



**PONTIFICIA
UNIVERSIDAD
CATOLICA
DEL ECUADOR**

SEDE AMBATO

ESCUELA DE LENGUAS Y LINGÜÍSTICA

Tema:

**IMPLEMENTING A PORTFOLIO-BASED WRITING
ASSESSMENT IN THE LEVEL FOUR AT THE PONTIFICIA
UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA DEL ECUADOR SEDE AMBATO**

Disertación de grado previo a la obtención del título de
Licenciado en Lingüística Aplicada a la Enseñanza del Idioma Inglés

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Ambato-Ecuador
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**PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATOLICA DEL ECUADOR
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HOJA DE APROBACIÓN

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Yo, Wilson Daniel Aguilar Vásquez portador de la cédula de ciudadanía No. 180245969-1 declaro que los resultados obtenidos en la investigación que presento como informe final, previo la obtención del título de Licenciado en Lingüística Aplicada a la enseñanza del idioma inglés son absolutamente originales, auténticos y personales.

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A mis padres, por todo su amor, esfuerzo y apoyo durante el transcurso de mis estudios, espero que la realización de esta disertación traiga alegría a sus vidas.

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Resumen

La creciente demanda mundial por aprender el idioma inglés ha generado la necesidad de la excelencia en la enseñanza del mismo. En Ecuador, escribir en inglés es un requisito esencial para el éxito en los niveles de educación, de negocios y para desarrollo personal. Esta investigación demuestra que la incorporación efectiva de la metodología de aprendizaje “Portafolios de escritura” mejora la habilidad para escribir en inglés. Esta investigación presenta los resultados obtenidos de la implementación de “Portafolios de escritura” en el cuarto nivel de los cursos abiertos de inglés de la Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato. Los participantes pertenecieron a tres grupos distintos. El estudio fue de tipo experimental. Al finalizar la investigación se encontró que para la mayoría de estudiantes fue una experiencia positiva (80%), además que consideraron que les ayudó a mejorar su escritura (96%). Las observaciones del investigador también confirmaron la mejora en la escritura. La mayoría de los estudiantes en el examen final en la sección “writing” obtuvieron notas dentro de los parámetros establecidos para la escritura (96%) y cumplieron con los parámetros establecidos para la presentación de los portafolios al final del semestre (94%). Se recomienda el uso de los portafolios como herramientas de aprendizaje.

Abstract

The world-wide demand for English has generated an enormous need for excellence in language teaching. In our context writing in English is an essential pre-requisite for success required in everyday educational, business and personal situations. This research shows that the effective incorporation of a Portfolio-based writing assessment enhances the learner's writing ability. This research presents the investigation and evaluation of the implementation of a portfolio-based writing assessment at level four English classes at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato. Participants included three intact classes. The research design used was experimental research. Significantly, the research found that the majority of students favoured the portfolio system (80%), considering the whole process helpful to their writing improvement (96%). Moreover, researcher's observations also confirmed that students benefited from the portfolio system in terms of writing improvement: the majority of students met the writing standards in the final test (96%) and met the standards of the portfolio presentation at the end of the semester (94%). Findings of this study recommend that portfolios would be better used as pedagogical tools.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.”
(Habakkuk, 600 BC)*

The ancient writer Habakkuk in the previous verses highlights the importance of writing for transmitting and preserving the intended message. Indeed, one of the most important characteristics of writing is that it records evidence.

Writing is an essential skill required in everyday educational, business and personal situations. Now we are in the era of communication and the tendency moving towards globalization has been consistent, becoming English the international tool for communication. Therefore, in our context writing in a foreign language is becoming more significant for our learners. As teachers we need to find effective ways to enhance the learner’s writing ability.

In our country, the educational system does not encourage students to write effectively in their native tongue. Students do very little writing in their everyday lives. Most of their writing is short and unplanned. Considering also that writing in the mother tongue is a demanding and complex task for everybody, it is more so in a foreign language (White and Arndt, 1991). Because of these problems, for some teachers the major focus in English language teaching is on speaking, leaving writing aside (Skyline Writing Resource Team, 2002).

However, there are some good reasons to teach writing in class:

- Writing involves a different process than speaking, in the sense that there is more time to think and prepare.
- Writing is tangible. It provides the opportunity to revise and analyse a piece of writing, edit it and improve it.
- Writing can consolidate what students learn.
- Students might have the need to communicate through written form, because they have a foreign friend; have the desire to study overseas; or for business purposes.
- Writing increases creativity.

This research attempts to show that the effective incorporation of Portfolio-based writing assessment enhances the learner's writing ability. Furthermore, by using portfolios it is possible to teach them how to assess themselves thoroughly and accurately while measuring students' achievements as well as in encouraging students to become more independent.

This work is organized in five chapters. Chapters one through three present the theoretical background. Chapter one explores the nature of writing. Chapter two examines the assessment known as Portfolio-based writing assessment and deals with the assumptions it is based on. Chapter three presents an overview of applying language learning strategies to the writing skill. Chapter four presents the methodology and research applied. Chapter five describes the data analysis. Chapter six ends with conclusions and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE WRITING SKILL

1.1. Introduction

Writing is an essential skill required in everyday educational, business and personal situations. An integral part of interacting fully with the users of English is learning to communicate when the person is not right there in front of us. "Writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own right" (White and Arndt, 1991:3). Therefore, writing involves cognitive processes that allow writers to express their ideas into written form.

1.2. Definition of writing

Defining writing, the productive skill to be assessed is an essential starting point, O'Malley and Valdez (1996) state that "writing is a personal act in which writers take ideas and transform them into self-initiated topics" (p.136). Therefore, each person will produce a unique piece of writing. To write well, students rely on background knowledge and complex mental processes in order to develop new insights (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996).

1.3. The relationship between writing and speaking

Taking into account that both writing and speaking are productive skills but are used in different situations, for different reasons, and to achieve different communicative goals, it is important to analyse their differences. Brown (1994 in Cushing 2002) summarises these differences by providing a list of the characteristics of these productive skills:

- **Performance:** oral language is processed in real time and is transitory, while written language is permanent and can be read and reread.
- **Production time:** speakers have to plan, create, and deliver their utterances within a few instant in order to keep a conversation, while writers have more time to devote for planning, reviewing, and revising before they final products are presented.
- **Distance:** In a normal conversation, the speaker and the listener engage in face-to-face contact; whereas the distance between the writer and the reader is much greater, having the writer the necessity to be more explicit, thus the message can be understood.
- **Orthography:** It is the set of rules that controls written language. It helps to transmit the message. However it is limited when compared with the richness of devices found in oral communication such as: stress, intonation, pitch, volume, etc.

- **Complexity:** written language is characterised by complex sentences and a variety of subordinations, while spoken language tends to have shorter utterances linked by coordinators, also redundancy is used to clarify meaning.
- **Formality:** Writing tends to be more formal than speaking.
- **Vocabulary:** written communication makes use of a wider range of vocabulary than oral communication.

Considering cognitive differences, a demanding task which writers face is the absence of the addressee during the writing process, which seems to have the most significant cognitive implications (Cushing 2002). When speaking the person needs to use cognitive strategies to maintain the flow of the conversation, but in writing more time and energy are spent in cognitive activities such as planning and information retrieval. Thus, writers need to make a constant and conscious effort to imagine the intended audience and anticipate its response to the text (White and Arndt, 1991).

In summary, writing and speaking rely on many of the same linguistic resources and sometimes can be used to achieve the same communicative purposes. However, writing is not just oral language put on paper, rather, “it is a thinking process in its own right” (White and Arndt, 1991:3). It is a different manner of communication, involving a different cognitive course of action (Cushing 2002).

1.4. Writing as a social and cultural phenomenon

Writing is “an act that takes place within a context, that accomplishes a particular purpose, and that is appropriately shaped for its intended audience” (Hamp-Lyons and Kroll, 1997:8 in Cushing 2002). Therefore, writing is a meaningful activity that is socially and culturally shaped. For instance, Kaplan (1996 in Cushing 2002) who analysed the differences between Spanish and English described English writing as a straight line, while Spanish writers have a preference for extended introductions, and instead of focusing only just on the main ideas of an essay, as in English, Spanish writers make use of digressions and asides to demonstrate their breadth of knowledge on the topic. Shen (1998 in Cushing 2002), a Chinese student speaks of the necessity of changing one's own identity in order to write well in a second language:

In order to write good English, I knew that I had to be myself, which actually meant not to be my Chinese self. It meant that I had to create an English self and be that self. (Shen, 1998: 461 in Cushing 2002)

For many second-language and foreign-language writers it might be helpful to know both the culture and the social aspects that operate within the culture of the target language to write better in the target language.

1.5. Writing as a cognitive process

White and Arndt (1991) point out that “writing is far from being a simple matter of transcribing language into written symbols: it is a thinking process in its own. It demands conscious intellectual effort, which usually has to be sustained over a considerable period of time” (p.3). Therefore, teachers should provide students with opportunities to plan, revise and edit their writings.

1.5.1. Hayes and Flower model

An influential model of the writing process was that proposed by Hayes and Flower (1980 in Cushing 2002). Hayes and Flower described the writing process considering the task environment, which included the writing assignment and the text produced so far, the writer's long-term memory, consisting of knowledge of the topic, knowledge of the audience, and stored writing plans, and a number of cognitive processes, including planning, translating thought into text and reviewing (see Figure 1.1). One of their main contributions proposed by the Hayes-Flower model is that the writing process is not linear, but recursive.

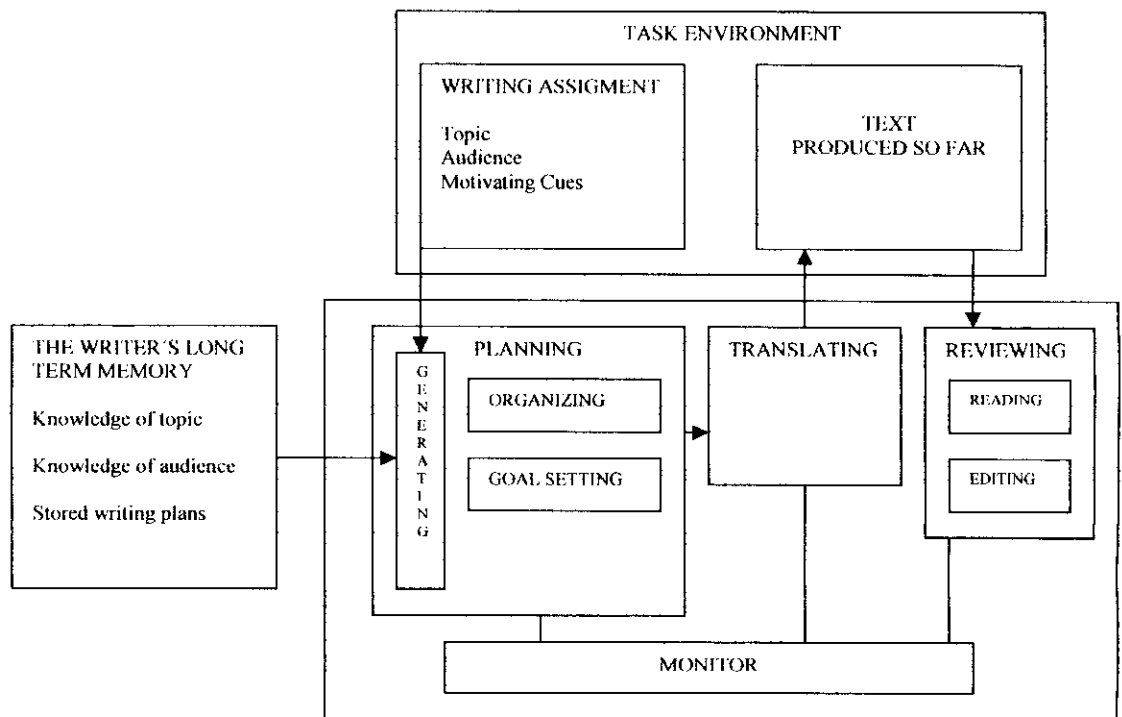


Figure 1.1 The Hayes-Flower (1980 in Cushing 2002) writing model

1.5.2. Hayes model

A more recent version of the Hayes-Flower model writing model is the Hayes (1996 in Cushing 2002) Model. In this model, the writing process consists of two main elements: the task environment and the individual (See figure 1.2). The central focus of this model is the individual. The task environment consists of two parts: the social environment and the physical environment. The social environment consists of the audience and any collaborators involved in the writing process. The physical environment incorporates the text so far, and the composing medium: handwriting or word processing. Nowadays, the advances in technology with the incorporation of word processors influences the way students write. Individual features of writing involve interactions among four components: working memory, motivation and affect, cognitive processes, and long-term memory. The working memory consists of phonological memory, which stores verbal input, the visual-spatial sketchpad, which stores visual information such as written words, and a semantic memory, which stores conceptual information.

Hayes's model also shows that motivation and affect play an important role in writing. In general, goals of the writer, predispositions, beliefs and attitudes, and cost/benefit estimates influence the writer's performance.

In the Hayes Model the cognitive processes consist of text interpretation, reflection, and text production. Text interpretation "is the process by which internal representations are created from linguistic and graphic input" (Cushing 2002:25). Reflection is a process that allows the writer to create new internal representations from previous existing ones. Finally, in text production, new written output is

produced from internal representations. All these processes are involved in drafting and in revising writing as well.

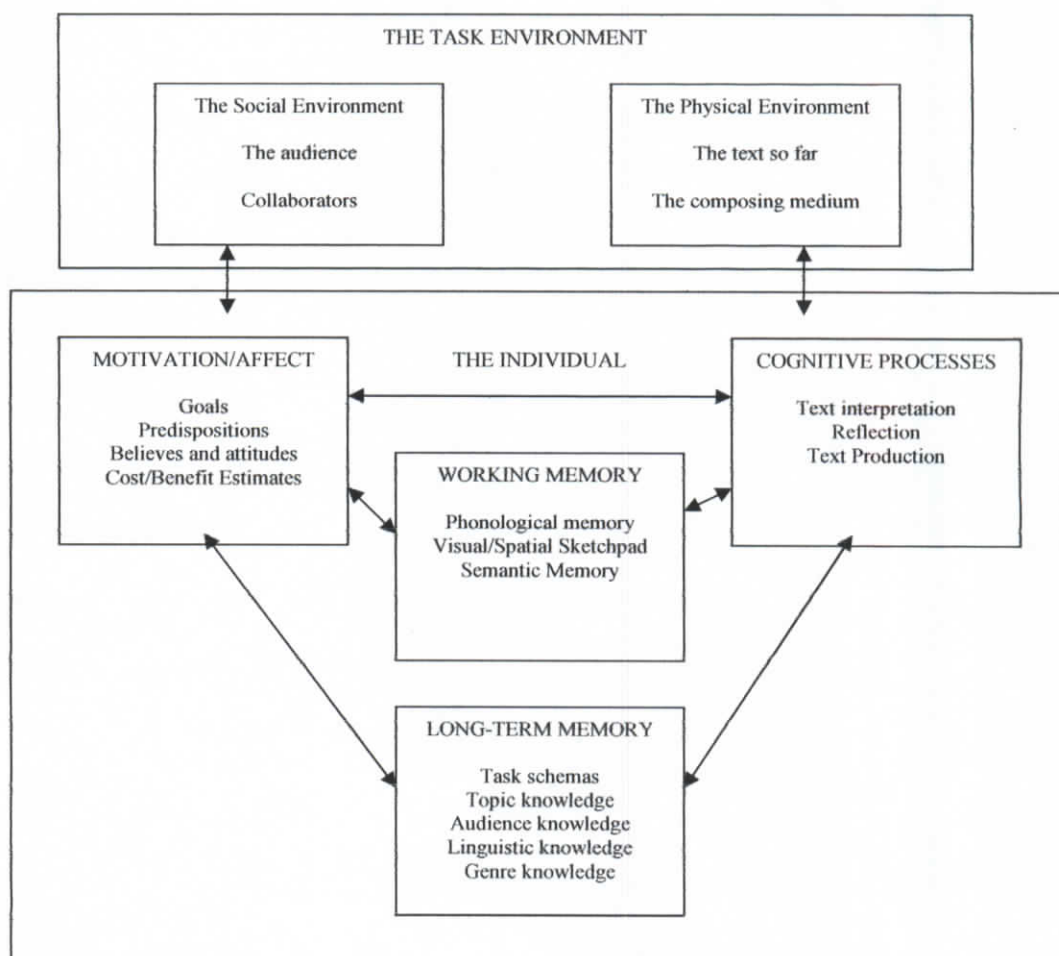


Figure 1.2. Hayes (1996 in Cushing 2002) model

Hayes also highlights the importance of reading to evaluate in writing. Hayes sees it as a central process because it enables writers to improve their performance. Reading to evaluate is a type of reading, “in which the writer reads his or her text critically to detect possible problems and to discover improvements” (Cushing 2002:27). Hayes model for reading to evaluate is presented in figure 1.3. This model shows the cognitive processes involved when reading to evaluate, such as decoding words,

applying grammar knowledge, applying semantic knowledge and so on. It also shows the possible discoveries and problems that we can find in a text that can be improved.

The fourth component of Hayes' model is long-term memory, which includes Task schemas, topic knowledge, audience knowledge, linguistic knowledge and genre knowledge. Task schemas are defined as "packages of information stored in long-term memory that specify how to carry out a particular task" (Cushing, 2002:24). Task schemas contain information about task goal, the process required for accomplishing the task, how to order the process, and how to assess the achievement of the task. Topic knowledge indicates what one is to write about. Knowledge of the audience makes the writer aware of who might read the text. Genre knowledge indicates the writer how to write considering cultural and social aspects. Finally, linguistic knowledge includes knowledge about the linguistic resources that are involved in the writing process.

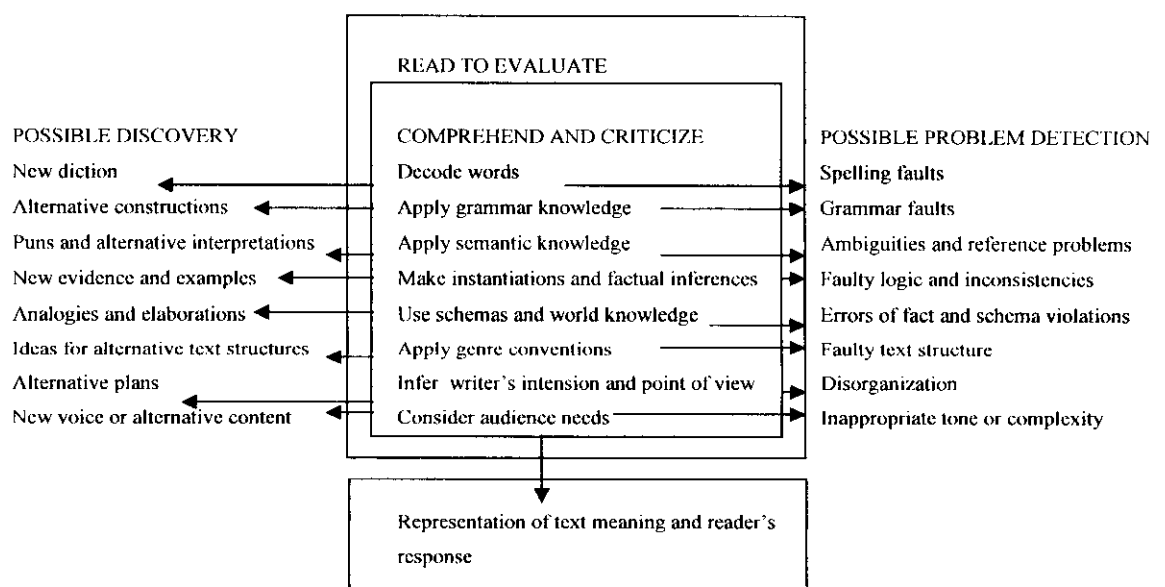


Figure 1.3. Cognitive process in reading to evaluate text (Hayes, 1996)

1.6. The Writing Process

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Online Writing and Communication Centre (1999), mentions that writing is a process that includes at least four distinct stages: prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing. Furthermore, “writing is recursive, meaning that several processes occur at the same time and overlap” (Connelly, 2005:1). While writing, writers reread, review and back track their texts to expand their ideas. Therefore, the process of generating ideas is an activity that occurs all the way through the writing process.

1.6.1. Prewriting

Prewriting is anything done before writing a draft. It consist of thinking, taking notes, talking to others, brainstorming, outlining, and gathering information (e.g., talking to a friend or partner about the topic, listing ideas, making an outline or semantic map).

1.6.2. Drafting

Drafting occurs when the writer puts his or her ideas into sentences and paragraphs. At this stage, writers state a topic sentence; add supporting sentences to fully explain their ideas and use concluding sentences to end paragraphs. Writers begin to connect their ideas. Despite prewriting, the process of putting ideas into sentences changes constantly; interesting ideas evoke additional ideas or implications. During this stage, students write without much attention to the accuracy of their texts. Drafts tend to be **writer-centred**.

1.6.3. Revising

Revision is the key to successful documents. Writers begin to consider the readers' needs and expectations. At this stage, the document turns into **reader-centred** by considering the register and the tone, trying to make each sentence as concise and accurate as possible so that the ideas can be understood by the addressee without any problem.

1.6.4. Editing

Finally writers focus on form. They check for such things as grammar, mechanics, and spelling.

1.7. Purposes and types of writing

Students write to accomplish different purposes and use a number of genres to do so. O'Malley and Valdez (1996) state that "purpose in writing determines the nature of writing" (p.137). Thus, students need clear specification of the purpose in order to follow the stages involved in the writing process. On the other hand, the genre defines the own style of the writer.

1.7.1. Purpose

According to O'Malley and Valdez (1996) there are at least three main purposes in writing: informative writing, narrative writing and persuasive writing.

Students use informative writing to share knowledge and transmit information, thoughts or directions. Examples of informative writing include describing experiences or a famous person, considering causes and effects and so on. In informative writing the writer relies on existing knowledge to generate ideas.

Narrative writing is used when students write stories which can be real or fictional. It is based on observations of people, things and places. This type of writing is used for entertainment.

In persuasive writing the main goal of the writer is to influence others or change their ideas. In order to do this, the writer uses facts and examples to prove his or her point of view. According to O'Malley and Valdez (1996) writers use higher-level cognitive skills such as analysis and evaluation to argue a specific point of view in a convincing manner.

It is important to remember that students need to have opportunities to practice writing for different purposes.

1.7.2. Genre

Students can use a variety of genres to accomplish their writing tasks. Examples of different genres include biographies, essays, stories, journal entries, letters, newspaper reports, manuals, and research papers (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). The selection of the genre depends on the purpose of the writing.

1.8. Foreign Language Writing

Learning to write in a foreign language requires a lot of effort for most Ecuadorian students. Most of them struggle in their attempts to put their ideas into paper. In some cases, foreign language students often devote a minimum amount of time for writing. Unless they are given clear guidelines for writing students tend to plan less, revise less, edit less and write less accurately than in their mother tongue. Producing a high-quality piece of writing can be challenging even in our mother tongue. “One reason that writing is so difficult relates to the fact that, in addition to knowing the appropriate grammar and vocabulary, a writer’s ideas must be presented clearly and in an organised fashion” (Kedir, 2005:1). In addition, the language systems of English and Spanish are significantly different. The rhetorical conventions of English texts – the structure, style, and organization – are different from the conventions in Spanish, therefore it requires time and effort to be familiar with and handle the differences (Leki, 1991). Inappropriate translation is a problem in teaching and learning writing due to the fact previously mentioned.

There are other problems that EFL students writers face when compared to western societies, ours does not read as much as they do. Poor reading skills may limit one's ability to evaluate one's own writing (Cushing, 2002). Also, Cushing notes that at the time of writing, EFL learners can be interrupted by the need for selecting suitable lexical and syntactic choices. As a result, they may end up with a different product from the intended one.

The majority language group members learn a foreign language for personal interest and/or educational improvement. They may not have a great necessity to write in a foreign language by the time they are learning it, but in the future: when they face a world that uses English as a tool for communication. In Ecuador, English is the foreign language taught in the three levels of education. However, the number of opportunities to write in a foreign language for real purposes is very limited. For most students, the only purpose to write in English may be to pass examinations or to get good grades during the learning process. This might make them uninterested in the writing task. Writing also may become artificial and decontextualised. In consequence, it is the teacher's role to find alternative ways to encourage his or her students to write productively. Although these inconveniences will continue, writing portfolio is a way to improve the teaching of this skill to prepare students for the writing they will need in their future.

CHAPTER TWO

PORTFOLIO-BASED WRITING ASSESSMENT

2.1. Introduction

According to Butler (2006), portfolios are widely used for a variety of purposes such as: for learning, for professional development, for assessment, or for job applications and promotions; and many different audiences: for lecturers, for mentors, for employers, or for the creator him or herself. Portfolio assessment has spread from L1 contexts to second-language and foreign language writing contexts. Currently, portfolio assessment is being used to assess students' writing ability because teachers can see it as a process and not as a single shot event. In this chapter an overview of authentic assessment is provided. Next portfolio assessment is defined, and the most important elements of portfolio are introduced. After that, the benefits of portfolio assessment are presented. Finally, practical and logical issues in portfolio implementation are discussed.

2.2. Authentic assessment

Many teachers recognize that alternative assessments in EFL and ESL contexts are an important means of gathering evidence regarding how learners advance, deal with, and complete real life tasks in the target language (Ghazi, 2002). "Alternative

assessment refers to the procedures and techniques which can be used within the context of instruction and can be easily incorporated into the daily activities of the school or classroom” (Hamayan, 1995 in Baker, 2005:213). While, Traditional approaches focused on transmitting information based on a predetermined programme of study or course books, using multiple choice tests as the main form of testing; alternative assessment is by definition criterion-referenced and it is genuine because it is based on activities that correspond to real-life situations (O’Malley and Valdez, 1996).

Pierce and O’Malley (1992 in Kassim, 2001) define alternative assessment as “any method of finding out what a student knows or can do that is intended to show growth and inform instruction and is not a standardized or traditional test” (p.2). O’Malley and Valdez (1996) use “the term authentic assessment to describe the multiple forms of assessment that reflect student learning, achievement, motivation, and attitudes on instructionally-relevant classroom activities. Examples of authentic assessment include performance assessment, portfolios, and student self-assessment” (p.4). Because of this authentic assessment is based on activities such as: solving complex problems, exchanging significant ideas, changing someone’s mind on important positions, putting in order information and managing human resources, and working as a team with others in the workplace. Kassim (2001) suggests that assessment is an indispensable tool to help teachers and administrators make conclusions about students’ linguistic abilities, performance, their placement in appropriate levels, and to measure their success.

According to Tannenbaum (1996), alternative assessment generally meets the following criteria:

1. *Focus is on documenting individual student growth over time, rather than comparing students with one another.*
2. *Emphasis is on students' strengths (what they know), rather than weaknesses (what they don't know).*
3. *Consideration is given to the learning styles, language proficiencies, cultural and educational backgrounds, and grade levels of students*

(Tannenbaum, 1996:1)

Although there is no single definition of authentic assessment, the main goal is to "gather evidence about how students are approaching, processing, and completing real-life tasks in a particular domain" (Huerta-Macias, 1995 in Tannenbeum, 1996:9). Therefore, teachers can track each student's progress.

According to Fradd and Hudelson (1995 in Kassim, 2001) in many settings "control over the collection and interpretation of assessment information has shifted from centralized authority towards the classrooms where assessment occurs on a regular basis" (p.5). Therefore, the teacher has a significant role in assessing students. Furthermore, it is vital for the teacher to search for and implement new assessment methods to evaluate students' achievement and progress. Alternative assessment benefits both teachers and students by providing them with tasks that are realistic, interactive, and practical, creating meaningful and effective assessment experiences for ESL and EFL students (Cushing, 2002).

There are various forms of assessment. Teachers can choose from a wide range of assessment possibilities to satisfy their learner's needs. One form of authentic assessment is portfolio assessment which is used in many disciplines and seems to be especially appropriate for the assessment of writing (Hamp-Lyons, 1992). O'Malley and Valdez (1996) list the following advantages of portfolios:

1. *Integrates information from a number of sources.*
2. *Gives overall picture of student performance and learning.*
3. *Strong student involvement and commitment*
4. *Calls for student self-assessment.*

(O'Malley and Valdez, 1996:12)

Because of these advantages, EFL teachers around the world are incorporating the use of portfolio assessment in their classrooms.

2.3. Definition of portfolio assessment

The notion of a portfolio was borrowed from the field of fine arts where portfolios are used to display the best samples of an artist's efforts (Kassim 2001). According to the Northwest Evaluation Association, a portfolio is "a purposeful collection of student work that exhibits the student's efforts, progress, and achievements. The collection must include student participation in selecting contents, the criteria for selection, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of student self-reflection" (Northwest Evaluation Association, 1991:4 in Cushing 2002). In other words, a portfolio is used "to collect samples of student work over time to track progress" (Tannenbaum 1996:4). More specifically in the context of writing instruction, it is "a

collection of texts the writer has produced over a defined period of time to the specifications of a particular context” (Hamp-Lyons, 1992:25).

Yancey (1992 in Park 2004) set forth four principles for a legitimate portfolio system:

1. *A portfolio is a **collection** of work, but it is a collection that is a subset of a larger archive. Theoretically, the archive is the whole of a student's work, but more practically and more frequently, it is a subset of writing completed in a class, a program, and a school.*
2. *The process by which the subset is created is one of **selection**, which is the second principle of portfolios. How entries are selected varies according to the rhetorical situation contextualizing the portfolio.*
3. *A third principle is **reflection**, the process by which a student explains his or her learning.*
4. *A fourth principle is **communication**, in the sense that the writing portfolio, like any portfolio, will communicate something about the writer, about what he or she values, about the context in which the writer has worked, and so on.*
(Yancey 1992, in Park 2004:1)

Of the four principles proposed by Yancey, the most important are: collection, reflection, and selection, according to Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000 in Cushing 2002). The basic elements are shown in Figure 2.1. The figure illustrates the relationship that exists between these elements, with a constant feedback to the writer at every stage of the process, with final evaluation delayed until the portfolio is turned in.

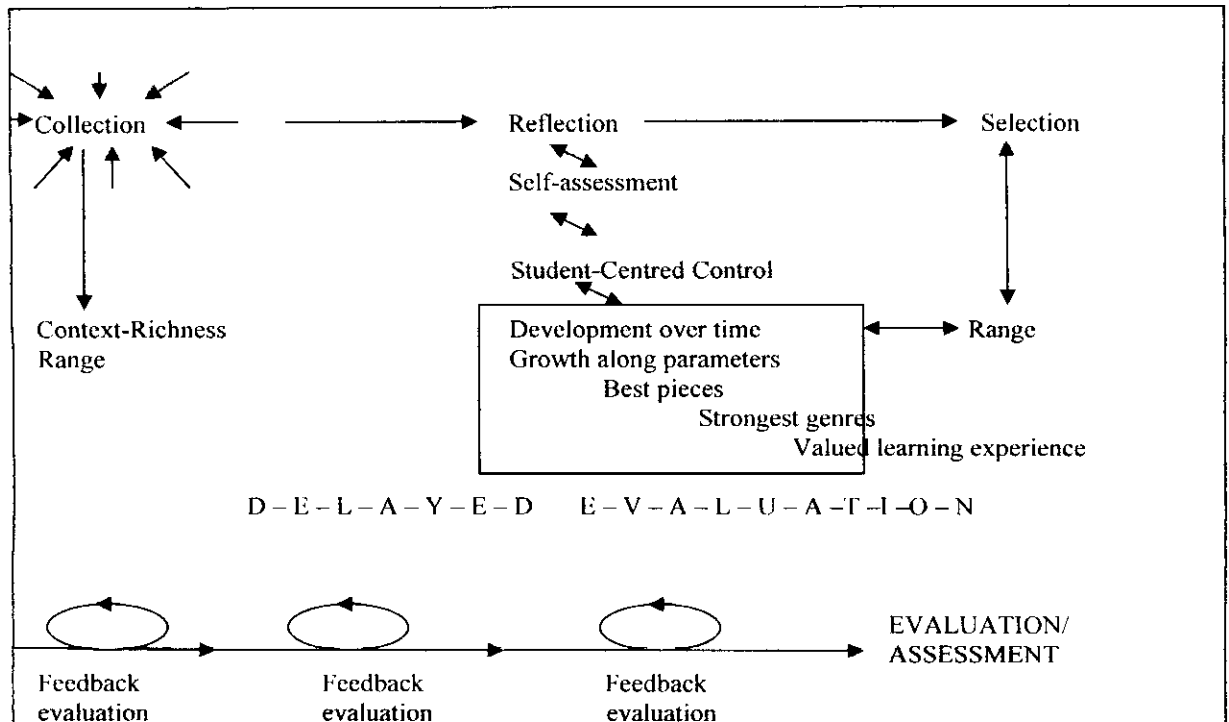


Figure 2.1. Basic portfolio characteristics (Hamp-Lyons, L. and Condon, W., 2000 in Cushing 2002)

Park commenting on Yancey's three essential characteristics of portfolios notes:

Firstly, they are longitudinal in nature. That is, in a portfolio classroom, the teacher sets out quite explicitly to create the time necessary for writers to develop. In practice, what this means is that the piece initiated on Monday need not be submitted a week or two later for a final evaluation. Instead, it can be reshaped and revised in light of what is learned days or weeks or even a month or two later. Secondly, portfolios are diverse in content. That is, as a system, the portfolio is open rather than closed and its contents are intended to be diverse and inclusive. Thirdly, portfolios are almost always collaborative in ownership. In other words, portfolios are created collaboratively by the student as author, working with the teacher and other students as partners, who respond to and advise the writer, helping to evaluate and rework and select pieces to be submitted for the institutional assessment that fully determines the grade. (Park 2004:1-2)

Yancey's characteristics emphasize the flexibility that allows participants to compile the portfolios. Students feel free to express themselves and have many opportunities to improve their works.

Furthermore, it promotes the concept of student ownership. Students can review their writing, improve it, and decide which pieces they want to include in their portfolios. Consequently, it becomes a meaningful application for them.

By definition a portfolio is a collection of writing samples. Therefore, a portfolio is not a portfolio unless it contains more than a piece of writing. According to Cushing (2002), the collection can differ along a number of factors – it can include finished products only, or drafts to reflect the writer's progress ; it can be assembled under extremely strict guidelines or be left to the learner's good judgment; it can include just a few writing samples or a large number.

Moreover, to make a portfolio useful for evaluation two elements are compulsory: reflection and selection (Cushing 2002). As Hamp-Lyons and Condon (2000 in Cushing 2002) state, “everything that we have read about how and why portfolios work successfully, as pedagogical tools, teacher development tools, and as assessment tools, teaches that without reflection all we have is simply a pile, or a large folder” (p.119). In other words, deliberate selection of the portfolio entries by the student and reflection are what turn a collection of written work into portfolios.

Hamp-Lyons (1992) state: “It seemed to us that the opportunities for multiple drafting, self-reflection, and receiving and responding to feedback implied by the portfolio mirror the reality of writing as it is taught these days and the ways students approach writing when it is required in their courses outside English class” (p.33). Thus, portfolios allow students to engage in the writing process as it happens in real life.

2.4. Validity

O'Malley and Valdez (1996) notes that validity "refers to whether or not an assessment is an adequate measure of the curriculum and the objectives it represents" (p.240). According to the National Capital Language Resource Centre (2006) for a writing portfolio to have high content validity, it requires to be developed for a specific class working toward a specific purpose and learning objective. This is the only way in which portfolio assessment can be authentic and valid in each learning experience. Because portfolios contain several writing samples, which are written under different situations, teachers can feel more confident in generalizing from the results of a portfolio assessment project (Hamp-Lyons, 1992; O'Malley and Valdez, 1996).

The NCLRC suggests that teachers should set the purpose of the portfolio in agreement with course objectives, match the contents of the portfolio to the purpose, and create clear criteria in relation to the original objectives to ensure content validity. To establish content validity teachers should ask themselves these two questions:

Does the portfolio match the instructional purpose and objectives of the course?

Is the portfolio (or the writing samples) assessing what it was set out to assess?

2.5. Reliability

According to the NCLRC (2006) reliability refers to “the consistency and accuracy of the assessment tool to measure students' performance” (p.6). Portfolios are successful only if teachers establish a consistent way of scoring by providing clear and detailed criteria.

Students need to know how their work will be evaluated during the portfolio assessment, so that they can set goals and work toward them (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). This is possible when they are given specific criteria and standards about what they are expected to achieve. “Criteria are statements of exactly what skill or knowledge the specified learner or group of learners is to master, what constitutes mastery, and how progress toward mastery is measured” (NCLRC, 2006:6). In instruction, criteria are represented in the form of objectives, goals or learning outcomes. Furthermore, criteria for both the portfolio and its contents should be given at the beginning of the portfolio project to help students understand what is expected and to help the teacher know what he or she is going to assess.

2.6. Practicality

According to Cushing (2002) “perhaps the most important limitation of portfolio assessment has to do with the amounts and types of resources – particularly human resources and time – that are required to implement portfolio assessment, especially

beyond the level of the individual classroom” (p.209). In some programs instructors frequently have only part-time contracts and are not paid for extra work or additional meetings to score the portfolios if they want to create an assessment team of teachers. Therefore, they might not be willing to implement portfolio assessment in their classes.

For the individual teacher, implementing the portfolio assessment may be easier, because it does not require the same level of organization with other instructors in terms of standard setting, determining portfolio contents, and terms of achieving reliability. Perhaps the difficulty of portfolio assessment is the fact that they are time and labour intensive for teachers and students alike. However, teachers who have worked with portfolio assessment believe that is well worth the benefits students received. In fact, Herman et al in Cushing reports a list of the demands of portfolios:

the intensive and pervasive demands on teachers' time ... to learn new assessment practices, to understand what should be included in portfolios and how to help students compile them, to develop portfolio tasks, to discern and apply criteria for assessing students' work, to reflect on and fine-tune their instructional and assessment practices, and to work out and manage the logistics. (Herman et al., 1996:54 in Cushing 2002)

2.7. Benefits of Portfolio

Teachers who have implemented portfolios inform that portfolios increase both the quantity and quality of writing and enhance students' cognitive development (O'Malley et al., 1996). Portfolio encourages student self-awareness and critical thinking; they can reflect on their effort, their progress and set goals (Abrami &

Barrett, 2005). It also allows them to assess their individual learning styles. Furthermore, they provide a detailed picture of the student's performance in a variety of different writing tasks. According to Kemp and Toperoff (1998) portfolio assessment:

1. *Matches assessment to teaching, the products that are assessed are mainly products of class work, and are not divorced from class activities like test items.*
2. *Has clear goals, they are decided on at the beginning of instruction and are clear to teacher and students alike.*
3. *Gives a profile of learner abilities.*
4. *Depth: It enables students to show quality work, which is done without pressure and time constraints, and with the help of resources, reference materials and collaboration with others.*
5. *Breadth: A wide range of skills can be demonstrated.*
6. *Growth: It shows efforts to improve and develop, and demonstrates progress over time.*
7. *Is a tool for assessing a variety of skills, written as well as oral and graphic products can easily be included.*
8. *Develops awareness of own learning, students have to reflect on their own progress and the quality of their work in relation to known goals.*
9. *Caters to individuals in the heterogeneous class, since it is open-ended, students can show work on their own level. Since there is choice, it caters to different learning styles and allows expression of different strengths.*
10. *Develops social skills, students are also assessed on work done together, in pairs or groups, on projects and assignments.*
11. *Develops independent and active learners, students must select and justify portfolio choices; monitor progress and set learning goals.*
12. *Can improve motivation for learning and thus achievement, empowerment of students to prove achievement has been found to be motivating.*
13. *Is an efficient tool for demonstrating learning, different kinds of products and records of progress fit conveniently into one package; changes over time are clearly shown.*
14. *Provides opportunity for student-teacher dialogue, enables the teacher to get to know each and every student. Promotes joint goal-setting and negotiation of grades.* (<http://www.anglit.net/main/portfolio/default.html>)

Because of these benefits, it is widely used in EFL instruction. Furthermore, students become active participants in the whole learning experience.

2.8. Design Steps in Portfolio Assessment

In order to successfully design and implement a portfolio assessment project, the NCLRC (2006) provides a framework which consists of seven steps:

- 1. Set Assessment Purpose*
- 2. Identify Instructional Objectives*
- 3. Match Task to Objectives*
- 4. Set Criteria*
- 5. Determine Organization*
- 6. Monitor Progress*
- 7. Evaluate the Portfolio Process*

(<http://www.nclrc.org>)

Following these steps will help teachers ensure that the portfolio is a reliable and valid assessment tool. Steps one through five (setting assessment purpose through setting criteria) correspond to the design phase and are done in advance as part of the planning process. Step six (monitoring progress) is ongoing throughout the whole learning experience of the portfolio and corresponds to the implementation phase. Step seven (evaluating the process) occurs at the end of the portfolio project.

2.8.1. Set Assessment Purpose

The first and most important step is setting the assessment purpose, because it provides focus and direction. This can be done by answering the following questions:

What aspect of language learning will the portfolio be used to assess?

Who will use the portfolio?

What is the reason for making the assessment?

Herman et al., in Cushing (2002) provide the following list of purposes for portfolio assessment:

- *Accountability; evaluating program or curriculum effectiveness.*
- *Evaluating individual student progress; grading; certifying student accomplishment.*
- *Diagnosing students' need; informing classroom instructional planning; improving instructional effectiveness.*
- *Encouraging teacher efficacy (i.e. helping teachers become more effective); encourage reflective practice at the school and classroom levels; supporting teachers' professional development*
- *Encouraging student efficacy (i.e. helping students become better learners); promoting student self-assessment; motivating student performance.*
- *Communicating with parents.* (Herman et al, 1996 in Cushing, 2002:29)

2.8.2. Identify Instructional Objectives

The next stage is to identify portfolio objectives for students to work toward in writing. Choose several goals to focus on; for example, general goals such editing a piece of writing, writing different types of paragraphs, punctuating texts and so on. It is also recommendable at this stage to establish performance standards. This stage is

very important because teachers can identify the learning goals according to the level of the students.

2.8.3. Match Tasks to Objectives

At this stage the teacher selects writing tasks that match the objectives. Choose writing tasks that will allow students to systematically produce and reflect on their learning. The products of these tasks will become artifacts in the assessment portfolios. What can students do to show evidence of their progress toward the objective?

At the moment of choosing the activities the teacher must consider the performance standard which is “the level of performance required on specific activities represented in content standards,” (O’Malley and Valdez, 1996:238) which are “the declarative and procedural knowledge specific to a given content domain” (O’Malley and Valdez, 1996:239). This helps the teacher develop activities that are adequate to the specific groups of students.

2.8.4. Set Criteria

Establish criteria by which both the individual entries and the portfolio will be assessed.

How will be determined the degree of student progress toward the goals?

2.8.5. Determine Organization

Decide how the elements of the portfolio will be handled and in which order they will be placed.

Where will the portfolio be stored?

How often will artifacts and attestations be submitted?

Who will select the artifacts and attestations?

2.8.6. Monitor Progress

This is on-going process that allows the teacher to monitor the portfolio for validity and reliability constantly. If necessary adjustments are made.

Is the portfolio assessing the specified skill or area consistently?

Is the portfolio providing useful information about the students to inform instruction?

2.8.7. Evaluate the Portfolio Process

At the end of the portfolio semester or year, teachers should reflect on the entire process and evaluate students' accomplishment with the portfolio.

What worked well that should be included next time?

What changes will improve the use of portfolios for the next time?

2.9. Essential Elements of Portfolios

Deciding what should go into a student's portfolio requires identifying the key elements. According to O'Malley and Valdez (1996) these are: samples of student work, student self-assessment and clearly stated criteria.

2.9.1. Samples of student work

Portfolios must include pieces of writing that show evidence of student's improvement during the teaching-learning experience. The entries can be chosen by the student, or his or her teacher or both participants in agreement. The purpose of the portfolio will determine who decides the writing entries for the portfolio (Cushing, 2002). For example if the primary purpose of the portfolio is to enhance student learning, the student can decide which elements are the most appropriate. On the other hand, if the main purpose of the portfolio is certifying students' accomplishment, then it is advisable that the teacher selects the entries, because students may not be able to select the writings that most closely correspond to the

grading criteria. In this case student's selection may work against his or her best interest. Cushing also notes that the number of pieces that should be included into the portfolio must take into account two factors: validity and practicality:

Ideally, since portfolios are intended to demonstrate the depth and breadth of a student's writing performance, the simple answer to this question is the more pieces, the better. However, this concern for adequately sampling the domain (i.e. concerns of construct validity) must be balanced with concerns of practicality, particularly in terms of time – both the student's time in assembling the portfolio, and the teacher/ evaluator's time in reading the portfolio – and efficacy. For example, if a reliable and valid decision about a student's work can be obtained from, say, reading five pieces then there is little to be gained from including eight in the portfolio. (Cushing, 2002:214)

Thus, each particular situation will determine the number of pieces that should be included in the portfolios.

2.9.2. Student self-assessment

O'Malley and Valdez (1996) note that "without self-assessment and reflection on the part of the student, a portfolio is not a portfolio" (p.35). Therefore, a portfolio is an exceptional opportunity for students to learn to monitor and take responsibility for their own progress. O'Malley and Valdez also point out that there are three kinds of self-assessment: documentation, comparison and integration. In documentation, students are asked to select their best work and explain the reasons for selecting it, for example, they might indicate that they choose that piece of writing because they liked the topic, or because the ideas are well-organised, or because it shows a good range of vocabulary and structures. In self-assessment through comparison, students compare a recent piece of writing with an earlier and see their progress, for example they might comment on their improvements in using writing strategies. Finally in integration, students explain their learning in a more general way combining different factors. On the other hand, Cushing notes that students possibly will not

take this opportunity for reflection seriously and may perhaps use the reflective essay to butter up their teachers.

2.9.3. Clearly stated Criteria

Students need to know how their writing will be evaluated and by what standards their work will be judged. Moreover, it has to be clear for the students; they need to fully understand what it is required from them.

2.10. Holistic scoring

ESL and EFL teachers can evaluate the students' writing ability by using writing scoring rubrics. Holistic scoring is "the assignment of a single score, based on specific criteria, to a student's performance" (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996:238). The specific criteria rely on local instructional program and language learning objectives. O'Malley and Valdez also note that the underlying principle for using a holistic scoring method is that the "total quality of written text is more than the sum of its components. Writing is viewed as an integrated whole" (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996:142).

Although many forms of scoring exist, Cushing (2002) cites that holistic writing is advantageous because the teacher focuses on the strengths of the writing, not on its weaknesses. Furthermore, it reflects most closely the genuine, personal effect on the

reader to a text, and that, in analytic scoring methods, too much attention to the parts obscures the meaning of the whole.

A holistic scoring rubric for EFL students is presented in Figure 2.2. The system is divided into five bands. For each band there is a description of what the writing must be like. The criteria for which ratings are assigned take into consideration: meaning, organization, use of transitions, vocabulary, and grammatical/ mechanical usage. Each scoring rubric should be adapted according to the particular needs of each group of students.

From a practical perspective it is faster because it involves reading a writing sample rapidly in order to get a broad impression of a writer's ability and assign a single score (Currier, 2005). Because of this, holistic scoring has become widely used in writing assessment over the past 25 years (Cushing, 2002). Another factor to consider is that the scoring rubric helps students understand what it is required from them.

Figure 2.2 Holistic Scoring Rubric for Writing Assessment with EFL/ESL Students

Score Point	Criteria
5	- Your writing relates to the topic. - Your writing has interesting ideas that are transmitted clearly and effectively. - The grammar and vocabulary are appropriate and correspond to the language we have learnt. - It has a logical structure that flows naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. - Your paragraph(s) has/have a "topic sentence", at least four sample supporting details and a "concluding sentence". - It has only minor spelling or grammatical errors that do not affect meaning - It has the right tone and register. - Your writing has a very positive effect on the reader
4	- Your writing relates to the topic. - Your writing has interesting ideas that are transmitted clearly. - The grammar and vocabulary are appropriate and correspond to the language we have learnt. - It has a logical structure that flows naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. - Your paragraph(s) has/have a "topic sentence", at least four sample supporting details and a "concluding sentence". - It has some spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning is still clear. - It has the right tone and register. - Your writing has a very positive effect on the reader.
3	- Your writing has interesting ideas most of the time - Your writing has a logical sequence. - The grammar and vocabulary are appropriate to the task but may be limited in range. - It has some spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning is still clear. - A reasonable attempt has been made at completing the task.
2	- You misunderstood the task. The ideas are not related to the topic. - Your writing has inappropriate examples - The style and the register are not appropriate - It has limited vocabulary - It has a negative effect on the reader due to serious errors the meaning is unclear.
1	- Copies from a model. - Uses single words or phrases. - The errors in the writing make the meaning unclear.

Adapted from Prience William Country Public Schools, Virginia and Lethaby, C., Brewster, S., Davies, P., and Rogers, M. 2002. Skyline 4: Skyline Writing Resource Book. Macmillan: Oxford
 O'Malley and Valdez (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*. Longman: USA

2.11. Types of portfolios

According to O'Malley and Valdez (1996) there are three basic types of portfolios: showcase portfolios, collections portfolios, and assessment portfolios.

2.11.1. Showcase model

A showcase portfolio is “used to show off one's best work; items are selected to represent one's highest level of achievement in regard to particular knowledge or skills” (Catalyst 2004:1). Therefore, a student selects the entries carefully to demonstrate his or her achievements during the learning experience. The disadvantage of this kind of portfolio is that it does not show the entire learning process over time.

2.11.2. Assessment model

Contrasting showcase and collections portfolios, “assessment portfolios are focused reflections of specific learning goals that contain systematic collections of student work, student self-assessment, and teacher assessment” (O'Malley and Valdez 1996:37). Thus, the entries are selected with a purpose and to show growth over time. To facilitate the selection of the entries, the criteria used may take the form of rubrics, checklists, self-assessment forms and peer-assessment forms and so on. Usually the student selects the entries with some supervision from the instructor.

2.11.3. Collections model

“A collections portfolio literally contains all of a student’s work that shows how a student deals with daily class assignments” (O’Malley and Valdez, 1996:37). They are also known as working folders as they include drafts, outlines, unfinished writings and final products. The advantage of this model is that shows both: process and product. It contains every single work produced by the student throughout the learning experience. However, one disadvantage may be that since it contains everything, it is difficult to use it for assessment purposes.

“The best portfolio assessments collect writing from different points over the course or year and take into account both growth and excellence. Such portfolios require students to include in their portfolio papers which have been revised over a period of time and to provide the original draft and all subsequent drafts” (Hamp-Lyons, 1992:26). Traditionally, this model has not been used. It may be due to the fact that instructors have not received any guidance about this type of portfolio. (O’Malley and Valdez 1996).

2.12. Self-assessment in writing

In modern days language teachers have emphasised the role of the learner as an active participant in the language-learning process. Self-assessment helps students to focus much more directly on what the student can do. It also promotes critical thinking about the purpose for writing and self-awareness on what and how much they are learning (NCLRC, 2006). Moreover, it helps students realise that they can

take responsibility for their own learning. A research conducted at the NCLRC found out that students often assess their progress towards course goals in the same way that the teacher evaluates them.

One of the most important benefits of portfolio assessment is that it promotes learner reflection (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). Chen notes that "portfolio use seems to show the greatest promise in enhancing diverse dimensions of learning and developing multiple intelligences as well as promoting learner autonomy" (Chen, 2006:1). As part of the portfolio process, learners are asked to reflect about their, progress, needs, goals, strengths and weaknesses. Asking students to complete reflective forms and write reflective essays gives them the opportunity to see themselves as active participants in the writing process, and discover how their perceptions change during the process.

Sometimes it is hard for the students to assimilate the idea of self-assessment. They want their teachers to correct their work, if possible at every stage of the writing process. Most of them tend to think that they do not have the necessary skills to evaluate themselves. They might be right. For them, the problem is meta-cognitive; some students are not used to evaluate themselves. As part of the portfolio assessment students also should be given the opportunity to learn meta-cognitive strategies. For example, if a teacher wants students to assess themselves as to how well they write in the target language, he or she uses a writing rubric (NCLRC, 2006). Another problem is linguistic when they are asked to write reflective forms or complete learning logs; their communication skills may not be sophisticated enough to express their reflective ideas in English (Blanche 1988). This problem can be over

come by allowing them to express their reflective thoughts either in English or in their mother tongue. By doing this, they can feel less anxious.

Despite these problems, self-assessment is a key element in portfolios (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). Santos (1997 in Coombe et al. 2004) says, "Without reflection, the portfolio remains a folder of all my papers" (p.10).

2.12.1. Writing Checklist

An important part of self-assessment is for students to check their own writing with respect to some guidelines to make progress in learning. (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). Teachers can provide checklists with specific guidelines referring to: assigned topic, audience, theme, use of complete sentences, etc (See Annex A). Furthermore, students can revise it whenever they want to see if they are meeting what is expected from them.

Other samples of this type are the self assessment of writing dimensions and the self-assessment of writing strategies. The self-assessment of writing dimensions can cover the following areas: purpose and organisation, word and sentence use, mechanics and format and editing (See Annex B). The self-assessment of writing strategies can be divided taking into account the writing process. Thus, the checklist contains: before writing strategies, during writing strategies and after writing strategies (See Annex C). For example, teachers can find their learners' use of writing strategies by providing them with checklists that contain simple sentences such as: I talked to a friend or partner about the topic, I made a list of ideas on the

topic, I checked to see if it made sense and so on, and learners rate these sentences in a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means *never or almost never true of me* and 5 means *always or almost always true of me*.

2.12.2. Learning Logs

Learning logs encourage students to write during the last five minutes of a lesson their impression about their learning (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). They can do this by answering simple questions about: learning, strategies, learning difficulties to check their understanding. Learning logs help teachers keep track of students' learning needs. Learning logs are especially designed to help students who are afraid to ask questions during the lessons (See Annex D).

2.12.3. Survey of interest and awareness

To know what the attitudes of learners toward writing are, teachers can use surveys of interest and awareness (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). It is important to know the attitudes of the learners towards writing to develop the appropriate tasks (See Annex E). Teachers can find their learners' attitudes towards writing by providing students with checklists that contain simple sentences such as: I like to write stories, I am a good writer, writing stories is easy for me and so on, and learners rate these sentences in a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 means *a lot* and 4 means *not at all*.

2.13. Peer assessment in writing

*"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.
For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he
falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."
(The Holy Bible, 1989)*

Teo (2006) observing Peregoy and Boyle's (2001) research in the field of second language writing found out that pairing students up in writing is ideal to promote learning effectiveness. Because it gives teachers more quality time to work with their students and provides students with many chances to share ideas. This eases the burden on the teacher for evaluating every single piece of writing produced by the students and provides students with some form of regular feedback (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). "Including peer-assessment in the portfolio process promotes cooperation, trust, and a sense of responsibility, not just to oneself but to others" (NCLRC, 2006:1). However, Peregoy and Boyle highlighted that students in the peer response groups require clear guidelines in giving their partners positive feedback. O'Malley and Valdez state that this procedure is possible by making students exchange their writings and use peer evaluation and editing forms to improve them and use a scoring rubric to rate them(See Annex F). Peer evaluation and editing forms for writing help learners to share their impressions about their peer's writing. In Addition, students can learn the characteristics of good writing by assessing their peer's work (NCLRC, 2004).

Students are sometimes unwilling to share their impressions about their peer's writing because they do not want to hurt their classmates' feelings (O'Malley and

Valdez, 1996). This can be overcome by asking students to find out how the writing can be improved. As mentioned earlier in this chapter assessment focus more in what the student can do rather than in what the student can not do.

One activity for promoting ESL/EFL students' narrative writing skills is presented in Figure 2.3. This activity was adapted from Teo's (2006), which consists of six steps:

3.13.1. Step 1: Ideas

In order to help ESL/EFL writers identify the important elements in narrative writing such as character, setting, problem, and solution, students are provided with complete questions using the journalist's questions:

2.13.2. Step 2: Draft

Students begin writing by using the ideas generated from Step 1. The emphasis is on having the students continue writing as their ideas are flowing. One way is to remain them that they do not have to worry too much about spelling in this step.

2.13.3. Step 3: Read

The Writer reads the writing aloud, so that the helper can correct the writer's mistakes.

2.13.4. Step 4: Edit

In this step, the helper and writer revise the draft together; the helper completes the peer evaluation and editing form for writing in order to give a constructive feedback (See Annex F). Therefore, the writer receives feedback about the improvements he or she could make and the strengths of his or her writing (O'Malley and Valdez, 2006). Teachers or students can also indicate mistakes by using a code list or set of symbols. This will enable writers to self-correct their work. According to Teo (2006), there are five levels when editing. They are meaning, order, style, spelling, and punctuation.

The questions provided in the form can help students edit their works successfully. The questions can be organized in a way that shows the importance of each criterion, the first question being the most important, and the last being the least. Questions 1 and 2 (which are bolded) are the two most important questions the pair should fully answer to while editing their writings and are shown in Figure 2.9.

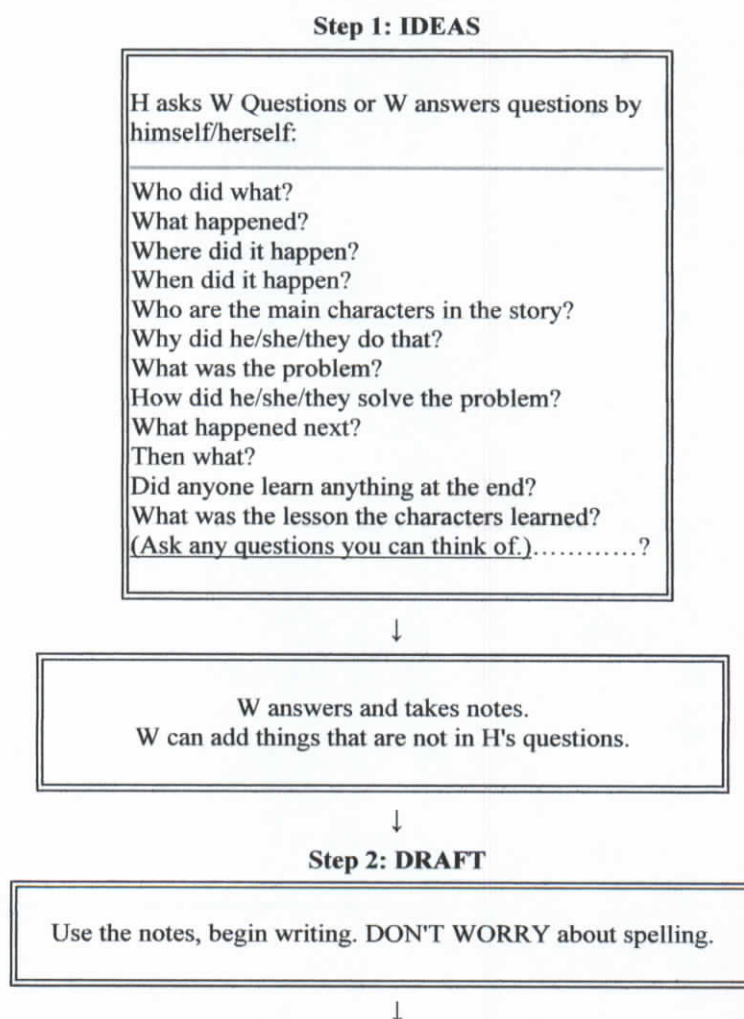
2.13.5. Step 5: The Final Copy

The writer then presents the best version of the corrected draft to the teacher.

2.13.6. Step 6: The Teacher Evaluates

Finally the teacher evaluates the final copy. In this step, students receive edifying feedback directly from the teacher. The teacher uses the scoring rubric to rate the writings. Teacher can also write some comments that can be written on the students' writing. They are meant to encourage students to improve their writing.

Figure 2.3 Guidelines for the Peer Assisted Writing Activity



Step 3: READ

W reads drafts out loud and makes it sound good!
H corrects words read wrong if he/she can.



Step 4: EDIT

H and W both look at the draft.

H completes Peer evaluation and editing form for writing

W asks himself/herself:

1. Does H understand what I want to say in my writing? (meaning)
2. Did my writing have a clear beginning, middle, and ending? (order)
3. Did I use all the words and write all the sentences correctly? (style)
4. Did I spell all the words correctly? (spelling)
5. Did I put all the punctuation (, . ? ! "....") in the right places? (punctuation)

H asks himself/herself:

1. Do I understand what W wants to say in his/her writing? (meaning)
2. Did the writing have a clear beginning, middle, and ending? (order)
3. Did W use all the words and write all the sentences correctly? (style)
4. Did W spell all the words correctly? (spelling)
5. Did W put all the punctuation (, . ? ! "...") in the right places? (punctuation)



W makes changes. ← → H suggests changes.
Use a dictionary when necessary.



Step 5: BEST COPY

W copies the 'best' writing from Step 4. H may help if necessary.
Turn in the completed copy to teacher.



Step 6: TEACHER EVALUATES

Teacher comments on meaning, order, style, spelling, and punctuation.
H and W read the teacher's comments together, then discuss and make corrections.

2.14. Communicating Portfolio results

Once portfolios become part of the learning experience, teachers can communicate results by using a portfolio evaluation summary which specifies whether or not a student has met the performance standards in writing (See Annex G). This provides useful feedback to the students and other stakeholders. The portfolio evaluation summary can have different sections according to the needs of the groups of students. It can contain three levels to describe the writing performance: does not meet standards, meets standards, and exceeds standards. The portfolio evaluation summary sheet is used with the holistic scoring rubrics. Teachers can determine which score points in the holistic scoring rubrics correspond to each level of writing performance.

2.15. Rating scales for portfolio assessment

Cushing (2002) points out that scoring portfolios is more time-consuming than scoring a single writing sample; thus a holistic scale may be more feasible than an analytic scale. Even a small saving in time can translate into large saving in time and money when grading a lot of portfolios. Furthermore, a holistic rubric it is the most appropriate in terms of practicality that was explained previously in this chapter. Figure 2.4 is a holistic scoring rubric adapted from Wolcott (1998) which contains descriptors related to the portfolio as a whole at each of the five levels.

Figure 2.4. Holistic guide for portfolio scoring

Score Point	Criteria
5	- It reflects work that is consistently high in quality. - The out-of-class work shows care in revising, and the in-class writings – while containing a few errors – are strong as well. - There is creativity or depth of content - The work shows a real engagement on the part of the writing. - The overall writing is fluent - The pieces of writing are well developed - The organisation for most sections is appropriate. - There is a strong evidence of self-assessment and peer assessment. - The writer has a solid command of grammar
4	- It reflects work that is generally high in quality. - The out-of-class work shows care in revising. - There is some depth of content (and/ or creativity) throughout - The organisation is satisfactory - The writing style is varied - Grammar is generally correct - The writer is engaged with most tasks.
3	- It reflects work that is usually solid in quality. - The out-of-class work and the in-class writing show some care in revising. - There is some content, as well as some development - The organisation is usually adequate. - A few errors appear throughout. - The portfolio reflects some involvement on the part of the writer.
2	- The portfolio reflects work that is uneven in quality. - Some, but not all, out-of-class pieces show care in revising. - The in-class writings are often considerably weaker - The content may be shallow - The organisation still appears weak - Errors in grammar appear through - The writer's involvement with the portfolio is negligible.
1	- It reflects work that is very weak. - The writer has shown very little, if any effort in attempting to revise out-of-class work - In class writings contain multiple errors - Content development and organisation need much improvement - Grammar problems dominate - The writer seems disengaged from the task

Adapted from Wolcott, 1998 in Cushing 2002.

CHAPTER THREE

APPLYING LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES TO THE WRITING SKILL

3.1. Introduction

There has been a prominent change within the field of language learning with more emphasis being put on learners rather than on teachers (Hismanoglu, 2000). Consequently, how learners process new information and what kinds of strategies they employ to understand has become the primary concern of teachers who want learners to benefit from applying language learning strategies successfully. This chapter emphasizes the importance of applying language learning strategies to the writing skill. It defines the concept of a language learning strategy, and outlines Oxford's (1990) taxonomy of language learning strategies.

3.2. Language Learning Strategies

According to the National Capital Language Resource Centre (2004) language students have two kinds of knowledge operating for them:

1. *Their knowledge of their first language*
2. *Their awareness of learning strategies, the mechanisms they use, consciously or unconsciously, to manage the absorption of new material*

(<http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/motivating/strategies.htm>)

Wenden and Rubin (1987 in Hismanog 2000) identify learning strategies as "... any sets of operations, steps, plans, routines used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval, and use of information" (p.19). Oxford (1987) says that "learning strategies are steps taken by students to enhance their own learning" (p.1). Moreover, all language learners use them during the act of processing the new input and performing tasks.

The NCLRC presents a summary of the reasons for teaching learning strategies in the foreign language classroom:

1. *Strategic differences between more and less effective learners have been documented through research in both first and second language contexts. Better learners have greater metacognitive awareness, which helps them select appropriate strategies for a specific task.*
2. *Most students can learn how to use learning strategies more effectively.*
3. *Many strategies can be used for a variety of tasks, but most students need guidance in transferring a familiar strategy to new problems.*
4. *Learning strategies instruction can increase student motivation in two main ways: by increasing students' confidence in their own learning ability and by providing students with specific techniques for successful language learning.*
5. *Students who have learned how and when to use learning strategies become more self-reliant and better able to learn independently.*

(<http://www.nclrc.org/guides/HED/chapter1.html>)

Language learning strategies help learners become more efficient at the moment of performing a language task. In real life, human beings face unexpected circumstances in which they need to use strategies to overcome limitations. The same principle applies to language learning.

3.3. Oxford's (1990) Classification of Language Learning Strategies

Oxford (1990) states that the main goal of language learning strategies is that they contribute to the development of communicative competence. Among other features Oxford affirms they help learners to become more self-directed, are problem-oriented, are precise actions taken by the learner, sustain learning both directly and indirectly, are not always recognisable, are often conscious, are flexible and can be learnt.

The interrelationships between direct and indirect strategies are shown in Figure 3.1, taken from Oxford (1990). Oxford divides language learning strategies into two main categories, direct and indirect, which are further subdivided into six groups. This figure indicates that there is a mutual support between direct and indirect strategies. Oxford explains the existing support with an analogy where the direct strategies for dealing with the new language, is like a Performer in a stage play, working with the language in a variety of particular situations. The Performer's outcome is closely related with the Director's guide. The second major strategy group which is indirect strategies for managing the learning is the Director of the play. For successful performance both the performer and director need each other. The Director guides,

corrects, encourages, and coaches the Performer. The functions of both the Director and the Performer are inside the learner.

In Oxford's classification, the first major group, direct strategies help them to deal with the target language. The direct class is made up memory strategies for remembering and retrieving new input, cognitive strategies for understanding and recalling new information, and compensation strategies for overcoming knowledge gaps so that communication is not interrupted.

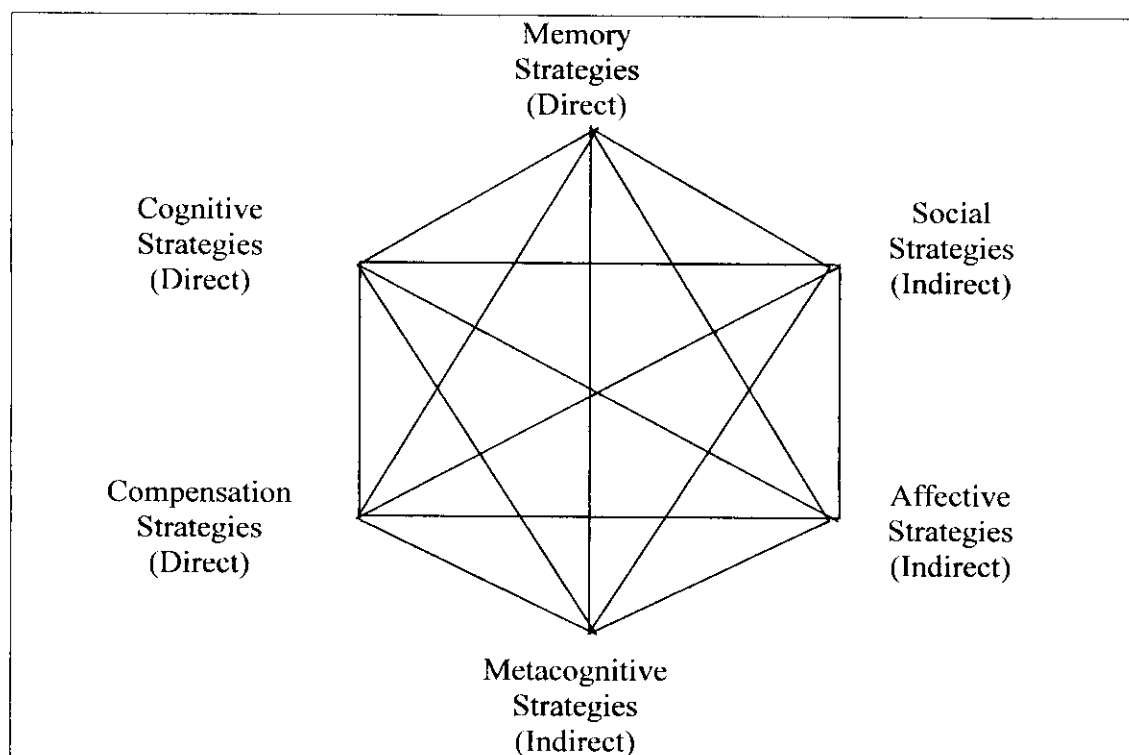


Figure 3.1. Interrelationships Between direct and Indirect Strategies and Among the Six Strategy Groups.

The second major strategy group, indirect strategies for general management of learning is composed of meta-cognitive strategies for helping learners to evaluate and track their own progress, affective strategies for building up learner's self-confidence

and perseverance, which are indispensable in any learning process, and social strategies for facilitating interaction and empathy between peers.

Oxford's (1990) diagram of the strategy system showing two classes, six groups, and nineteen sets is shown in figure 3.2.

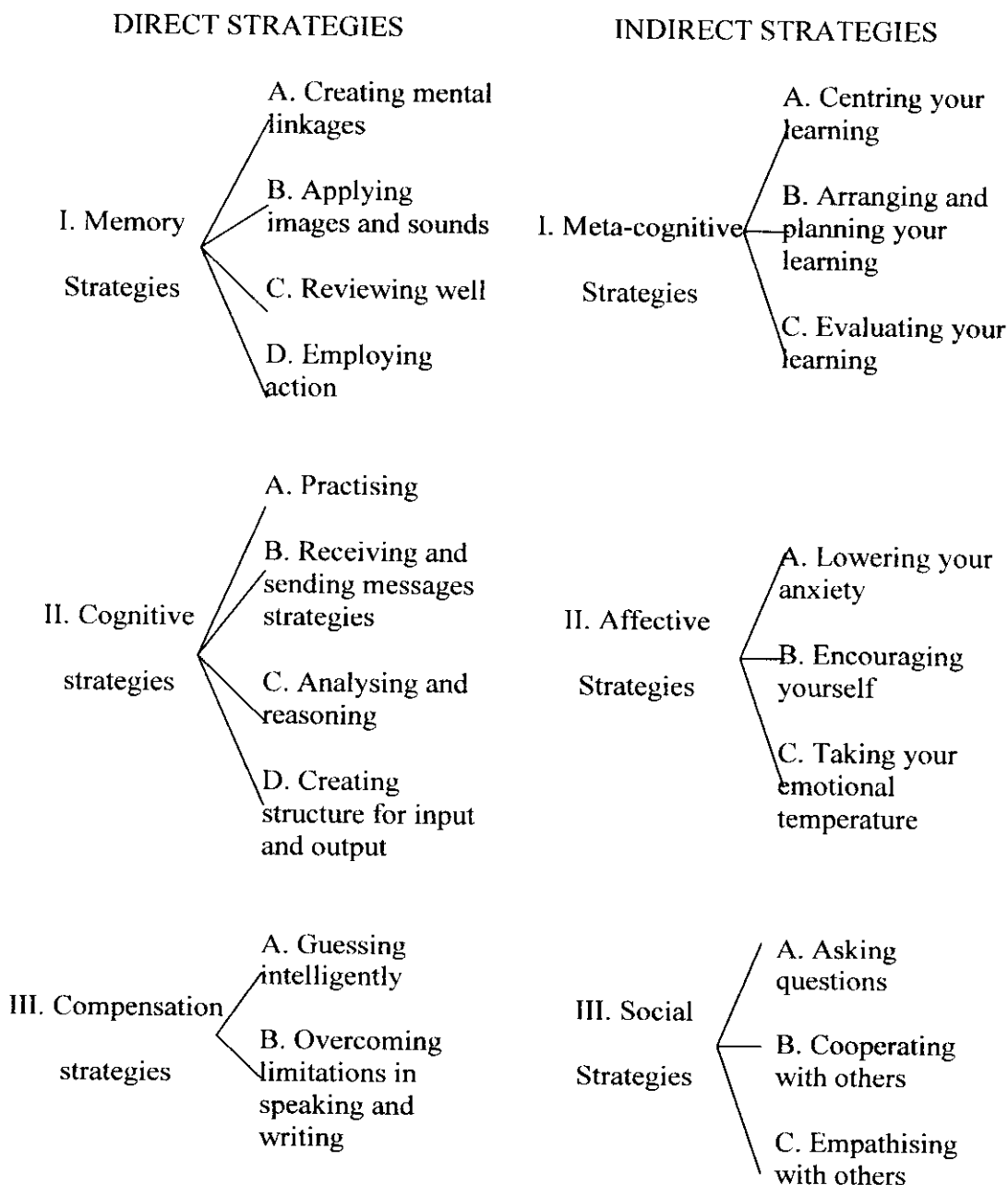


Figure 3.2. Diagram of the Strategy System Showing Two Classes, Six Groups, and 19 sets.

3.4. Applying Direct Strategies to the Writing Skill

Direct strategies – memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies (See figure 3.2) – are used to enhance the writing ability. These direct strategies work best when supported by indirect strategies.

3.4.1. Applying memory strategies to the writing skill

“Storage and retrieval of new information are the two key functions of memory strategies” (Oxford, 1990:58). These strategies enable learners to store in their memory the important things that they learn. In addition, these strategies help learners retrieve stored information from their memory when they need it.

3.4.1.1. Creating mental linkages

Three kinds of strategies belong to this category: grouping, associating, and placing new words into a context. They are helpful because they enable students to associate similar ideas.

3.4.1.1.1. Grouping

Grouping involves “classifying or reclassifying what is heard or read into meaningful groups, thus reducing the number of unrelated elements” (Oxford, 1990:58). When writing it helps learners associate similar ideas that then are grouped in the same paragraph.

3.4.1.1.2. Clustering

Clustering is also called mind mapping. It is a strategy which allows the writer to find the relationships between ideas.

The first step is to put the topic in the centre of a page. As the writer generates ideas, he or she connects the key ideas to the topic. Then, he or she can link additional ideas to the key ideas and continue within the same process adding more ideas as long as he or she wants. Clustering ideas works especially with visual writers, because it helps them to see their ideas expressed in different way.

3.4.1.1.3. Placing New words into a Context

According to Oxford (1990) this strategy “involves placing new words or expressions that have been heard or read into a meaningful context, such as a spoken or written sentence, as a way of remembering it” (p.60). This strategy helps students create coherent sentences, paragraphs and texts.

Other pre-writing strategies can be generated from the previous ones such as: brainstorming, looping, free Writing and asking the six journal’s questions.

3.4.1.1.4. Brainstorming

Brainstorming, also known as listing, is a method used to generate a lot of ideas within a short period of time by building on the association of terms.

First of all the writer is asked to write down all the possible terms that come out from his or her mind that are related to the assigned topic. This procedure can also be used with a whole class or groups, where all students can contribute with ideas, and one member writes the ideas on the board or a sheet of paper. When using this strategy writers do not have to worry about editing or sharing what may not be a good idea. All possibilities are written down. Then the items are grouped according to the arrangements that make sense to the writer or the whole class. The items are listed under common labels. This helps writers to have ideas with possible points of development. As a result, topic sentences and supporting sentences can come out from this strategy.

According to White and Arndt (1991) brainstorming can be used to:

- *choose a topic*
- *identify a reason or purpose for writing*
- *find an appropriate form in which to write*
- *develop a topic*
- *work out a plot*
- *develop the organisation of ideas.*

(White and Arndt, 1991:18)

3.4.1.1.5. Free writing

Free writing is “the process of writing down all your thoughts about a topic in order to help ideas flow and overcome writer’s block” (Skyline Resource Team, 2002:35). This offers students a pleasing experience of writing because it avoids the inhibitions

such as writing has to be clear, correct and neat which normally influence writing (Dickson, 2001).

Writers can use this strategy for ten minutes or less to generate ideas even though nothing related to the topic comes to their minds. As mentioned in the above strategies neither grammar nor editing is necessary. After the process of free writing has finished, writers look back over what they have produced and highlight the most relevant and interesting ideas.

3.4.1.1.6. Looping

Looping is “a recursive process, in which the writer produces a stretch of text, summarises it in one sentence, and then uses that sentence to begin a new loop” (White and Arndt, 1991:47). The writer loops for about ten minutes after a previous free writing. Thus, a sequence of free writings is generated. The same rules that are valid to free writing also apply to looping: Before starting a new free writing, writers must read through their free writings, looking for interesting ideas. Then, they can repeat the process again with a new perspective and base their looping in the key ideas. Four to five rounds of looping are recommended to have specific information about an assigned topic.

3.4.1.1.7. The Journalists' Questions

“Questions, being the basis of Socratic dialogue and of problem-solving, are an important prompt for writers” (White and Arndt, 1991:22). Journalists usually ask six questions when they are writing assignments, five W's and one H: Who?, What?,

Where?, When?, Why?, How?. In order to help writers recognize important elements in narrative writing such as character, setting, problem, and solution, they can come out with new ideas by answering generic questions using the journalist's questions. White and Arndt note that the journalists' questions can even be recombined to form more complex questions, such as:

How does Who affect What?

Why does Who affect What?

Why is What affected by Who?

3.4.1.2. Applying images and sounds

The four strategies for applying images and sounds are helpful for remembering new expressions that have been heard or read. These strategies include using imagery, semantic mapping, using keywords, and representing sounds in memory. Significantly, semantic mapping is used for comprehension.

3.4.1.3. Reviewing well

This strategy enables the writer to re-examine and remember new information. "It entails reviewing at different intervals, at first close together and then increasingly far apart" (Oxford, 1990:66).

3.4.1.4. Employing action

The most important strategy under employing action is using mechanical techniques for writing. For example students can contextualise a new expression and get writing practice, by writing the full sentence on a flashcard. Then, they can move the flashcards from one pile to another according to the learner's criteria and knowledge.

3.4.2. Applying cognitive strategies to the writing skill

Four categories correspond to this group: practicing, sending messages, analysing and reasoning, and creating structures for input and output.

3.4.2.1. Practicing / Repeating

In writing, this strategy is used for revising (one of the elements of the writing process), that is, "going through a written draft in detail (usually more than once) in order to correct or amend it" (Oxford, 1990:77).

3.4.2.1.1. Formally practicing with written systems

This strategy focus on learning new writing systems, which are necessary for writing in a foreign language. Learners have to learn alphabets, new structures that are different from their writing system.

3.4.2.1.2. Recognising and using formulas and patterns

When teaching grammar teachers can provide students with formulas and patterns to build self-confidence, increase understanding, and enhance fluency. Formulas are “unanalyzed expressions” (Oxford, 1990:72), while patterns “have at least one slot that can be filled with an alternative word” (Oxford, 1990:72).

3.4.2.1.3. Recombining

The strategy of recombining involves “constructing a meaningful sentences or longer expression by putting together known elements in new ways” (Oxford, 1990:74). For example the teacher gives the students the chunk: swimming. Then, students have to complete the sentence using the different pronouns in English. For instance, the student writes he is swimming but she is not, we are swimming tomorrow, etc.

3.4.2.1.4. Practising naturalistically

This strategy enables students to use the language in an authentic way. It is not the same if they write a letter about their last vacation without mentioning any addressee than to do the same activity but state that they are going to write it to his or her best friend. Peer assessment makes writing purposeful, because they know that somebody else will read his or her writing. Thus, it becomes more motivating for them. Also, students can write together in groups or couples a single article, short story, play as it happens in real life. Teachers can also publish their texts on the classroom walls or in a school magazine.

3.4.2.2. Receiving and sending messages

This strategy allows students to use resources to produce messages when writing. For example, students can use a dictionary and a grammar book when writing a text.

3.4.2.3. Analysing and reasoning

“The five strategies in this set help learners to use logical thinking to understand and use the grammar rules and vocabulary of the new language” (Oxford, 1990:82). They include reasoning deductively, analysing expressions, analysing contrastively, translating and transferring.

3.4.2.3.1. Reasoning deductively

This strategy involves “hypotheses about the meaning of what is heard by means of general rules the learner already knows” (Oxford, 1990:82). However, overgeneralization might result into errors. A Spanish speaking can generalise the past forms adding –ed to the verb know. The result is knowed. The teacher must indicate his or her students that rules have limitations to avoid these errors.

3.4.2.3.2. Translating

It helps writers produce the target language using their own language as the basis for producing it. However, word for word translation can become a problem when producing written texts. Furthermore, it slows learner’s fluency.

3.4.2.3.3. Transferring

It means “directly applying previous knowledge to facilitate new knowledge in the target language” (Oxford: 1990:84). In other words, it involves applying linguistic knowledge from the learner’s native tongue to the new language. It works well when the two languages are parallel, otherwise, it may result into inaccuracy.

3.4.2.4. Creating structure for input and output

The three strategies in this group are: taking notes, summarising and highlighting. They enable writers organise the new information and use it in an authentic way.

3.4.2.4.1. Taking notes

An essential skill in writing is taking notes. The focus on taking notes should not be writing but understanding and identifying essential information. This can be combined with a listening activity where they are required to answer specific questions.

3.4.2.4.2. Summarizing

It is “making a condensed, shorter version of the original passage” (Oxford: 1990:88). In order to make an accurate summary, students must be able to identify the main ideas of each paragraph. Students may use it to develop successfully in further education or professional development.

3.4.3. Applying Compensation strategies to the writing skill

They help learners to overcome limitations when writing. For intermediate students, these strategies might be among the most significant. Students use them when they face a situation in which they can not produce the target language to reach their purpose successfully.

3.4.3.1. Getting help

This strategy involves asking someone for help when writing. Students can ask for new vocabulary, expressions, etc. The learner wants the other person to provide what he or she does not know, not to give an explanation or clarify. Students can ask for help to his or her teacher or their peers or native speakers.

3.4.3.2. Selecting the topic

When using this strategy students deliberately select the topic. They do this to make sure that the topic is interesting for them and that they know the required vocabulary and structures to write a competent piece of writing.

3.4.3.3. Adjusting and approximating the message

This strategy is used to change the message by omitting some words, make the ideas easier, or write something slightly different that has similar meaning from the intended message. For instance, instead of writing the more difficult sentence “I would have liked to have visited The United States, but I couldn’t go because I did

not have any money”. The student writes a simpler sentence “I did not go to the United States because I did not have money.”

3.4.3.4. Coining words

This strategy involves “making up new words to communicate a concept, for which the learner does not have the right vocabulary” (Oxford: 1990:97). Students can use this strategy in the drafting stage of the writing process. Then, in the revising stage they can use a dictionary to confirm the new words they made up.

3.5. Applying Indirect Strategies to the Writing Skill

They are called indirect because “they support and manage language learning without (in many instances) directly involving the target language” (Oxford: 1990:135). They should be used in combination with direct strategies in order to improve the writing skill.

3.5.1. Meta-cognitive strategies

According to Oxford (1990), meta-cognitive strategies “are actions which go beyond purely cognitive devices, and which provide a way for learners to coordinate their own learning process” (p.136). These strategies are useful because they help students organise their own learning. They include three sets: centring your learning, arranging and planning your learning and evaluation your learning.

3.5.1.1. Centring your learning

They help learners to converge their attention and energies on a writing task. They consist of over viewing and linking with already known material and paying attention.

3.5.1.1.1. Over viewing and linking with already known material

This strategy helps learners to overview a key concept, principle or set of materials in a language activity for an upcoming writing task and associates it with what they already know.

3.5.1.1.2. Paying attention

In order to engage in a writing task students have to decide to pay attention and avoid distractors. This strategy involves two modes, directed attention and selective attention. Directed attention refers to “deciding generally or globally to pay attention to the task and avoid irrelevant distractors” (Oxford, 1990:134). On the other hand, selective attention “involves deciding in advance to notice particular details” (Oxford, 1990:154). Teacher can get students attention by providing motivating tasks. Writing in the native and foreign writing requires paying attention. For instance, when learners write a letter in the target language they decide to concentrate on it and avoid distractors, also they use selective attention to use content, tone, sentence construction, vocabulary, punctuation appropriately.

3.5.1.2. Arranging and planning your learning

They help learners to plan their own learning. They are necessary because they help learners establish and achieve their own goals. They consist of finding out about language learning, organising, setting goals and objectives, identifying the purpose of a language task, planning for a language task, seeking practice opportunities.

3.5.1.2.1. Finding out about language learning

Students need to make efforts to find out how language learning works by reading books and talking to people, and then use this information to become better learners. Students can benefit from this strategy by discussing the problems they face when they write or finding ways in which they can improve their writings.

3.5.1.2.2. Organising

“This strategy involves a variety of tools, such as creating the best possible physical environment, scheduling well, and keeping a language learning notebook” (Oxford, 1990:156). In order to assemble a writing portfolio students need to organise the portfolio entries.

3.5.1.2.3. Setting goals and objectives

Students need to identify short-term objectives and long-term objectives to be effective learners. If they do not have a clear objective they do not know where they are going. As a result, they cannot focus in their language learning. Goals for writing

encourage learners to develop the necessary writing skills required to achieve the performance standards.

3.5.1.2.4. Identifying the purpose of a writing task

It enables writers to clearly identify the purpose for writing. An example can be writing a letter to persuade a friend to visit a certain place. This is also known as purposeful writing. It is important because once they have identified the purpose they can channel all their efforts in the writing task.

3.5.1.2.5. Planning for a writing task

This strategy includes four stages: describing the situation, determining its conditions, checking one's own linguistic sources, and determining other additional elements. This procedure can be used as follows: A student first decides to write a letter to apply to a program to travel and work overseas. After that he decides some specific language functions such as: describing and explaining, a number of structures such as: Past, Present, Future continuous and conditionals, and specific vocabulary to attain his purpose. Finally, he asks for help in a foreign teacher to see if his writing met the purpose.

3.5.1.2.6. Seeking Practice opportunities

Successful students constantly seek for realistic opportunities in which they can practice writing in a natural way. For example students write messages in English in a chat room, write letters to a foreign friend, etc.

3.5.1.3. Evaluating your learning

They help learners to evaluate their writing performance and to monitor one's own errors. It consists of self-monitoring and self-evaluating

3.5.1.3.1. Self-Monitoring

Identifying errors in understanding or producing the new language, determining which ones are important (those that cause serious confusion or offence), tracking the source of important errors, and trying to eliminate such errors help students understand more about the target language or about their own use of writing strategies. In writing they can use peer evaluation to monitor their writings and give each other feedback about their mistakes in a non-threatening environment (See Annex F).

3.5.1.3.2. Self-evaluating

Evaluating one's own progress in the new language helps learners produce more accurate pieces of writing. Students can use checklists, diaries, or journals to evaluate their progress. They can also review samples of their own work, and assess progress over time. As they complete the peer evaluation and edition form they can see their progress in comparison with another student.

3.5.2. Applying Affective strategies to the writing skill

Affective strategies are composed of lowering your anxiety, encouraging yourself and taking your emotional temperature.

3.5.2.1. Lowering your anxiety

Writing in a foreign language can be stressful because it is a more complex cognitive task than writing in the mother tongue. In order to reduce anxiety students can make use of progressive relaxation, deep breathing or meditation. Students can also use music while they are writing their text. Sometimes teachers and the students themselves can use laughter as a therapy to relax.

3.5.2.2. Encouraging yourself

Teachers need to teach students ways to keep their spirits up and keep trying to understand and produce the new language. This can be achieved by teaching students to make positive statements and take risks wisely. Teachers can also teach students to reward themselves. Students need to find ways in which they can reward themselves. For example, if they score high in a written homework, they buy themselves a bar of chocolate.

3.5.2.3. Taking your emotional temperature

This strategy is directly related to self-assessment. The purpose is to assess one's own feelings, attitudes and motivations for writing. Students need to learn to handle negative feelings while they are writing. Once they know the situation in which they feel tense they can find strategies to feel calm. They can encourage themselves to use the new language even though they are afraid of making mistakes. They can also write down their feelings about learning English in a diary or talk to someone else about how they feel the moment they are using the new language.

3.5.3. Applying the social strategies to the writing skill

They are essential to enhance not only the writing ability but all the language skills. They are composed of: asking questions, cooperating with others and empathizing with others.

3.5.3.1. Asking questions

Students use this set of strategies to ask for clarification and ask for correction. According to Oxford asking for correction is more common in writing than in the other skills. This happens because writing is a process that allows writers to rewrite and constantly backtrack their texts.

3.5.3.1.1. Asking for correction

Students use this strategy when they realise that the language that they are producing is not correct and they ask for correction to someone who has a higher level than them.

Oxford (1990) suggests that “language learners should ask for correction of some writing difficulties, but the kind and amount of correction depends on the level of the learner and the purpose of the writing. Heavy-handed correction, especially in the beginning stages of language learning, can have two possible negative effects: students’ morale plummets, or students simply ignore the product, they might ask for a greater amount of correction, or at least a noting of problems which they themselves can correct” (p.70). Therefore, teachers should be sensible in using this strategy according to each particular situation.

3.5.3.2. Cooperating with others

Due to the fact that language is a social act, learners must learn to cooperate with each other. Students should interact among themselves and with the teacher and others that have a higher level in the target language outside the classroom.

3.5.3.2.1. Cooperating with peers

Incorporating cooperation with peers in the classrooms can make the language experience more enjoyable and rewarding. The power of working in couples was analysed in the previous chapter.

3.5.3.2.2. Cooperating with proficient users of the New Language

Students should know that learning not only takes place inside the classroom, but it is an ongoing activity that continues outside the classroom. Students can ask native speakers questions concerning any aspect of the language in order to enhance their learning of the language.

3.5.3.3. Empathizing with others

Understanding and producing the new language involves empathy with other people especially with the members of the target culture. Learners need to be aware that language and culture are related. Because of this, they have to adapt themselves to the new culture when they are exposed to it.

3.5.3.3.1. Developing cultural understanding

Language and culture are related and cannot be separated. Thus, learners of the target language must also learn about the target culture to successfully communicate. Furthermore, background knowledge of the target culture helps learners to understand better the new language. Because, it provides clues about the use of certain words and expressions in the target language. Teachers can help their students to develop this knowledge by injecting short cultural discussions into the language tasks and comparing one's own culture with the target culture.

3.5.3.3.2. Becoming aware of other's thoughts and feelings

Students can learn to identify the fluctuations in the thoughts and feelings of particular people who use the target language in order to communicate better. They can sense the feelings of the people they communicate with by reading letters and notes. Students can also use this strategy at the moment of completing the peer correction and editing forms. They do not want to hurt the feelings of other people. What they really want is to help their peers improve their writing.

Applying language learning strategies to the writing skill helps learners to enhance their writing because when they face a problem they can find a way to overcome it. Through the whole language learning experience they will have many opportunities to use them. As they keep using them they will realise they are fundamental to produce competent pieces of writing.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH

4.1. Introduction

At PUCESA teachers explore and use innovative practices in classrooms in order to offer a good education. Stakeholders are also willing to support any initiative that benefits learners. Moreover, teachers are constantly trained in new trends for learning. Of all non-traditional approaches to instruction and assessment, portfolio use seems to show the greatest promise in enhancing diverse dimensions of learning ... as well as promoting learning autonomy” (Chen, 2006:69). As Gottlieb (1995 in Chen 2006) puts it, portfolios “serve as a guide for students in making choices and in demonstrating how they reason, create, strategize and reflect” (p.12). In other words, the assembly of a portfolio enhances language learning, self-reflection, learning responsibility and autonomy, critical thinking, and strategic development among other elements.

This study aimed to investigate and evaluate the implementation of a portfolio system in order to find out whether or not writing portfolios enhance students’ writing ability at level four English classes at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato and find out the perceptions of the students towards it.

4.2. Methodology

4.2.1. Communicative language teaching

The Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato mainly uses a communicative approach to teach English.

According to Richards (2006), communicative language teaching “can be understood as a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom” (p.3). The main goal of communicative language teaching is the teaching of communicative competence which includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

- *knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions.*
- *knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication)*
- *knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g. narratives, reports, interviews, conversations)*
- *knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communicative strategies)*

(Richards, 2006:4)

“Earlier views of language learning focused primarily on the mastery of grammatical competence. Language learning was viewed as a process of mechanical habit formation. Good habits are formed by having students produce correct sentences and not through making mistakes. Errors were to be avoided through controlled opportunities for production (either written or spoken)” (Richards, 2006:6). This was

only possible by memorizing dialogs and performing drills. Thus, students rely absolutely on the teacher.

Language learning now is seen as a process consisting of the following principles:

- *Interaction between the learner and users of the language*
- *Collaborative creation of meaning*
- *Creating meaningful and purposeful interaction through language*
- *Negotiation of meaning as the learner and his or her interlocutors arrive at understanding*
- *Learning through attending to the feedback learners get when they use the language.*
- *Paying attention to the language one hears (the input) and trying to incorporate new forms into one's developing communicative competence*
- *Trying out and experimenting with different ways of saying things.*

(Richards, 2006:5)

4.2.1.1. The roles of teachers and learners in the classroom

Learners are expected to participate in classroom activities that involve working in couples or groups rather than individualistic approach to learning. They have to get used to exchanging information with their peers while they work in groups, rather than relying solely on the teacher for a model. They are expected to be responsible for their own learning. Teachers now assume two main roles: facilitator and monitor.

4.2.1.2. Implication for methodology

Richards summarises the principles of communicative language teaching methodology at this time as follows:

- *Make real communication the focus of language learning*
- *Provide opportunities for learners to experiment and try out what they know*
- *Be tolerant of learners' errors as they indicate that the learner is building up his or her communicative competence*
- *Provide opportunities for learners to develop both accuracy and fluency*
- *Link the different skills such as speaking, listening, reading, together since they usually occur so in the real world.*
- *Let students induce or discover the grammar rules.*

(Richards, 2006:14-15)

4.2.1.3. Classroom activities in Communicative Language Teaching

Teachers must find and provide learners activities that are in accordance to the principles of communicative language teaching.

4.2.1.3.1. Accuracy versus fluency activities

Let's remember that one of the principles of communicative language teaching is to develop fluency in language use. "Fluency is natural language use occurring when a speaker engages in meaningful interaction and maintains comprehensible and ongoing communication despite limitations in his or her communicative competence" (Richards, 2006:13). Students can develop fluency when they are provided with activities in which they must negotiate meaning, use communication strategies, correct misunderstandings and work to overcome communication breakdowns.

Students also need to develop accuracy, which focuses on producing correct samples of language use. It is advisable to use a balance of fluency and accuracy activities.

Richards presents a summary of activities that focus on fluency and those that focus on accuracy:

- *Activities focusing on fluency*
 - *Reflect natural use of language*
 - *Focus on achieving communication*
 - *Require meaningful use of language*
 - *Produce language that may not be predictable*
 - *Seek to link language use to content*
- *Activities focusing on accuracy*
 - *Reflect classroom use of language*
 - *Focus on the formation of correct examples of language*
 - *Practice small samples of language*
 - *Do not require meaningful communication*
- *Choice of language is controlled*

(Richards, 2006:13)

4.2.2. Writing process approach

An important element of portfolios is process writing because it enables students to be actively involved in the construction of texts in which they have interest (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996). Tribble (1996) defines the process approach as "an approach to the teaching of writing which stresses the creativity of the individual writer, and which pays attention to the development of good writing practices" (p.160). Therefore, the focus shifts from the product itself to the process students go through to create the product. Stone (1995 in NCREL) notes "Process writing is learning how to write by writing" (p.232). White and Arntd (1991) state that focusing on language errors does not help learners to improve neither grammatical accuracy

nor writing fluency and they suggest instead to pay attention to what the students produce. By doing this students will show an improvement in writing.

What is important for us as teachers of writing is to engage our students in that creative process; to excite them about how their texts are coming into being; to give them insights into how they operate as they create their work; to alter their concepts of what writing involves. What we have to get across is the notion that writing is re-writing; that revision – seeing with new eyes – has a central role to play in the act of creating a text, and it is not merely a boring error-checking exercise; and above all, that evaluation is not just the province of the teacher alone at the final stage of the process, but that is equally the concern and responsibility of the writer at every stage. (White and Arntd, 1991:5)

4.2.2.1. Stages in a writing process approach

According to Graham (2006) it can be broken down into three stages:

Pre-writing

The teacher needs to be stimulate students' creativity, to get them thinking how to approach a writing topic. In this stage, the most important thing is the flow of ideas, and it is not always necessary that students actually produce much (if any) written work. If they do, then the teacher can contribute with advice on how to improve their initial ideas.

Focusing ideas

During this stage, students write without much attention to the accuracy of their work or the organisation. The most important feature is meaning. Here, the teacher (or other students) should concentrate on the content of the writing. Is it coherent? Is there anything missing? Anything extra?

Evaluating, structuring and editing

Now the writing is adapted to a readership. Students should focus more on form and on producing a finished piece of work. The teacher can help with error correction and give organisational advice. (Graham 2006:1)

Therefore, in a writing process approach, writing is seen as a process consisting of three main stages: Pre-writing, during writing and post-writing. In pre-writing students generate ideas, then they concentrate on the content while writing. Finally, students edit their work. In all these stages the teacher plays mainly the role of a helper consolidating what students learn.

4.3. Research design

4.3.1. Experimental research

“All experimental approaches involve the control or manipulation of three basic components of the experiment: the population, the treatment, and the measurement of the treatment” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:136). In experimental research the variables can be controlled or manipulated.

Following conventions established by Campbell and Stanley (1963 in Seliger et al. 1989), the components of experimental research design will be symbolised as follows:

X = an experimental treatment such as a teaching method

O = observation or measurement of the effect of the treatment

R = randomization, or the random assignment of subjects to groups in order to control for extraneous variables.

(Campbell and Stanley, 1963:137)

4.3.1.1. The treatment

According to Seliger and Shohamy (1989) it “refers to anything done to groups in order to measure its effect. The treatment is not a random experience which the groups might have, but a controlled and intentional experience” (p.137) Once the treatment has been applied the researcher can determine its effects. The treatment is the independent variable in the experiment.

4.3.1.2. Measurement or observation

“Measurement or observation refers to how the effects of the treatment will be evaluated or observed” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:137). These effects might be evaluated by means of a language test, a judgment or a communicative task.

4.3.1.3. The type and number of groups

“Experimental research is concerned with studying the effects of specified and controlled treatments given to subjects usually formed into groups” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:136). The researcher can use pre-existing groups, as they occur in nature or to construct them for the research. This difference between natural groups and those constructed specifically for the research is one of the characteristics that differentiates experimental design from quasi-experimental design.

4.3.2. Quasi-experimental design

“Quasi-experimental designs are constructed from situations which already exist in the real world, and are probably more representative of the conditions found in educational contexts” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:148). Quasi-experimental research is used when it is difficult to control many of the variables and in which subjects cannot be assigned to specific groups for the purposes of the experiment.

4.3.2.1. Advantages of Quasi-experimental research

“Quasi-experimental research is more likely to have external validity because it is conducted under conditions closer to those normally found in educational contexts” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:136). Thus, it enables the researcher to gain access to already existing groups and conduct the experiment.

4.3.2.2. Disadvantages of Quasi-experimental research

It is not truly experimental because it “cannot assign subjects through randomization” (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989:136). In experimental research randomization is fundamental because it allows the researcher to construct the groups for the research.

4.3.3. Design- Time-Series Analysis

The time-series analysis design permits the researcher to evaluate the effectiveness of the treatment because it collects repeated measurements taken over a period of time.

4.3.4. Design- Pre-test - Post-test Control Group

To determine that a treatment (X) had an effect, a pre-test and post-test are administered to the subjects. The progress can be evaluated by analysing the pre-test data and post-test data.

4.4. Implementing a Portfolio-based writing assessment in the level four EFL courses at PUCESA

This study aimed to investigate and evaluate the implementation of a portfolio system in order to find out whether or not portfolio-based writing assessment enhances students' writing ability at level four English classes at Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato and find out the perceptions of the students towards it. It was implemented in the semester September 2006 to February 2007. The researcher used quasi-experimental research for this study.

The texts used to teach English for intermediate levels are Skyline 4 and 5, with course procedures and teaching procedures designed based on a university calendar and text content. Other teaching materials are not unified, but chosen, adapted or developed by the teachers. Therefore, teachers can use other forms of assessment.

Specifically, the following questions were addressed in the study:

1. What are student's perceptions of the portfolio system?
2. What are my observations of its effect on student writing learning?
3. Does portfolio assessment enhance student's writing ability?

4.4.1. Quasi-experimental research

The research was carried out with three groups consisted of already existing level four English classes at the PUCESA.

- Word order with two-word verb
- Pronouns: whoever, whenever, whatever and wherever.

4.4.5.3. Matching Tasks to Objectives

At the beginning of the portfolio system, prompts that were appropriate for the students were chosen. Twelve prompts were selected in correspondence to the objectives. The prompts were both: challenging and accessible to all students. The selected prompts were sensitive to the culture background of the students to interest them and be enjoyed by the students. From these twelve prompts: ten were established by the teacher and two were free topics. Table 4.2 presents the list of all the prompts.:

Table 4.2. List of prompts

Prompts
1 The ending of the story "The Fox"
2 A balanced article about the effect of using Internet
3 A short review of a concert you enjoyed
4 An article for a magazine "Tips for a perfect date"
5 Free topic
6 Free topic
7 Biography of Princess Diana
8 A biography of a famous person
9 Write about your hopes and predictions for your future (Vision)
10 Write your opinions about genetic engineering
11 Write a statement of purpose for a university program that you would like to enrol in
12 Write an event which has influenced your life

Students were given the prompts as the text book units were finished to ensure that they had the necessary language to produce the writing. From these topics groups of students A and B produced six of them and group of students C produced seven of them. This happened because groups of students A and B were university students and had less time to devote for writing, while group C students had more time.

Moreover, during this research, adjustment in design in learning tasks was done constantly to accommodate the implementation in the university program and students' needs. During the portfolio assessment procedure students did not have extra homework. Some of the writings were sent as homework while others developed in classes. If extra homework had been assigned, the students might have felt burned by the portfolio system. The researcher did not want students to hate the portfolio assessment procedure.

The system also integrated assessment with Skyline Writing Resource sheets that are designed to go together with the units of Skyline 4 and 5 (See Annex H). The writing resource team (1996) describes these activities that are designed to help learners in all the stages of the writing process:

Each level offers a purposeful and motivating approach to the development of writing skills by providing a practical resource that examines what is involved in writing. The focus is on the types of task and text that students will need, particularly in their professional and academic lives. Teachers are provided with clear and simple instructions to enable their students to carry out a number of accuracy and fluency-based activities. These activities will help to develop learners' ability to produce a number of different text types suitable to their needs and to their level of written English. (www.skyline.com).

At the beginning of the portfolio the emphasis was placed on accuracy. Thus, accuracy activities were sent as homework and more accuracy exercises were practised (See Annex I). Then, the emphasis was placed on fluency exercises (See Annex J). The aims of these activities were: to organise and write a paragraph, to recognise different types of paragraphs, to write the ending of a story, to plan and write an article, to edit a piece of writing, to write a transaction letter, to practice free writing, to punctuate texts, to practice using past time clauses and to write drafts.

These activities were combined with peer and self-assessment to exercise writing, collaboration with peers, critical thinking, and self-development.

Students were provided with self-assessment forms to reflect about their own writings (See Annexes A – C) and peer evaluation forms to share their impressions about their peers' writings (See Annex F). All these forms were adapted to the particular needs of the groups. Also, students were given the opportunity to write free topics. The writings that were outstanding would be published in the Magazine Graffiti, which is a magazine published by the language department of PUCESA. It contains articles written by teachers and students which is published once a year.

In order to review how students write students were provided with Checklists that focus on process writing and writing strategies (See Annexes A – C). The aim was to make learners aware of the whole process involved in writing and their use of learning strategies. Students also were given time to use self-assessment and peer assessment during the lessons.

Other activities included searching topics in the internet. Students read background material to be able to discuss their findings within groups. After that, whole class discussions took place. Finally students produced their pieces of writing. The purpose of these activities was to give students opportunities to practice pre-writing strategies. Furthermore, student had the opportunity to develop workshops of the different learning strategies in groups. The purpose of these activities was to make them aware of the different kind of learning strategies that exist and that they can use.

4.4.5.4. Setting criteria

The holistic scoring rubric for writing assessment for EFL students presented in Chapter two was used to help students understand what was required from them (See figure 2.2). The holistic scoring rubric was adapted to meet the specific needs of the group of students. It was presented to the whole class. The rubric was revised with all the students to make sure they understand what was required from them and clarify any vocabulary they did not know. O'Malley and Valdez (1996) state that "assessment criteria should be public for students and that they should be familiarised with the scoring rubrics so they can plan their writing effectively" (p.159).

A holistic scoring rubric for writing helped to establish the criteria for evaluation. The scoring rubric was kept uncomplicated so that students could use it. Students were given photocopies of the scoring rubric and they could revise it as many times as they needed to. The rubric was an element of the assessment portfolio. "Writing assessment can be used most effectively with instruction when the criteria for scoring written products is clear to the students and when the students see an obvious relationship between what they have written and the scores they received" (O'Malley and Valdez, 1996:156). Moreover, students were given the opportunity to use the rubric to rate their own writings and evaluate the writings of their peers.

4.4.5.5. Determining Organisation

The implementation of a Portfolio-based writing assessment included two periods: a midterm evaluation and a final evaluation. Another essential activity in the portfolio

system was portfolio compilation. The task and activities of the portfolio were assembled in a chronological order, except the writings that were placed according to the students' criteria. Students were told about the portfolio project at the beginning of the semester and by its end they were required to present an assessment portfolio with specified portfolio entries, to demonstrate their improvements and showcase their best writings. Guidelines for final portfolio compilation were provided before students presented their final assessment portfolios at the end of the semester (See Annex K).

“Portfolios generally involve selection of the pieces to be included in the portfolio, usually by the student with some guidance from the instructor” (Hamp-Lyons and Condon in Cushing 2002:199). Therefore, students had partial ownership of the portfolios because the students worked to produce their own portfolios. Moreover, the teacher had control over the process of selecting parts of the portfolio.

For the mid-term evaluation students presented their assessment portfolios that were divided in two main parts: the first section contained the two writings that students considered were the best and the last section included all the writings and activities that had been done until the mid-term presentation.

Final Portfolio-based writing assessment was also divided into two main parts: the first section regarded as showcase portfolio that contained four writings: three writings students considered were the most outstanding and the final writing done in class; and the last section that contained five Skyline writing resource sheets with their solutions, one writer's checklist, one self-assessment of writing dimensions, one

self-assessment of writing strategies, one peer evaluation, a draft of any writing and all the learning logs. Students also had the freedom to place any work that they had produced during the semester but that was not specified as a final portfolio entry at the back of the portfolios.

4.4.5.6. Monitoring progress

Each semester the PUCESA administers four formal examinations: first partial examination (written), midterm examination (written and oral), second partial examination (written) and a final examination (written and oral). The maximum grade to pass the semester is 50 points distributed as follows:

First and second partial examinations	10 points
Midterm examination	10 points
Final examination	20 points
General class work and tests	10 points
Total	50 points

All the examinations are mandatory. What a teacher can control is the so-called general class work and tests, 20 % of the total grade. For this study, 10% of the total corresponded to portfolios.

The grading scheme of this portfolio system included the use of a Portfolio evaluation summary (See Annex G) and a holistic guide for portfolio scoring presented in Chapter 2 (See figure 2.4) to monitor and support students' learning process and achievement, attitude and efforts.

Students were given the necessary time to write and rewrite their texts. Students had opportunities for multiple drafting, self-reflection, and receiving and responding to feedback implied by the portfolio inside and outside the classrooms. Most of the time students followed this procedure for writing: first of all, they wrote the first draft, then they completed self-assessment forms, after that if they wanted a second draft was written, next they shared their writings with their classmates to receive feedback from them. Peers completed peer assessment forms to share their impressions of their classmates' writings and rated the writings using the holistic scoring rubric for writing (See figure 2.2). After students had received feedback from their peers, they wrote the final products. It is important to mention that the teacher played the role of a helper throughout all the learning experience supporting and encouraging students' efficacy.

At the end of the Mid-term period an evaluation was carried out to give feedback to the student about their writing progress. The researcher used a portfolio evaluation summary to inform students whether or not the students met performance standards in writing (See Annex G). Student's performance in this summary was rated in three levels: Does not meet standards, meets standards, and exceeds standards. Meets standards would be similar to the parameters established in both holistic scoring rubrics for writing and portfolio scoring in the levels 3, 4 and 5 (See figures 2.2 and 2.4). Each student had the opportunity to present two writings they considered were the best as final products in their assessment portfolios to the teacher. Then, the teacher rated these writings using the holistic scoring rubric for writing. Students were told to improve these writings after they had been rated by the teacher because

they could include these writings as artefacts for the final assessment portfolio presentation.

For the final evaluation the holistic guide for portfolio scoring presented in chapter two was used (See figure 2.4). The holistic guide for portfolio scoring was adapted to meet the needs of these particular groups of students. Portfolios were rated by the teacher in light of completeness (whether the collection records different learning activities), writing ability (whether language use is clear and correct) and organisation (whether it is organised and presented neatly).

The students' outcomes of the mid-term and final evaluations are presented in the following chapter: Data Analysis.

4.4.5.7. Evaluating the portfolio process

The reflections of the entire process are presented in the last chapter: Conclusions and Recommendations.

4.4.6. Background questionnaire

A background questionnaire was carried out to learn about the conditions of the learners before the treatment (See Annex L). It contained 12 items taking into account: Language learning, perceptions towards writing, difficulties students face when writing, self-assessment and peer assessment, and strategy use in writing. The data collected is presented as follows:

Table 1: Students' previous invested time in English learning

1. How long have you been learning English?

Theme	N=21	
	Frequency	Percentage
1 2 years	8	38%
2 since primary school	6	29%
3 1 year	3	14%
4 1 1/2 year	1	5%
5 3 years	1	5%
6 4 years	1	5%
7 since high school	1	5%

Table 2: Students' previous English practice in a foreign country

2. Have you practiced English abroad?

Theme	N=21	
	Frequency	Percentage
1 Never	21	0%

None of the students has significantly used English in a foreign country.

Table 3: Students' previous perceptions of improvement in the four language skills since they began learning English

3. Which skill have you developed the most? Rank them from the most to the least

(Students rated the skills from 4 "the most" to 1 "the least")

Theme	A		B	
	M	Rank	M	Rank
Writing	2,75	2	2,71	2
Speaking	2,5	3	3	1
Reading	3,25	1	2,64	3
Listening	1,5	4	2,57	4

Table 4: Students' previous perceptions of English taking into account difficulty and relevance

4. When learning English, what language skill (speaking, reading, writing, and listening) Do you think it is

Theme	Speaking		listening		reading		writing	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
	N=10	N=14	N=10	N=14	N=10	N=14	N=10	N=14
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Most important?	5	12		2			3	
Easiest?	1			2	5	8	2	4
Most difficult?	1	1	5	5		1	2	7

	Speaking		listening		reading		writing	
	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
Most important	50%	86%	0%	14%	0%	0%	30%	0%
Easiest	10%	0%	0%	14%	50%	57%	20%	29%
most difficult	10%	7%	50%	36%	0%	7%	20%	50%

Table 5: Students' greatest difficulties when they write in English

5. What are the greatest difficulties when you write in English?

Theme	A		B	
	N=7		N=16	
Use of tenses	3	43%	7	44%
Vocabulary	3	43%	5	31%
Organise ideas	1	14%	4	25%
Distinguish between main idea and secondary ideas			2	13%
Structure of paragraph			1	6%
Imagination	1	14%		

Table 6: Students' previous answers regarding self-assessment

6. Have you ever been asked to assess your own writing?

Theme	A		B	
	N=7		N=16	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	43%	8	50%
No	4	57%	8	50%

Table 7: Students' previous answers regarding peer assessment

7. Have you ever been asked to assess your classmate's writing?

Theme	A		B	
	N=7		N=16	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	6	86%	10	63%
No	1	14%	6	38%

Table 8: Students' answers regarding time they could dedicate for writing

8. How much time can you dedicate for writing?

Hours	A		B	
	N=7		N=15	
A daily hour	3	43%	3	20%
1 hour a week	1	14%	10	67%
2 hours a week	3	43%	2	13%

Table 9: Students' answers regarding how often they write in English

9. How often do you write in English?

Theme	A		B		C	
	N=7		N=15		N=14	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Often			6	40%	2	14%
Sometimes	2	29%	8	53%	4	29%
Seldom	4	57%	1	7%	5	36%
Never	1	14%	0	0%	3	21%

Table 10: Students' answers regarding how often they think they would write in English in the future

10. In the future, in your profession how often do you think you will write in English?

Theme	A		B		C	
	N=7		N=15		N=14	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Often			6	40%	2	14%
Often	1	14%	9	60%	5	36%
Sometimes	6	86%	5	33%	8	57%
Seldom	0	0%	1	7%	1	7%
Never	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%

Table 11: Student' needs for writing in English

11. What do you need writing for?

Theme	A		B		C	
	N=7		N=15		N=14	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Often			6	40%	2	14%
E-mails	5	71%	12	80%	8	57%
Letters	2	29%	7	47%	8	57%
Summaries	1	14%	7	47%	8	57%
Personal						
Documents	2	29%	4	27%	5	36%
Reports	3	43%	1	7%	8	57%
Instructions	4	57%	1	7%	9	64%

Table 12: Students' previous strategies use

12. Strategies use

Strategies	N=7				N=16			
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%
					Yes		No	
Before writing:								
	Yes		No					
1. I talk to a friend or partner about the topic	2	29%	5	71%	11	69%	5	31%
2. I make a list of ideas on the topic	5	71%	2	29%	10	63%	6	38%
3. I make an outline or semantic map	2	29%	5	71%	1	6%	15	94%
During writing:								
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
4. I skip words I don't know and go back to them later	3	43%	4	57%	11	69%	5	31%
5. I substitute a word from my own language	5	71%	2	29%	3	19%	13	81%
6. I reread, review and backtrack my text	5	71%	2	29%	11	69%	5	31%
After writing:								
	Yes		No		Yes		No	
7. I check to see if the writing meets my purpose	6	86%	1	14%	15	94%	1	6%
8. I reread to see if it makes sense	7	100%	0	0%	13	81%	3	19%
9. I add information or take out information	6	86%	1	14%	6	38%	10	63%
10. I edit for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar	7	100%	0	0%	11	69%	5	31%
11. I ask someone else to read my writing and comment on it.	2	29%	5	71%	5	31%	11	69%

4.4.7. Students' responses regarding Language Learning Strategies

The survey on students' perspectives of their use of language learning strategies was administered at the beginning of the semester. The aim was to make learners aware of the strategies they use while learning. The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was developed by R. Oxford (1989) developed for speakers of other languages learning English. The questionnaire contained 50 items. Each item was scored on a 5- point scale from 5 "always or almost always true of me" through 3 "Somewhat true of me" to 1 "never or almost never true of me" (See Annex M).

Table 13: Students' previous answers regarding language learning strategies

<u>Key to understanding averages</u>				
High	Always or almost always used	4,50 to 5,00		
	Generally used	3,50 to 4,40		
Medium	Sometimes used	2,50 to 3,40		
Low	Generally not used	1,50 to 2,40		
	Never or almost never used	1,00 to 1,40		

Groups of students		A	B	C
Item		n=9	n=14	n=14
		M	M	M
<u>Part A Remembering more effectively</u>				
1.	I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	2,56	3,50	3,64
2.	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	3,22	4,07	3,64
3.	I connect the sound of a new word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	3,22	3,57	3,86
4.	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3,11	4,00	3,36
5.	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	1,33	3,00	2,50
6.	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	1,33	2,57	2,36
7.	I physically act out new English words.	1,89	2,93	2,79
8.	I review English lessons often	3,11	3,64	2,86
9.	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	2,56	4,14	3,14
Total		22,33	31,43	28,14
Average		2,48	3,49	3,13

Part B Using all your mental processes

10. I say or write new English words several times.	3,00	4,14	3,50
11. I try to talk like native speakers.	1,89	3,14	2,79
12. I practice the sounds of English	2,44	3,64	3,50
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.	2,67	3,79	3,07
14. I start conversations in English	2,00	4,07	2,43
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English	3,33	4,71	3,43
16. I read for pleasure in English	2,00	3,21	2,21
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English	1,89	3,64	3,00
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	2,56	3,64	3,43
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	3,22	3,43	4,00
20. I try to find patterns in English	2,33	3,00	3,14
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	2,67	3,57	2,86
22. I try not to translate word by word.	3,00	3,36	3,00
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	2,00	3,57	2,79
Total	35,00	50,93	43,14
Average	2,50	3,64	3,08

Part C Compensating for missing knowledge

24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	2,89	3,36	2,93
25. When I cannot think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	2,44	3,64	3,64
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	2,67	2,86	2,86
27. I read English without looking up every new word.	2,00	2,86	3,00
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	2,33	3,50	3,00
29. If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	3,11	4,43	3,93
Total	15,44	20,64	19,36
Average	2,57	3,44	3,23

Part D Organising and evaluating your learning

30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	3,00	3,86	3,21
31. I notice my English mistakes and use the information to help me do better.	3,22	3,64	3,64
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	3,78	4,14	4,29
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	3,22	4,00	3,57
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	2,67	3,29	3,21
35. I look for people I can talk in English	2,11	3,50	3,14
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	2,78	2,79	2,79
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	2,89	3,14	3,36
38. I think about my progress in learning English.	3,67	3,86	3,43
Total	27,33	32,21	30,64
Average	3,04	3,58	3,40

Part E Managing your emotions

39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	3,00	4,07	3,14
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	3,22	3,36	3,64
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	1,89	4,00	3,36
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	3,11	3,07	3,14
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	2,00	2,29	2,64
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	2,44	3,00	2,43
Total	15,67	19,79	18,36
Average	2,61	3,30	3,06

Part F Learning with others			
45.	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	3,78	4,43 3,93
46.	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	3,56	3,57 3,50
47.	I practice English with other students.	2,33	3,71 3,00
48.	I ask for help from English speakers.	2,44	3,71 3,36
49.	I ask questions in English.	2,67	4,07 3,43
50.	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	2,33	2,64 2,43
Total		17,11	22,14 19,64
Average		2,85	3,69 3,27

4.4.8. Portfolio evaluation

Students submitted their portfolios twice during the semester. The grading scheme of this portfolio system included the use of a Portfolio evaluation summary and a holistic guide for portfolio scoring to monitor and support students' learning process and achievement, attitude and efforts. For the midterm evaluation the Portfolio evaluation summary was used (See Annex G). For the final evaluation the holistic guide for portfolio scoring presented in chapter two was used (See figure 2.4).

4.4.8.1. Mid-term portfolio evaluation

At the end of the Mid-term period an evaluation was carried out to give feedback to the student about their writing progress. The researcher used a portfolio evaluation summary to inform students whether or not the students met performance standards in writing. Student's performance in this summary was rated in three levels: Does not meet standards, meets standards, and exceeds standards. Meets standards would be similar to the parameters established in both holistic scoring rubrics for writing and portfolio scoring in the levels 3, 4 and 5.

Table 14: Mid-term portfolio evaluation taking into account writing standards

<u>Theme</u>	Group A N=10		Group B N=19		Group C N=18	
<u>Portfolio</u>	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Does not meet standards	2	20%	5	26%	6	33%
Meets standards	7	70%	13	68%	12	67%
Exceeds standards	1	10%	1	5%	0	0%
Writing						
Does not meet standards	1	10%	2	11%	1	6%
Meets standards	7	70%	11	58%	16	89%
Exceeds standards	2	20%	6	32%	1	6%

Table 15: Mid-term portfolio evaluation taking into account some writing guidelines

Group of students	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	A	B	C	
Theme	Never			Sometimes			Often			Always			
You write in relation to the topic				0	2	1	3	3	3	7	14	14	
You use interesting ideas				0	3	2	3	4	4	7	12	12	
You put similar ideas in the same paragraph				1	3	5	5	6	10	4	10	3	
You use grammar and vocabulary that are appropriate and correspond to the language we have learnt				2	3	4	8	9	9	0	7	5	
You stay with appropriate length			1	0	4	5	4	6	8	6	9	4	
You write in relation to the topic				0%	11%	6%	30%	16%	17%	70%	74%	78%	
You use interesting ideas				0%	16%	11%	30%	21%	22%	70%	63%	67%	
You put similar ideas in the same paragraph				10%	16%	28%	50%	32%	56%	40%	53%	17%	
You use grammar and vocabulary that are appropriate and correspond to the language we have learnt				20%	16%	22%	80%	47%	50%	0%	37%	28%	
You stay with appropriate length				6%	0%	21%	28%	40%	32%	44%	60%	47%	22%

4.4.8.2. Students who submitted the final portfolio-based writing assessment

Most of the students submitted their portfolio and were cooperative in the whole learning experience.

Table 16: Students who submitted the portfolio at the end of the treatment

Theme	Submitted the portfolio		Did not submit the portfolio	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Group A	10			
Group B	19		2	
Group C	18			
Total	47	96%	2	4%

4.4.8.3. Students' responses regarding Language Learning Strategies

At the end of the treatment a self-assessment of language learning strategies was carried out to determine the improvements in the use of writing. It was administered to groups B and C (See Graph 2).

Table 17: Students' final responses regarding language learning strategies

<u>Key to understanding averages</u>		
High	Always or almost always used	4,50 to 5,00
	Generally used	3,50 to 4,40
Médium	Sometimes used	2,50 to 3,40
Low	Generally not used	1,50 to 2,40
	Never or almost never used	1,00 to 1,40
Item	B N=16	C N=19
<u>Before writing:</u>		
1. I talked to a friend or partner about the topic	2,81	3
2. I made a list of ideas on the topic	2,5	3,68
3. I made an outline or semantic map	1,56	1,63

During writing:

4. I skipped words I didn't know and went back to them later	3,38	3,37
5. I substituted a word from my own language	3,38	4

After writing:

6. I checked to see if the writing met my purpose	4,06	3,95
7. I reread to see if it made sense	4,56	3,84
8. I added information or took out information	3,43	3,63
9. I edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar	3,75	3,37
Total	29,43	30,47
Average	3,27	3,39

4.4.8.4. Students' responses regarding writing dimensions

At the end of the portfolio system a self-assessment of writing dimensions was administered to groups of students A and B (See Graphs 3 and 4) to see the improvements of writing dimensions.

Table 18: Students' final responses regarding writing dimensions

<u>Item</u>	Group A N=15		Group B N=16	
	yes	no	yes	no
<u>Purpose and Organisation</u>				
1. I stated my purpose clearly.	14	1	15	1
2. I organized my thoughts.	15	0	13	3
3. I made an outline or semantic map.	1	14	0	16
4. I chose words that helped make my point.	14	1	15	1
	yes	no	yes	no
<u>Word/Sentence Use</u>				
5. I used some new vocabulary.	14	1	15	1
6. I wrote complete sentences.	13	2	15	1
7. I used correct subject-verb agreement.	9	6	9	7
8. I used the tenses in English correctly.	9	6	12	4
	yes	no	yes	no
<u>Mechanics/Format</u>				
9. I spelled words correctly	13	2	12	4
10. I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences	12	3	14	2
11. I used punctuation correctly	12	3	12	4
	yes	no	yes	no

Editing

12. I read my paper aloud to a partner	6	9	5	11
13. I asked a partner to read my paper	9	6	11	5

Table 19: Students' final responses regarding writing dimensions in percentages

<u>Item</u>	Group B N=15		Group C N=16	
	yes	no	yes	no
<u>Purpose and Organisation</u>				
1. I stated my purpose clearly.	93%	7%	94%	6%
2. I organized my thoughts.	100%	0%	81%	19%
3. I made an outline or semantic map.	7%	93%	0%	100%
4. I chose words that helped make my point.	93%	7%	94%	6%
Average	73%	27%	67%	33%
<u>Word/Sentence Use</u>				
5. I used some new vocabulary.	93%	7%	94%	6%
6. I wrote complete sentences.	87%	13%	94%	6%
7. I used correct subject-verb agreement.	60%	40%	56%	44%
8. I used the tenses in English correctly.	60%	40%	75%	25%
Average	75%	25%	80%	20%
<u>Mechanics/Format</u>				
9. I spelled words correctly	87%	13%	75%	25%
10. I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences	80%	20%	88%	13%
11. I used punctuation correctly	80%	20%	75%	25%
Average	82%	18%	79%	21%
<u>Editing</u>				
12. I read my paper aloud to a partner	40%	60%	31%	69%
13. I asked a partner to read my paper	60%	40%	69%	31%

4.4.8.5.Final portfolio evaluation

At the end of the semester the researcher used a holistic guide for portfolio scoring that was presented in chapter two (See Figure 2.4) to evaluate the portfolios. These were the final grades on a 5 point scale:

Table 20: Final portfolio grades

No	A	B	C
1	5,00	5,00	3,20
2	4,60	3,00	3,00
3	2,80	4,50	3,20
4	3,00	2,00	3,70
5	5,00	3,50	3,10
6	3,50	5,00	5,00
7	5,00	4,00	5,00
8	3,20	3,00	2,90
9	3,00	4,80	3,20
10	2,70	3,50	4,50
11		2,60	2,00
12		2,80	3,00
13		2,50	4,30
14		5,00	4,30
15		2,80	3,00
16		3,30	3,10
17		4,80	4,30
18		3,00	
19		4,80	
Total	37,80	69,90	60,80
Average	3,78	3,68	3,58

Table 21: Final portfolio grades presented in percentages

				A		B		C	
Score				Fre	Per	Fre	Per	Fre	Per
4,5	to	5	5	4	40%	7	37%	3	18%
3,5	to	4,49	4	1	10%	3	16%	4	24%
2,5	to	3,49	3	5	50%	8	42%	9	53%
1,5	to	2,49	2	0	0%	1	5%	1	6%
0,5	to	1,49	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total				10		19		17	

4.4.9. Students' final scores in the writing section

At the end of the semester students took the final examination which contains four main sections: listening, grammar and vocabulary, reading and writing. For this research the scores obtained in the writing section are part of the quantitative data. The scorer used a holistic scoring rubric for writing presented in chapter two (See figure 2.2) to score their writings.

Table 22: Students' final scores in the writing section

No	Group A	Group B	Group C
1	3,90	3,50	4,60
2	4,20	4,00	4,30
3	5,00	4,20	4,30
4	4,50	3,10	4,10
5	4,20	3,00	4,60
6	3,90	3,80	4,80
7	4,60	0,50	4,20
8	3,00	3,50	4,60
9	3,80	3,60	5,00
10	5,00	4,30	4,60
11		4,20	4,60
12		4,80	4,80
13		4,60	4,80
14		2,00	4,80
15		3,10	5,00
16		3,80	5,00
17		4,60	3,50
18		3,90	4,60
19		3,10	
20		4,20	
21		3,60	
Total	42,10	75,40	82,20
Average	4,21	3,59	4,57

Table 23: Students' final scores in the writing section presented in percentages

Scores				A		B		C	
				Fre	Per	Fre	Per	Fre	Per
4,5	to	5	5	4	40%	3	14%	13	72%
3,5	to	4,49	4	5	50%	12	57%	5	28%
2,5	to	3,49	3	1	10%	4	19%	0	0%
1,5	to	2,49	2	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%
0,5	to	1,49	1	0	0%	1	5%	0	0%
Total				10	100%	21	100%	18	100%

4.4.10. Students' final questionnaire free responses

After students submitted their portfolios a final questionnaire was administered to determine the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment implemented (See Annex N). All the questions in the questionnaire were in Spanish to ensure students could express their thoughts without any problem. It cover aspects such us: students' learning attitudes towards portfolios and perceptions of writing improvement, their feelings involved in the process, topic preference, assignments, self-assessment and peer assessment and suggestions and recommendations.

4.4.10.1. General

Table 24: Students' final reactions towards portfolios

1. ¿Cómo se sintió creando su portafolio?				N=45	
Theme/Categories				Frequency	Percentage
<u>Positive</u>					
1	Bien			17	37,78%
2	Muy bien			10	22,22%
3	Más responsable			1	2,22%
4	Me agrada			1	2,22%
5	Other			7	15,56%
Total positive				36	80,00%
<u>Rehaznos</u>					
1	Mejoro mi escritura			19	42,22%
2	Aprendí mucho			4	8,89%

3	Corregí mis errores	2	4,44%
4	Interesante	2	4,44%
5	Practique mi Inglés	2	4,44%
Total negative			
<u>Negative</u>			
1	Confundido	3	6,67%
2	No me gustó	2	4,44%
3	Estresante	2	4,44%
4	Cansado	1	2,22%
5	Aburrido	1	2,22%
Total negative		9	20,00%
<u>Rehaznos</u>			
1	No tuve tiempo	2	4,44%
2	Nunca lo había hecho	2	4,44%
3	Al principio no entendía de que se trataba	2	4,44%

Table 25: Students' perceptions of improvement in writing at the end of the portfolio experience

2. ¿Cree que ha mejorado su habilidad para escribir en inglés ahora que ha finalizado su portafolio?
N=45

<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Si	43	95,56%
2 No	2	4,44%
Total	45	100,00%
<u>Reasons</u>		
<u>Positive</u>		
1 Practiqué la escritura	12	26,67%
2 Aprendí vocabulario	12	26,67%
3 Mejoró mi escritura	4	8,89%
4 Mejoró mi gramática	4	8,89%
5 Expresó mejor mis ideas	3	6,67%
<u>Negative</u>		
1 No se como van las palabras	1	2,22%

Table 26: Students' perceptions of improvement in different areas while using the portfolios

3. ¿Qué aprendió mientras utilizaba el portafolio? (Mencione 3) N=45		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Vocabulario	28	62,22%
2 Gramática	16	35,56%
3 Organizar ideas	8	17,78%
4 Utilizar correctamente los tiempos	6	13,33%
5 Expresar mejor mis ideas	4	8,89%

Table 27: Students' previous experience with portfolios

4. ¿Ha utilizado portafolios anteriormente? N=45		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Si	5	11,11%
2 No	40	88,89%
Total	45	100,00%

Table 28: Students' perceptions about using portfolios in further levels

5. ¿Le gustaría utilizar portafolios para el próximo nivel? N=45		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Si	30	66,67%
2 No	15	33,33%
Total	45	100,00%
<u>Reasons</u>		
<u>Positive</u>		
1 Mejora la escritura	10	22,22%
2 Mejora el aprendizaje	5	11,11%
3 Práctico lo aprendido	2	4,44%
4 Creativo	1	2,22%
5 Veo mis errores	1	2,22%
<u>Negative</u>		
1 Lleva mucho tiempo	5	11,11%
2 Estresante	3	6,67%
3 Cansado	2	4,44%
4 No me gustó	2	4,44%

4.4.10.2. Students' perceptions about the topics

Table 29: Students' final perceptions of the topics

1. ¿Qué tema le gustó más y porqué?		
N= 45		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 A balanced article about the effect of using Internet	14	31,11%
2 Free Topic	8	17,78%
3 The ending of the story "The Fox"	3	6,67%
4 Write your opinions about genetic engineering	1	2,22%
Write a statement of purpose for a university program that you would like to enrol in	1	2,22%

<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Rehaznos		
Internet		
1 Analizar los pros y cons	5	11,11%
Free Topic		
2 Pude expresar lo que yo quería	5	11,11%
The fox		
3 Me sentí creativo	1	2,22%
Biography of princess Diana		
4 Pude aplicar toda la gramática	1	2,22%
A statement of purpose for a university program		
5 Me sirve para el futuro	1	2,22%

Table 30: Students' perceptions of the free topics

2. ¿Cómo se sintió cuando escribió los temas libres?

N= 44		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Positive</u>		
1 Bien	21	47,73%
2 Muy bien	2	4,55%
3 Libre	2	4,55%
4 Other	15	34,09%
Total positive	40	90,91%
<u>Reasons</u>		
1 Pude escoger el tema y escribir de lo que me gusta	12	27,27%
2 Pude expresar mis ideas	7	15,91%
3 Me sentí sin condicionamientos	4	9,09%
4 Fomentaban mi imaginación	4	9,09%
5 Aplique lo aprendido	1	2,27%

<u>Negative</u>		
1 Mal	1	2,27%
2 Extraño	1	2,27%
3 Limitado	1	2,27%
4 No sabía que escribir	1	2,27%
Total negative	4	9,09%

4.4.10.3. Students' perceptions about the task

Table 31: Students' perceptions of the portfolio tasks

1. ¿Considera que los trabajos del portafolio asignados fueron suficientes?		
N= 44		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Si	42	95,45%
2 No	2	4,55%
Total	44	100,00%
<u>Positive Reasons</u>		
1 Suficiente para practicar	7	15,91%
2 Fueron Bastantes	4	9,09%
3 Acorde con el tiempo	3	6,82%
4 Fueron Pocos	2	4,55%
5 Esta bien repasar una vez por semana	2	4,55%
<u>Negative Reasons</u>		
1 Debe incluirse más temas libres	1	2,27%
2 Nunca es suficiente para aprender	1	2,27%

Table 32: Students' comments to improve the use of the portfolios

2. ¿Cuál sería su sugerencia para mejorar el uso del portafolio?		
N=45		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Incluir más temas libres	8	17,78%
2 Dar más tiempo para entregar los writings	4	8,89%
3 Revisar semanalmente los portafolios	3	6,67%
4 Incluir temas actuales	3	6,67%
5 Explicar mejor los trabajos	3	6,67%
6 Deben ser más organizados	3	6,67%
7 Que se revise en clases	2	4,44%

8	Indicar el plan de temas al inicio del semestre	2	4,44%
9	Incluir practicas de listening	2	4,44%
10	Incluir ejercicios gramaticales	2	4,44%
11	Socializar más con los compañeros	1	2,22%
12	Que sea secuencial	1	2,22%
13	Que se cumpla con los temas asignados	1	2,22%
14	Que no tenga tantas hojas	1	2,22%
15	Que no sea tan seguido	1	2,22%
16	Que exista más relación entre los temas	1	2,22%
17	Mejorar la presentación	1	2,22%
18	Los códigos son confusos	1	2,22%
19	Eliminar los códigos	1	2,22%

4.4.10.4. Self-assessment and peer assessment

Table 33: Students' final perceptions about self-assessment

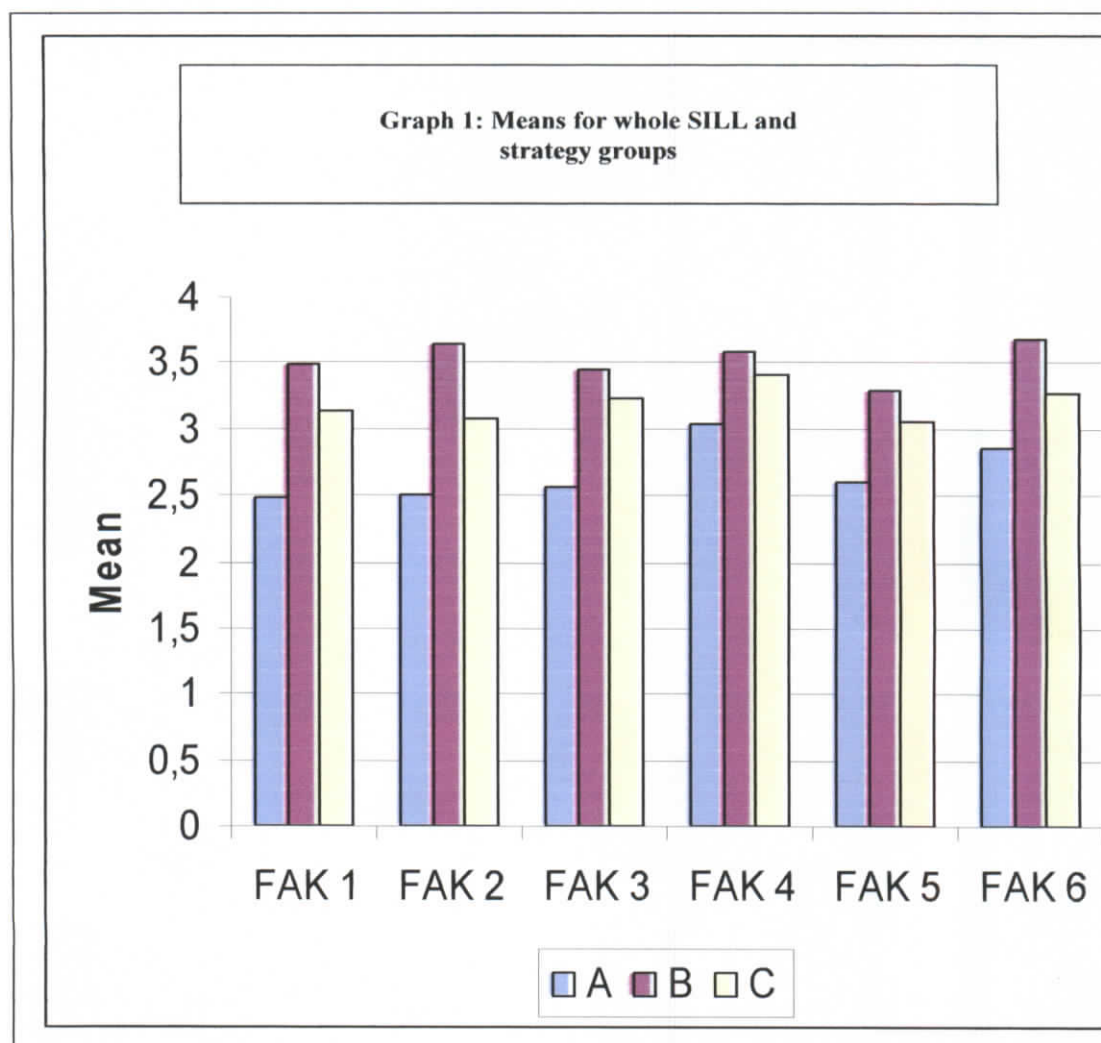
1. ¿Cómo se sintió al usar el self-assessment?			
		N=	40
<u>Theme/Categories</u>		<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Positive</u>			
1	Bien	21	52,50%
2	Muy Bien	5	12,50%
3	Cómodo	1	2,50%
4	Interesado	1	2,50%
5	Other	8	20,00%
Total positive		36	90,00%
<u>Reasons</u>			
1	Aprendí a autoevaluarme	9	22,50%
2	Me doy cuenta de mis errores	4	10,00%
3	Corrijo mis errores	5	12,50%
4	Me ayuda	2	5,00%
5	Sabes como aprendes	1	2,50%
6	Fue divertido	1	2,50%
7	Me sentí como profesor	1	2,50%
<u>Negative</u>			
1	No me gustó	1	2,50%
2	No muy seguro	1	2,50%
3	No fue bueno	1	2,50%
4	No muy bien	1	2,50%
Total negative		4	10,00%

Reasons		
1	No pude darme cuenta de mis errores	1 2,50%
2	No pude auto corregirme	1 2,50%
3	Me frustraba al ver mis errores	1 2,50%

Table 34: Students' final perceptions about peer assessment

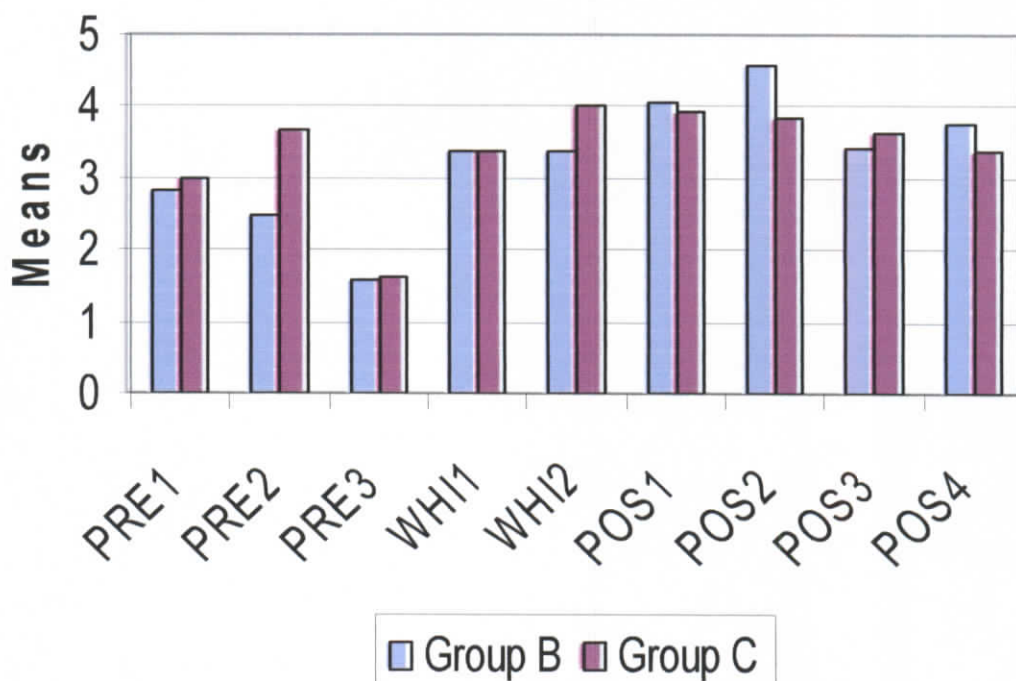
2. ¿Cómo se sintió al usar el peer assessment?		
N= 39		
<u>Theme/Categories</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Positive</u>		
1 Bien	24	61,54%
2 Muy bien	5	12,82%
3 Interesante	1	2,56%
4 Other	6	15,38%
Total positive	36	92,31%
<u>Reasons</u>		
1 Es bueno conocer la opinión de alguien más sobre nuestro writing	3	7,69%
2 Otros ven los errores que nosotros no vemos	2	5,13%
3 Ayude a mi compañero a mejorar su writing	2	5,13%
4 Pude leer lo que otros piensan	2	5,13%
5 Vi el aprendizaje de mis compañeros	2	5,13%
5 Aprendí a evaluar a otros	1	2,56%
5 Pude corregir mis errores	1	2,56%
5 Nos ayuda a mejorar	1	2,56%
5 Es una evaluación profesional	1	2,56%
<u>Negative</u>		
1 Dudoso	1	2,56%
2 Fue estresante	1	2,56%
3 No sé que es	1	2,56%
Total negative	3	7,69%
<u>Reasons</u>		
1 Calificar es estresante	1	2,56%

4.4.11. Graphs



Strategy groups	Code
Memory strategies	FAK 1
Communicative strategies	FAK 2
Comprehension strategies	FAK 3
Cognitive strategies	FAK 4
Comprehension strategies	FAK 5
Socio-affective strategies	FAK 6

Graph 2: Means for final self-assessment of Writing strategies



Before writing:

Code

1. I talked to a friend or partner about the topic

PRE1

2. I made a list of ideas on the topic

PRE2

3. I made an outline or semantic map

PRE3

During writing:

4. I skipped words I didn't know and went back to them later

WHI1

5. I substituted a word from my own language

WHI2

After writing:

6. I checked to see if the writing met my purpose

POS1

7. I reread to see if it made sense

POS2

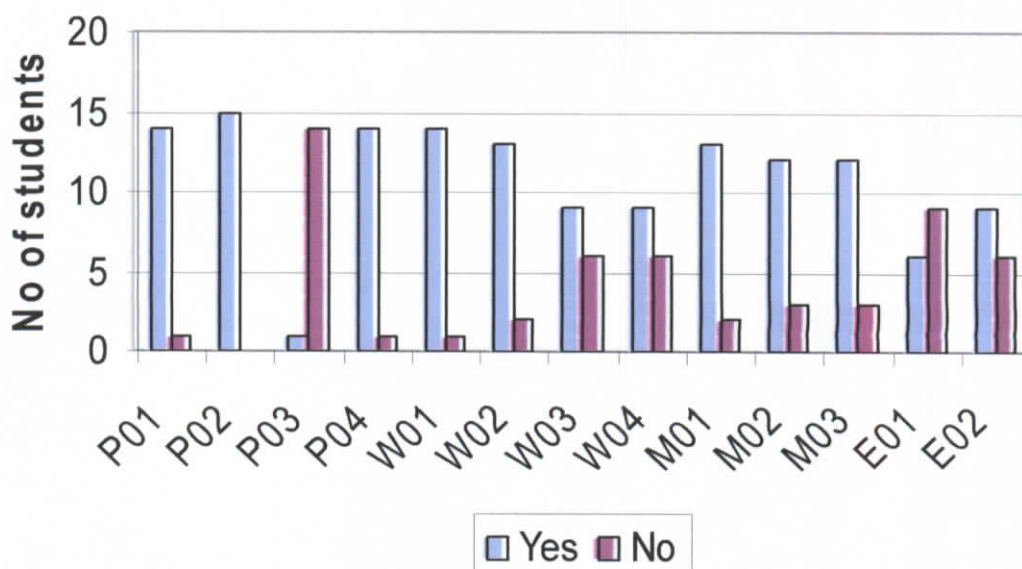
8. I added information or took out information

POS3

9. I edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar

POS4

Graph 3: Group B Final Self-assessment of writing Dimensions



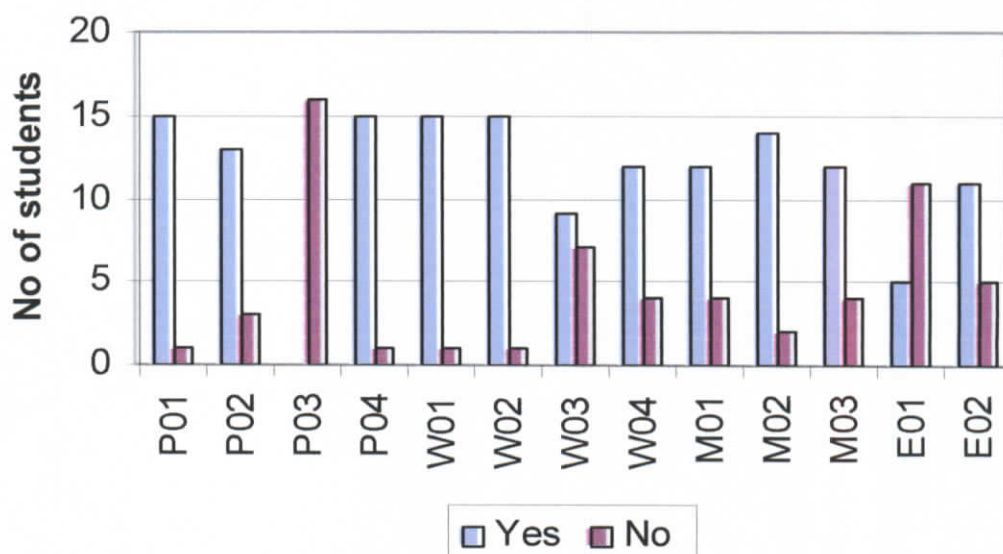
Writing Dimensions

Code

1. I stated my purpose clearly.
2. I organized my thoughts.
3. I made an outline or semantic map.
4. I chose words that helped make my point.
5. I used some new vocabulary.
6. I wrote complete sentences.
7. I used correct subject-verb agreement.
8. I used the tenses in English correctly.
9. I spelled words correctly
10. I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences
11. I used punctuation correctly
12. I read my paper aloud to a partner
13. I asked a partner to read my paper

P01
P02
P03
P04
W01
W02
W03
W04
M01
M02
M03
E01
E02

**Graph 4: Group C Final Self-assessment
of writing dimensions**



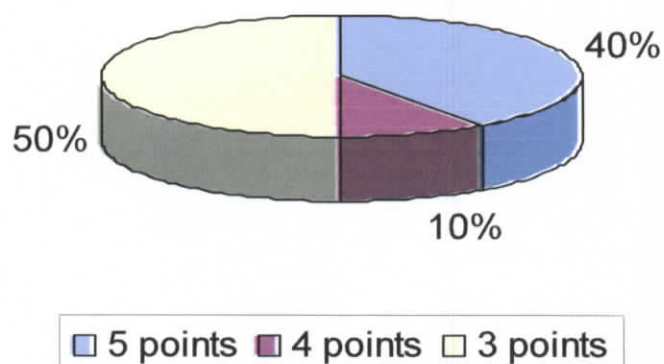
Writing Dimensions

1. I stated my purpose clearly.
2. I organized my thoughts.
3. I made an outline or semantic map.
4. I chose words that helped make my point.
5. I used some new vocabulary.
6. I wrote complete sentences.
7. I used correct subject-verb agreement.
8. I used the tenses in English correctly.
9. I spelled words correctly
10. I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences
11. I used punctuation correctly
12. I read my paper aloud to a partner
13. I asked a partner to read my paper

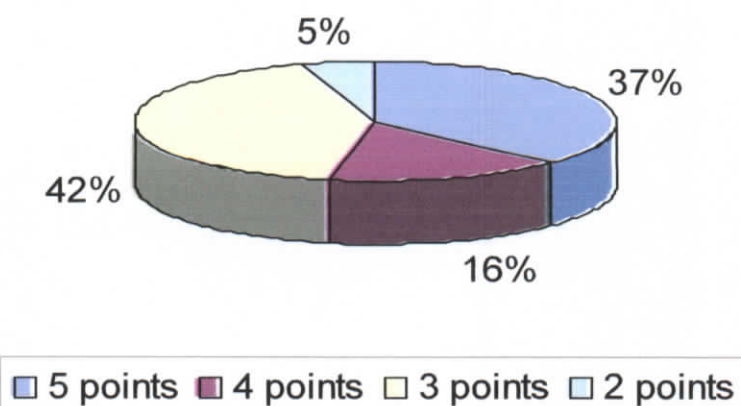
Code

- P01
P02
P03
P04
W01
W02
W03
W04
M01
M02
M03
E01
E02

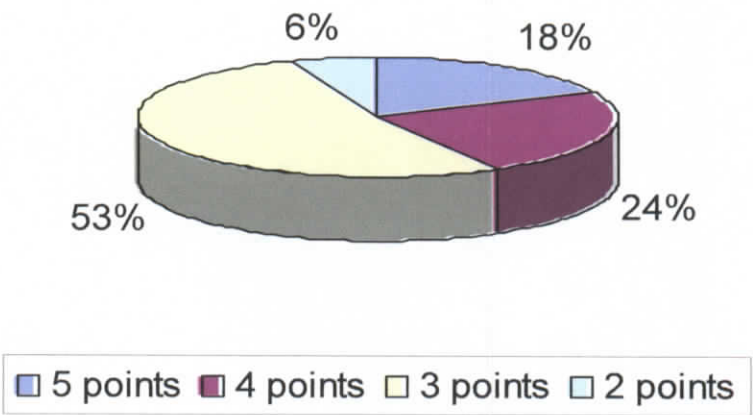
**Graph 5: Group A Portfolio-based writing
assessment grades**



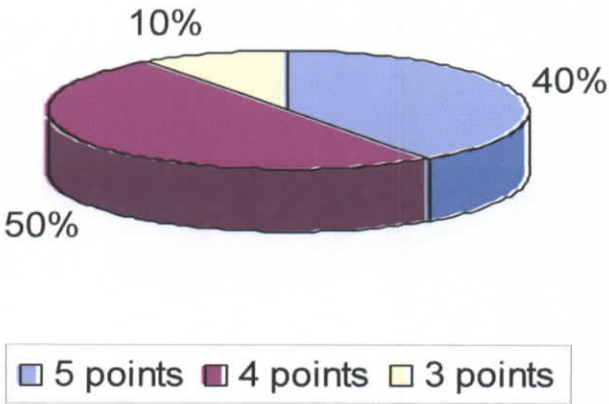
**Graph 6: Group B Portfolio-based writing
assessment grades**



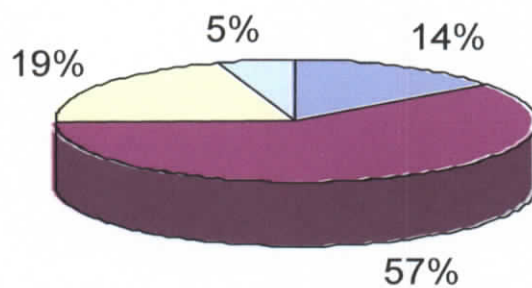
**Graph 7: Group C Portfolio-based writing
assessment grades**



**Graph 8: Group A Final scores
in the writing section**

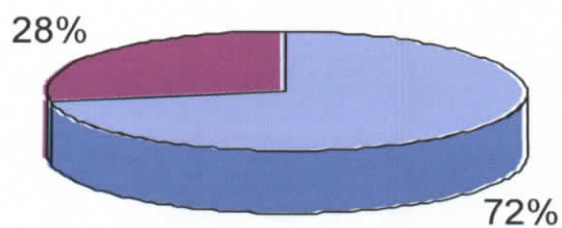


**Graph 9: Group B Final scores
in the writing section**



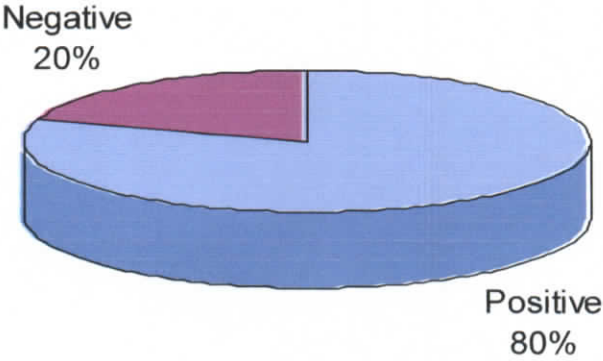
■ 5 points ■ 4 points ■ 3 points ■ 2 points

**Graph 10: Group C Final scores
in the writing section**

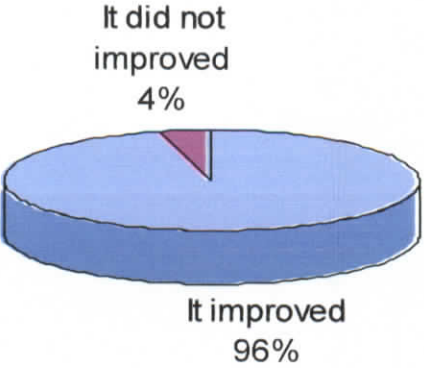


■ 5 points ■ 4 points

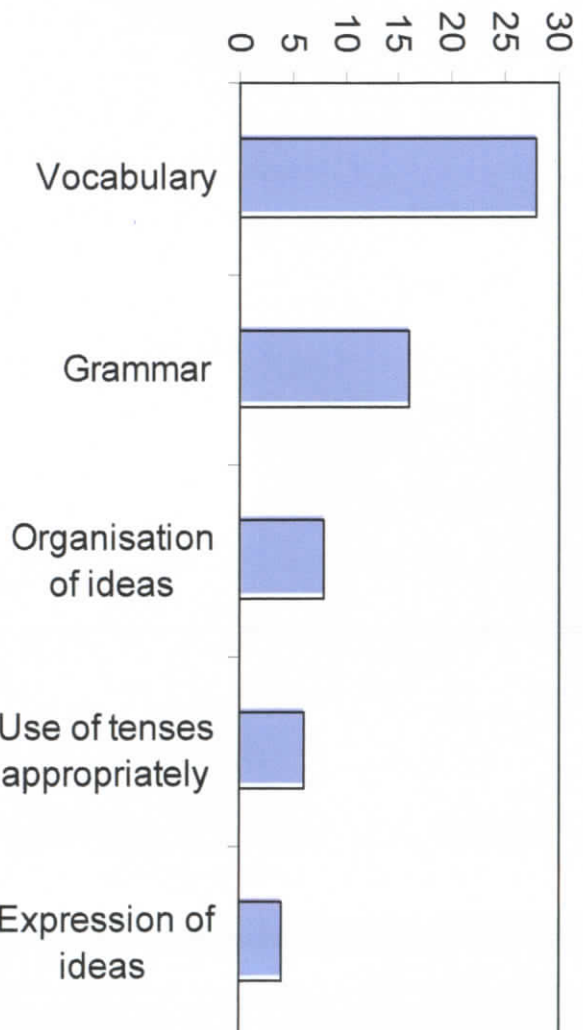
Graph 11: Students' attitudes towards portfolios



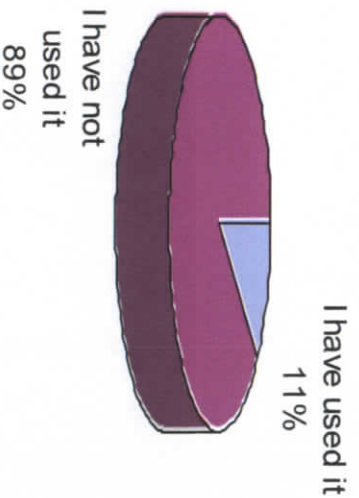
Graph 12: Students' perceptions of writing improvement after using portfolios



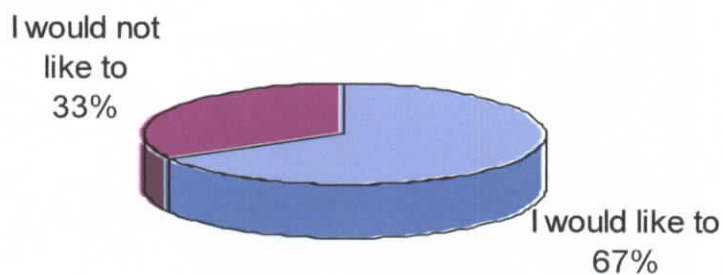
Graph 13: Students' perceptions of improvement in different areas while using the portfolios



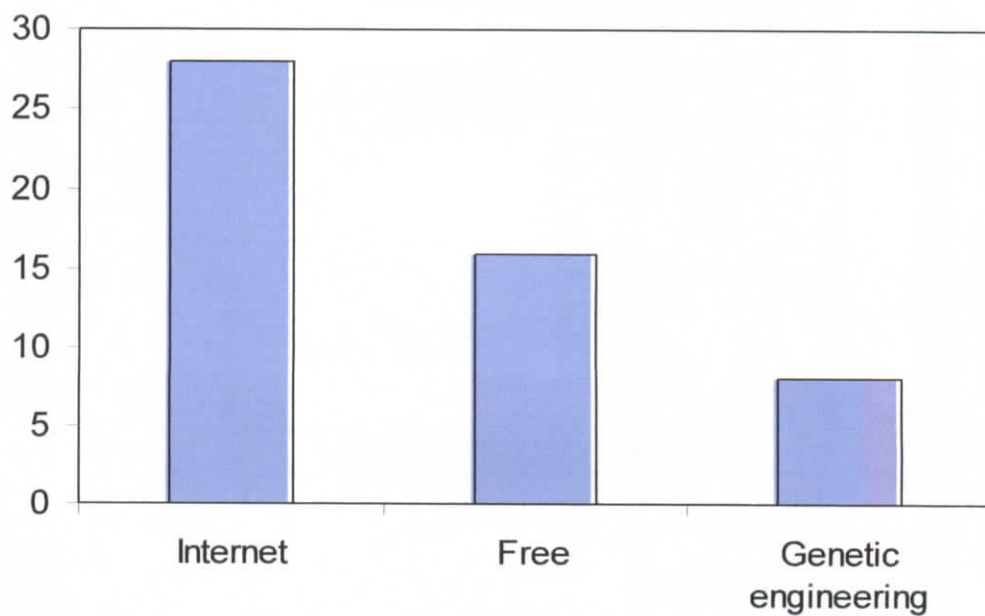
Graph 14: Students' previous experience with portfolios



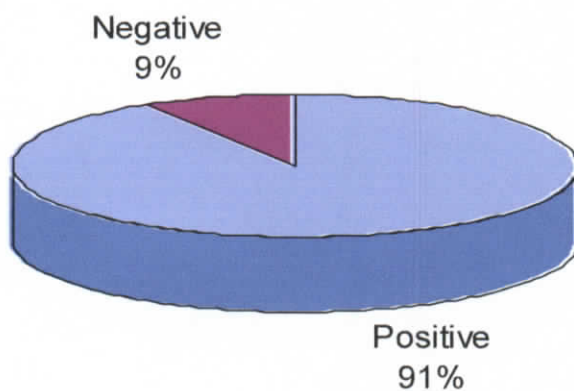
Graph 15: Students' willingness to use portfolios in the next level



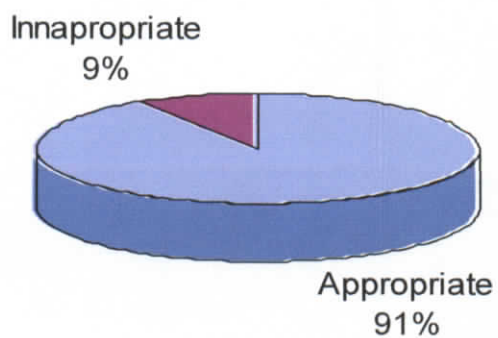
Graph 16: Preferred topics



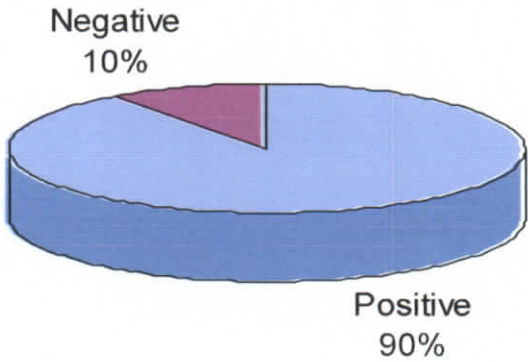
Graph 17: Students' attitudes towards free topics



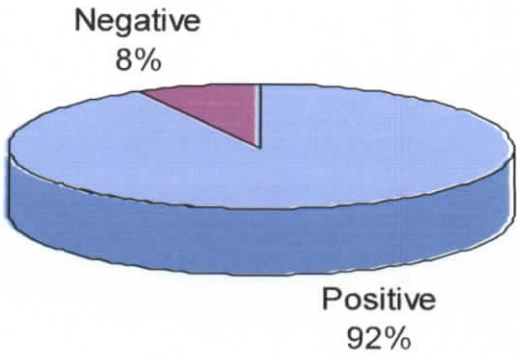
Graph 18: Students' perception of the quantity of activities



Graph 19: Students' attitude towards self-assessment



Graph 20: Students' attitude towards peer assessment



CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS

5.1. Background questionnaire outcomes

The background questionnaire was divided into two parts: The first part referred to General questions and it was administered to groups A and B. the second part referred to Writing needs and it was administered to the three groups of students (See Annex L).

The majority of students (38%) reported they had been studying English for two years and 29% reported they had been learning English since high school (See Table 1). The rest reported they had been learning English since high school (14%), for four years (5%), three years (5%), a year and a half (5%) and one year (5%). None of the students reported they had significantly used English in a foreign country (See Table 2).

Group A reported that they had developed the reading skill the most, then writing, after that speaking and finally listening. Group B reported that they had developed the speaking skill the most, then writing, after that reading and finally listening. In both groups they placed writing in the second place for the skill they had developed the most (See Table 3).

The majority of students (50%) of group B considered that writing was the most difficult skill (See Table 4). 29% of the same group considered is the easiest. 30% of group A reported that writing was the most important skill and 20% considered is the most difficult to learn.

Concerning difficulties students face when they write in English 43% of group A reported that they had difficulties to use the tenses, and use vocabulary and 14% had difficulties in organising their ideas (See Table 5). 44% of group B reported they had difficulties to use the tenses, 31% had difficulties to use vocabulary and 25% had difficulties to organise their ideas.

Almost half of the students of group A had been asked to assess their own writing before (43%) (See Table 6). Half of the students of group B had been asked to assess their own writing before the treatment.

Surprisingly most students (86%) of group A had been asked to assess their classmates' writing before (See Table 7). 63% of group B had been asked to assess their classmates' writing before.

The majority of students (43%) of group A reported they could dedicate 2 hours a week for writing and 67% of group B reported they could dedicate 1 hour a week for writing (See Table 8).

The majority of students (57%) of group A reported they seldom used writing (See Table 9). 53% of group B reported they sometimes used writing. And 36% of group

C reported they seldom used writing. However, they thought that in the future they would use writing more often (See Table 10). 57% of group A reported they would sometimes use writing in the future. 60% of group B reported they would often use writing. And 50% of group c reported they would often use writing in the future. Furthermore, students need writing to write e-mails, instructions, letters, summaries and personal documents (See Table 11).

5.2. Teacher's observations and reflections

Students were given many opportunities to practice writing using self-assessment, peer assessment and group work. In addition to those English tasks, students used English when completing the learning logs, though they were allowed to use Spanish (DA, Reflection 0207). In the final examination some Group C students wrote more words than required, they wrote the double number of words. The researcher had taught level 4 before and this was the first time a situation like this presented itself in level four. Usually they require more time to finish the exam. (DA, Observation 0207). Some students described the portfolio system as a tool to practice English. They had gained confidence and made progress in writing after working in groups, received feedback from peers. Students also showed interest in writing the free topics. They felt motivated because their writings were read either by their peers or their teacher.

Cushing (2002) argues that “when students are allowed to choose their best work based on explicit criteria, they will be more intrinsically motivated to revise and improve their writing and take pride of their work” (p.213). Students had the

opportunity to place their best three writings in their assessment portfolio in the order that they felt it was most appropriate to show their improvement. A few students described they felt more responsible while assembling the portfolio (CF 13, CF 30). Some students wrote more topics than it was required. One of them stated that she liked writing and that she wanted to improve her writing. Also, students were told to use a specific colour folder according to the group they belonged to. This was necessary to distinguish the folders among groups. However, by the end they asked to use any folder according to their likes. A few girls presented their portfolios with drawings. This self-rewarding behaviour might suggest that students increased their learning responsibility. After looking and grading students' portfolios It seemed that students might have selected their writings according to their own satisfaction.

Students were involved in constant reflection and critical thinking by using self and peer assessment. When completing the peer assessment formal they had to criticise their writings in a positive way. A few reported that they helped their peers to improve their writings (CF 15 and CF16). A few reported that they could see the progress of their peers by using peer assessment (CF 38 and CF 42). One of them reported that he could analyse the ideas and commentaries of others (VF 19). One of them reported that he could read what others think (CF 40). A few also stated that it was helpful that somebody else could evaluate them. Others also reported that it was necessary because it helped them to realise his or her mistakes (CF 3, CF 8 and CF 9). One of them reported that peer assessment helped him or her to improve his or her writing (CF 32).

5.3. Writing strategies developed

Before the treatment a self-assessment of writing strategies was administered to groups A and B (See Table 12). 71% of group A reported that they did not talk to a friend or partner about the topic and 71% reported that they did not make an outline or semantic map before writing. Group B reported that they did not make an outline or semantic map (94%) before writing. During writing 57% of Group A reported that they did not skip words they did not know and they did not go back to them later. Also, 81% of group B reported that they did not substitute a word from their own language. After writing 63% of Group B reported that they had not added information or taken out information. Most students of both Groups A and B reported that they did not ask someone else to read their writings and comment on them (71% and 69% respectively).

Surprisingly the researcher found out that students were accustomed to use some writing strategies before the implementation of writing portfolios. Before writing 71% of group A reported that they made a list of ideas on a topic. Before writing 69% of group B reported that they talked to a friend or partner about the topic and 63% made a list of ideas on the topic. During writing 71% of group A reported that they substituted words from their own language and reread, reviewed and backtracked their texts. 69% of group B reported that they skipped words they did not know and went back to them later and reread, reviewed and back tracked their texts. After writing group A (100%) reported that they reread to see if it made sense and edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals and grammar. 86% of the same group reported that they checked to see if their writing met their purpose and added

information or took out information. 94% of group B reported that they checked to see if the writing met their purpose, 81% reported that they reread to see if it made sense and 69% reported that they edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals and grammar.

The survey on students' perspectives of their use of language learning strategies was also administered at the beginning of the semester (See Table 13). The aim was to make learners aware of the strategies they use while learning. The SILL was developed by R. Oxford (1989) developed for speakers of other languages learning English (See Graph 1). The questionnaire contained 50 items. Each item was scored on a 5- point scale from 5 "always or almost always true of me" through 3 "Somewhat true of me" to 1 "never or almost never true of me" (See Annex M).

The SILL developed by Oxford (1989) reported for group A the strongest strategies were organising and evaluating your learning (3,04) and learning with others (2,85). The overall average for this group was 2,68. The overall average indicates that students used sometimes language learning strategies in general before the portfolio experience. The least strategy group used was using all your mental processes (2,5).

The results of the SILL for Group B indicated that the strongest groups of strategies were learning with others (3,69) and using all your mental processes. The overall average for this group was 3,52. The overall average indicates that students generally used the language learning strategies in general before the implementation of the portfolio system. From the three groups for this study this group had been trained the

most in strategy use. The least strategy group used was managing your emotions (3,30).

The results of the SILL for Group C indicated that the strongest groups of strategies were organising and evaluating your learning (3,40) and learning with others (3,27). The same pattern was found in Group A. The overall average for this group was 3,20. The overall average indicates that students sometimes used language learning strategies before the portfolio system. The least strategy group used was managing your emotions (3,06). The same pattern was found in group B.

After the treatment a self-assessment of language learning strategies was carried out to determine the improvements in the use of writing strategies (See table 17 and Graph 2). There were similarities and differences in the groups of strategies the three groups of students tend to use the most in learning a new language. Thus, the teacher had to provide opportunities to practise all the strategies. Significantly they rated high in the use of writing learning strategies (Group B $M= 3,27$ and Group C $M= 3,39$).

On a five-point scale students in most of the questions rated themselves above average in the use of learning strategies (Group B $M= 3,27$ and Group C $M= 3,39$). Before writing group B reported that they generally talked to a friend or partner about the topic ($M=2,81$), sometimes made a list of ideas on a topic ($M=2,50$) and generally did not make an outline or semantic map ($M=1,56$). Before writing group C reported that they generally talked to a friend or partner about the topic ($M=3,00$),

generally made a list of ideas on a topic ($M=3,68$) and generally did not make an outline or semantic map ($M=1,63$).

During writing students both groups B and C reported that they generally skipped words they did not know and went back to them later (Group B $M= 3,38$ and Group C $M= 3,37$). They also generally substituted words from their own language Group B $M= 3,38$ and Group C $M= 4,00$).

After writing they reported that they generally checked to see if the writing met their purpose (Group B $M= 4,06$ and Group C $M= 3,95$). Group B reported that they almost or almost always reread to see if it made sense ($M=4,56$) and Group C reported that they generally reread to see if it made sense ($M=3,84$). Both groups B and C also reported that they generally added information or took out information (Group B $M= 3,43$ and Group C $M= 3,63$) and edited for spelling punctuation, capitals and grammar (Group B $M= 3,75$ and Group C $M= 3,37$). Significantly, it was found that students developed the most after writing strategies (Group B $M= 3,95$ and Group C $M= 3,70$).

5.4. Writing dimensions improved

At the end of the portfolio system a self-assessment of writing dimensions was administered to groups of students B and C (See Tables 18 and 19 and Graphs 3 and 4). The outcomes from the self-assessment report that students improved writing dimensions.

At the level of purpose and organisation learnt to state their purpose clearly (93% of group B and 94% of group C), organise their ideas (100% of group B and 81% of group C), and choose words that helped them to make their point (93% of group B and 100% of group C). They did not make outlines or semantic maps though (93% of group B and 94% of group C). This might be because the teacher did not teach them how to make outlines or because it is not of their preference to do it.

At the level of word and sentence the majority of students used some new vocabulary (93% of group B and 94% of group C), wrote complete sentences (87% of group B and 94% of group C) and used correct subject-verb agreement (60% of group B and 56% of group C).

At the level of mechanics and format the majority of students perceived they spelled words correctly (87% of group B and 75% of group C), used capital letters at the beginning of sentences (80% of group B and 88% of group C) and used punctuation correctly (80% of group B and 75% of group C).

The majority of students asked a partner to read their papers (60% of group B and 69% of group C). 40% of group B and 31% of group C read their paper aloud to their partners.

5.5. Student's learning logs reports

Students reported on learning logs that they learnt new strategies for writing and that they had the opportunity to use them. One student reported that he had already

known some strategies, but through portfolio assessment he was able to put them into practice (CF 07). They also reported that they learnt about self-assessment and peer assessment.

5.6. Portfolio evaluations

5.6.1. Mid-term portfolio outcomes

At the end of the Mid-term period an evaluation was carried out to give feedback to the student about their writing progress (See table 14). The researcher used a portfolio evaluation summary to inform students whether or not the students met performance standards in writing. Student's performance in this summary was rated in three levels: Does not meet standards, meets standards, and exceeds standards. Meets standards would be similar to the parameters established in both holistic scoring rubrics for writing and portfolio scoring in the levels 3, 4 and 5. The results of the writing performance were better than the results of the portfolio assessment. This might be because portfolio assessment includes a wide variety of other activities such as self-assessment and peer assessment. In the midterm evaluation students showed improvement in writing.

Concerning Portfolio assessment most students (70% of group A, 68% of group B and 67% of group C) met the standards for portfolio assessment. 10% of group A and 5% of group C exceeded the standards. 20% of group A, 26% of group B and 33% of group C did not meet the standards for portfolio assessment.

Concerning writing performance most students (70% of group A, 58% of group B and 89% of group C) met the standards for writing performance. 20% of group A, 32% of group B and 6% of group C exceeded the standards. 10% of group A, 11% of group B and 6% of group C did not meet the standards for writing performance.

Furthermore, students were given feedback in writing dimensions (See table 15). Most students (70% of group A, 74% of group B and 78% of group C) always wrote in relation to the topic. 30% of group A, 16% of group B and 1% of group C often wrote in relation to the topic. 11% of group B and 6% of group C sometimes wrote in relation to the topic. Also, most students (70% of group A, 63% of group B and 67% of group C) always used interesting ideas. 30% of group A, 21% of group B and 22% of group C often used interesting ideas. 16% of group B and 11% of group C sometimes used interesting ideas. More than half of the students of group B (53%) always put similar ideas in the same paragraph. More than half of the students of groups A and C (50% and 56% respectively) often put similar ideas in the same paragraph. The majority of students (80% of group A, 47% of group B and 50% of group C) often used grammar and vocabulary that were appropriate and corresponded to the language that had been learnt. Most students of group A (60%) always stayed with appropriate length. 47% of group B always stayed with appropriate length. And 44% of group C always stayed with appropriate length.

5.6.2. Final Portfolio Outcomes

At the end of the semester the researcher used a holistic guide for portfolio scoring that was presented in chapter two (See Figure 2.4) to evaluate the portfolios (See tables 20 and 21). These were the outcomes:

Almost half of the portfolios (40%) of group A reflected work that is consistently high in quality (See Graph 5). The out –of – class work showed care in revising, and the in-class writing –while containing a few errors – was strong as well. There was creativity or depth of content. The work showed a real engagement on the part of the writing. The overall writing was fluent. The pieces of writing were well developed. The organisation for most sections was appropriate. There was a strong evidence of self-assessment and peer assessment and the writers had a solid command of grammar.

The minority of the portfolios (10%) of group A reflected work that was generally high in quality. The out-of –class work showed care in revising. There was some depth of content (and/ or creativity) throughout. The organisation was satisfactory. The writing style was varied. Grammar was generally correct and the writers were engaged with most tasks.

The majority of the portfolios (50%) of group A reflected work that was usually solid in quality. The out-of-class work and the in-class writing showed some care in revising. There was some content, as well as some development. The organisation was usually adequate. A few errors appeared throughout and the portfolios reflected some involvement on the part of the writers.

Almost half of the portfolios (37%) of group B reflected work that is consistently high in quality (See Graph 6). The out-of-class work showed care in revising, and the in-class writing –while containing a few errors – was strong as well. There was creativity or depth of content. The work showed a real engagement on the part of the writing. The overall writing was fluent. The pieces of writing were well developed. The organisation for most sections was appropriate. There was a strong evidence of self-assessment and peer assessment and the writers had a solid command of grammar.

A small number of the portfolios (16%) of group B reflected work that was generally high in quality. The out-of-class work showed care in revising. There was some depth of content (and/ or creativity) throughout. The organisation was satisfactory. The writing style was varied. Grammar was generally correct and the writers were engaged with most tasks.

The majority of the portfolios (42%) of group B reflected work that was usually solid in quality. The out-of-class work and the in-class writing showed some care in revising. There was some content, as well as some development. The organisation was usually adequate. A few errors appeared throughout and the portfolios reflected some involvement on the part of the writers.

The minority of the portfolios (5%) of group B reflected work that was uneven in quality. Some, but not all, out-of-class pieces showed care in revising. The in-class writings were often considerably weaker. The content was shallow. The organisation

appeared weak. Errors in grammar appeared through. The writers' involvement with the portfolio was negligible.

Some of the portfolios (18%) of group C reflected work that is consistently high in quality (See Graph 7). The out –of – class work showed care in revising, and the in-class writing –while containing a few errors – was strong as well. There was creativity or depth of content. The work showed a real engagement on the part of the writing. The overall writing was fluent. The pieces of writing were well developed. The organisation for most sections was appropriate. There was a strong evidence of self-assessment and peer assessment and the writers had a solid command of grammar.

Almost a quarter of the portfolios (24%) of group C reflected work that was generally high in quality. The out-of –class work showed care in revising. There was some depth of content (and/ or creativity) throughout. The organisation was satisfactory. The writing style was varied. Grammar was generally correct and the writers were engaged with most tasks.

The majority of the portfolios (53%) of group C reflected work that was usually solid in quality. The out-of-class work and the in-class writing showed some care in revising. There was some content, as well as some development. The organisation was usually adequate. A few errors appeared throughout and the portfolios reflected some involvement on the part of the writers.

The minority of the portfolios (6%) of group C reflected work that was uneven in quality. Some, but not all, out-of-class pieces showed care in revising. The in-class writings were often considerably weaker. The content was shallow. The organisation appeared weak. Errors in grammar appeared through. The writers' involvement with the portfolio was negligible.

5.7. Portfolio exceptions

Most of the students submitted their portfolio (96%) and were cooperative in the whole learning experience (See table 16). However, 4% did not submit their portfolios. One of them stated that he never does homework in any subject. The other student had health problems during the whole semester and was not able to give his best. 92% wrote original writings while 8% had some writings in their portfolios that were copies from a model.

Also some students were not as cooperative as it was expected. Some put all their works in the portfolio without any organisation and their writings revealed that they had not devoted enough time for the writing tasks.

5.8. Scores in the writing section in the final examination

At the end of the semester students took a final examination that consisted of four main sections: listening, grammar, reading and writing. The scorer used a holistic

writing rubric presented in Chapter 2 to score their writings (See Figure 2.2). The scores in the writing section on a 5 point scale were (See Tables 22 and 23).

Almost half of the students (40%) of group A showed their writings related to the topic (See Graph 8). Their writing also had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly and effectively. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and corresponded to the language that had been learnt. Their writings had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. Their writings had only minor spelling or grammatical errors that did not affect meaning. Their writings had the right tone and register and their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

The majority of students (50%) of group A showed their writings related to the topic. Their writing had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and correspond to the language that had been learnt. They had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. They had some spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning was still clear. They had the right tone and register. Their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

The minority of students (10%) of group A showed their writings had interesting ideas most of the time. Their writing had a logical sequence. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate to the task but were limited in range. They had some

spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning was still clear. A reasonable attempt had been made at completing the task.

Few students (14%) of group B showed their writings related to the topic (See Graph 9). Their writing also had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly and effectively. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and corresponded to the language that had been learnt. Their writings had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. Their writings had only minor spelling or grammatical errors that did not affect meaning. Their writings had the right tone and register and their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

The majority of students (57%) of group B showed their writings related to the topic. Their writing had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and correspond to the language that had been learnt. They had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. They had some spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning was still clear. They had the right tone and register. Their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

A small number of students (19%) of group B showed their writings had interesting ideas most of the time. Their writing had a logical sequence. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate to the task but were limited in range. They had some

spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning was still clear. A reasonable attempt had been made at completing the task.

Hardly any of students (5%) of group B showed they misunderstood the tasks. The ideas were not related to the topics. Their writings had inappropriate examples. The style and the register were not appropriate. They had limited vocabulary. They had a negative effect on the reader due to serious errors the meaning was unclear.

The minority of students (5%) of group B used single words or phrases. The errors in the writing made the meaning unclear.

The majority of students (72%) of group C showed their writings related to the topic (See Graph 10). Their writing also had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly and effectively. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and corresponded to the language that had been learnt. Their writings had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end. Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. Their writings had only minor spelling or grammatical errors that did not affect meaning. Their writings had the right tone and register and their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

More than a quarter of students (28%) of group C showed their writings related to the topic. Their writing had interesting ideas that were transmitted clearly. The grammar and vocabulary were appropriate and correspond to the language that had been learnt. They had a logical structure that flowed naturally with a beginning, middle, and end.

Their paragraphs had a “topic sentence”, at least four sample supporting details and a “concluding sentence”. They had some spelling or grammatical errors but the overall meaning was still clear. They had the right tone and register. Their writings had a very positive effect on the reader.

5.9. Final survey outcomes

After students submitted their portfolios a final questionnaire was administered to determine the effectiveness of the portfolio assessment implemented (See Annex N). All the questions in the questionnaire were in Spanish to ensure students could express their thoughts without any problem. Many indicated that the system was advantageous to them. The results are presented as follows:

The majority of students (80%) had a positive attitude towards writing portfolios (See Table 24 and Graph 11). 42% stated that it helped them to improve their writing. 8% stated that they learnt a lot by using them. A few indicated that it helped them to correct their mistakes, practice English and that it was interesting. One student reported that it became a part of him or her. Students appreciated the portfolio experience very much (MA, 07). As for negativity towards writing portfolios, 20% had negative feelings. Three main reasons were identified in students’ free responses. 2% complained that they did not have time to do the portfolio. 2% cited that they had never done it before and other 2% stated that at the beginning they did not understand what it was about.

A great majority of students (96%) stated that they believe that their ability to write in English had improved after finishing the writing portfolio (See Table 25 and Graph 12). The reasons for believing this are that they could practice more writing (27%), learnt new vocabulary (27%), their writing improved (9%), their grammar improved (9%) and that they learnt how to express their ideas better (7%). Only 4% stated that they do not believe that their ability to write in English has improved. One of them stated that he did not know how to use new words.

Many students (62%) agreed that portfolios helped them to learn new vocabulary (See Table 26 and Graph 13). 36% stated that it helped them to improve their grammar. 18% recognised that now they can organise in a better way their ideas. 13% reported that they learnt how to use the tenses in English correctly. This answer is related to the previous one concerning grammar improvement. A few reported that now they can express their ideas better. Therefore, portfolios are beneficial for students, because they help them to expand their vocabulary and learn grammar.

Most of the students (89%) stated that they had never used portfolios (See Table 27 and Graph 14). This shows that for them it was an innovative way of learning. 11% stated that they had used it before.

Most of the students (67%) indicated that they would like to use portfolios in the next level (See Table 28 and Graph 15). Five factors were identified in students' free responses: their writing improved (22%), their learning was enhanced (11%), they could practice what they had learnt (4%), it expands their creativity (2%) and it helps to detect mistakes (2 %). Unanimously, a few mention they would like to use it again

but with fewer activities. 33% stated that they would not like to use portfolios in the next level. Reasons for this response are: it takes too much time (11%), it is stressing (7%), it is tiring (4%) and that they did not like the whole process (4%).

Concerning topic preference 31% reported that they liked to write about the use of internet (See Table 29 and Graph 16). 18% reported that they preferred to write free topics and 7% reported that liked to write about the ending of a criminal story. Reasons for these responses are that they liked to analyse the pros and cons of using computers (11%), they could express their ideas (11%). A few stated that they like to write about updated topics.

A great majority of students (91%) showed a positive attitude towards writing free topics (See Table 30 and Graph 17). Reasons for students' free responses are that they can chose the topic and write about their preferences (27%), they can express their ideas (16%), and that they feel without limitations when expressing themselves (9%). Thus, it is a good idea to include free topics in writing portfolios. 9% showed a negative attitude towards writing free topics. They reported that they felt limited, bad and that they did not know what to write about.

Most of the students (95%) think that the portfolio activities were adequate (See Table 31 and Graph 18). Reasons for this response are that they had enough activities to practice (16%), there were a lot of activities (9%), and contrasting with this idea 5% stated that there were few activities. 5% reported that the number of activities was not adequate. One of them reported that it is never enough to learn.

Students' advices to improve portfolios are: to include more free topics (18%), to give more time to hand in the writings (9%), to check the writings every week (7%), to include more actual topics (7%), to explain better the tasks (7%), to organise the portfolios in a better way (7%) (See Table 32). A few reported that all the writing should be done in class, that the teacher should provide the list of all the prompts at the beginning of the semester, and that listening and grammar exercises should be included.

Regarding attitudes towards self-assessment, a great majority of students (90%) showed a positive attitude towards self-assessment (See Table 33 and Graph 19). Reasons for these answers are: they learnt to evaluate themselves (23%), they could correct their mistakes (12,50%), they could see their mistakes (10%), it helped them (5%). One student reported that he could track his progress, other that it was fun, and another student that he felt like a teacher. 10% showed a negative attitude towards portfolios. They reported that they couldn't correct themselves, and that it was frustrating to see their own mistakes.

Concerning attitudes towards peer assessment, again a great majority of students (92%) showed a positive attitude towards it (See Table 34 and Graph 20). Reasons for these answers are that it is beneficial to know somebody else's opinion about their writings (8%), that others can see the mistakes one is not aware (5%), that they helped the peers to improve their writings (5%), that they could read someone else's ideas (5%), and that they could see the progress of their classmates (5%). One of them reported that it is a professional procedure. 8% showed a negative attitude towards peer assessment. One of them reported that it is stressing.

The conclusions of implementing a portfolio-based writing assessment in the level four EFL courses at the PUCESA and the recommendations for further research are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study aimed to investigate and evaluate the implementation of a portfolio-based writing assessment in order to find out whether or not portfolio-based writing assessment enhanced students' writing ability at level four English classes in Pontificia Universidad Católica del Ecuador Sede Ambato and find out the perceptions of the students towards it. Participants included three groups of students. Significantly, the following conclusions arise:

- Students favoured the portfolio system, because most of them described it as a tool to improve their writing. Furthermore, they could use their imagination. Eventually they stated that their ability to write improved once they finished creating their portfolios.
- Students benefited from the portfolio system because they could apply writing strategies, self-assessment, and peer-assessment. Furthermore, their English, confidence, learning ownership, responsibility, creativity, and critical thinking were enhanced.
- This portfolio-based writing assessment could be used at all levels of English proficiency but would work best with Intermediate and Advanced levels

because students are more capable of expressing their thoughts in the target language for self-assessment and peer assessment purposes.

- In an EFL setting where the teacher has students for a short time each day, he or she can use portfolios to combine out-of-class work as well as in-class writings.

There are some good reasons to teach writing in class:

- Writing involves a different process than speaking, in the sense that there is more time to think and prepare.
- Writing is tangible. It provides the opportunity to revise and analyse a piece of writing, edit it and improve it.
- Writing can consolidate what students learn.
- Writing is an essential skill required in everyday educational, business and personal situations. An integral part of interacting fully with the users of English is learning to communicate when the person is not right there in front of us.
- Writing increases creativity.

- Given the fact that writing is a process, portfolios are ideal for the teaching of writing because they give learners the opportunities to revise written products before a final evaluation is given.
- The greatest difficulties students face when they write in English are how to use the tenses properly, vocabulary and how to organise their ideas correctly. Most students mentioned that portfolio helped them to improve in these areas.
- Portfolios should include both: accuracy and fluency activities to develop communicative competence. It is advisable to use a balance of fluency and accuracy activities.
- Students perceived they do not have a great necessity to write in English by the time they are learning it. However, they think that in the future they would need to write in English more often for their educational and professional development and with more opportunities to use it in a realistic way.
- The study found out that students had already been aware of the use of learning strategies consciously or unconsciously. However, portfolio gave them the opportunity to practice them more and learn new strategies.
- Each individual is unique. Therefore each student or group of students uses particular strategies according to their preference. Most of the strategies were used. However with one group of students Pre-writing strategies were

generally not used. This might be because they did not like those strategies or because there were not enough time to teach them and practice them. It was left on the part of the students to decide which strategies they use.

- In this study most students met the portfolio standards and the writing standards. Significantly it was found that students had a higher performance in the writing scores in the final examination than in the portfolio scores. On a five point scale the majority of students in their writing scored from 4 to 5 (Group A 90%, Group B 71% and Group C 100%). Although students met the standards for the portfolio presentation students who rated from 4 to 5 were less than students who rated 4 to 5 in the writing performance (Group A 50%, Group B 53% and Group C 42%). This might be because, the compilation of portfolios involves different elements such as: the writing samples, self-assessment and peer assessment and activities designed to teach process writing and writing dimensions.
- In this study students benefited from the use of portfolios. The majority of students developed competent pieces of writing in the final examination. They scored on a 5 point scale from 3,5 points to 5 points (Group A 90%, Group B 71% and Group C 100%). The minimum score to meet the standards was 3.
- Most of students dedicated time and effort to compile their portfolios. The majority of the students met the standards of portfolio presentation (Group A 100%, Group B 95% and Group C 94%).

- Most of the students (89%) stated that they had never used portfolios. This shows that for them it was an innovative way of learning.
- Portfolios promote critical thinking. Students were involved in constant reflection and critical thinking by using self and peer assessment. When completing the self-assessment forms they had to evaluate themselves and when completing the peer assessment form they had to criticise their peers' writings in a positive way. Many of them wrote positive comments trying to help their peers to improve their writing. Therefore direct strategies for cognitive process were practiced and indirect strategies for self-assessment and peer assessment were promoted.
- From the various types of portfolios, assessment portfolios are the most advantageous for learning purposes as well as evaluation purposes because students compile their portfolios taking into account specific criteria and assembling their more representative samples of written while reflecting in their own learning process. This eases the burden of work to correct every single piece of writing students produce because teachers can control the number of representative samples to be evaluated.
- The most important limitation of portfolio has to do with the amount of time required to develop and implement portfolio assessment. It takes a lot of time for the teacher to develop criteria for portfolios, to match task to the objectives as well as to put them into practice, to prepare students in the use of portfolios, to provide feedback to the students, and to score the portfolios.

Furthermore, in the universities teachers are not paid extra money for extra work and portfolios require a lot of time to implement and evaluate the portfolios accurately. This might cause teachers to neglect the use of portfolios. Despite using assessment portfolios and a holistic guide for portfolio scoring that make the implementation more practical, still they are extremely time-consuming.

- The majority of students (96%) submitted their portfolios. However, 4% did not submit their portfolios. During the process six students presented copies as if they were their own work. These copies seemed to be downloaded from the internet. This shows that the whole Portfolio-based writing assessment took place without major problems and that students were willing to compile their portfolios, create original pieces of writing and most importantly to collaborate with the whole process.
- Nowadays, many authors recommend the use of portfolio assessment for certifying student accomplishment instead of traditional tests based mainly in multiple choice procedures. That requires further research and was not the case of this study. In this research the primary purpose was to enhance students' writing ability. Findings of this study recommend that portfolios would be better used as pedagogical tools.

The following recommendations for further research are presented:

- Vocabulary acquisition is important in EFL and merits further study. Vocabulary acquisition is perceived by learners as essential. A study of self-assessment portfolios focusing on the methods they find most useful in learning vocabulary is suggested.
- The present study can also be expanded to the other productive skill: speaking or to the other receptive skills: listening and reading, or the implementation of portfolios to the four skills. However, the implementation of the portfolios to the four areas might be difficult because of the time required. It could be carried out in primary schools where teachers have more time to be in contact with their students. It is recommended that for an open EFL course it focuses in one skill where both teachers and students have less time to devote to learning activities.
- Writing is not an isolated skill – to write properly good writers read a lot. Poor reading skills may limit the capacity to evaluate one's own writing. A portfolio assessment that combines both skills is recommended.
- “New technologies are affecting the nature of writing itself, in terms of the writing process, the norms and the standards for written texts, and the development of new genres of writing” (Cushing 2002: 231). Learners tend to use more the computer to write their assignments. A study of the implementation of electronic portfolios to enhance writing ability is

suggested. It is advisable to consider the necessary resources and training before engaging in the use of electronic portfolios.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A - Writer's checklist

Name: _____

	Yes / No
1. Did you write on the assigned topic?	
2. Did you write for the assigned audience?	
3. Did you identify a central theme?	
4. Did you explain the key ideas or events for the theme?	
5. Did you use complete sentences?	
6. Did you correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage?	

Adapted from materials developed by the Maryland State Department of Education 1987
O'Malley and Valdez (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*. Longman: USA

ANNEX B - Self-assessment of Writing Dimensions

Name: _____

Title of the work: _____

Check one box for each statement.

<u>Purpose and Organisation</u>	yes	no
1. I stated my purpose clearly.		
2. I organized my thoughts.		
3. I made an outline or semantic map.		
4. I chose words that helped make my point.		
<u>Word/Sentence Use</u>	yes	no
5. I used some new vocabulary.		
6. I wrote complete sentences.		
7. I used correct subject-verb agreement.		
8. I used the tenses in English correctly.		
<u>Mechanics/Format</u>	yes	no
9. I spelled words correctly		
10. I used capital letters at the beginning of sentences		
11. I used punctuation correctly		
<u>Editing</u>	yes	no
12. I read my paper aloud to a partner		
13. I asked a partner to read my paper		

ANNEX C - Self-assessment of writing strategies

Name: _____

Check one box for each statement.

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

	1	2	3	4	5
<u>Before writing:</u>					
1. I talked to a friend or partner about the topic					
2. I made a list of ideas on the topic					
3. I made an outline or semantic map					
<u>During writing:</u>	1	2	3	4	5
4. I skipped words I didn't know and went back to them later					
5. I substituted a word from my own language					
6. I used drawings or pictures in my writing					
<u>After writing:</u>	1	2	3	4	5
7. I checked to see if the writing met my purpose					
8. I reread to see if it made sense					
9. I added information or took out information					
10. I edited for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar					

Other strategies I used:

ANNEX D - Learning Log

Name: _____

What did I learn today?

What strategies or approaches worked best for me in learning?

What was hard to understand?

What will I do to understand better?

Adapted from Atwell (1990)

O'Malley and Valdez (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*. Longman: USA.

ANNEX E - Survey of Writing Interest and awareness

Name: _____

Check one box for each statement.

	<u>A Lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A Little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>
1. I like to write stories	1	2	3	4
2. I am a good writer	1	2	3	4
3. writing stories is easy for me	1	2	3	4
4. writing to friends is fun	1	2	3	4
5. writing helps in school	1	2	3	4
6. I like to share my writing with others	1	2	3	4
7. I write at home	1	2	3	4

7. What kind of things do you like to write about?

8. What do you want to improve in your writing?

ANNEX F - Peer Evaluation and Editing Form for Writing

Reader's name: _____

Author's name: _____

Title of piece: _____

Peer Evaluation

The piece of writing was:

The part I liked best:

This writing can be improved by:

Editing Form

Look for these things when editing someone's paper.

Punctuation - periods - question marks - capital sentences at the beginning of sentences - capital letter for names	Comments:
Sentences - are complete and have a verb - have variety - writer uses paragraphs	
Spelling - correct spelling	
Overall paper - has a main idea - is logical and makes sense is organised well	

ANNEX G - Portfolio evaluation summary

Student: _____

<u>Portfolio</u>	Does not meet standards	Meets standards	Exceeds standards

<u>Writing</u>	Does not meet standards	Meets standards	Exceeds standards

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
You write in relation to the topic				
You use interesting ideas				
You put similar ideas in the same paragraph				
You use <u>grammar</u> and <u>vocabulary</u> that are appropriate and correspond to the language we have learnt				
You stay with appropriate length				

<u>Portfolio organisation</u>	Excellent	Satisfactory	Fair	Poor

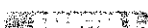
Comments:

HEROES AND VILLAINS: past time clauses

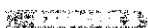
THINGS TO LOOK OUT FOR

- The main grammar focus is on past time clauses: deciding whether to use the past simple, the past progressive or the past perfect after conjunctions such as *when*, *while*, *after* and *before*.
- There should be no problems with the concept of an interrupted action in progress since Spanish follows stricter rules than the English regarding the tenses to be used with *while*, etc.
- The Spanish equivalents of *before* and *after* usually function as prepositions followed by the infinitive so this can lead to confusions with the English verb forms, causing errors such as *After leave / to leave / he leave, John went home.* ✗

ANSWERS



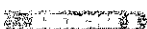
- The lecturer *had* already started the lecture *when* we arrived. (*started* happened before the second action, *arrived*)
- Andy met his future wife *while* he *was living* in Paris. (the second action *living* was ongoing when the first happened)
- ✓
- The workers *organized* a strike *after* negotiations had broken down. (*organized* comes after the first action—*broken down*)
- ✓
- We were marching downtown *when* the president *resigned* unexpectedly. (*resigned* is a short action that took place during the first action—*were marching*)



Note: More than one answer is possible in most cases here. The choice of conjunction will slightly change the relationship between the actions. If your students find this exercise difficult, give them the conjunctions from the answers below to help them.

- Alan became active in student politics *while* he was studying law in college. / Alan was studying law in college *when* he became active in student politics.

- Alan had become active in student politics *before* he graduated from college. (Although *became active* would be possible here, *had become* emphasises that it had already happened before he graduated.)
- After* Alan had gotten his law degree, he joined a law practice. (It would also be possible to use *got* since this focuses on the sequence of the actions.)
- Alan was working as a junior lawyer *when* he met his wife. / Alan met his wife *while* he was working as a junior lawyer.
- Alan had worked as a junior lawyer for four years *before* he became a partner. / Alan became a partner *after* he had worked as a junior lawyer for four years.
- Alan had been involved in local politics for eight years *before* he became a politician. / Alan became a politician *after* he had been involved in local politics for eight years.



Note: In one or two cases more than one answer is possible.

- traveled 2 had been 3 had spent 4 came across 5 died / was dying (both are possible—the first focuses on the complete action) 6 founded 7 had expanded 8 started 9 improved 10 had / had had (it is possible to link two past simples with *after*) 11 died

PERSONALIZE IT!

- The students can write a few biographical notes like the ones in exercise 2. In pairs, the students can hand the notes to their partners, who then write three or four sentences based on the notes, using the time conjunctions. Each student then reads their sentences to their partner (the student whose life they are describing), who checks whether the times expressed in the sentences are correct or not.

HEROES AND VILLAINS

RAISE 1

Four of these sentences contain mistakes with the past simple, past progressive or past perfect. Check (✓) the two correct sentences and correct the mistakes in the others.

- The lecturer already started the lecture when we arrived.
- Andy met his future wife while he lived in Paris.
- We waited until all our guests had arrived before we told them the news.
- The workers had organized a strike after the negotiations had broken down.
- We went on several demonstrations when we were living in Cambridge.
- We were marching downtown when the president was resigning unexpectedly.

RAISE 2

Look at the biographical details. Make sentences about Alan from the prompts, using the past progressive or past perfect.

Alan Stebbings

- 1985 joined the Democratic Party
- 1986–91 studied law in college
- 1988 became very active in student politics
- 1991 graduated with a law degree
- 1992 joined a law practice, working as a junior lawyer
- 1994 met and married Angela
- 1995 started getting involved in local politics
- 1996 became a partner in the law practice
- 2003 gave up law and became a professional politician

join Democratic Party / go to college

Alan had joined the Democratic Party before

he went to college.

- become active in student politics / study law in college
.....
- become active in student politics / graduate from college
.....

- get his law degree / join a law practice
.....

- work as a junior lawyer / meet his wife
.....

- work as a junior lawyer for four years / become a partner
.....

- be involved in local politics for eight years / become a politician
.....

RAISE 3

Complete the text by writing the verbs in parentheses in the correct tense. Use the past simple, past progressive or past perfect.



Mother Teresa was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu in Macedonia in 1910. Her family was very religious and Agnes went to church almost every day while she was growing up (grow up). In 1928 she left Macedonia and (1)

(travel) to Dublin, in Ireland, to join the Sisters of Loretto, where she took the name Teresa.

Mother Teresa then spent many years as a nun and a teacher, but in 1948 her life changed completely. By this time she (2) (be) in India for nearly twenty years, and (3) (spend) much of that time as a teacher and Principal in St. Mary's High School, Calcutta. Then, one day, she (4) (come across) a poor, dying woman in the street. Mother Teresa stayed with the woman as she (5) (die), and decided to dedicate her life to the poorest people. She then (6) (found) the Missionaries of Charity, which, by the end of the 20th century, (7) (expand) to about 550 missions worldwide.

In 1979 Mother Teresa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, but she (8) (start) to suffer from heart problems in the early 1980s. Although her health (9) (improve) a little after she (10) (have) a pacemaker fitted in 1989, she was then weakened by infections and diseases. She finally (11) (die) in Calcutta on September 5th, 1997.

Final review of grammar level 4

Name: _____

A. Complete the sentences with the following connectors:

Furthermore, Moreover, when, then, so, although, even though, In addition

1. The couple got married, _____ they went on vacation
2. We were sitting in the yard _____ they fire started
3. That applicant had good qualifications. _____ she was very nice.
4. The classroom was empty, _____ the teacher is very famous.

B. Complete the following sentences with phrasal verbs

Take off / take over / take after

1. Sue and her brother really _____ their mother.
2. Gross chemicals is trying to _____ our company.
3. Why don't you _____ your jacket? It's so hot.

C. Answer the following questions (Conditionals)

1. What will you do if you see a ghost?

2. What would you do if you had 1.000.000 dollars?

1. What would you have done if you had discovered your best friend lied to you?

D. Future tenses:

Complete the following text: Use future perfect, future simple or future progressive

Many people believe that life in the future _____ (be) completely different and that technology _____ (take over) the Earth. I believe that by 2050 life _____ (change) in two main ways: population and technology.

The population of western countries has been falling for many years. By 2050, I believe this _____ (become) a problem for society and the economy. There _____ (be) no young people to contribute to the economy or to take care of parents and grandparents.

Another example of change _____ (be) in technology and communications. I believe that by 2050 many people _____ (work) from home, using a computer.

In conclusion, I think that life by 2050 _____ (change), but technology _____ (not/take over) the Earth. Technology _____ (be) very important but humans _____ (continue) to control change.

E. Read the first part of the pairs of sentences below, and complete the second part using reported speech.

- 1 a) "I have told no lies about this matter," he said.
b) He said he _____
- 2 a) "I will resign here in the Oval Office tomorrow," he announced.
b) He announced that he _____ in the Oval Office the _____ day.
- 3 a) "My family understands," he told reporters.
b) He _____
- 4 a) "I can be proud of my achievements as President," he insisted.

F. Use the appropriate **Past tense**: Past simple /past perfect / past continuous.

The fox

It was completely dark and the whole town was asleep. A woman walked slowly toward the large house and stopped at the front gate. A few seconds later she appeared at the back of the house, turned off the security alarm, and silently _____ (open) the window. Within an hour she was back at her apartment. She was holding a beautiful diamond ring and bracelet, and she was smiling to herself. Reports on the following day described a daring jewellery at the house of a movie star. Police also _____ (state) that this was one in a series of robberies and that the criminal _____ (leave) a picture of a fox at the scene of each crime. Interpol were convinced that this clue would help them catch the thief quickly. Meanwhile the Fox _____ (wear) her new jewelry at a party in her luxury house by the ocean. She _____ (love) the way it _____ (look) and that no one knew where it _____ (come) from.

A month later The Fox arrived at a house in the country owned by a business woman. The woman and her family _____ already _____ (go) on vacation. The fox _____ (climb) into the woman's bedroom and she _____ (look for) her jewelry when suddenly the police _____ (arrive). The detective _____ (arrest) her and _____ (take) her to the police station. While he _____ (interview) her, she _____ (ask), "How did you know that I was the Fox?" "While you were wearing some stolen jewelry a reporter took a picture of you", he _____ (explain). When the police _____ (search) The Fox's apartment they _____ (find) jewelry worth millions of dollars. She was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

G. Complete the following sentences with: **Whatever / Whoever / whenever / wherever**

1. You can sit _____ you want
2. _____ wrote that article is a genius.
3. _____ you think of cloning, it is going to happen.
4. We always drop by _____ we are in town.

H. Read the text and choose the correct connector from the answers below.

The Spanish monarchy is one of the few successful monarchies in the modern political world. However, that was not the situation for much of the 20th century. King Alfonso XIII was deposed in 1931 and the Second Republic was formed, but that led to the Spanish Civil War in 1936, which was won by Franco and his right-wing coalition. Franco became a dictator and (1) _____ ruled the country for over 35 years, (2) _____ being a supporter of the monarchy. When Franco died in 1975, Alfonso's grandson, Juan Carlos, became king. He brought democratic elections to the country only 18 months later and, (3) _____, gained the respect of the people

King Juan Carlos and his family have kept that respect since then, partly (4) _____ they live like

ordinary people. (5) _____ they have royal palaces, the family use the palaces for state occasions only.

(6) _____, the royal family pay tax like normal people.

Both the king's daughters are married but his son, the heir to the throne, remains single, (7) _____ many young Spanish women live in hope of marrying into this normal royal family!

- 1 a) therefore b) then c) besides
- 2 a) although b) finally c) in spite of
- 3 a) as a result b) next c) because
- 4 a) so b) because c) although
- 5 a) However b) Although c) In spite of
- 6 a) Moreover b) Eventually c) After that
- 7 a) but b) because c) so

TIME:	40 - 50 minutes
INTERACTION:	Pair work
AIM:	To organize and write a paragraph.
TEXT TYPE:	Single paragraph
REGISTER:	Formal / semiformal / informal
WRITING SKILLS:	Writing on a topic, including supporting and concluding sentences
PREPARATION:	Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.

PROCEDURE**Warm up!**

- Ask the students what they know about how to organize a paragraph. Write any suggestions on the board, but don't confirm them yet. Come back to this after exercise 1.
- Explain that the students are going to read some tips on writing clear paragraphs.
- Ask the students to read the tips and underline the correct information.
- Check the answers with the class.

ANSWERS:

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 one main idea | 3 similar | 5 develop |
| 2 can | 4 beginning | 6 end |

- Ask the students to read the paragraphs quickly and answer the questions.
- With a weaker class or if the students ask questions about vocabulary, check the following: (paragraph 1) *get to travel* (have the opportunity to travel), *a blast* (a very enjoyable experience), *cute* (attractive); (paragraph 2) *gestures* (movements of the head, arm or hand that express how someone feels).
- Check the answers with the class.

ANSWERS:

(paragraph 1) from a letter to a friend about the writer's news (paragraph 2) from an article or essay about communication

- Remind the students that the topic sentence gives the main idea and the concluding sentence ends the paragraph.

- Have the students read the sentences and match them with the correct part of the paragraphs in exercise 2.
- Ask the students to check their answers in pairs.
- Check the answers with the class.

ANSWERS:

(paragraph 1) topic sentence = 6, concluding sentence = 4 (paragraph 2) topic sentence = 1, concluding sentence = 3

- Ask the students why sentences 2 and 5 are not possible. (Sentence 2 comes at the very beginning of a letter. Sentence 5 introduces a contrast, so does not logically conclude the paragraph.)
- Have the students read the extract and think of ideas for the supporting sentences.
- With a weaker class or if the students are short of ideas, brainstorm ideas and write notes on the board, e.g. *how long ago / where they met, what they were doing, why the meeting was memorable, how the writer felt*.
- Check the tenses that the students will need (the past simple / the past progressive / the present perfect).
- Have the students write their supporting sentences.
- Use the model answer on page 59 as a guideline when checking the students' work. They can write about whatever situation they like, but check that they have given appropriate information and used the tenses correctly.
- Ask the students to read the task and look at the diagram.
- With a weaker class or if the students are short of ideas, brainstorm ideas with the whole class and write notes on the board, e.g. *plan what you want to say, give examples and short explanations, don't talk for too long, listen to other people's ideas, ask questions and invite other people to talk, think about body language, use gestures to help communicate your ideas, smile and make eye contact*.
- Have the students write their paragraph.
- Use the model answer on page 59 as a guideline when checking the students' work.

Read the tips and underline the correct information.

Use these tips to help you write clear paragraphs in all types of text.

- Include ¹ *lots of ideas / one main idea* per paragraph.
- Paragraphs ² *can / can't* have a different number of sentences, but avoid paragraphs with just one or two sentences.
- Each paragraph in a text should be a ³ *similar / different* length.
- Each paragraph needs a "topic sentence" – a sentence that gives the main idea of the paragraph. This usually comes at the ⁴ *beginning / end* of the paragraph.
- "Supporting sentences" ⁵ *change / develop* the main idea from the topic sentence. They give details, examples or explanations.
- A "concluding sentence" marks the ⁶ *beginning / end* of the paragraph.

Choose the best topic sentence and concluding sentence for the paragraphs in exercise 2. (There are two sentences you don't need.)

- 1 Many aspects of human communication are nonverbal.
- 2 Thanks very much for your letter.
- 3 So, body language in all its forms is a powerful tool for communication.
- 4 Call me and let me know what's happening.
- 5 However, be careful not to offend people with gestures.
- 6 I have some news for you!

Think about the information that could go in the supporting sentences of the following paragraph.

I'll never forget the time I first met my best friend. ...
... I really hope we'll be friends for years to come.

Write four or five supporting sentences for the paragraph. What tenses will you probably use?

Read the supporting sentences from two different paragraphs. Where are the paragraphs from? What are they about?

1 ... I've just started a new job in a travel agency. I work with a great team of people and I get to travel all the time. It's just a blast! I also met a cute guy last week. He works for the same company, but in a different division. I can't believe my luck. I hope life with you is as good. ...

a topic sentence

4 or 5 supporting sentences

2 ... If you look at a group of people, notice how they use their hands, face and whole body to express how they feel. Gestures can have international meaning. Think about how you would express "Hi" or "Bye", "Be quiet!", "Fantastic!" or "Good job!" It's surprising how many other nationalities use the same gestures. ...

a concluding sentence

TIME:	40 – 50 minutes
INTERACTION:	Whole class / pair work / individual
AIMS:	To practice using past time clauses and connectors and writing first and second drafts.
TEXT TYPE:	Article
REGISTER:	Semiformal
WRITING SKILLS:	Using connectors and past time clauses, organizing ideas into paragraphs, drafting
PREPARATION:	Find pictures of famous people, e.g. from magazines (optional). Read through the text in exercise 1 and check the meaning of any unknown vocabulary. Make one copy of the worksheet for each student.

PROCEDURE**Warm up!**

- If you have collected some pictures, show them to the class. Ask who the people are and what the students know about their lives.
- Ask the class to suggest the names of famous people. Write the names of one man and one woman on the board and elicit “key facts” about their lives.
- Tell the students to read the text quickly and match the paragraphs with the headings.

ANSWERS:

4 conclusion 3 personal life 1 introduction 2 career

- Ask them if they can suggest a good title for the piece.
- Tell the students to read the text more carefully, then allow time for them to discuss the “key facts.”

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

39 when he died; born in 1929; grew up in Atlanta; son and grandson of Baptist ministers; very able student; studied theology; married Coretta Scott in 1953; four children; passionate about civil rights; inspiring public speaker; natural leader of protests against racism; 1963 he made his famous “I have a dream” speech in Washington; youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize; In 1968 ... was assassinated by James Earl Ray; in 1986, the third Monday in January was declared a national holiday in the U.S.A., to be known as “Martin Luther King Day.”

- Elicit two or three more examples of linking words, then allow time for the students to circle the linking words. Discuss their answers with the class. Use the model answer on page 59.
- Ask the students what they already know about Princess Diana.
- If they want to choose a different person, allow time for them to make notes. (They may choose to use the notes on the board, see the “warm up” above.)
- Encourage them to think of a title that is suitable for a popular magazine (i.e. not too formal).
- Explain that they can rearrange the order of the notes as they wish.
- Remind them that the first paragraph should be a general introduction and the fourth paragraph should provide a summary or conclusion. Paragraphs 2 and 3 should each have a “theme.”
- Monitor their work. Remind them just to write notes at this stage. Encourage them to introduce some of their own opinions into the introductions and conclusion.
- Encourage the students to form groups with other pairs and discuss each other's ideas.
- Suggest that the students look back to exercise 3.
- Allow time for the students to work on their first drafts. Monitor their work.
- Stop them after ten minutes and ask for volunteers to write their sentences on the board. Invite comments and suggestions.
- Ask the students to write a second draft for homework and illustrate it if they wish.

GRADING CHECKLIST FOR FLUENCY TASK**Check that:**

- there is a title.
- there is an introductory paragraph.
- there are two paragraphs, each with a “theme.”
- there is a concluding paragraph.
- the important facts are all included.
- “connectors” and past time clauses have been used effectively.
- the style is suitable for a magazine article.

Look at the text about Martin Luther King (below) and match the paragraphs with the headings.

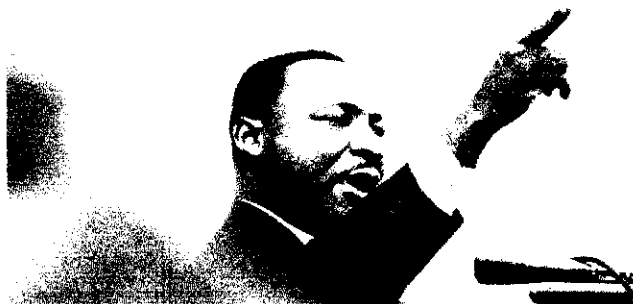
_ conclusion _ personal life 1 introduction _ career

Read the text again and underline the "key facts."

Title	
paragraph 1	Although Martin Luther King was only 39 when he died, he is one of the most famous figures in the history of the U.S.A.
paragraph 2	He was born in 1929 and he grew up in Atlanta, the son and grandson of Baptist ministers. King was a very able student and as a result he graduated from high school two years early. He then studied theology at several universities. King married Coretta Scott in 1953, and the couple had four children.
paragraph 3	King grew increasingly passionate about civil rights. He was an inspiring public speaker, too, and so became a natural leader of protests against racism. In 1963 he made his famous "I have a dream" speech in Washington, and a year later he was the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1968, King was assassinated by James Earl Ray. He was making a speech about equality at the time.
paragraph 4	In 1986, the third Monday in January was declared a national holiday in the U.S.A., to be known as "Martin Luther King Day." He was an American hero who will never be forgotten.

Look at the text again. Circle words that link ideas and events.

e.g.: Although Martin Luther King was only 39 when he died, he is
He was born in 1929 and he grew up in ...



Look at the notes about Princess Diana OR make notes about another famous person. Think of a title for an article about him/her.

Princess Diana

- born Sandringham, England 1961 – family friendly with royal family
- parents divorced 1969
- not a good student, loved sports (wanted to be a dancer, but too tall)
- left school, 1978, became a waitress, a cleaner, then a teacher at school for young children
- romance with Prince Charles (son of Queen Elizabeth II) began 1980 – followed everywhere by the press
- married Charles 1981 – watched by 750 million people worldwide
- had two sons (William and Harry)
- beautiful and popular – supported many charities
- became unhappy and sick, attempted suicide
- 1992 separated from Charles, divorced 1996
- killed with billionaire businessman Dodi Fayed in car crash, Paris, 1997 (while being chased by reporters)

Organize the notes into four paragraphs.

Use your notes to write a first draft for a magazine article. Use some of the words in the box to link ideas and events.

after although as a result because eventually
finally however in spite of later so
then when while

Write a second draft of your article. Include pictures if you want to.

ANNEX K - Portfolio Summary Sheet

Portfolio Summary Sheet

Student:	
----------	--

Required contents Assessment Portfolio

Assessment

	Code	Prompts	4
1	W3011	The ending of the story "The Fox"	
2	W0712	A balanced article about the effect of using Internet	
3	W1212A	A short review of a concert you enjoyed	
4	W1212B	An article for a magazine "Tips for a perfect date"	
5	W0201	Free topic	
6	W0801	Free topic	
7	W1501A	Biography of Princess Diana	
8	W1501B	A biography of a famous person	
9	W2012A	Write about your hopes and predictions for your future (Vision)	
10	W2012B	Write your opinions about genetic engineering	
11	W2012C	Write a statement of purpose for a university program that you would like to enroll in	
12	W2012D	Write an event which has influenced your life	
Skyline writing resource sheets			5
1	S01	Help with paragraphs	
2	S02	Different types of paragraph	
3	S03	Who is the fox	
4	S04	The pros and cons of the Internet	
5	S05	What a great concert	
6	S06	A statement of purpose	
7	S07	A dangerous situation	
8	S08	How is life changing	
9	S09	Biographies	
Self-assessment			
1	1	Writer's checklist	
2	1	Self-assessment of writing dimensions	
3	1	Self-assessment of writing strategies	
4		Learning log(all)	
5	1	Survey of Interest and awareness	
6	1	Peer evaluation	
7	1	Draft	

Others

Adapted from Developer by secondary ESOL HILT teachers.
Arlington County, Public Schools. Virginia.

ANNEX L - Background questionnaire

Background Questionnaire
Languages and Linguistics School - PUCESA
By Daniel Aguilar

Name: _____

Age: _____

Please answer the following questions.

1. How long have you been learning English? Where?

2. Have you practiced English abroad? (e.g. The United Kingdom)

Yes _____ No _____ If yes, for _____ months.

In _____ (Country)

3. Which skill have you developed the most? Rank them from the most to the least (4= The most and 1 = the least)

a. Writing	
b. Speaking	
c. Reading	
d. Listing	

4. When learning English, what language skill (speaking, writing, reading, listening). Do you think is...

a) most important?

b) easiest?

c) most difficult?

5. Which are your greatest difficulties when you write in English?

6. Have you ever been asked to assess your own writing?

Yes _____ No: _____

7. Have you ever been asked to assess your classmate's writing?

Yes _____ No _____

8. How much time can you dedicate for writing?

Hours	
A daily hour	
1 hour a week	
2 hours a week	

9. How often do you write in English?

Often

Sometimes

Seldom

Never

10. In the future, in your profession how often do you think you will write in English?

Often

Sometimes

Seldom

Never

11. What do you need writing for?

Letters

E-mails

Instructions

Summaries

Personal documents

Reports

Other: _____

12. Check one box for each statement.

Before writing:	Yes	No
1. I talk to a friend or partner about the topic		
2. I make a list of ideas on the topic		
3. I make an outline or semantic map		
During writing:	Yes	No
4. I skip words I don't know and go back to them later		
5. I substitute a word from my own language		
6. I reread, review and backtrack my text		
After writing:	Yes	No
7. I check to see if the writing meets my purpose		
8. I reread to see if it makes sense		
9. I add information or take out information		
10. I edit for spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar		
11. I ask someone else to read my writing and comment on it.		

Adapted from materials produced by the Georgetown University Evaluation Assistance Centre (EAC) East (1990)

ANNEX M - Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Example

6. Never or almost never true of me
7. Usually not true of me
8. Somewhat true of me
9. Usually true of me
10. Always or almost always true of me

Read the item, and choose a response (1 through 5 as above), and write it in the space after the item.

I actively seek out opportunities to talk with native speakers of English.

You have just completed this example item. Answer the rest of the items on the Worksheet.

Strategy Inventory for Language Learning

Version 7.0 (ESL/EFL)

© R. Oxford, 1989

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on worksheet)

<u>Part A</u>	
1. I think of relationships between what I already know and new things I learn in English.	
2. I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	
3. I connect the sound of a new word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	
4. I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	
5. I use rhymes to remember new English words.	
6. I use flashcards to remember new English words.	
7. I physically act out new English words.	
8. I review English lessons often	
9. I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	
Total	

<u>Part B</u>	
10. I say or write new English words several times.	
11. I try to talk like native speakers.	
12. I practice the sounds of English	
13. I use the English words I know in different ways.	
14. I start conversations in English	
15. I watch English language TV shows spoken in English or go to movies spoken in English	
16. I read for pleasure in English	
17. I write notes, messages, letters, or reports in English	
18. I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly) then go back and read carefully.	
19. I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	

20. I try to find patterns in English	
21. I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	
22. I try not to translate word by word.	
23. I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	
Total	

1. Never or almost never true of me
2. Usually not true of me
3. Somewhat true of me
4. Usually true of me
5. Always or almost always true of me

(Write answers on worksheet)

Part C	
24. To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	
25. When I cannot think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	
26. I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	
27. I read English without looking up every new word.	
28. I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	
29. If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	
Total	

Part D	
30. I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	
31. I notice my English mistakes and use the information to help me do better.	
32. I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	
33. I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	
34. I plan my schedule so I will have enough time to study English.	
35. I look for people I can talk in English	
36. I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English	
37. I have clear goals for improving my English skills.	
38. I think about my progress in learning English.	
39. I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	
40. I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	
41. I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English.	
42. I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	
43. I write down my feelings in a language learning diary.	
44. I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	
Total	

Part F	
45. If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	
46. I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	
47. I practice English with other students.	
48. I ask for help from English speakers.	
49. I ask questions in English.	
50. I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	
Total	

Your name: _____

Profile of results on the SILL

You will receive this profile after you have completed the Worksheet. This profile will show your SILL results. These results will tell you the kinds of strategies you use in learning English. There are no right or wrong answers.

To complete this profile, transfer your averages for each part of the SILL, and your overall average for the whole SILL. The averages are found on the worksheet.

Part	What strategies are covered	Your average on this part
A.	Remembering more effectively	
B.	Using all your mental processes	
C.	Compensating for missing knowledge	
D.	Organising and evaluating your learning	
E.	Managing your emotions	
F.	Learning with others	
	YOUR OVERALL AVERAGE	

ANNEX N - Students' final questionnaire


NO ESCRIBA SU NOMBRE
Cuestionario Final de Portafolio

Una vez que ha finalizado su Portafolio responda las siguientes preguntas

General

1. ¿Cómo se sintió creando su portafolio?

2. ¿Cree que ha mejorado su habilidad para escribir en inglés ahora que ha finalizado su portafolio? Si _____ No _____ ¿Porqué?

3. ¿Qué aprendió mientras utilizaba el portafolio? (Mencione 3)

3.1. _____

3.2. _____

3.3. _____

4. ¿Ha utilizado portafolios anteriormente? Si _____ No _____

5. ¿Le gustaría utilizar portafolios para el próximo nivel?

Si _____ No _____ ¿Porqué?

De los temas

1. ¿Qué tema le gustó más y porqué?

2. ¿Cómo se sintió cuando escribió los temas libres?

De los trabajos y deberes

3. ¿Considera que los trabajos del portafolio asignados fueron suficientes?

Sí _____ No _____ ¿Porqué?

4. ¿Cuál sería su sugerencia para mejorar el uso del portafolio?

Self-assessment and peer assessment

1. ¿Cómo se sintió al usar el self-assessment?

2. ¿Cómo se sintió al usar el peer assessment?

Sugerencias

Escriba sus sugerencias con respecto a Portafolios

Gracias por su colaboración



Name : Mónica Altamirano Núñez...
Level: Fourth.....
Topic: A statement of purpose.....

The Admissions Officer Mónica Altamirano Núñez.....
California University Tomás Sevilla 6-40 Street.....
California - USA Ambato - Ecuador.....

January, 8th 2007

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Very special greetings, I'm Mónica and I would like to enroll in the
master degree program through the scholarships that your university has to the
latin students.

I'm Agronomist Engineer and I would want to study biological control. My interest
for this began in my childhood, because I grew in contact with the nature. I love the
natural sciences, and my grades were very good in these subjects.

I'm interested in the biological control, because it has been of my passions. I have studied
in this, and I was assistant of vegetable sanitation in my university. I think that
the program will benefit me to obtain my master degree, I will share my knowledge
with the farmers and we could practice a biological agriculture.

I hope that my statement has your approval.

Sincerely your,

Mónica Altamirano N.

Name : Mónica Altamirano NunezLevel: FourthTopic: Andean agricultural products in extinction

Andean agricultural products in extinction

The Andean people were self-sufficient in the production of their food. They grew and ate Andean products such as: potatoes, peas, mellocos, jicamas, quinoa and white carrots. However, in recent years, there has been a reduction in the cultivation of these native products.

This is a result of several factors, such as: migration of people to the cities and changes in the eating habits, because they depend of industrial and urban products, such as noodles, tinned food. It's a social and cultural problem.

Although, the new generations haven't forgotten the customs of growing traditional crops such as quinoa or mellocos, It's important to revive the practice of traditional agricultural methods to offer a variety of food for future generations.

They're also highly nutritious, digested and they have medicinal properties. Therefore it's vital to promote the production of Andean products, to recover our traditions and cultural conservation.



Name :Mónica Altamirano Núñez.....

Level:Fourth.....

Topic:The Internet.....

The pros and cons of the Internet

✓ A recent article in this magazine asked readers to ban the Internet.

I would like to say that the parents should give their children some rules for the use of Internet, such as: The time, the places that they can enter. The parents should explain to them the reason of these rules. They shouldn't ban the Internet.

✓ As with any new technology, there are advantages and disadvantages to the Internet. The writer of the article said that children saw scenes of violence and pornography every day, and that children couldn't use the Internet, but it's a sensationalist opinion. However, the most important advantage is the research and the upgrade of knowledge. It's also very useful for the trade, and the e-mails. Vice versa, continuous sex advertisements and pornography pages are the disadvantages.

✓ All in all, I believe that the Internet is one of the most important developments of this century. We need to be sure of the use that we will give the Internet and it will cover our expectations.

Excellent work.

(5/5) Daniel Quintanilla



Name : Mónica Altamirano Núñez

Level: Fourth

Topic: Andean agricultural products

Andean agricultural products in extinction

The Andean people were self-sufficient in the production of their food. They grew and ate Andean products such as: potatoes, oca, mellocos, jicamas, quinoa and white carrots. However, in recent years, there has been a reduction in the cultivation of these native products.

This is a result of several factors, such as: migration of people to the cities and changes in the eating habits because they depend on industrial and urban products. It is a social and cultural problem.

Although the new generations haven't forgotten the customs of growing traditional crops such as quinoa or mellocos, it is important to revive the practice of traditional agricultural methods to offer a variety of food for future generations. They are also highly nutritious, digested and they have medicinal properties. Therefore, it is vital to promote the production of Andean products to recover self-sufficiency, our traditions and cultural conservation.

Use the tips and underline the correct information.

Use these tips to help you write clear paragraphs in all types of text.

- Include 'lots of ideas' / one main idea per paragraph.
- Paragraphs can / can't have a different number of sentences, but avoid paragraphs with just one or two sentences.
- Each paragraph in a text should be a 'similar' / different length.
- Each paragraph needs a "topic sentence" – a sentence that gives the main idea of the paragraph. This usually comes at the beginning / end of the paragraph.
- "Supporting sentences" change / develop the main idea from the topic sentence. They give details, examples or explanations.
- A "concluding sentence" marks the beginning / end of the paragraph.

Read the supporting sentences from two different paragraphs. Where are the paragraphs from? What are they about?

... I've just started a new job in a travel agency. I work with a great team of people and I get to travel all the time. It's just a blast! I also met a cute guy last week. He works for the same company, but in a different division. I can't believe my luck. I hope life with you is as good. ...

... If you look at a group of people, notice how they use their hands, face and whole body to express how they feel. Gestures can have international meaning. Think about how you would express "Hi" or "Bye", "Be quiet!", "Fantastic!" or "Good job!" It's surprising how many other nationalities use the same gestures. ...

EXERCISE 3

Choose the best topic sentence and concluding sentence for the paragraphs in exercise 2. (There are two sentences you don't need.)

- Many aspects of human communication are nonverbal.
- Thanks very much for your letter.
- So, body language in all its forms is a powerful tool for communication.
- Call me and let me know what's happening.
- However, be careful not to offend people with gestures.
- I have some news for you!

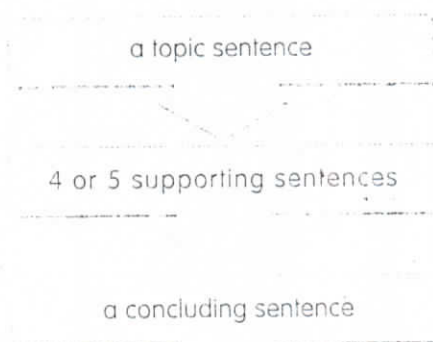
EXERCISE 4

Think about the information that could go in the supporting sentences of the following paragraph.

I'll never forget the time I first met my best friend. ...
... I really hope we'll be friends for years to come.

Write four or five supporting sentences for the paragraph.
What tenses will you probably use?

Write a paragraph of about 75 words on "How to be a good communicator." Remember to include:



Skill
R
W
S
L

Productive
or
Receptive

(wicked)



Name : Idara Altamirano Núñez

Level: Fourth

Topic: Crime

Exercises 1

Read the parts from a crime story and number them in the correct order. Use the underlined words to help you.

- a) Reports on the following day described a daring jewelry robbery at the house of a movie star. 6 5
- b) A woman walked slowly toward the large house and stopped at the front gate 2
- c) She loved the way it looked and that no one knew where it had come from. 5 9
- d) Interpol were convinced that this clue would help them catch the thief quickly. 9 7
- e) Meanwhile "The Fox" was wearing her new jewelry at a party in her luxury house by the ocean. 7 8
- f) Within an hour she was back at her apartment. She was holding a beautiful diamond ring and bracelet, and she was smiling to herself. 4
- g) It was completely dark and the whole town was asleep. 1
- h) Police also stated that this was one in a series of robberies and that the criminal had left a picture fox at the scene of each crime. 8 6
- i) A few seconds later she appeared at the back of the house, turned off the security alarm, and silently opened the window. 3

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



Name : ..Pánica Altamirano Núñez.....

Level:Fourth.....

Topic:Crime.....

Look at the story again. Which past tenses were used? Why?

Past continuous.....

Past Simple.....

Present Perfect.....

Exercise 2. Correct the tenses extracts from crime stories.

1.- While the police was interviewing the wrong man, the gang committed another robbery.

2.- "Where have you been living since May 8th?" asked the police officer.

3.- Ten years ago, I was in a gang of money launderers in New York City.

4.- He wasn't a very successful criminal. Even after he had robbed and steal many times, he always got caught.

5.- It was 12 midnight and it was raining hard as I walked along the empty street.

6.- When I saw the empty safe, I almost cried. Someone had gotten there before me.

Writer's checklistName: Mónica Altamirano
who is the fox

	Yes / No
1. Did you write on the assigned topic?	Yes
2. Did you write for the assigned audience?	No
3. Did you identify a central theme?	Yes
4. Did you explain the <u>key</u> ideas or events for the theme?	Yes
5. Did you use complete sentences?	Yes
6. Did you correct errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, usage? <u>grammar</u>	Yes

Adapted from materials developed by the Maryland State Department of Education 1987

Peer Evaluation and Editing Form for Writing

Reader's name: Cristina NoboaAuthor's name: Mónica AltamiranoTitle of piece: The Fox

Peer Evaluation

The piece of writing was:

Extensa, solo se requería 100-120 palabras

The part I liked best:

When the woman was captured for the people

This writing can be improved by:

The writing was very good. I like it.

Comment on your partner's writing. Did he /she:

<u>Answer all the questions in exercise 3?</u> When and where did she commit the robbery? What was she trying to steal? Who caught her? How did she get caught? Did they know that she was "The Fox"? How? What happened to her?	Comments: In the night, and in the luxury residence To works of art at a residence The people of the town She was turning off the alarm and opened the window for the picture in her pockets. She was captured but finally she was liberate
Use the past tenses correctly?	Yes
Write a very different ending from you?	Yes

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY



Name : ...Mónica Altamirano Núñez...

Level:Fourth.....

Topic:learning lag.....

What did I learn today?

I learned to recognize some types of paragraphs, they have different characteristics, such as: direct instructions, adjectives and adverbs, language of opinions and suggestions, connectors of contrast.

What strategies or approaches worked best for me in learning?

Work in group, is a good option, Exhibition of work.

What was hard to understand?

Some words, in the four paragraphs, but I continued to read, and finally I understood those words.

What will I do to understand better?

I will use a bilingual dictionary and I will say and write several times those words, because it help to understand better the text.



Name : ..Mónica.. Altamirano.. Núñez..

Level:Fourth.....

Topic:The Internet.....

The pros and cons of the Internet

A recent article in this magazine asked readers to ban the Internet. I would like to say that the parents should give their children rules for the use of Internet, such as: the time, the places that they can enter, mainly the parents should explain to them the reason of these rules, They shouldn't ban the Internet.

As with any new technology, there are advantages and disadvantages to the Internet. The writer of the article said that the children saw scenes of violence and pornography every day, and that the children couldn't the Internet, but it's a sensationalist opinion, however the most important advantage is the research and upgrade of knowledge, It's also very useful for the trade, and the e-mails. Virus, continuous sex advertisements and pornography pages are the disadvantages. All in all, I believe that the Internet is one of the most important developments of this century. We need to be sure of the use that we will give the Internet and it will cover our expectations.

4/5



Name : ...Mónica Altamirano Núñez

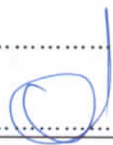
Level: ...Fourth

Topic: ...A great concert

The best concert that I have enjoyed was the Colombian singer's presentation Carlos Vives. He sings the authentic Colombian folclor. He is famous with his group "La Provincia", because they play a different vallenato, in this group are Maite and Egidio, they are good musicians.

The concert took place on Monday night, on February 28th, in Ambato. The doors of the stadium opened at 6 o'clock. The scenario was the best that I have seen before. It had good illumination, screens. The fanatics waited the singer, who went out very happy to the scenario.

Vives and his group played their first songs such as "Déjame entrar", "Quiero verte sonreír". People shouted, sang and danced with each song. That was a tropical, amusing and crazy concert. That was the best.





Name : Mónica Altamirano Núñez....

Level: Fourth.....

Topic: The Fox.....

The Fox

She returned to her apartment, while people of the town had been organized to catch the thief. She had decided to steal works of art of a luxury house.

In the moment that she was turning off the security alarm, They captured her and They knew that she was "The Fox" because in one of her pockets was a picture of a fox, which always leave in a scene of the crime.

After that, They caught her, she answered that she had stolen to help to the development of that place. They decided to liberate her and she returned to her luxury house in an island.



Name : Mónica Altamirano Núñez

Level: Fourth

Topic: "The Fox"

Exercise 3.

"The Fox"

After one week of staying in her luxury house, she returned to her apartment, while people of the town, that was tired of the series of robberies, they had been organized to catch the thief, who altered the ^(W)quiet of this place, because that was the ideal place to relax.

She had decided to steal in this occasion works of art of a residence. The night in that she went to the mansion, the great surprise was that the people ^(T)was organized to see over the places that the fox liked to steal, in the moment that she was turning off the security alarm and opened the window, they captured her and they knew that she was her because in one of her pockets ^(T)was a picture of a fox, which always leave in the scene of the crime.

After that, they took ^{her}to police's department, and she answered to the police that she had ~~sub~~to help anonymously to the development of that place, people ^(T)was very confused and they remembered that somebody has helped them for many years, they decided to liberate her. She returned to her luxury house in an island, and she promised to help them.



Name : Mónica Altamirano
 Level: Fourth
 Topic: Princess Diana

Princess Diana

Princess Diana was born in Sandringham, England in 1961, her family was friendly with royal family, Diana's parents divorced in 1969.

Although she wasn't good student, she loved sports because she wanted to be a dancer, but she was too tall. After she left of the school in 1978, she became a waitress, a cleaner, then she a teacher at school for young children. After that she had a romance with Prince Charles, who is son of Queen Elizabeth II, then it began in 1980, as a result she was followed everywhere by the press.

Diana married with Charles in 1981, she was watched by 750 million of people world wide. After that she had two sons (William and Harry). She was beautiful and popular woman. However, she supported many charities, but she became unhappy. Finally she killed with billionaire businessman Dodi Fayed in car crash in Paris in 1997.

