a different perspective.

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