Problem-Based Learning to Foster EFL Persuasive Writing: A Study with Pre-Service Teachers of English

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DEDICATION

  I dedicate this work to my parents who have always been there in every moment, and to my sisters, who have supported me and encouraged me to believe in myself. I also thank God because he has always been my strength to make the right decisions and achieve my goals. I am really grateful with all of them because they were my motivation to keep working and give my best.

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Abstract

This investigation explores Problem -Based Learning as a model to promote persuasive writing. The purpose was to analyze how pre-service English language teachers with an upper intermediate level could achieve an understanding of controversial topics, and proposed, in writing, contextualized and well-structured solutions. The data gathered to identify the problem suggest that there are areas for continued development in writing. During the diagnostic stage, it was identified that participants did well in summarizing, analyzing, and interpreting but required guidance and practice in taking a stand, and having their academic voices heard. The study adopted an action research methodology which implied the design of workshops to appraise its appropriateness and give an account of the processes and outcomes evidenced in participants' written products. The pedagogical intervention consisted on the implementation of six workshops based on issues related to the participants' context. Then, Problem-based learning was selected as the approach to enhance persuasive writing since it uses issues for the analysis, integration, and adaptation of new knowledge, and it provides different types of instruction that help students develop their communicative skills (Barrows, 1996). This action stage was evaluated through different instruments such as a teacher's journal, a self-assessment form, and a persuasive writing rubric to measure some strategies. The main findings of this study displayed positive results in terms of students' effective writing performance, effectiveness of the use of Problem-Based Learning, and participants' positive perceptions towards writing. Additionally, learners acquired pre-writing and writing strategies that contributed to improve their writing performance.

Key words: controversial topics, high order thinking, persuasive writing, Problem-Based learning.

Resumen

Esta investigación explora el Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas como un modelo para promover la escritura persuasiva. El propósito de este estudio es analizar la manera como profesores en formación con un nivel superior-intermedio de inglés pueden alcanzar un entendimiento de temas controversiales y proponer soluciones escritas, contextualizadas y bien estructuradas. La información obtenida para identificar el problema sugiere que existen áreas de desarrollo continuo en escritura. Durante la fase diagnóstica, se identificó que los participantes se desempeñaban bien resumiendo, analizando, e interpretando información, pero requerían orientación y práctica para tomar una posición y hacer que sus voces académicas fuesen escuchadas. El estudio adoptó la metodología de investigación acción, la cual implicaba diseñar talleres para evaluar su conveniencia y dar cuenta de los procesos y resultados evidenciados en los productos escritos de los participantes. La intervención pedagógica consistió en la implementación de seis talleres basados en problemas relacionados con el contexto de los participantes. Port al motivo, el Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas fue la metodología seleccionada para promover la escritura persuasiva debido a que se adoptan problemáticas para el análisis, integración, y adaptación de nuevo conocimiento, y provee diferentes tipos de instrucción que ayuda a los estudiantes a desarrollar sus habilidades de competencia comunicativa (Barrows, 1996). La fase de acción fue evaluada a través de diferentes instrumentos tales como un diario docente, un formato de autoevaluación, y una rúbrica de escritura persuasiva. Los hallazgos más importantes de este estudio demuestran resultados positivos en términos del desempeño efectivo en escritura, efectividad en la implementación del Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas, y en las percepciones positivas de los participantes en cuanto

a la escritura. Adicionalmente, los aprendices adquirieron estrategias que contribuyeron a mejorar su desempeño escrito.

Palabras clave: *Temas controversiales, pensamiento de nivel superior, escritura persuasiva, Aprendizaje Basado en Problemas.*

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Introduction

The purpose of this project was to enhance persuasive writing through Problem-Based Learning in EFL pre-service teachers. Thus, this dissertation enabled participants to have reflective, meaningful, and contextualized English language practice. This study was carried out at a public university in Armenia Quindio with Modern Languages Students. The PEP (Proyecto Educativo del Programa) asserts the vision of the program that is to provide pre-service teachers with abilities to develop research and provide services of social projection and cultural development in the practice of teaching (2016). In this sense, to achieve this goal, pre-service teachers should be analytical and critical. Then, Problem-based learning was selected as the approach to enhance persuasive writing since it uses issues for the analysis, integration, and adaptation of new knowledge, and it provides different types of instruction that help students develop their communicative skills (Barrows, 1996).

After administering different instruments in the diagnostic stage, the results indicated that fourth-semester pre-service teachers showed great difficulty in expressing their opinions in the foreign language, they had a hard time giving arguments to support their points of view. In listening, reading, and speaking they seemed more skilled. Due to the weaknesses in the persuasive writing skills, I decided to implement Problem-Based Learning as the teaching approach to foster this productive competence through some specific issues related to their context.

To identify the problem of inquiry, I kept a journal that allowed me to reflect upon the behavior of pre-service teachers in the English class. Also, I administered a survey to determine their perceptions about writing. Besides, I analyzed some external class

observations to identify learners' reactions and performance during the activities. The outcomes were learners' difficulty in completing the written tasks that were proposed. Although students had been taught some pre-writing strategies, they found it difficult to support the ideas that they wanted to express. Pre-service teachers showed interest in the activities whose topics were related to their context, but supporting their ideas was still an arduous task for them.

The research questions evolved from identifying teaching methods and strategies to foster pre-service teachers' writing. The research questions were:

What is the impact of Problem-Based Learning on the development of persuasive writing?

What can EFL pre-service teachers gain from persuasive writing practices?

How do Problem-Based Learning activities generate persuasive writing spaces in the English classroom?

The study adopted action research which implies applying a set of activities or workshops to a group that shows certain difficulties in a specific aspect. "Action research involves not just practical application but the development of empirical and theoretical insights about the social situation under investigation" (Coombe & Brown, 2015, p. 193). According to Cunningham (1993), action research focuses on "research, planning, theorizing, learning, and development. It describes a continuous process of research and learning in the researcher's long-term relationship with a problem" (p. 4). Likewise, this involves investigation, evidence discovery, research, preparing, applying, and more evidence discovery or assessment (Sanford, 1970). This helped me understand that for carrying out action research, theory, evaluation, and implementation are equally important, and should be implemented to conduct the research study properly.

In the action stage, I designed and implemented some workshops. These aimed at analyzing some contextualized concerns and writing a persuasive type of text exploring different solutions or alternatives. Regarding the evaluation stage, I implemented some instruments such as a journal, a rubric, and an assessment form to collect and analyze data. After analyzing the data, the conclusion that arose was that learners' performance and use of persuasive arguments obtained positive results as well as the application of Problem-Based learning activities.

The main findings of this study displayed positive results in terms of students' effective writing performance, effectiveness of the use of Problem-Based Learning, and participants' positive perceptions towards writing. Additionally, learners acquired pre-writing and writing strategies that contributed to improve their writing performance. In this sense, the implementation of contextualized Problem-Based Learning activities was a successful methodology to enhance pre-service teachers' persuasive writing

In general terms, the progressive improvement resulted from an adequate identification of the problem, lesson planning, recognition of students' needs, and implementation of writing tasks in the regular instruction. This process provided pre-service teachers with opportunities to learn, practice, and reinforce persuasive writing through Problem-Based Learning activities, as evidenced throughout the activities developed in the implementation stage. The information and the data portrayed above were used to acknowledge the importance of this study.

This research study entails five chapters: The first one presents the justification, the setting, the description of the problem, the research question, and the objectives. The second chapter explores literature concerning the constructs of this inquiry: Problem-based learning approach and persuasive writing. The third chapter deals with the research methodology. The fourth chapter covers the phases of the study. The fifth chapter presents the findings. Finally,

the sixth chapter describes the conclusions and the pedagogical implications, limitations, and questions for further research.

Chapter I. Research Problem

1.1 Purpose of the research

Teaching English as a foreign language involves a deep linguistic understanding and the capacity to convey meaning in numerous situations. In this sense, the development of Basic Interpersonal Skills (BIS) deals with proficiency, while the achievement of Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) encompasses its use in decontextualized intellectual situations (Cummins, 2008). Hence, learners must develop the four language skills. This project aimed at enhancing EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills which are highly relevant because as future English teachers, they should have the capacity of being critical towards the different situations they might face in their context.

Having proactive teachers that look for solutions to the various daily circumstances they face is imperative. Unfortunately, despite its relevance, little has been explored on this topic. For this reason, it is important to provide students with sufficient elements to make the right decisions. This demands applying different high-order thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating and creating alternatives. The present proposal encompassed contextualized issues, stages that will allow participants to analyze the problem of concern from different perspectives, and writing strategies to suggest solutions to the specific issues.

This research intends to impact the participants' academic, professional, and social life using Problem-Based Learning will have positive repercussions on their professional life because this approach not only encourages greater understanding of the environment but also develops lifelong skills such as critical thinking, research, autonomous learning, communication skills, among others. Finally, Since the topics proposed for the workshops were directly linked to their

context, life experiences, and interests, pre-service teachers will have the opportunity to be critical towards their living conditions. Then, they will reflect on their teaching practices, where they deal with various situations that need immediate resolutions.

1.2 Description of the Context and setting

This study was conducted with a group of Modern Languages students from a University in Armenia Quindío. This is a public institution with 12.000 students and 854 professors allocated in 7 faculties (schools). It offers 31 undergraduate degrees, 16 postgraduates and, 12 diploma programs. It also has 31 research groups, 14 of them categorized and recognized by Colciencias. This is the biggest university in the department of Quindío and has legal and academic autonomy, administrative and financial independence, assigned to the governorship of Quindío.

The B.A in Modern Languages' mission is to educate honorable professionals in the field of teaching foreign languages (English and French) with the ability of leadership. The alumni will have research skills, the ability to develop research and provide services of social projection, and cultural development in the practice of teaching. The program uses the concept of learning to learn, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live.

The Bachelor's Degree in Modern Languages is a five-year program. English is taught during the first four semesters and is divided into three areas: Grammar, audio oral, and reading and writing, each taught five hours per week. From the fifth semester to the tenth, English is not studied as a subject, but as a medium of instruction. Pre-service teachers take General Linguistics, Phonetics, Morphology and Syntax, Semantics, Reading and Writing, Methodology, Culture Seminar, Pedagogical Practice, Professional Practice I, and Research in a Foreign Language.

The program is offered in two shifts: morning and evening. Every class has 35 students approximately, but the evening groups have from 12 to 20 students. They come from several regions. Most come from low-income families. On the other hand, the Modern Languages Program has an academic coordinator, and a curriculum council with 13 professors. There are 54 professors who teach in the program. All of them hold either specializations, master's degrees, or doctorate studies in areas related to Education, Didactics, Linguistics, and Bilingualism. In total, there are 83 professors since English is taught to all the students at the university.

All of the professors are autonomous in terms of the materials they use for the classes. Some of them use authentic material, some others design their worksheets, videos, presentations, etc., and part of them adapt things that they find on the internet, or in books. Regarding the methodological design, each course has a suggested curriculum and syllabus. However, there are variations depending on the professors' considerations and pre-service teachers' requirements.

1.3. Description of the Problem

During the different courses, pre-service teachers are permanently exposed to communicate in English. However, the general performance is not always the best because some of them struggle with expressing themselves in this language, or find it difficult to put their ideas together. The Modern Languages program proposes adapting the different methodologies to the characteristic of the context. For this reason, professors conduct research in different areas to enhance, improve, change, or even prove a determined theory.

The Modern Languages PEP (Proyecto Educativo del Programa) establishes that the mission of the program is to educate future teachers not only for teaching English and French as foreign languages, but also for being ethical professionals with different capacities that will allow them to take action in a society that is going through a post-conflict and social

transformation. Thence, it is imperative to have critical and proactive pre-service teachers. As Mullen (2009) affirms, "their ability and desire to think critically will begin with you as their leader. And like you, their opinions matter". That is why it is necessary to help EFL pre-service teachers develop their problem-solving skills by having a model which proposes contextualized issues to be analyzed and discussed.

The aforementioned reasons were highly important in deciding to conduct action research in this context. Hence, the first step was to detect an aspect to tackle, and then to identify a methodology to approach it. Thus, I chose three instruments to achieve this goal: External class observations, a reflective journal, and a questionnaire. After analyzing the results obtained during the diagnostic stage, I could detect that aspects such as students' teamwork, interaction, and real-life activities had positive repercussions on participants' performance. However, pre-service teachers had some trouble completing writing tasks due to a lack of knowledge of pre-writing and writing strategies. As a corollary, I inquired about Problem-Based Learning and writing. The topics for the workshops were related to the students' real-life experiences and promoted systematic group work as a way to keep students' participation.

1.4 Research Question and Objectives

General research question

What is the impact of Problem-Based learning on EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills?

Sub-question 1: What can EFL pre-service teachers gain from persuasive writing activities based on the Problem-Based learning approach?

Sub-question 2: How do Problem-Based Learning activities generate persuasive writing spaces in the English classroom?

Objectives

General objective

To describe the impact of the Problem-Based Learning Approach on EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills.

Specific objectives

a. To verify he appropriateness and usefulness of Problem-Based learning activities in the development of EFL pre-service teachers' Persuasive Writing.

b. To evaluate Persuasive Writing among EFL pre-service teachers by means of Problem-Based Learning activities.

c. To suggest contextualized Problem-Based Learning activities to promote writing tasks in the EFL classroom.

d. To explain the effects of the integration of Problem-Based Learning and Persuasive Writing on EFL instruction.

Chapter II. Literature Review

This chapter discusses the literature that supports the underlying hypothesis that if learners are encouraged to propose solutions to issues relevant to their context by an input that draws on their ability to persuade, they can manage to develop persuasive writing skills that allow them to express ideas and solutions connected to everyday and familiar concerns. This literature review discusses the most representative works and pieces of research on Problem-Based learning and Persuasive Writing. It analyzes the theoretical considerations behind them, some previous studies, and the limitations in the research-related field.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The main attempt of this research study was to implement teaching techniques and instructional strategies related to Problem-Based Learning that allow EFL pre-service teachers at a public university to foster persuasive writing skills. This section covers topics on Problem-Based Learning and its connection with language instruction, its applicability in the development of EFL persuasive writing, and some other definitions linked to this study for a more comprehensive framework of the project's main issue.

2.1. 1. Problem-Based Learning

The concept and application of Problem-Based Learning (PBL hereafter) have evolved. This approach was pioneered and applied by Barrows and Tamblyn at a medical school program in the 1960s. They define it as "the learning that results from the process of working toward the understanding or resolution of a problem" (1980, p. 1). Later, this thought was expanded to various areas of education, and different authors attempted to define it. In the last century, Norman & Schmidt described PBL as "a collection of carefully constructed problems presented to a small group of students", whose task is "to discuss these problems and produce tentative

explanations for the phenomena" (1992, p. 557). More recently, Torp and Sage (as cited in Foo, 2013) state it as "focused, experiential learning organized around the investigation and resolution of messy, real-world problems" (p. 9). In the same vein, Savery (2006), defines it as a student-centered approach that integrates concepts and application of knowledge to propose solutions to a particular problem. In general, these definitions agree on the reflection and discussion of specific situations as a means of learning while pondering on certain issues. Accordingly, it is important to analyze its usefulness in language instruction.

2.1.2. Features of Problem-Based Learning

Problem- Based Learning is considered as an approach that constitutes an actual transformation in education, and as such, it encompasses certain characteristics that demarcate its singularity. In this regard, Coffin (2014) propounds, "PBL is viewed and understood at two levels, as a pedagogical approach and an educational strategy" (p. 18). Similarly, this method contributes to the students' educational process since they are engaged in authentic tasks (Halpern, 2014). In addition, one of the most important characteristics of PBL is the authenticity of the concerns which can be encountered in real-life settings (Hung, et al., 2008). These circumstances are appealing for solvers if their degree of complexity is moderate enough to link them to participants' prior knowledge, their context, and their interests (Jonassen & Hung, 2008). In a nutshell, contextualized, and challenging situations that allow student-centered activities are important aspects of this approach.

Furthermore, the application of this study relates to aspects such as contextualized concerns, and real-life situations, which are some of the most important features of PBL. In 1989, Walton & Mathews introduced realistic problems, the application of background

knowledge, the implementation of scientific theories, and the construction of premises, as key

characteristics of PBL. More recently, Barrel (2010) described ten key elements of this method.

Nevertheless, I will mention five of them, which I consider were useful for the

development of this study. Firstly, Barrel describes the application of real-life problems to foster

teamwork aptitudes, which I consider are essential for the discussion of the concerns proposed in

the different assignments. Secondly, this approach sets cognitive processes such as question-

posing, critical thinking, decision-making, and reaching conclusions, which in my opinion, are

necessary when evaluating the possible solutions for the matter under consideration. Thirdly,

feedback is one important feature since it provides information about learners' comprehension

and achievement, and it supports them to be aware of what they know and what they want to

achieve (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Sadler, 1989). Subsequently, Problem-Based Learning

allows solvers to monitor their process by revising, editing, and reflecting on the work done to

make decisions to improve their performance. Finally, teamwork activities are the factor that

enables students to accomplish the aforementioned processes to solve the issues proposed during

the activities.

2.1.3. Problem-Based Learning and language instruction

Foreign language education opens a wide range of possibilities for both, teachers and

learners. As stated by Larsson (2001a), when language is not a subject, then it turns into an

instrument. For this study, students used their communicative skills in English as a means for

analyzing, discussing, and even solving some problems related to their life experiences.

Additionally, English cannot be seen as a content subject since content-based curricula may not

help learners enhance their communicative performance which are the pillars of EFL instruction

(Mardziah, 2005). Nonetheless, there are still some EFL traditional approaches that put special

emphasis on content (Tan, 2003). Therefore, PBL has become particularly convenient to contribute to the development of communicative abilities in students through contextualized tasks.

The implementation of Problem-Based Learning activities might be highly beneficial in the development of EFL learners' language proficiency. In this approach, students worked in groups to solve an authentic problem as they enhance their communicative skills during the interaction process that they go through to analyze, assess, and solve different issues (Watson, 2001). Hence, they "serve as the context… students work in teams to solve one or more complex and compelling real-world problems" (Major & Palmer, 2001, p. 5). Also, it is an efficient method that uses concerns that pupils are familiar with for solving certain situations as well as studying from the material (Nurhadi et al., 2004; Masek & Yamin, 2011; Lin & Lee, 2013). Its applicability makes PBL a reliable approach for language instruction, and more specifically for enhancing particular communicative aspects, in this case, persuasive writing, which makes it useful to comply with the aim of this study.

2.1.4. Teacher's and students' role in Problem-Based Learning

As part of the development of activities to enhance pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills based on PBL, it is necessary to consider the role of the participants regarding this approach. "Problem-Based Learning is not a teaching method but a way of learning" (Boud & Feletti, 1997, p. 15). In the same vein, Othman and Ahamad (2013) argue that "PBL is an approach that involves no teaching; students learn by solving problems that are carefully constructed by the teacher according to the course syllabus assigned" (p. 2). In light of this, the teacher acts as a guide or facilitator, while the students are the active actors in the acquisition process. Its purpose is to create student-centered settings (Bueno et al., 2015). In PBL the

content is introduced in a context related to real-life problems (Boud & Feletti, 1997). In other words, the teacher sets a learning environment by means of proposing contextualized and authentic materials and situations that the learners will be exposed to, so they have to conduct a process of analysis, interpretation, and discussion of possible solutions. All this is linked with communicative activities, which are the way students interact and reach any conclusions.

In brief, Problem-Based Learning encompasses a wide range of practical attributes that can be applied in an EFL classroom. It is a highly convenient approach not only to foster collaborative and analytical abilities but also to enhance communicative and interactive processes in the target language (Othman & Shah, 2013b). For that reason, PBL is acknowledged in this investigation, as an innovative and enthralling method to foster persuasive writing skills in pre-service teachers of English. So far, I have addressed the first construct of this inquiry. In the following section, I will explain the complementary construct that informs this study, which is persuasive writing skills.

2.2 Persuasive writing skills

Writing is a process that implies the application of knowledge of the language, and personal involvement. In this experience, writers are engaged mentally and emotionally while giving their reasons (Kristmanson, Dicks & Le, 2009). Hence, the teacher has to generate authentic situations that motivate learners to express themselves in a context in which arguments or ideas are stated naturally (Bruton, 2005; Herrera, 2002). Persuasive writing (PW hereafter) is a genre of expository writing that serves the purpose of convincing the readers to agree with an opinion or to convince them to do something. This definition is supported by Novero (2015), who states that PW is "the ability to express one's opinion by arguing in favor of or against a particular viewpoint logically, thereby changing and affecting readers' point of views or actions"

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As a corollary, PBL is a very beneficial approach to foster PW in EFL pre-service teachers since it provides students with contextualized and stimulating issues to analyze. However, it is imperative to establish the difference between persuasion and argumentation. In light of this, Moore (2009) declares that "persuasion is designed to cause an audience to act and argumentation is designed to act on the audiences' beliefs and understandings of an issue" (p.48). Hence, in argumentative compositions, the assertions rely on evidence and facts, while in PW the reasons appeal to emotions and reliability (Sachar, 2013). Persuasive writing can be applied in an ample variety of fields; in this case, I will direct my attention to its applicability in EFL instruction.

2.2.1. Persuasive writing skills and EFL learning

Effective language instruction implies promoting authentic communication spaces that enable students to develop different abilities successfully. However, written language turns out to be a weak skill in university education and instruction in general because of the learners' lack of linguistic items or emptiness of ideas (Javid & Umer, 2014; Alkhairi, 2013). Likewise, writing activities that involve problem-solving or critical thinking, are especially demanding for students (Shukri, 2014). Thereby, it is imperative to promote tasks that enhance not only written production but also persuasion skills through real-life problems that allow pupils to express extensive and complete ideas. This would require writers to be capable of expressing their thoughts, making them meaningful, and organizing their reasons in a comprehensible manner (Ng, 2003). Nonetheless, persuasive writing in EFL instruction has some specific characteristics that should be analyzed.

As stated before, persuasion seems to be a challenging task in students' written performance since its attributes seem to be complex for trainees. One of its most important

characteristics is that it demands writers to think critically to explain, analyze, and solve certain issues (Philippakos, MacArthur & Coker, 2015). Besides, it goes beyond listing ideas for communication purposes, it is an exercise of problem-solving (Maarof & Murat, 2013). In this regard, the implementation of this study implies adopting issues that students may encounter in their everyday context to foster their written performance. However, it is also essential that they know what is expected in their products. This entails promoting a better understanding of the outcomes by knowing the characteristics of a good text (Culham, 2015). In light of this, the six traits of writing is an appealing model to establish coherent elements that students and I, might take into consideration during the development of the workshops proposed for the pedagogical intervention of this study.

2.2.2 The six traits of writing

Analyzing students' writing performance implies setting clear items to bear in mind. The Six Traits of Writing is a model that establishes components that constitute quality compositions (Culham, 2005; DeJarnette, 2008). The elements complement each other, the production process with its components (Culham, 2015). This model was developed by Spandel and Stiggins in 1990 and it contains specific criteria to evaluate compositions. The items that it takes into account are ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions. It allows teachers and learners to continually assess the process (James, Abbott, & Greenwood, 2001) and to enrich their writing awareness (Isernhagen & Kozisek, 2000). For this reason, the six traits of writing is a practical framework to appraise the written production in the persuasive compositions of this study. Therefore, it is necessary to understand what each element is about and its practicality in the assessment of writers' compositions.

Steineger (1996) described every aspect of the six traits of writing model in his publication "A way with words". In a nutshell, the author describes this framework in the following way:

Ideas: They are the core of the message and their features make it expressive and meaningful.

Sentence fluency: It is the flow and the harmony that the composition has when it is read aloud.

Word choice: The language used makes the person who is reading feel familiarized and motivated because the vocabulary is ample, varied, and exact, so it creates a picture of the text in the reader's mind.

Organization: It is the arrangement of the composition, the organization of the text in a logical way, and the relationship between its parts which are the topic sentence, the ideas, and the conclusion.

Voice: It is how the author talks to the reader in the text. It is the personal touch the writer puts to make the composition sound as if a real person was talking.

Conventions: This is about the correctness of the text in terms of linguistic features such as grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

This model is very useful to assess participants' written performance because there are numerous aspects to take into consideration for a good text, and it would be hard to define the features of a quality text if there is not a defined framework (Steineger, 1996). From my experience, I can tell that when students know the characteristics of the outcomes I expect from them, they can establish action plans for achieving the proposed result. Hence, they consider these aspects to self-evaluate their achievements, as well as their products, which are appraised qualitatively or quantitatively.

So far, I have addressed the theory behind the two constructs of this inquiry: Problem-Based Learning, and Persuasive Writing. I have also reviewed, described, and analyzed ample literature to expand the premises behind them. Then, it is imperative to examine some specific previous studies regarding these concepts, their relevance, and contrast with this research.

2.3 Research on PBL and Language

Although different studies have been conducted on the usefulness of Problem-Based Learning, little has been investigated concerning its influence on the development of writing skills. Firstly, Ansarian et al., (2016) employed experimental research to investigate the effects of PBL through cognition-based tasks on speaking proficiency. The population was Iranian EFL learners that were selected through the administration of an IELTS speaking and listening test. Homogeneous intermediate students were selected for the study (24 in the control group – 24 in the experimental one). They used three different instruments: IELTS speaking and listening test, Top Notch English series, and modified Top Notch Series. At the end of the process, the experimental group showed a significant positive effect on their speaking proficiency and the results of the IELTS post-test improved remarkably in comparison with the control group. Finally, this thesis suggests that other language attainments such as listening, reading, and writing are still untouched regarding the effect of PBL on them. Subsequently, the aforementioned conclusions assert the suitability of this inquiry, whose purpose is to foster persuasive writing skills through the Problem-Based Learning approach.

Secondly, Bashith and Amin (2017) carried out a quantitative study using a quasi-experiment model to examine the effects of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) on students' critical thinking skills and learning outcomes. The participants were 11th graders of a public institution in Indonesia. The instruments in this study were tests based on indicators of acquisition, and the

critical thinking abilities data are from the test scores of each class, and it is categorized based on the critical thinking criteria. Finally, the researcher administered a posttest to the experimental and control groups. After learning with the PBL model, the critical thinking skills of the experiment group increased. These results were analyzed through an independent-sample t-test model, which is a statistical parametric form. However, the researchers expressed that it is difficult to apply PBL in all the classes since it requires developing material and research and because it is difficult to assess achievements in the students who do not fully understand the issues presented in class. In this regard, this study attempts to use social controversial issues that are related to the learners' context and to implement the six-traits of writing model to evaluate persuasive writing to avoid this kind of constraint.

Next, Muñoz, (2017) conducted exploratory, descriptive research to discover the perceptions of pre-service teachers about the impact of a PBL on the development of key competencies, including higher-order thinking skills and reflective, research, knowledge transfer/integration, social, and self-management skills. The participants were 54 pre-service teachers of an ELTE program at a regional university in Chile. The instruments in this study were a self-administered, Likert scale, 12-statement observations of group performances to obtain evidence of the level of achievement of the capacities related to PBL. The investigators concluded that this approach was highly beneficial to develop reflective, critical, and social aptitudes in the participants. However, they expressed the necessity to highlight in learners that this strategy allows them to demonstrate and foster their communicative language competence in English and that PBL activities might be implemented for this purpose. In light of this, this thesis attempted to adopt this approach to enhance a particular productive language skill. The

participants were aware of their process since I provided them with different strategies and tools to enhance their persuasive writing skills.

Regarding PW, Abdullah, (2020) studied the effect of the SPAWN strategy in developing persuasive writing skills and productive habits of mind. This quasi-experimental research involved two groups of secondary second-grade students; 30 for the experimental group, and 30 for the control group. Three instruments were used: A teacher's guide, a persuasive writing test and scoring rubric, and a scale for the productive habits. The author determined that participants' persuasive writing skills and productive aspects of the mind such as problem-posing increased improved remarkably. According to the investigator, Problem-Solving is one of the aspects of the SPAWN strategy. It fosters critical thinking and encourages creativity. As a corollary, this gives me important arguments to deeply explore the impact of PBL on participants' persuasive writing skills.

Finally, Korau & Aliyu (2020), carried out a correlational research design with 56 second-year pupils from a Department of English and Literary Studies in one of the universities in Northern Nigeria. The purpose was to examine the use of Metadiscourse elements in the persuasive writing of Nigerian undergraduates. The instruments were written tasks and text analysis rubrics. The researchers found that educatees' abilities to comprehend language help writers to produce persuasive texts that guide readers in the understanding of a text. They concluded that learners' lack of metadiscourse elements results in low-quality persuasive pieces. Finally, the authors suggest the use of metadiscourse devices to guide pupils to produce logical and convincing ideas. Consequently, in the implementation of this research inquiry, participants were guided to state a clear purpose in every text for marking a coherent direction of its intention.

The studies reported above indicate the potential of implementing the Problem-Based Learning approach in the development of cognitive and analytical abilities. They also show the importance of persuasive writing to demonstrate communication skills. However, little has been exploited regarding the implementation of PBL to enhance writing. As a result, I took some actions to fill the existing gap.

Chapter III. Research Methodology

3.1 Type of study

Action research was the research method chosen to be applied in the present inquiry because this study implies implementing some strategies and techniques to improve a situation. Action research "is a form of investigation designed for use by teachers to attempt to solve problems and improve professional practices" (Parsons & Brown, 2002, p. 32). That is to say, it aims to intercede carefully in a certain situation to improve it by means of proposing and applying modifications that in the end can benefit the educational practice (Burns, 2010, p. 2). Before doing so, it is important to "identify problematic situations or issues considered by the participants to be worthy of investigation to bring about critically informed changes in practice" (Burns, cited in Cornwell 1999, p. 5). For the reasons above mentioned, this type of research was the most suitable type of study for this research inquiry when identifying a problematic situation regarding critical thinking skills in my learners and when aiming to improve my teaching practice.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this study were fourth-semester undergraduate students from a Modern Languages Program. Their ages were 19 to 23 years old. These students received 16 hours of English per week, divided into two components: Audio oral, and reading and writing. As evidenced in the data collected from the teacher's diary, the survey administered to students, and the external observation in the diagnostic stage, writing proficiency level was found low. Learners displayed weak achievement of the task, and poor use of persuasive arguments.

In the group selected for this study, there were 12 participants, 7 of them were females and 5 males. It was a homogeneous group in terms of the level of written production. However, as detected in the diagnostic stage, they enjoyed teamwork activities. Data collection instruments also revealed that they were cooperative and responsible. Learners preferred hands-on activities that kept them on task, student-centered classes in which they had plenty of opportunities to practice and participate.

The sampling technique used to choose the participants was the convenience or purposive where "the participants are chosen, based on the convenience of the researcher; for example, due to the availability or accessibility" (Stevens, 1999, p. 187), and because in this technique, "researchers just use as participants those individuals who are easy to get" (Gravetter & Forzano, 2015, p. 147) which highlights the availability since I was their teacher. Also, this group was chosen because of their difficulties concerning writing skills, as was confirmed in the diagnostic stage.

3.3 Instruments

This study was conducted in three stages: a) the diagnostic stage in which three instruments were administered to identify the problem; b) the action stage, which consisted of the design and implementation of six workshops, which included different pre-writing and writing strategies, and issues to be analyzed, and c) the evaluation stage, which entailed the analysis of the process once completed, and the formulation of pedagogical implications, conclusions, and recommendations. This section presents, in brief, the instruments employed in the diagnostic, action, and evaluation stage.

Data collection instruments in the diagnostic stage

        Collecting and analyzing information is a crucial part of any research study. Accordingly, three instruments were applied to reach this objective: A teacher's journal kept by the researcher to describe the most important events in the class, external observations executed by a professor to have a wider image of what occurs in a class, and a writing perception survey to identify pre-service teachers' attitudes and knowledge of writing. Then, after being applied, data was analyzed and triangulated to identify the problem of concern. The following table displays the aforementioned information:

Table 1: Diagnostic stage instruments

Diagnostic stage instruments			
Technique	**Instrument**	**Author**	**Rationale**
Notes and Diaries (Observational)	Teacher's journal	Burns (2001)	To document and reflect upon the teacher's and participant's experiences during the class. The researcher wrote the entries after every class.
Notes and Diaries (Observational)	External Observation	Burns (2001)	To collect data and reflect on the teaching practices and the weaknesses observed during the English classes.
Survey	Questionnaire	Burns (2001)	To identify participants' perceptions of writing and their knowledge of strategies related to this language skill.

Data collection instruments in the action and evaluation stage

        Assessing the results after the action stage in research allows to evaluate the effects of the investigation. In this sense, three instruments were implemented to achieve this goal: A self-assessment form to recognize participant's perceptions of their performance after every workshop; a rubric to evaluate the final writing products, and a teacher's journal to reflect upon the experiences in the action stage. These instruments were used with the purpose to

continuously assess not only participants' progress, but the process itself. As a consequence, different adaptations in the workshops were made with the intent to improve the process, and subsequently the outcomes.

Table 2: Action and evaluation stage instruments

Data collection instruments in the action and evaluation stage			
Technique	**Instrument**	**Author**	**Rationale**
Questionnaires (Non Observational)	Self-assessment form: Likert scale	Likert (1932)	To acknowledge participant's perceptions towards the different tasks.
Questionnaires (Non Observational)	Rubric	Burns (2001)	To appreciate participants performance in the writing tasks (Quantitatively and qualitatively)
Notes and Diaries (Observational)	Teacher's journal	Burns (2001)	To document and reflect upon the teacher's and participant's experiences in every workshop. The researcher (non-participant observer) writes the entries after every workshop.

Chapter IV. Phases of the Study

4.1 Diagnostic stage

This stage aimed at identifying the problem of concern, detecting strengths that could be used in the action stage, and knowing the context for the implementation. For conducting data analysis, I used Cresswell's (2002) approach, in which the researcher follows some steps to validate the accuracy of the information. In this sense, to perform this analysis, students' surveys, teacher's journals, and external observer field notes were the data collection instruments used to gather and interpret information. All this gave insights on specific aspects to enhance, and on how to structure the pedagogical intervention of this inquiry.

Results and analysis of the data collection instruments in the diagnostic stage

Teacher's journal (Appendix 1)

The teacher's journal compiled a synopsis of class stages and my perceptions of them. I described in detail each activity and students' reactions towards every stage. In this sense, the first conclusion that arose was that the topics of the classes allowed students to be critical of certain situations. For example, sugar consumption and climate change seemed to be interesting for this context, because pre-service teachers could relate them to their experiences and realities. Thus, participation was high, and communication was enhanced through the analysis and discussion of these themes.

Although students' interaction was advantageous, the writing activities did not work that well. In this regard, participants manifested some difficulties to generate and organize their ideas. Also, most of them were not able to finish this kind of task. After interpreting their reactions, I concluded it was because they lacked writing strategies. In this sense, the teacher's role was very

important to provide them with elements for their written performance. This also may decrease students' participation, which was mostly noticed when participants had to share their writing outcomes, or when they were asked to brainstorm ideas for a writing activity.

External class observation (Appendix 2)

This class observation was implemented as an exploratory instrument to find out about the weaknesses and strengths related to the students' language performance. The observation protocol contained three aspects that were considered: The description of every activity, the interpretation of it, and the reflection. The external observer considered in the comments participants' interaction and connections with their life experiences. In this regard, when they felt familiar with the topics, they were willing to share their realities. These results highlighted the positive impact that contextualized issues have in the students' class participation.

On the other hand, the external observer's reflections portrayed that pre-service teachers did not accomplish the written tasks because they did not know what to write or how to write it. This was evidenced on their comments and behavior during the activities. Finally, the observations unveiled that students' participation decreased when they were asked to do a writing task, which shows a possible reluctance to develop these activities.

Students' survey (Appendix 3)

The students' survey was implemented as an exploratory instrument to identify pre-service teachers' writing perceptions. It considered linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, spelling, perspective aspects, and pre-writing and writing knowledge. Then, it was divided into three parts: Part I: Feelings and perceptions. Part II: Knowledge of strategies. Part III: Writing preferences. After evaluating the participants' responses, it was evidenced that most of them had unfavorable opinions about writing. For example, in Part I: Feelings and

perceptions, pre-service teachers had to complete the following sentence with their impressions: "When I am asked to write in English, I feel…". Most of them answered with words related to negative feelings and emotions, and complemented their responses expressing the reason why they felt in that way.

Furthermore, the second part of the survey disclosed a poor knowledge of writing strategies. Most of the participants expressed they did not use any strategy before or while executing these tasks, which in the end may decrease the quality of their written compositions. Finally, the section of writing preferences allowed pre-service teachers to express the topics they found interesting to write about. Most of them suggested themes that were related to their life experiences or issues that were important for them, which gave important insights for the lesson planning and implementation of the current research inquiry.

4.1.2   *Data triangulation in the diagnostic stage*

Data triangulation in research is important to assess validity. Its purpose is to collect perspectives from participants to get a richer and less subjective view of the research inquiry (Burns, 1999). According to Freeman (1998), the results from this data are the information obtained after applying three different instruments. In this case, an external observation, a teacher's journal, and a students' survey were applied. They were designed to identify and see the problem from different perspectives, and in this way, avoid bias.

After administering and collecting the outcomes of every instrument, they were analyzed using the grounded data analysis technique proposed by Freeman (1998). It consists of finding repeated points, coding them with keywords, grouping them into concepts, and categorizing them according to their relationship (Charmaz, 2006). Then, I compared the information

gathered in tables and charts. The purpose of this process was not only to find the issue to research but also to confirm validity and reliability.

After administering the data collection instruments in the diagnostic stage, the information was analyzed and categorized. The following codes emerged:

- Problem-based activities: Implementation of Problem-Based Learning activities in the classes based on students' real-life experiences.

- Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies: Students' difficulties when generating and writing down ideas related to a specific topic.

- Students' effective teamwork and class participation: Students collaborate and are involved in the activities proposed in class.

- Students' lack of participation: Students' reluctance to participate during the activities in the class.

The above-mentioned codes were the relations found among the data in the different diagnostic instruments. They were used to analyze and triangulate information, and to identify the problem of concern. The following graph displays the findings in this stage:

Graph 1: Data triangulation. Diagnostic stage

	Problem-Based learning activities	Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies	Students' effective teamwork and class participation	Students' lack of participation
■ Serie1	28,03	51,59	15,92	4,46
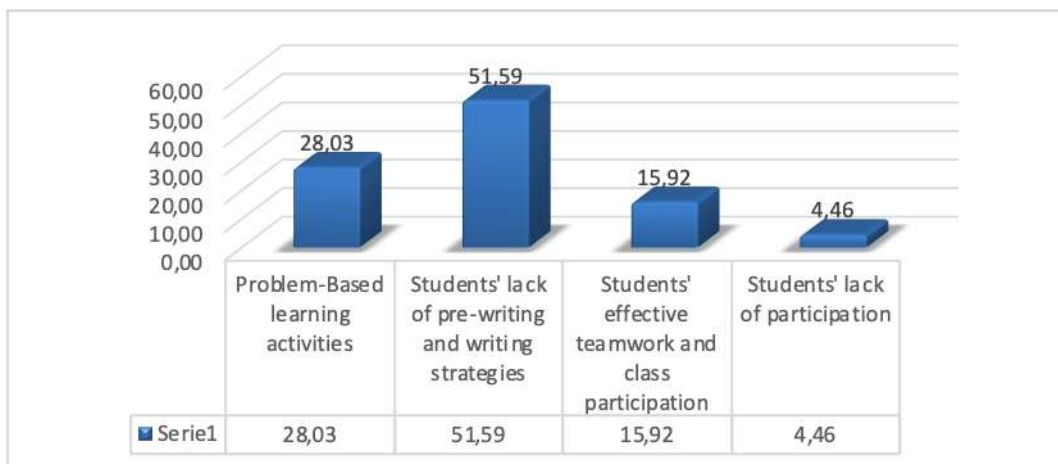
The data triangulation of the diagnostic stage showed that the majority of students lacked pre-writing and writing strategies. The three instruments displayed that pre-service teachers had difficulties in generating, and organizing ideas in a written way. Most of the comments were related to the weak achievement of writing activities, and with pre-service teachers' negative perceptions of this type of task. Also, their participation diminished when they were asked to brainstorm ideas and write them down. Then, writing was chosen as the skill to enhance in this research inquiry.

On the other side, during the implementation of contextualized Problem-Based learning activities seemed to foster interaction and teamwork. In the same way, class participation increased when pre-service teachers related the topics to their experiences. This approach appeared to be beneficial since it fits pre-service teachers' interests. Then, the topics suggested by them in the survey were taken into consideration for planning the action and evaluation stage of this inquiry.

All in all, this data analysis allowed to choose Problem-Based Instruction as the approach to be used to enhance pre-service teachers' persuasive writing. Finally, the topics for the workshops were related to students' real-life experiences and interests.

4.2 Instructional design

The main objective of this action research was to describe the impact of the Problem-Based Learning Approach on EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills. Accordingly, contextualized issues and real-life activities were the basis to design the action and evaluation stage. Likewise, students' responses in the survey applied during the diagnostic stage were also highly taken into consideration. They had the opportunity to express their writing preferences in a checklist, or to add a different option, they could choose

all the options of their preference. In this vein, 60% chose to write paragraphs and emails. 55% letters, 20% infographics, 45% posters, 40% essays, and 30% flyers. Also, as mentioned in the data analysis of the diagnostic stage, pre-service teachers were able to suggest the topics to be worked on in class.

Based on the findings in the diagnostic stage, all the workshops were planned based on an issue participants were familiar with, and the writing products had to do with proposing different solutions or alternatives to the issue that was discussed. These outcomes were also different from session to session, so participants managed to write in this case posters, infographics, action plans, news reports, bulletin boards, and brochures.

Moreover, persuasive writing was the language skill chosen to work on this project. It was highly important to provide participants with pre-writing and writing strategies that would contribute to their performance. Hence, two strategies were taught and implemented per workshop to make their writing more powerful. Also, the six traits of writing model developed by Steineger, (1996) was adopted for designing and applying the Likert Scale and self-assessment form to collect data during the action stage. This contributed to appraise how a quality written composition looks like. All in all, the action stage of this inquiry was designed in a way that pre-service teachers could have plenty of opportunities to participate and to be aware of their process.

4.3 Action Stage

Once the research problem was identified, there was a need to tackle persuasive writing as the skill following the six-step procedure proposed in the action-research methodology. For the implementation stage, six workshops were carried out in this study to strengthen students` persuasive writing skills. According to Nunan (2002) "it is seen as a small- scale intervention in

the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such intervention" (p.186). This action stage was conducted in three phases as a spiral model. As Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) point out, "planning, acting, observing and analyzing" (p.5). Each phase consisted of two workshops that were applied and later analyzed. Data analysis took into account the three instruments chosen for this stage: A Likert scale, a rubric, and a teacher's diary.

All the workshops were designed in a way that had a similar structure. The purpose of this was to help students get familiar with the mechanics of the different phases. First of all, at the beginning of every session, pre-service teachers were told about the writing objective, the problem-solving objective, and the writing strategies to be used. Then, they had a warm-up activity to get prepared for the main activity. After that, in the practice part, they had three different activities: Pre-While and Post that included one main language skill (Reading, writing, listening, speaking). However, there was an integration of abilities because most of the time pupils had to work in groups, and communication was key. Later, they had a production part in which based on the knowledge they acquired during the previous stages, they started writing the final product which would be evaluated in the last part of the workshop: The evaluation.

It is important to notice that pre-writing and writing strategies were included in the different activities. Also, there was always a context and a space for evaluating and discussing the problems from a different perspective. In this sense, it was highly relevant that participants felt familiarized with the topic. Likewise, it was imperative that they participated and communicated their perceptions. Therefore, activities were linked one with another in a way that pre-service teachers would always count on sufficient elements to work on their final writing product. Finally, to motivate pupils to write, the products were varied, so they did not feel they were always writing essays or paragraphs, and had the opportunity to be creative.

Additionally, after the implementation of every workshop, each instrument was used to collect the data needed, to make decisions over the aspects to keep and to improve. This analysis is described in the next part of the study.

4.3.1. Overview of the workshops

Table 3: Overview of the workshops

| Topic	Title	Writing objective	Writing strategies	Outcome
Public higher education in Colombia	My education, my business (Part I)	Students will learn about different strategies to write a persuasive poster using the six traits of writing.	Brainstorming. Rapid writing	Poster
Public higher education in Colombia	My education, my business (Part II)	Students will learn about different strategies to write an action plan for the educational community of the university.	Sequence chart. Drafting.	Action plan
Drug abuse	Providing our future generations with more hope	Students will learn about different strategies to write a bulletin board display about teenage drug abuse.	Clustering. Rapid writing.	Bulletin board display
Poverty and unemployment	A more sustainable city	Students will learn about different strategies to write a newspaper report about unemployment in Armenia.	Brainstorming Sentence strip paragraphs.	Flyer
Mental health conditions	Living from different perspectives	Students will learn about different strategies to write a brochure about mental illnesses.	Brainstorming. Drafting	Brochure
Social consequences of Covid 19	Life after coronavirus	Students will learn about different strategies to write an infographic about what the world should have learned from Covid-19.	Sequence chart. Clustering.	Infographic

4.4 Evaluation stage

This stage aimed at examining the outcomes of every workshop. The researcher used different instruments such as a teacher's journal, a self-assessment form, and a persuasive writing rubric. The results were analyzed and triangulated every two workshops. Therefore, there were three phases in which the information was compiled.

4.4.1 Phase One

After analyzing the results and triangulated data collected in the three instruments, the following codes and percentages emerged:

Graph 2: Triangulation phase one
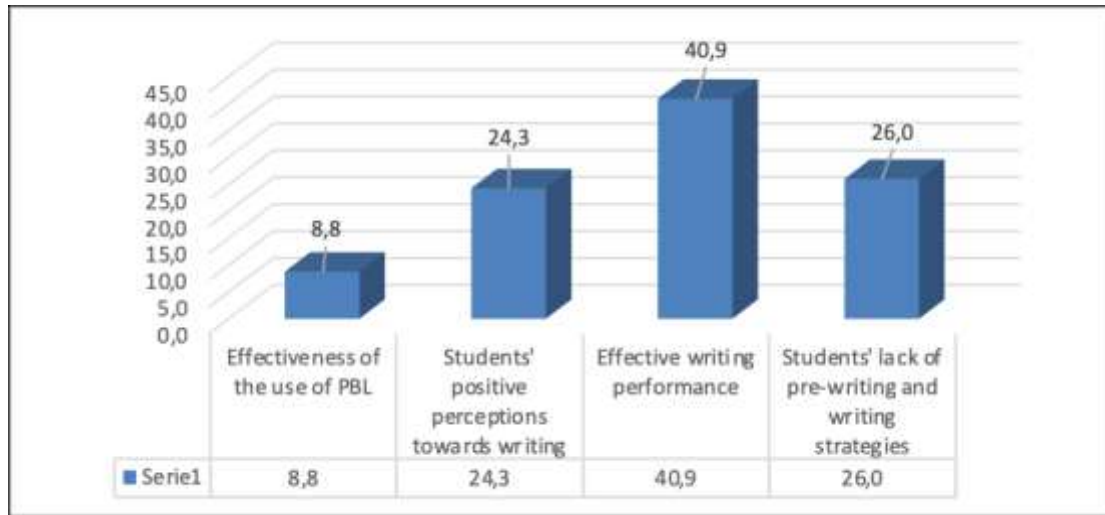
It is evident that the outcomes of the writing activities were successful. Thus, *Effective writing performance* obtained the highest percentage of occurrences. It was noticeable that pre-service teachers applied correctly the pre-writing and writing strategies taught to take a stand and use persuasion in the poster and action plan. The following examples taken from the data collection instruments support the previous statement:

"The participant states is/her opinion and supports it with arguments. They used different sources to do so (statistics and facts)."

"Regarding writing skills, in this workshop, I learned to use new strategies to write credible arguments"

Therefore, using two strategies per workshop was helpful because it became a summative process, in which previous knowledge was applied while enforcing it with procedures. When pre-service teachers had clear guidelines and enough sources, their performance was beneficial.

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In the same way, *Students' positive perceptions towards writing* was crucial because it reflected their favorable attitudes during the lesson tasks. Hence, these opinions resulted on participants' engagement during the activities of the workshops. Similarly, the *effectiveness of the use of PBL* was directly linked to the satisfactory results in the codes above-mentioned. Contextualized topics were suitable to enhance pre-service teachers' productive performance and involvement. During the different activities, they could take a stand regarding the issues proposed, and gave examples related to their experiences. Then, situated Problem-Based Learning activities promoted analysis, interpretation, and reflection of their backgrounds.

Nevertheless, there was still absence or inadequacy in the use of pre-writing and writing strategies, which was reflected in the 26% of frequencies in the code *Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies.* In this sense, pre-service teachers still needed to learn and rely on more elements to apply in the written compositions. However, these concerns were understandable since the introduction of these strategies were still in an early stage.

To sum up, I consider several aspects worked very well in phase one, and some were features to improve. Data analysis of workshops one and two displayed that effective writing performance was linked to the implementation of strategies which were applied during the writing process. However, there was still a high percentage of pre-service teachers' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies. Thus, it was necessary to continue instructing them in this aspect. Finally, from the above mentioned results, I could announce that participants' use of persuasive arguments was effective, and their perceptions of the workshops were positive. Then, controversial issues related to their context were incorporated in the following workshops. In the following phase, four writing strategies were included within the different tasks.

4.4.2 Phase two

When exploring the performance of the participants of this study phase 2, the results that emerged from the data triangulation instruments, marked some aspects that represented improvements on pre-service teachers' persuasive writing performance, and some others to enhance. The following graph displays the triangulation of the three instruments in this phase.

Graph 3: Triangulation phase 2
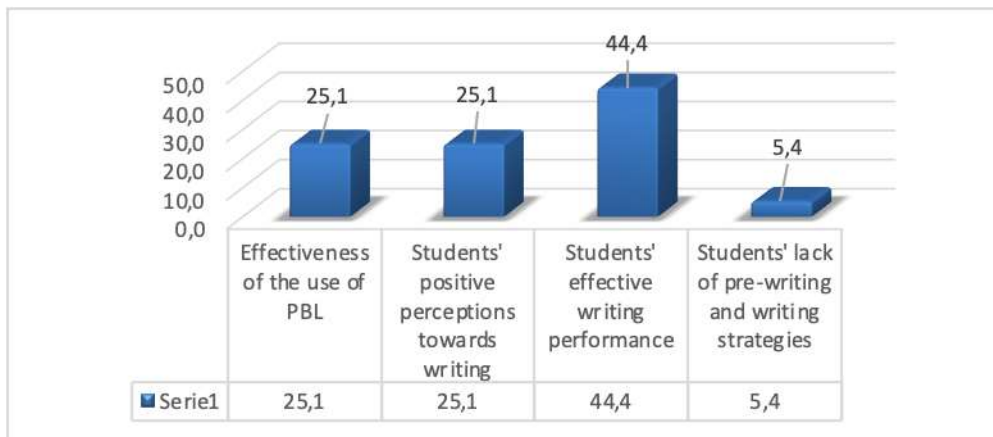
First of all, the code *Students' effective writing performance* obtained the highest percentage of occurrences. This was highly measured in the persuasive writing rubric, most specifically in the category of *"voice"*, which stated: *"Writer has a definite tone and the arguments employed appeal to the reader's emotion through credible facts".* Indeed, in this matter, 91% of the participants wrote quality persuasive arguments. According to the evidence, I can manifest that the relations established during the different activities in the workshops, which were interrelated and allowed participants to start building the written products from the beginning. Every task provided them with information and strategies to construct their outcomes based on the analysis of the issues of concern.

Secondly, having successful workshops also depended on students' attitudes. In this sense, the code *Students' positive perceptions towards writing* attained a frequency of 25% of occurrences. This is supported in opinions such as:

"My attitude during this workshop was very good because it was very interesting and it was easy to write about that problem"

"I could write my ideas and I did not feel exposed or nervous because I did not have to talk in front of everybody"

These thoughts were strongly associated with pre-service teachers' interests and engagement during the activities, which reinforced the idea of considering students' interests and context to enhance participation and motivation.

Similarly, the implementation of contextualized issues in this phase displayed beneficial results. Then, the code *Effectiveness of the use of PBL* obtained the third place. One of the elements that showed the positive results in the implementation of the tasks based on this approach was the persuasive writing rubric. The category of *ideas* assessed the effectiveness of arguable claims and solutions or ways to approach the issue of concern. Thus, the results revealed that 75% of the pupils were proficient in this, and 25% of them were developing. Besides, learners wrote some comments on the self-assessment form that demonstrated the effectiveness of the PBL activities in this workshop*:*

"I liked all the activities because they had a flow and all of them made me think about this problem and how to solve it"

"I know many people with problems of drug abuse, so it was not difficult to talk and write about this".

Once more, contextualized issues resulted on pre-service teachers' effective viewpoints. In this case, drug abuse and unemployment in the city promoted critical analysis through the association with life experiences and context.

Finally, in every workshop, it is imperative to consider what might have gone wrong to make decisions to improve it. Accordingly, the category *Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies* that had to do with participants' absence or inadequacy in the use of pre-writing and writing strategies got a frequency of 5%, and it was mostly found in the self-assessment form and the persuasive writing rubric. Comments such as *"To improve the writing process, I would like to practice more to organize better my ideas"* showed a small percentage of participants lacked this kind of strategy. This was also analyzed the persuasive writing rubric, most specifically in the descriptor *"Arguably claims or solutions to approach the problem of concern are confusing or inconclusive",* in which 1.6% of the pre-services teachers' writing outcomes were categorized here. However, it is important to highlight that this code dropped 20% from phase one to phase two, which demonstrated the effectiveness of the implementation of this investigation in the application of the first four workshops.

As a conclusion of the data analysis of phase 2, I consider various aspects worked very well in the different stages of the workshops, and a few that should be improved. The essence of this research inquiry is to implement Problem-Based Learning as the approach to foster EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing. Data analysis showed that pre-service teachers' participation was high when they were engaged in activities that are authentic and that have to do with controversial issues. From the learners' comments and my observation written in the teacher's diary, I could conclude that the writing strategies had been beneficial for their writing performance, the use of persuasive arguments., and even the positive perceptions towards

writing. Finally, it was important to consider what could be done to support those participants who still showed a weak achievement of the writing task because of the lack pre-writing and writing strategies.

4.4.3 Phase three

When examining the performance of the participants of this study in this phase, the results that emerged from the data triangulation instruments, displayed a remarkable improvement in the accomplishment and perceptions of the different writing tasks. The following graph displays the results of data triangulation in this phase:

Graph 4: Triangulation phase 3
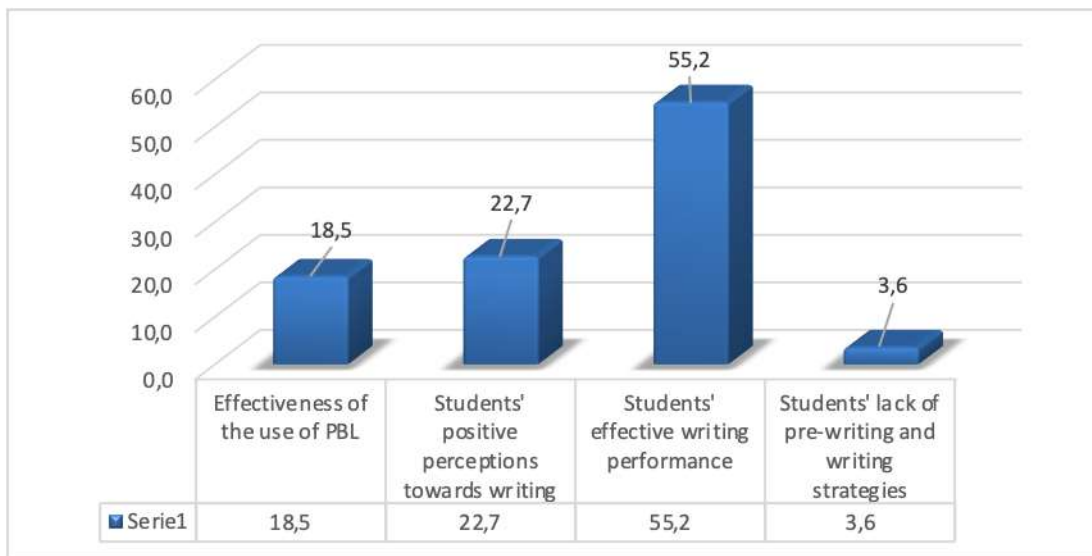
The highest frequency was *Students' effective writing performance*. The results unveiled that participants increased the quality of their written compositions. Since pre-service teachers counted with sufficient elements such as pre-writing and writing strategies, and background information on the topics, they could achieve successfully the written tasks proposed in this phase. On the other hand, *Students' positive perceptions towards writing* kept a similar percentage during the three phases, in this case 22% of occurrences. The teacher's journal and

the students' self-assessment form were highly important to detect favorable opinions towards the lesson tasks. Statements such as *"To improve the writing process, I would like to continue making writing products different from the traditional ones"* or *"I would like to take advantage of all the tools the teacher has given us to write in a better way"* unveiled the positive perceptions participants had in this phase. Pre-service teachers' opinions were relevant to this study because as the findings of the diagnostic stage displayed, participation diminished at the moment of developing writing activities, and the change of these negative perceptions may foster their willingness to write.

Similarly, the implementation of activities with contextualized issues to be analyzed was also successful. Hence, *Effectiveness of the use of PBL* obtained 18% of the total frequencies The three data triangulation instruments displayed examples for this code:

"I enjoyed that this is a very common topic, at least in this city because there are many cases of people who commit suicide because of a mental illness"

"It is incredible how this issue has affected that amount of people in different ways: Their families, education, social life, etc."

The above-mentioned examples also showed a connection with participants' background which exposed the effectiveness of having taken into consideration the topics proposed by pre-service teachers in the survey applied during the diagnosis stage.

Ultimately, when attempting to enhance any academic aspect of students, it is essential to consider the ones who still struggle on achieving the tasks proposed. In this sense, *Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies* obtained 3% of occurrences. Although this percentage was low, it was necessary to understand the reason why there was still absence of these skills. The persuasive writing rubric, and the self-assessment form evidenced the following appreciations:

"Although the participant explored three different solutions to the problem of concern, they were very limited. They should be wider and detailed.".

"I found difficult to summarize the information and write just the most important aspects"

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned findings do not mean that this percentage of pre-service teachers ignored how to write quality persuasive compositions, or that they lacked ~~of~~ all the strategies to do so. It means that there were still some aspects to improve, and that with the necessary instruction and practice, they may acquire them.

4.4.4 Triangulation of categories in the evaluation stage

The triangulation of the data collection instruments provided the evidence required to identify the most relevant categories that consistently emerged during the implementation of this investigation. The following graph shows the scores that pre-service teachers achieved regarding the codes that emerged in the action stage.

Graph 5: Triangulation of categories in the action and evaluation stage
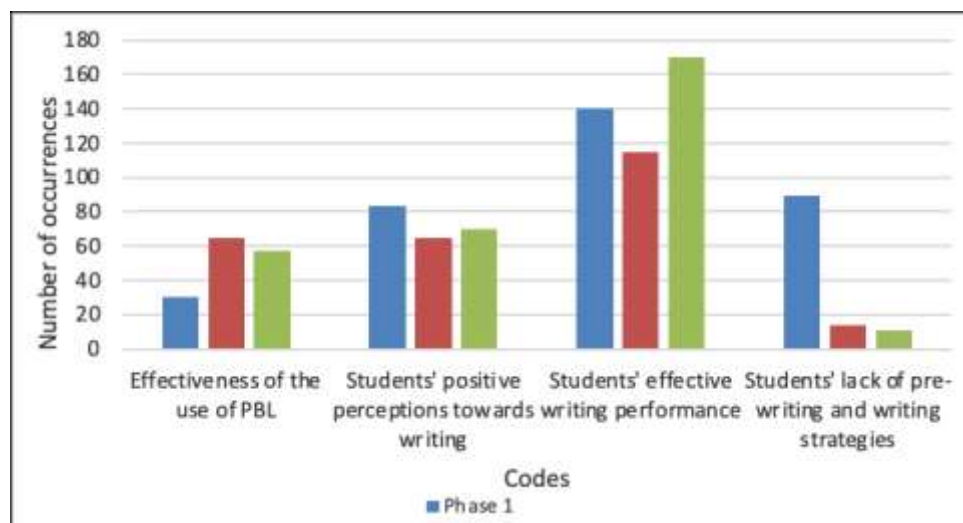
Throughout the implementation of the six workshops in the action stage, the results of data collection instruments revealed that pre-service teachers' performance improved gradually.

During the first phase, some difficulties were evidenced in the use of pre-writing and writing strategies. Participants struggled on putting together their ideas, and this was mostly evidenced in the early writing outcomes. However, at the end of the evaluation, they demonstrated significant improvement in their performance in the persuasive writing tasks because most of them adopted and applied the different tools in their written compositions effectively. On the other hand, during the whole process, the information gathered displayed an important reduction of students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies, which gave insights on the effectiveness of instructing participants on tools for writing quality compositions.

In this research, persuasive writing was taken as a process of problem identification, analysis of contextualized issues, and exploration of solutions or alternatives by using credible facts and examples to support individual points of view. Then, students' effective writing performance was highly relevant to assess the achievement of the objectives of the present investigation. During the whole process, the frequencies found in this code were superior compared to the other categories. The action stage also aimed at providing pre-service teachers with sufficient elements to write suitable persuasive texts, which resulted on favorable perceptions towards writing. In this sense, the implementation of contextualized Problem-Based activities was highly relevant to obtain these results, since participants expressed the importance of having the opportunity to explore issues related to their context, and to be critical towards them.

<center>**Chapter V. Findings**</center>

This chapter aims at providing further information about the results obtained in the categories that emerged during the process of data triangulation. The results gave an account of the achievements in persuasive writing using the PBL approach, and in the marked reduction of participants' lack of pre-writing and writing elements and their weak achievement of tasks.

Effective writing performance

The main research question of this inquiry was to unveil the impact of Problem-Based learning on EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills. The data triangulated displayed that this approach had positive repercussions on participants' written persuasion. This could be evidenced in the code *Effective writing performance* in which pre-service teachers proposed solutions or alternatives to a specific issue using persuasion. After the implementation of phase one, this category obtained 40% of occurrences, while at the end of phase three, 55% of frequencies demonstrated the positive impact of written outcomes based on the PBL methodology. Appealing to issues related to participants' life experiences facilitated analyzing and proposing solutions or alternatives to the situations proposed, which in the end simplified the process of persuasion.

Effectiveness of the use of PBL

The percentages obtained by this code in the data analysis of the action and evaluation stage, strengthened the positive results achieved in this research, and answered two of the specific objectives of this investigation, which were "to identify the appropriateness and usefulness of Problem-Based learning activities in the development of EFL pre-service teachers' Persuasive Writing", and "to evaluate Persuasive Writing among EFL pre-service

teachers by means of Problem-Based Learning activities". It is important to remember that this methodology was the basis to plan the different tasks, as the means to enhance persuasive writing skills because: The content and skills to be learned are organized around problems, rather than as a hierarchical list of topics, so a reciprocal relationship exists between knowledge and the problem. (Hung et al., 2008b, p. 488)

Accordingly, when pre-service teachers could relate the topics to their backgrounds, the examination of the issues was deeper, and even more the postulation of alternatives to solve or alleviate the problem being discussed. Hence, participants' written products were the collection of all the activities in every workshop, which were interrelated and designed to give them enough tools to explore the theme from different perspectives and use written persuasion successfully.

Another specific research objective was "to suggest contextualized Problem-Based Learning activities to promote writing tasks in the EFL classroom". Participants' positive reactions towards lesson tasks demonstrated the convenience of the topics and activities applied in the action stage, based on the PBL methodology. In this sense, Barron et al., (1998) argue that PBL is useful to adjust learning content through the employment or contextualization of daily circumstances that students can face. Realistic and situated themes were the basis to design successful lesson plans, which considered pre-service teachers' preferences identified in the survey that was applied in the diagnosis. Then, their performance during the workshops was successful because they had enough background experiences that allowed them to analyze issues of concerns and take a critical stand toward them. In a summary, the methodology implemented and real-life activities played an essential role to conduct these tasks successfully.

Students' positive perceptions towards writing

One of the specific questions of this research inquiry was "What can EFL pre-service teachers gain from persuasive writing activities based on the Problem-Based learning approach?". The quality of their written compositions demonstrated that besides diminishing their reluctance to write, they gained practical skills for their written performance. In the same way, they acquired analytical and persuasive abilities to suggest alternatives for specific issues. During the diagnostic stage, their reluctance to write was associated to the lack of pre-writing and writing strategies, and this also influenced negatively their class participation. The implementation of workshops based on contextualized issues, boosted participants' involvement in the different tasks, as well as their persuasive writing skills, which had positive repercussions on their perceptions towards writing.

Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies

The last place occupied by the codes *Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies* with 13% of frequencies gave an account of the positive outcomes of this inquiry. The percentage of this category decreased remarkably from phase one to phase three. During the implementation of the first phase, 26% of occurrences displayed the absence or inadequacy of pre-service teachers' writing strategies. Then, they diminished until the point of being found in just 3% of the data collected in phase three. These results displayed the appropriateness of the application of two writing strategies per workshop. At the end of the process, participants were aware of the use of these procedures during the written tasks, because the final writing products of every workshop were built based on the ideas that arose when using the different strategies.

In general terms, the progressive improvement resulted from an adequate identification of the problem, lesson planning, recognition of students' needs, and implementation of writing tasks in the regular instruction. This process provided pre-service teachers with opportunities to

learn, practice, and reinforce persuasive writing through Problem-Based Learning activities, as

evidenced throughout the activities developed in the implementation stage. The information and

the data portrayed above were used to acknowledge the importance of this study.

Chapter VI. Conclusions, Pedagogical Implications, Limitations, and Questions for Further Research

In this chapter, I present the most relevant conclusions that I drew after analyzing the data gathered, the pedagogical implications in terms of my teaching practice, and the effects the project had for pre-service teachers. After that, I mention some limitations that I had during the research process, and finally, I give some suggestions for further research.

6. 1. Conclusions

The conclusions and new pedagogical knowledge resulting from the analysis and interpretation of the data collected are explained below.

Effectiveness of the use of PBL

First of all, it is necessary to recall the main research question of this inquiry, which was: *What is the impact of Problem-Based learning on EFL pre-service teachers' persuasive writing skills?* The outcomes of this investigation lie in the effectiveness of PBL in participants' use of persuasion in their texts. In this regard, it is imperative to remember the importance of selecting contextualized issues for enhancing learners' high-order thinking skills such as interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating alternatives for different issues. By actively engaging with the topics, students are able to integrate their background experiences with the knowledge they are acquiring. Then, they have the possibility to take a stand and use persuasion to state their points of view and to try to convince the reader to agree with the alternatives proposed by them.

In addition, Problem-Based learning also promotes communication since it encourages students' active participation. This approach requires giving and exchanging ideas, considering real-world contexts, and defending particular positions. Hence, it can be used for boosting and

practicing language skills in an EFL context. Teachers may take advantage of the authenticity that PBL activities generate in the classroom. In that way, learners can convey messages that are encountered in daily settings. However, it is essential to consider students' backgrounds to give them the chance to relate the issues to their experience, and not to see the topics as unfamiliar or detached from their realities.

Students' effective writing performance

One of the sub-questions of this inquiry was: *How do Problem-Based Learning activities generate persuasive writing spaces in the English classroom?* Despite PBL is not an approach originally designed for language instruction, the results of this research display that it is suitable for enhancing language skills. Then, the design and implementation of workshops based on concerns related to learners' real-life experiences, and pre-writing and writing strategies correspond to an effective pedagogical strategy to promote persuasive writing and to promote pre-service teachers' analysis and critical points of view. When learners implement strategies such as brainstorming, rapid writing, sequence chart, drafting, clustering, and sentence strip paragraphs, they are better prepared to respond to tasks that demand stating a point of view and supporting it with facts. Professors are recommended to implement these approaches in their classes to boost learners' persuasive writing skills.

Additionally, writing is a process that involves gathering information, putting ideas together, revising content, and rewriting when necessary. Students also need to count on sufficient elements to execute these tasks. Then, the teacher's role is to provide them with background information, and strategies to write quality compositions. Hence, these elements should be included smoothly during the implementation of a lesson, so learners become aware of this and incorporate them gradually to execute their written activities. In the same vein,

informing students about the elements of good writing is beneficial because they have clear guidelines on what to include in their texts and what the teacher expects from them. Thus, language instructors are invited to provide learners with enough tools to accomplish the activities proposed during the lessons.

Students' positive perceptions towards lesson tasks

Learners' participation is directly linked to the interest they have to develop the activities proposed in class. In this regard, teachers are invited to conduct a students' needs analysis to identify any relevant aspects to take into consideration during a course. Reflecting on their context, strengths, and even on their weaknesses, give relevant insights on aspects to keep and improve with learners. Also, identifying their reluctance to develop a specific type of task, suggests there is an area to work on. Teacher reflection contributes to understanding there is always a reason behind learners' behavior, and to make decisions to increase the quality of the classes by implementing suitable teaching techniques that satisfy their demands.

Besides, the use of meaningful topics supposes a key point to motivate the students to engage in the activities proposed in a session, since they can express themselves with major ease on themes that are relevant for them, which also contributes to improving their general performance. In this regard, students become active learners by being focused on not only answering a task and building a final product but also on stating ideas that might have an impact on their particular setting. Therefore, it is appropriate to design activities whose topics are relevant for learners to enhance participation and motivation.

Students' lack of pre-writing and writing strategies

One of the concerns of this investigation was pre-service teachers' lack of knowledge regarding the use of pre-writing and writing strategies. On this basis, the following sub-question

attempted to determine any contribution that PBL could have on participants: *What can EFL pre-service teachers gain from persuasive writing activities based on the Problem-Based learning approach?* In this sense, writing tasks that promote high-order thinking skills such as research, knowledge transfer/ integration, and reflection are useful to develop learners' persuasive skills. By continuously applying this kind of activity, their performance improves by using writing strategies while designing written outcomes. When teachers design lessons that include stages to develop different writing assignments, learners automatically get familiar with them and put together previous and new knowledge to write quality compositions. It is important that professors at the university level promote these strategies to prepare pre-service teachers for higher-level writing tasks that allow them to state their ideas and support them.

On the other hand, with the training in the implementation of pre-writing and writing strategies, teachers prevent that the lack of these components affects learners' writing. Therefore, professors are strongly advised to provide learners with sufficient elements to write quality compositions. In this sense, it is advisable to inquire about the knowledge students have regarding writing, and how to train them on the features for successful written performance. Also, it is important to consider their preferences because they impact the way learners perceive these tasks, and even how they develop them. In this respect, Problem-Based Learning plays an important role because it provides ample topics that when related to students' contexts, result in significant learning experiences. This approach allows them to analyze and to be critical of their realities, which can be expressed on solutions or alternatives in their writing compositions.

To conclude, the implementation of contextualized Problem-Based Learning activities proved to be a fruitful way to enhance pre-service teachers' persuasive writing. It is essential to allow learners to analyze issues related to their realities from different points of view and to dare

to suggest ways to alleviate those concerns. Thus, if the main objective is to contribute to have more critical teachers and to promote written persuasion, universities and EFL professors are advised to use these strategies as part of the curriculum and lesson planning.

6.2 Limitations

During the initial implementation of this study, the only limitation was time constraints. Because each workshop was designed to be implemented in three hours, it was difficult to reach this objective because the classes lasted two hours. For this reason, the workshops were split into two parts. However, from workshop 3, plans changed because of the outbreak of Covid-19. The lockdown began and the proposal had to be restructured. Also, professors and learners were responsible for getting familiar with online sessions and virtual tools to develop the different classes. Challenges as participants' resources, knowledge of ICT tools, and participation were demanding. Hence, this new reality was exhausting for all because the adaptation process was not easy, and teachers seemed to be busier than before. For this reason, this research took longer than expected, but in the end, it was worthwhile to see the outcomes.

6.3 Further research

As mentioned in the literature review, little has been explored on Problem-Based Learning for language instruction. That is why I suggest to the EFL academic community to inquiry on applying this approach for the different language skills. Also, it is suitable to recommend more research on critical thinking skills and argumentation in pre-service teachers of English.

These are some possible research questions that might be considered in further research studies: (a) *How does the implementation of Problem-Based learning activities enhance productive language skills in an EFL class?*

(b*) How does the implementation Problem-Based learning boost the critical thinking and argumentation skills of undergraduate students?*

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Teacher's journal

Date: September 17th 2019

This was a two-hour class. There were twelve students there. The topic of the session was sugar consumption. The general English Level is A2+.The final goal was to write a 150-word text discussing the pros and cons of sugar. In the warm-up activity, I showed students different images related to sugar, and they would tell the first things that came to their mind when they saw them. Since it is a small group, it is easy to do these kind of activities, and to promote class participation. Some of the students associated these images to the feelings they provoked on them. Then, I wrote a question on the board to be answered: "What would happen if we stopped consuming sugar?". The group analyzed this from different points of view, but they focused on health and weight. The most common answers were "I would look thinner", "I wouldn't have diabetes", "I would feel less anxious", "My body would look better". After that, I presented a video named "What would happen if we stopped consuming sugar?". This recording was funny because it explored not only the consequences on our health, but also on our daily basis. I stopped the video in some parts to talk about it because some students raised their hands not only to express their points of view, but also to tell an anecdote that the video remained them of.

Although the video analyzed the possible consequences in a funny way, it explored positive and negative repercussions of quitting sugar. Pupils showed positive attitude towards the activity, and the level of participation was high. The last activity of the session was to write an expository video about the pros and cons of sugar consumption. Participants could make reference to the information they gave and received during the previous activities. I gave them 40 minutes to do so. I observed that some students immediately started looking at the notes they had taken during the session, others searched more information on the internet, and the rest begun writing instantaneously. However, after 15 minutes approximately, I observed that some of them stopped writing, and seemed pretty concerned. I approached them, and they expressed they did not know what else to write. What I do in these cases is to ask questions that would give them insights on what to write.

On the other hand, while monitoring other participants, I noticed they wrote isolated sentences without any connectors. At the end of the class, some participants were not able to finish and asked for more time. When I asked them the reason why they did not complete the activity, some of them expressed that they spent a lot of time trying to figure out what to write, and to organize their ideas. I told them to give their writings for the following class.

Appendix 2: External observation

Observer: <u>Juan Mateo Agudelo Villa.</u> **Teacher:** <u>Lina Marcela Alfonso.</u> **Date:** <u>September 3rd 2019</u>

/This class was carried out in a third semester group from the Modern Languages program at the University of Quindío/./ By the end of the lesson,/ /students would be able to give possible solutions/ to stop food wasting. / /First, the teacher greeted the students/ / and asked them to get in groups of 4 people /and brainstorm words related to FOOD/ /and write them on the board./ / In one of the groups, only one student wanted to write/ /while his partners dictated him their ideas./ /In the other group, all of the students wanted to write,/ /but they did not show a clear organization of the turns they were going to take for writing. /	/The teacher establishes from the very beginning the general topic for the class/ /and guides the students through it./ /She also wants to students to work in groups/ /to get different ideas./	/Getting students into groups is a good strategy/ /for classroom management and participation./ /Brainstorming is a good warm-up activity/ /that helps students generate ideas/ /about what they are going to talk about in class./
/After the first activity,/ / the teacher showed a video from the BBC/ / about people who eat landfill food./ / Students were asked to be in pairs/ / and give their opinions about it, / /and the cause of this problem/./ Some pairs started speaking in English about it/ /and stating their opinions./ /They interacted and talked about the topic./ /There were also pairs in which one student gave his opinion in English,/ / and the other one spoke in Spanish./ /There was a case with some students who just did not know what to say,/ /and just stayed quiet listening to their partners./	/The teacher uses BBC videos to relate the topic to a real life context./ / She asks the students to give their opinions/ /to make them show understanding / /and analyze the issue shown in the video./ /On the other hand, the students who did not talk seemed to be so shy. /	/Having students work in pairs facilitates interaction/ /and helps to have a student-centered class./ /It would be better if the teacher establishes some consequences / for the students who speak in Spanish / /since this is a fourth semester/ / and they are supposed to interact in English all the time. /
/Then, there was a reading about		

food waste./ /Students had to read the text/ / and write down a paragraph// with some alternatives to avoid or solve this problem./ /Most of them were on task,/ / so they were trying to write down their ideas./ /Some students used Google translator/,/ some others asked the teacher if they could write some ideas/ / before writing the paragraph/, /some other talked to their partners/. /They had 20 minutes for this activity,/ /but only 7 students could finish it,/ /so the teacher told them to finish it for the following class./	/The teacher used a reading exercise/ / to give students some background information / /to write the paragraph./ / Unfortunately, some of them showed some lack of strategies/ /for generating ideas and writing the paragraph./	/Through these three last activities, / /there was an integration of the four language skills in the class./ / It would have been better if students had a structure to follow when writing the paragraph./ / On the other hand, the teacher could have given them some pre-writing ideas / /since students showed some difficulties when generating them./ /As a strength, all the materials were related to the main topic of the class / /and students showed interest and participation during the activities./

Appendix 3: Writing perceptions survey

MODERN LANGUAGES PROGRAM
WRITING PERCEPTIONS SURVEY

Part 1
Feelings and perceptions
Complete the sentence below with your personal opinion.
When I am asked to write in English, I feel

_____

_____

In a scale from 1 to 5, being 1 very easy, and 5 very difficult, answer the following questions.

	1	2	3	4	5
When writing in English, I find grammar					
When writing in English, I find spelling					
When writing in English, I find constructing paragraphs					
When writing in English, I find vocabulary					
For a writing task, I find working in groups					

Part 2
Knowledge of strategies
Answer **T** if the statement is True for you, and **F** if the statement is false for you.
➢ I have learned how to write the structure of a text _____
➢ I know how to state the main idea of a paragraph_____
➢ Before I start writing, I plan what I am going to write _____
➢ When I am writing, I can put my ideas in words quickly _____
➢ After writing, I usually check what I wrote to make corrections _____
➢ After writing, I usually ask another person to check what I wrote to make corrections _____

Use of strategies
Choose all the statements that are related to your own experience
When I write, I
   o Write random ideas about the topic
   o Organize the different ideas that will go in each part of the text
   o Write something really fast without thinking on any spelling or grammar mistakes.
   o Ask another person to read what I wrote and give me some recommendations.
   o Read and modify some of the ideas written before.
   o Write my ideas in Spanish and then I translate them.

Part 3

Choose all the options that are of your preference.

I would like to write

- o   E-mails.
- o   Letters.
- o   Posters
- o   Flyers.
- o   Paragraphs.
- o   Essays.
- o   Other. Give examples: _____

_____

Is writing easy or difficult for you? Why?

_____

_____

Which topics do you find more interesting to write about? Give examples

_____

_____

Thank you

Appendix 4: Workshops and worksheets

UNIVERSITY OF QUINDIO

Problem-Based Learning to Foster EFL Persuasive Writing: A Study
with Pre-Service Teachers of English
Designed by Lina Marcela Alfonso Bermúdez

N°	Name of Workshop	Topic
1	My education, my business (Part I)	Public higher education in Colombia
2	My education, my business (Part II)	Public higher education in Colombia
3	Providing our future generations with more hope	Drug abuse
4	A more sustainable city	Poverty and unemployment
5	Living from different perspectives	Mental health conditions
6	Life after Coronavirus	Social consequences of Covid-19

Workshop N°1

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write a persuasive poster using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

- Students will propose possible solutions to the current situation of higher public education in Colombia.

Writing strategies:

- Brainstorming – Rapid writing.

I.   Warm up

- The teacher will talk about the latest events regarding the situation of higher public education in Colombia. Then, she will project an image about the current situation of public education in Colombia **(WS #1)**.
- The teacher will ask the students how they can relate what they see in the image to the current situation of the University of Quindio and then, she will elicit some students' answers.

II.   Presentation

The purpose of the activity is for the ss to guess each other's questions

- The teacher will paste on each student's back one question **(WS #2)**. They will walk around answering each other's questions

without mentioning the original. After 10 minutes the T will ask different ss if they could guess the question and then there will be a discussion about the ss answers, opinions, or impressions.

III.   Practice

3.1   Pre-listening

- The ss will be divided in groups of 4, and the T will give each group a spider map **(WS #3)** and ask them to read the question and write what comes into their mind in each of the gaps. After 10 minutes, the T will ask a person form each group to report the answers as she writes them on the board. At the end, the teacher will explain that what they have just done is using brainstorming as a strategy for generating ideas before writing. Students will keep the spider map to use it in the last activity of the workshop.

B R A I N S T O R M I N G

The teacher will explain that brainstorming is a pre-writing strategy that consists on generating and writing down ideas collectively. In the same way, "brainstorming is not just a way to encourage new ideas, but to encourage all participants to contribute to teamwork (Wahib & Zidane, 2001).

3.2   While listening

- The ss will watch a video called "What's happening with the public education in Colombia?" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwDajPOh0bI and will answer some questions given in a handout **(WS #4).** The teacher will play the video twice.

- In pairs the ss will compare their answers. Then, the teacher will elicit some students' answers to check their understanding. After that ,ss will get in pairs, and talk about the video. The teacher will be moving around listening to the students' answers. After 10 minutes, the teacher will select 3 groups to present in front of the class.
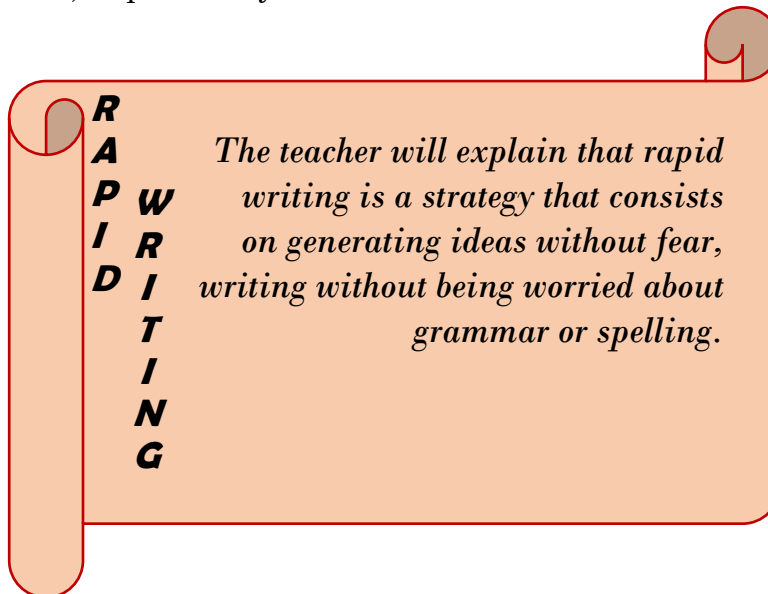
IV.   Production

- The teacher will ask students to go over the spider map and the answers from the listening comprehension exercise. Then, the teacher will write on the board:

What can students and the government do to improve public education in Colombia?

- Ss will be given 10 minutes to write 3 actions that can be done form the part of the ss and 3 actions from the part of the government. Then, in pairs they will discuss their answers.

R
A
P **W**
I **R**   *The teacher will explain that rapid*
D **I**   *writing is a strategy that consists*
       T   *on generating ideas without fear,*
       I   *writing without being worried about*
       N   *grammar or spelling.*
       G

V.   Evaluation

- In the same groups, ss will design and present a poster to propose 5 solutions to the main problems they could identify during

the previous activities. The teacher will collect the posters and give ss feedback at the beginning of the following class.
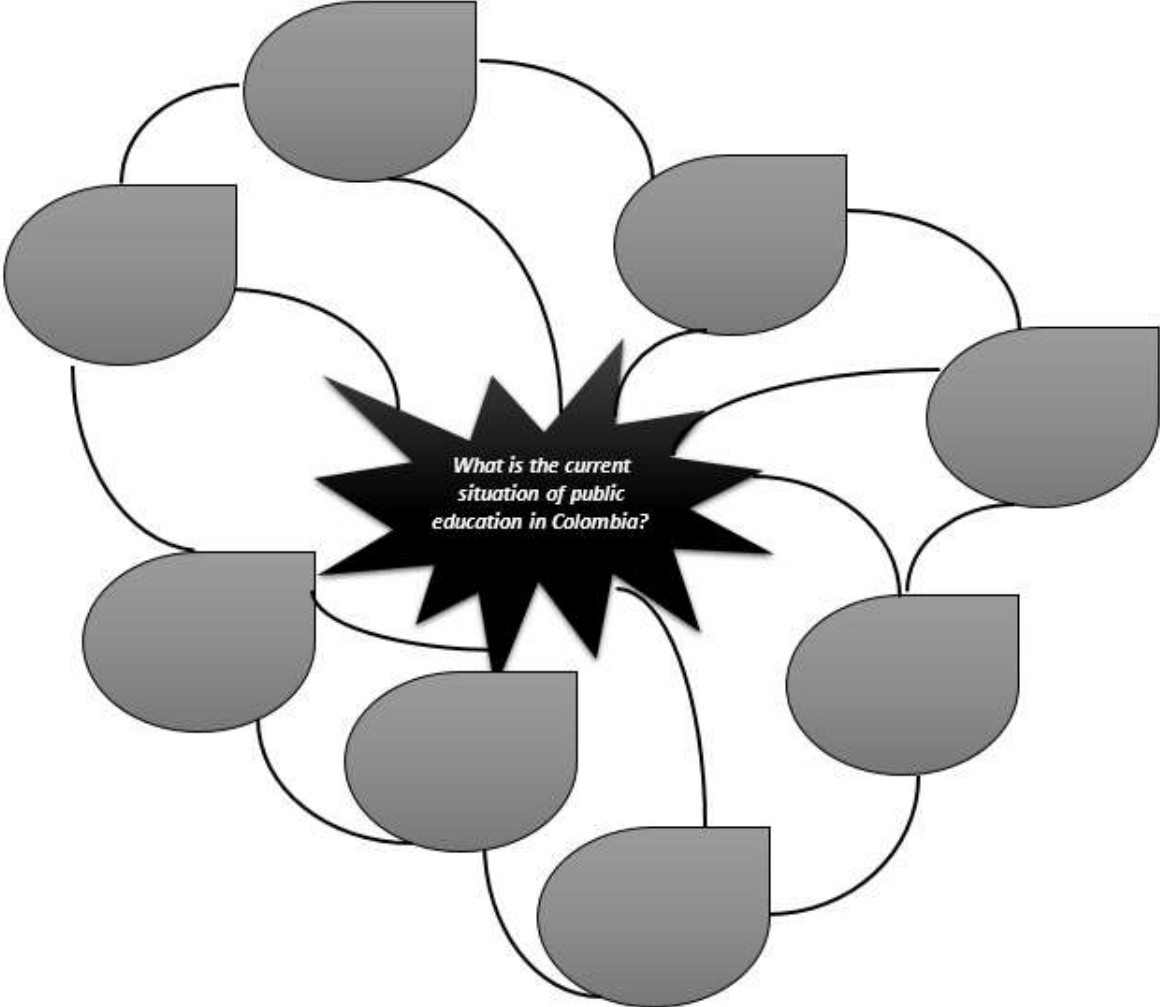
WORKSHEEET #1

WORKSHEET #2

How do you feel when there are college strikes?
How do you feel when politicians talk about the budget for education?
How do you feel when college leaders talk about education?
How do you feel when you are asked about the current situation of education in Colombia?
How do you feel when you have to pay for the semester?
How do you feel when you think about education in other countries?
How do you feel when someone asks your opinion about this university?
How do you feel when there are elections at the university?
How do you feel when talking about education in Colombia?
How do you feel when college students criticize the Colombian education system?

WORKSHEET #3

What is the current situation of public education in Colombia?

WORKSHEET #4

a. Why are public universities in crisis?

_____
_____
_____
_____

b. What are some negative repercussions of the program "ser pilo paga"?

_____
_____
_____
_____

c. What are youth asking for?

_____
_____
_____

d. In your opinion, is it possible to meet the demands college students disclosed? Why?

_____
_____
_____
_____

e. How has the Colombian government reacted towards Colombian college students' demands?

_____
_____
_____
_____

f. Why are not college students satisfied with the agreement signed with the government?

_____
_____
_____

g. Do you think the actions carried out by college students have had any positive outcomes in the Colombian education system?

_____
_____
_____

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write an action plan for the educational community of the university.
- Students will write an action plan using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

- Students will compile different suggestions and ideas to improve the education system at the University

Writing strategies:

- Sequence chart– Drafting

I.   Warm up

- The teacher will talk about the latest events regarding some issues related to public higher education in Colombia. Then, she will show some photos to illustrate this problematic. **(WS #1)**
- The teacher will ask the students for their opinion about the messages in the photos and then, she will elicit some students' answers.

II.   Presentation Debate sequence chart

- The students will watch a short lecture called "Education in Colombia" by Andreas Schleicher - Director for the Directorate of Education and Skills https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8gPnWcX5S4
- After the lecture, the ss will be divided in group of 4, ad the T will give each group a sequence chart **(WS #2)** and ask them to write down the most

relevant information they could identify in the video. After ten minutes, the T will ask a person from each group to write on the board one of the facts from the sequence chart. At the end, the T will explain that the sequence chart can be used as a pre-writing strategy.

**S
E
Q
U
E
N
C
E
  C
  H
  A
  R
  T**

A sequence chart is a tool to summarize a series of events chronologically, or by relevance.
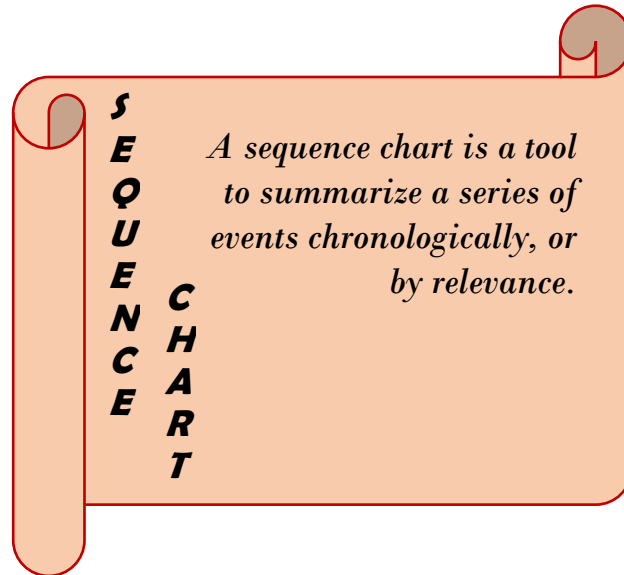
III.   Practice

a.   Pre-reading

- The ss will be divided in two groups to play charades. The T will give a word to one student from each group **(WS #3)** and they will have one minute to act it out. If his/her team guesses the word, they score a point. The group with more points wins.
- The T will ask ss how they can relate the words from the previous activity to the main topic of the workshop **"*A better education system in Colombia"*.** The T will elicit some of the ss' answers and ask them to find them in the article "Colombia: Thousands of March in Defense of Public Universities", written by a Colombian student and published in the Harvard Magazine **(WS #4)**

b.   While- reading

- In pairs, the ss will read the article given in the previous activity **(WS #4)** and identify the main idea on each paragraph. The T will project the text on the board and will select one group per paragraph to

go to the board and underline the main idea. The ss will receive feedback if necessary.

c. <u>Post- reading</u>

- The students will complete some sentences about the text by writing down their personal opinion **(WS #5)**. The teacher will elicit some of their answers and write them on the board. Then, ss will identify any similarities among their responses.

IV. Production

- The teacher will ask students to go over the sequence chart and the answers from the post-reading activity. In pairs, ss will write a 3 paragraph draft explaining possible actions that new generations can implement to contribute to have a better education in our country.
- Then, ss will swap their drafts and give peer feedback to another pair. The teacher will be moving around checking ss' corrections and answering any questions that arise. Finally, ss' will give their writings back and check the feedback given by their partners.

D R A F T I N G

The teacher will explain that drafting is a process of putting thoughts in paper following some pre-writing ideas (in this case the sequence chart and the whole reading activity). This allows the writer to make changes to improve his/ her writing

V. Evaluation

- In the same groups, ss will design and present an action plan to propose how they can contribute to have a better education system in Colombia. The teacher will give them some guidelines **(WS #5)** to

do it. At the end, the T will collect the action plans and give ss feedback at the beginning of the following class.
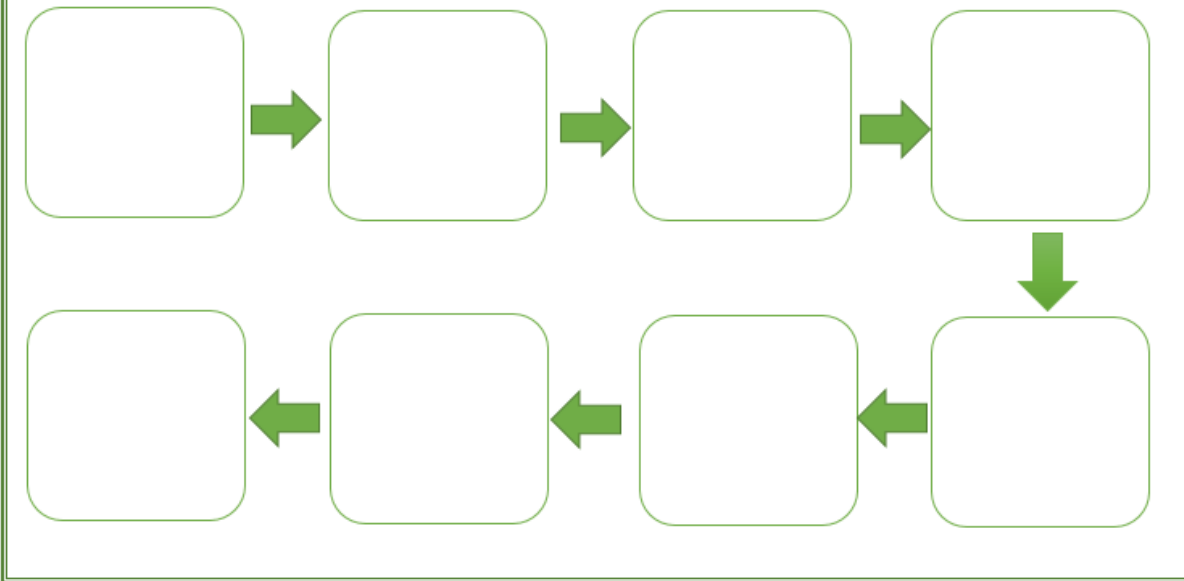
WORKSHEET #1

WORSKHEET #2

WORKSHEET #3

Money   **Education**

Professors   **Strike**

Resources   **Deficit**

WORKSHEET #4

Worksheet #4: Read the following text

Colombia: Thousands of March in Defense of Public Universities

Colombian students and professors are demanding higher budgets to avert a funding crisis in the public system. Thousands of students, professors, and university directors of 32 public universities in Colombia participated in the National March in Defense of Higher Education to demand higher budgets and transparency from the national government.

Ahead of the march, students of several faculties in Colombia's public universities organized a student strike and held permanent assemblies to discuss the student movement's demands.

Colombians are demanding higher budgets for public education, which for years has lagged behind inflation despite the fact that the public system continues to grow and accommodate more students, many of whom cannot afford private universities. According to the organizers, public universities are facing a deficit of US$1 million in outstanding salaries to professors and administrative expenses, and US$4.9 million to maintain quality in education and infrastructure.

Alejandro Palacio, president of Colombia's university student's association (ACREES) argues investment in education is deficient because it doesn't take into consideration investment in research. "For next year with the resources the state gives public universities, it will not be enough to cover the payroll for the National University. That is when you see the defunding, when they say there is no money to buy paper, change light bulbs," Palacio argued.

According to analysts, the lack of government resources have led to universities trying to produce income, negatively affecting access. "For years ago, enrollment fees at the National University was around 400,000 pesos (US$131)and for 2018 it went up to 800,000 (US$262), that is double the amount and the programs for student well being have decreased," Palacio explained.

Students from private universities also joined the march. "We join because right now were are in a context of a fractured education system. If the public universities are at their limit, on the side of private institutions the middle class that is impoverished is being strangled and cannot pay an enrollment fee of 20 minimum wages," Cesar Vargas, student leader of the Universidad de Los Andes said.

Students and professors are also demanding the government guarantee their right to protest, in a context where state officials have sought to delegitimize social protests by accusing them of receiving funding by illegal armed groups.

Retrieved from: https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/education-colombia

WORKSHEET #5

My education, my business

Worksheet #5

Complete the following sentences with your personal opinion

1. Colombian students and professors are demanding…
   _____
2. Public universtities in Colombia are facing…
   _____
3. Investment in education is…
   _____
4. In 10 years, public education in Colombia will…
   _____
5. A good aspect that education in Colombia has is…
   _____
6. Students have the right to…
   _____
7. Students have the responsibility to…
   _____
8. I can contribute to have a better education system in Colombia if…
   _____

WORKSHEET #6

Action Plan Guidelines

1. Define the 3 problems that you will address.
2. Write down the steps to be followed to solve each problem.
3. State how complying those steps will be helpful to solve each problem.
4. Explain possible obstacles that would impede to carry out the action plan.

Providing our future generations with more hope
Workshop N°3

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write a bulletin board display about teenage drug abuse
- Students will design a bulletin board display using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

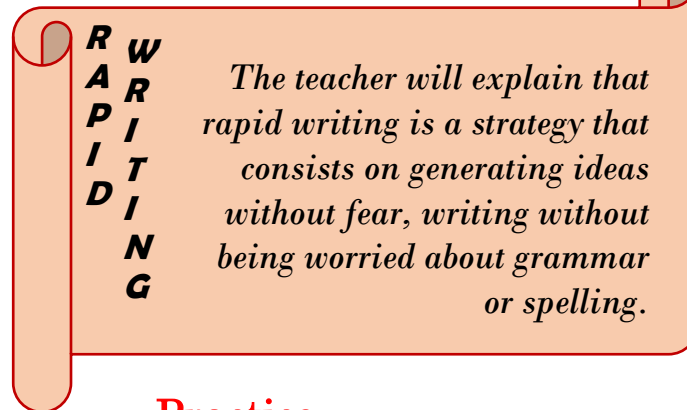- Students will compile different suggestions and ideas to prevent teen drug abuse.

Writing strategies:

- Clustering– Rapid writing

I.   Warm up

- Each student will have a red and a green object (any object that they have at home). The red object represents *"Agree"*, and the green one represents *"Disagree".* Ss will be asked to turn their cameras on because the teacher will read some facts about teenage drug abuse **(WS #1)** and they will raise the card that best represents their opinion. The teacher will ask some of them to give reasons to support their choice.

II.   Presentation: Public chatroom

- The teacher will create a WhatsApp group with the participants to fulfil this activity. She will ask a question related to teenage drug abuse (WS #2) and ss will write their answer on the chat as fast as they can. Once they finish, every student will reply to five of classmates' answers.
- Then, students will identify the commonalities in the replies. The teacher will elicit some of their answers orally using zoom video calling as the means to have synchronous communication.

R A P I D   W R I T I N G

The teacher will explain that rapid writing is a strategy that consists on generating ideas without fear, writing without being worried about grammar or spelling.

III.   Practice

a.   Pre-speaking

- The ss will be divided in groups of 4 breakout rooms in zoom. Each group will have a different text about drug abuse (WS #3). Together, they will read it and answer some comprehension questions orally. The teacher will monitor them while they are doing the activity.

b.   While- speaking

- Once they have mastered the text and answered the comprehension questions, students share their newfound expertise through short oral presentations. While doing so, the rest of the class will be paying attention and writing down relevant information.

c.   Post- speaking

- The teacher will read one statement to the class (WS #4). Based on the presentations of the previous activity, students will write in the video call chat the title of the text they think best describes the statement. They will also support their answers orally. If participants' opinions vary, they will refute each other's opinion.

IV.   Production - clustering

- Students will receive a cluster diagram **(WS #5)** and taking into consideration the ideas explored in the previous activities, they will identify any negative consequences when they see the phrase *"Teenage drug abuse"* and write them down in the circles.
- Then, ss will come up with possible solutions or alternatives for each negative consequence, and write them down on the squares.

C L U S T E R I N G

The teacher will explain that clustering is a strategy that allows ss to explore many ideas as soon as they occur, and to explore the relationships among them.
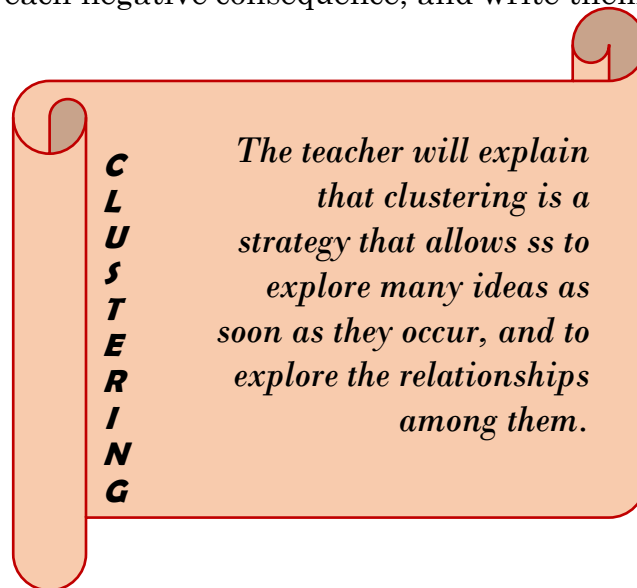
V.   Evaluation

- Each student will design and present a bulletin board with suggestions and ideas to prevent teenage drug abuse. The teacher will give ss some guidelines **(WS #6)** to do it. After receiving feedback from the teacher, participants will publish their designs on the Facebook group of the course.

WORKSHEET #1

Worksheet #1: Facts about teenage drug abuse

1. Children and teens who use alcohol and drugs are more likely to have a substance use disorder as adults.
2. There is a clear link between depression and substance abuse.
3. Smoking marijuana regularly is harmful.
4. Alcohol is the substance most widely used by teenagers.
5. Teenage drug abuse also includes using legal medications without a prescription.

Source: https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/substance-abuse/10-facts-teen-drug-abuse/

WORKSHEET #2

Why do teenagers become addicted to drugs or to alcohol?

WORKSHEET #3

Text #1

HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

Rave Realities: The Truth About Club Drugs

Some teens go to all-night dances, called raves or trances. Some like to party at clubs. Many of the young people who are into the club and dance scene don't do drugs. But some do. They may be attracted to club drugs like MDMA (ecstasy) because they promise increased stamina for hours of dancing and intoxicating highs. But what these teens don't know may hurt, or even kill, them. Here are the facts on club drugs.

MDMA (Ecstasy)

The so-called "love drug" can cause psychological problems like confusion, depression, sleep problems, and severe anxiety. MDMA can also cause physical difficulties, such as faintness, nausea, muscle tension, blurred vision, involuntary teeth clenching, and chills or sweating. MDMA can also cause severe overheating. In rare cases, this has led to death in MDMA users. Some side effects of MDMA don't go away when the drug wears off. Depressed feelings can emerge several days after MDMA is taken. Animal studies show that MDMA can cause brain damage; this may also occur in people.

LSD

A hallucinogen, LSD causes extreme changes in sensory perceptions. Also known as acid, the drug produces physical effects including tremors, sleeplessness, dry mouth, dilated

Methamphetamine

This highly addictive drug has many street names—speed, ice, chalk, meth, crystal, crank, fire, and glass. It's a stimulant with many serious health risks. Methamphetamine can cause memory loss, aggression, violence, psychotic behavior, heart problems, brain damage, stroke, and extreme anorexia. Scientists are investigating whether heavy, long-term methamphetamine use contributes to a permanent loss of muscle control that includes shakes and tremors. This drug can kill in many ways; for example, by causing convulsions, dangerously high body temperature, and disabling heart and lung function.

Questions to answer orally about text #1

Text #2

HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

Club-Drug Cheat Sheet

Now that you've read the facts on club drugs, how will you remember them? One helpful way to process new information is to use a graphic organizer, called a web. Use the Rave Realities page to fill in the specific types of club drugs and their effects.

MDMA
type of drug

EFFECTS
Hyperthermia
_____
_____
_____
_____

type of drug

EFFECTS
_____
_____
_____
_____

CLUB DRUGS

Text #2

Text #3

HEADS UP
REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

FAQs on Cocaine

1. WHAT IS COCAINE?

Cocaine is a very addictive drug that is sold illegally in form of a fine, white, crystalline powder. This drug's many street names include coke, snow, blow, toot, and rock.

2. WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Cocaine is made from the leaves of the coca plant.

3. HOW IS IT USED?

It is snorted through the nostrils in powder form. It may also be injected into the veins in a liquid form.

4. HOW IS CRACK DIFFERENT FROM COCAINE?

Crack is the crystallized or freebase form of cocaine, and it is usually smoked in a pipe.

5. WHY IS COCAINE DANGEROUS?

Cocaine is an addictive stimulant that speeds up your heart and causes your blood vessels to narrow. Cocaine use can cause heart attacks, stroke, dangerously high body temperature

7. WHAT'S WRONG WITH A BUILDUP OF DOPAMINE?

The buildup of dopamine is bad because it causes an extra sense of pleasure for a short time. This leads to two problems. First, your brain is wired to want to repeat activities that lead to pleasure.

Second, users may lose the ability to experience pleasure without cocaine—and may also need more and more of the drug just to keep from feeling bad.

Questions to answer orally about text #2

Text #4

Mixed-up About Heroin, continued

It is an opiate, or drug that comes from opium, the white liquid produced by the poppy plant.

What is heroin?

Heroin is highly addictive and it carries serious health risks.

Heroin abuse can also lead to collapsed veins, bacterial infections of the blood vessels and heart valves, as well as liver or kidney disease.

DRAW YOUR OWN CONCLUSION

Text #3

Text #5

HEADS UP REAL NEWS ABOUT DRUGS AND YOUR BODY

Top 10 Things You Need to Know About Inhalants

Educate yourself about this dangerous class of drugs with our Top 10 list below. Then, complete the true/false activity on the next page.

1 Household products can be dangerous. Inhalants are breathable chemical vapors that produce mind-altering effects. Some of these come from everyday household products like spray paint, glues, and cleaning fluids. But these toxic chemicals were never meant to be inside a human body!

2 Using inhalants just one time can kill you. Sniffing highly concentrated amounts of the chemicals in solvents or aerosol sprays can cause heart attacks and even death within minutes. Known as "Sudden Sniffing Death," this can happen the first time you use inhalants or anytime after. You can also die from lack of oxygen, since you are filling your lungs with chemicals instead of air.

3 No matter how inhalants are taken, they still spell danger. Inhalants are breathed in through the nose or mouth in a number of ways, variously called sniffing, snorting, huffing, or bagging. But there is no safe way to breathe toxic fumes.

4 Your brain may never be the same again. The poison in inhalants can kill so many brain cells that brain tissue actually shrinks. People who abuse inhalants may have difficulty with memory, learning, and thinking.

7 You can lose your hearing for good. Use of toluene (a chemical found in spray paints and glues) and trichloroethylene (a chemical found in cleaning fluids and correction fluids) can cause hearing loss.

8 The destruction could go as deep as inside your bones. Use of benzene (or gasoline) can damage bone marrow.

9 Damage can go beyond your brain and bones. Chronic exposure to inhalants can lead to significant damage to the heart, lungs, liver, and kidneys.

10 Fewer teens are trying inhalants. According to a recent NIDA-funded study, 17.1 percent of 8th-graders surveyed had tried inhalants in 2001. In 2002, that number decreased to 15.2 percent.

Questions to answer orally about text #1

Text #6

True or False?

What's the truth? Read these statements about inhalants. Mark "T" for statements you think are true, and "F" for statement you think are false. Then, double-check your answers by reviewing what you read in "Top 10 Things You Need to Know About Inhalants."

____ Inhalants can cause heart attacks.

____ Aerosol sprays are not toxic.

____ Toluene (a chemical found in spray paints) is the only harmless inhalant.

____ Inhalant abusers are at risk for depression.

____ According to a 2002 study, more than 50% of 8th-graders surveyed had tried inhalants.

____ Inhalants help speed messages through nerves by building myelin.

____ Inhalants can cause permanent hearing loss.

Text #4 with the questions to answer orally

Text #7

A Prescription for Pain

Most people who take prescription drugs do so in a form and dose that a doctor orders. But some people take medicine for non-medical purposes. That's drug abuse, and it can have serious health consequences. Here's some info on a few commonly abused prescription drugs. Once you've reviewed it, complete the true/false quiz based on the graph at right.

- **OxyContin** and **Vicodin** are painkillers. They belong to the same class of drugs as heroin. When used for non-medical purposes, OxyContin and Vicodin can cause addiction, slowing or stopping of breathing, and death.

- **Tranquilizers** and **barbiturates** are used to treat anxiety, panic attacks, and sleep disorders. They are depressants, which means they slow down brain activity. This produces a calming effect. When they're abused, they create the potential for addiction.

- Methylphenidate, also known as **Ritalin**, is a stimulant used to treat Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Stimulants increase brain activity and can lead to greater alertness and attention. If used inappropriately (not as medically prescribed), stimulants can cause dangerously high body temperatures, irregular heartbeat, seizures, and heart attack.
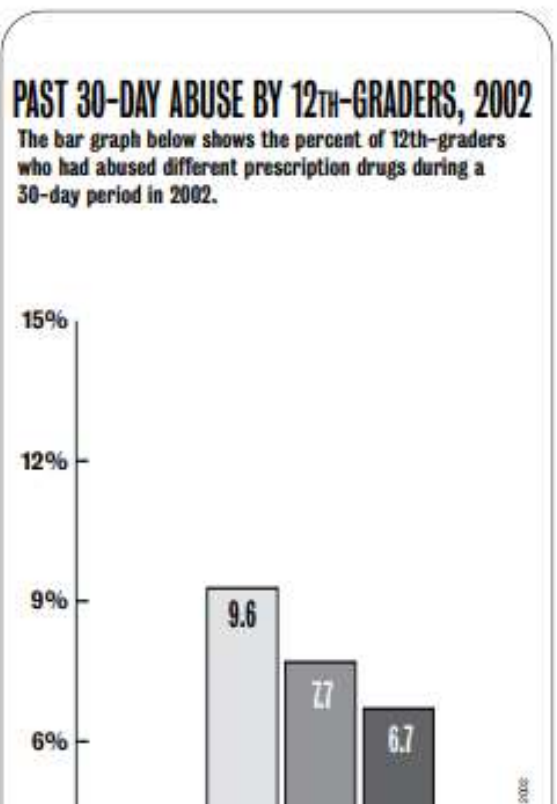
PAST 30-DAY ABUSE BY 12TH-GRADERS, 2002

The bar graph below shows the percent of 12th-graders who had abused different prescription drugs during a 30-day period in 2002.

15%

12%

9% — 9.6

7.7

6.7

6%

TRUE/FALSE QUIZ

1. The graph shows the percentage of 10th graders who abuse prescription drugs.
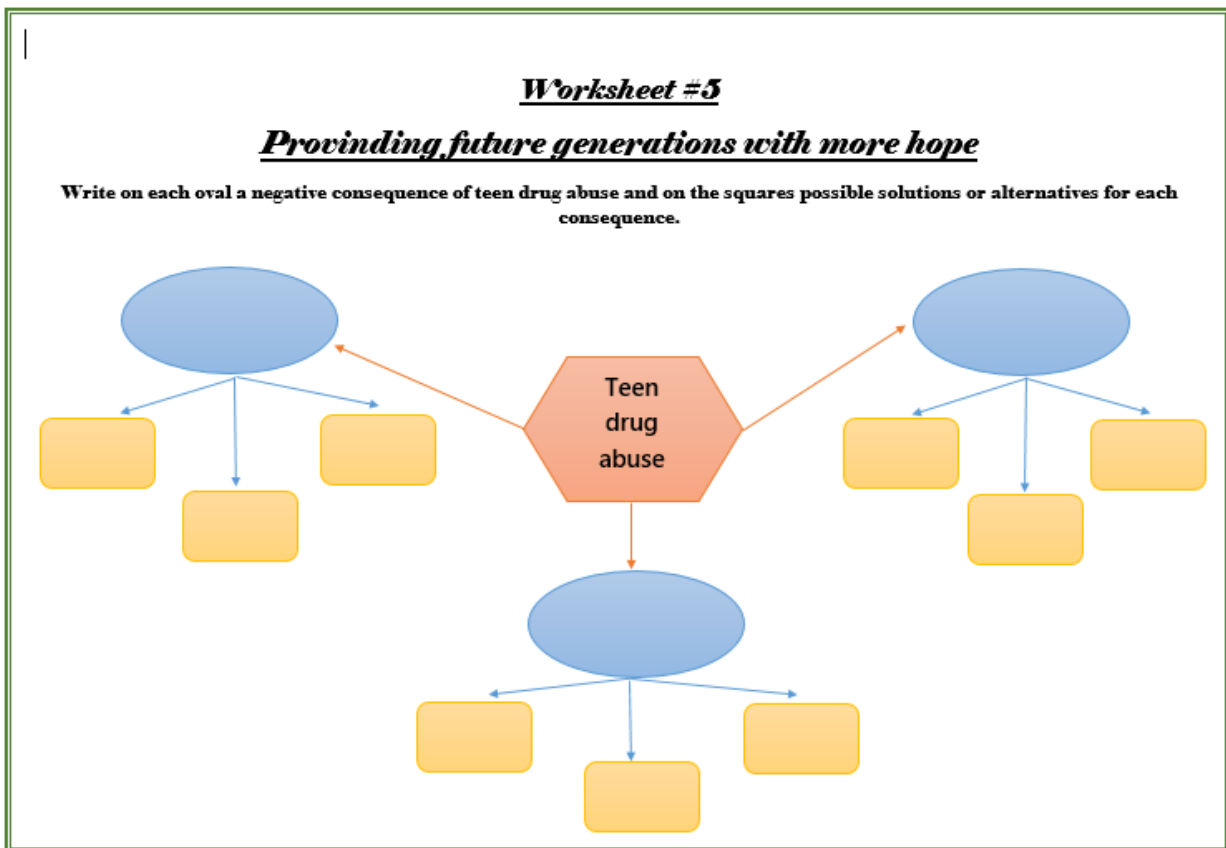
TRUE   FALSE

WORKSHEET #4

Worksheet #4: Statements to be read to the students + answers

1. Drugs increase stamina for hours of dancing (Text #1)

2. A hallucinogen causes extreme changes in sensory perceptions (Text #1)

3. This drug stimulates the brain reward pathway, which makes a person feel pleasure (Text #2)

4. This is an addictive stimulant that speeds your heart and causes your blood vessels to narrow (Text #2)

5. They are chemical vapors that produce mind-altering effects (Text #3)

6. These type of drugs can affect an abuser's mood even when he or she is not huffing (Text #3).

7. These drugs are supposed to be used for medical purposes only (Text #4).

WORKSHEET #5

Worksheet #5
Provinding future generations with more hope

Write on each oval a negative consequence of teen drug abuse and on the squares possible solutions or alternatives for each consequence.

Teen drug abuse

WORKSHEET #6

Worksheet #6

Bulletin Board Guidelines

1. Write down the most important negative consequences about teenage drug abuse
2. Use some catching images to represent the consequences.
3. State some suggestions and ideas to prevent teenage drug abuse.
4. Support your ideas with facts and real life examples.
5. Be as creative as possible.

University of Quindío
Modern Languages Program

A more sustainable city
Workshop N°4

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write a newspaper report about unemployment in Armenia.
- Students will write a newspaper report using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

- Students will compile different suggestions and ideas to diminish unemployment rates in Armenia.

Writing strategies:

- Brainstorming – Sentence strip paragraphs

I.   Warm up

- Ss will get in pairs, and the teacher will project a question on the screen **(WS#1)** related to unemployement. They will talk about it for a minute. At the end, the teacher will elicit some of their answers.

II.   Presentation

- The ss go the PADLET webpage (https://es.padlet.com/dashboard) **(WS #2)**. There, they will find several illustrations. Under each illustration, they will write down two ideas that come to their mind when they see each of them.
- At the end, together ss will go through the ideas written by them and their partners, and identify some similarities among them.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming a pre-writing strategy that consists on generating and writing down ideas collectively. In the same way, "brainstorming is not just a way to encourage new ideas, but to encourage all participants to contribute to teamwork (Wahib & Zidane, 2001).

III.   Practice

     a.   Pre-reading

- The ss will be in pairs. They will read a quote **(WS #3)** and think on a question related to it. They will write it down and send it to the chat as a private message to the teacher. She will paste those questions on an online wheel picker (https://wheelofnames.com/54s-btw) Each pair will be assigned randomly one question written by their partners and try to answer it. Then, they will socialize their ideas.

b. <u>While- reading: Create a headline for each paragraph</u>

- In pairs (Breakout rooms), the ss will read an article with news related to unemployment in Colombia **(WS #4).** Then, they will create a headline for each paragraph and write it down.

c. <u>Post- reading : A new scene of the news</u>

- In pairs (Breakout rooms), students will plan a new scene of the news previously read. They will write a title for the newspaper, the headline, and the description of the issue in question: Unemployment rate in Armenia.

IV. <u>Production Sentence strip paragraph</u>

- The ss will work in pairs. In a template for sentence strip paragraphs **(WS #5),** and based in the "art gallery activity", they will write the most relevant ideas with different suggestions to diminish the unemployment rate in Armenia.
- Once ss have written down their ideas, they will read through all the sentences together and take the ones they consider more achievable. At the end they will share them with the rest of the class.

SENTENCE STRIP PARAGRAPH

A sentence strip paragraph is a pre writing strategy that consists on students working in small groups to create sentences, and use them to construct a paragraph.

V.   Evaluation flyer

- In the same groups, ss will design and present a newspaper report with suggestions and ideas to diminish the unemployment rate in Armenia. The teacher will give them some guidelines **(WS #6)** to do it. At the end, the ss will take the role of news anchors to present it.
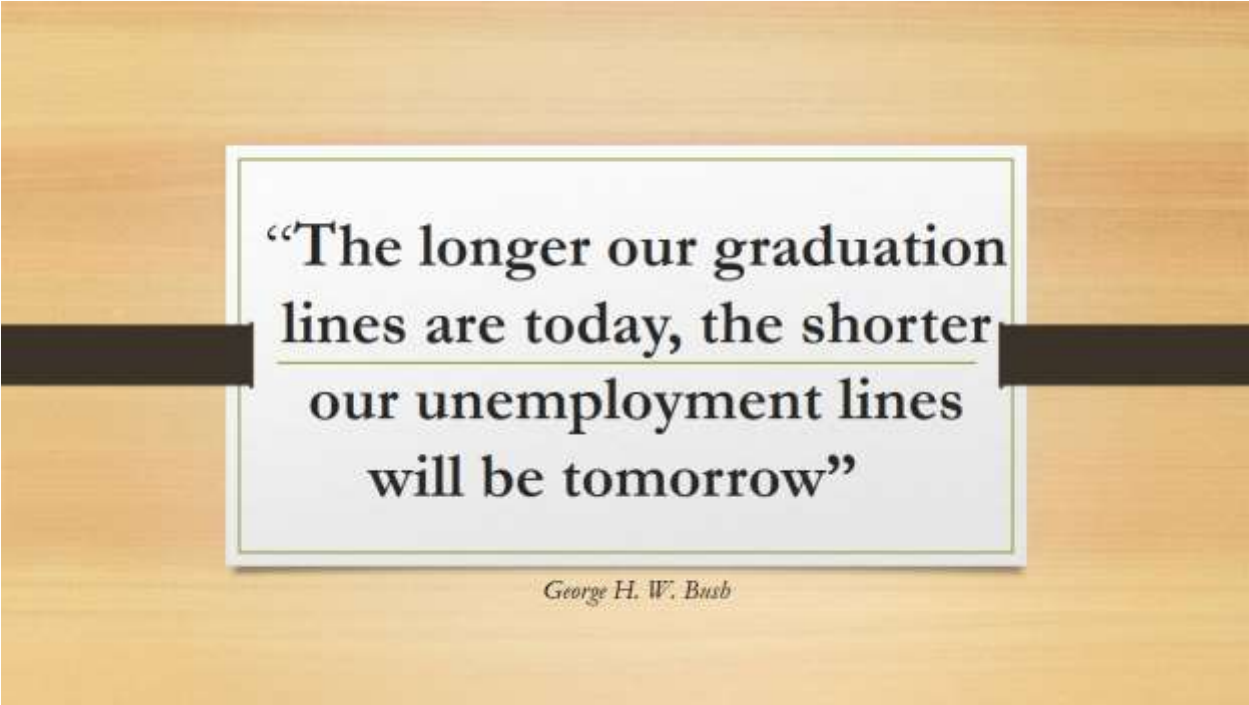
WORKSHEET #1

WORKSHEET #2

WORKSHEET #3

"The longer our graduation lines are today, the shorter our unemployment lines will be tomorrow"

George H. W. Bush

Worksheet #4

A more sustainable city

Read and write a headline for each paragraph

<div style="border:1px solid green; height:2em;"></div>

The most recent rise in unemployment followed a global commodity crash in 2014 commodity crisis that hit many economies around the world, and particularly South America. Unlike the rest of the region, Colombia has yet to recover from this crisis in regard to employment.

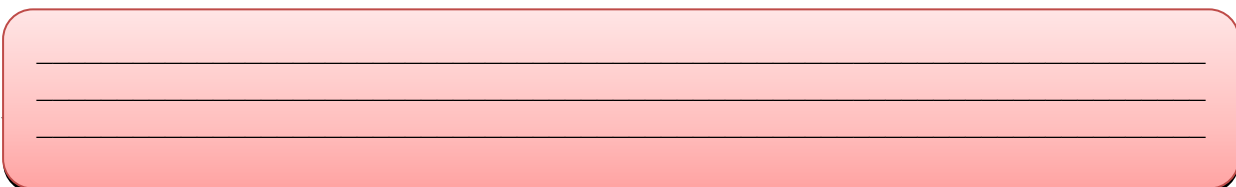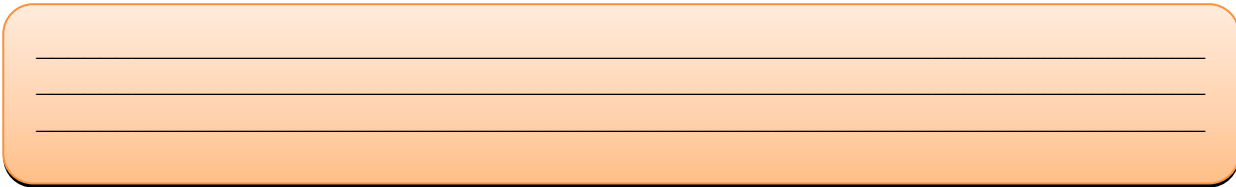<div style="border:1px solid green; height:2em;"></div>

Unemployment among women in Colombia was 70% higher than among men in 2019. This is particular dramatic among young women under 28 whose unemployment rate rose to 25.2% last year.

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Colombia's mass displacement and consequent urbanization in the 1990s and beginning of this century have caused a major disparity between unemployment in the country's 13 largest cities and the countryside.

<div style="border:1px solid green; height:2em;"></div>

Until 2019, the majority of Colombians who are employed are not formally employed and thus not receiving the social security benefits that come with formal employment. It is unclear what created last year's statistical blip.

Worksheet #5
A more sustainable city

Write on each box different suggestions to dimish the unemployement rate in Armenia.

Newspaper Report Guidelines

1. Create a design for your newspaper.
2. Write on your report the title for the newspaper, the headline, and the description of the news scene of the news that you created during the post- reading activity.
3. Use the ideas that you wrote down in the sentence strip to compile different suggestions to diminish unemployement rates in Armenia.
4. Support your ideas with facts and real life examples.
5. Be as creative as possible.

Living from different perspectives
Workshop N°5

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write a brochure about mental illnesses
- Students will design a brochure using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

- Students will discuss different suggestions and ideas on how society can help people who suffer depression, anxiety, or obsessive compulsive disorder.

Writing strategies:

- Brainstorming– Drafting

I. Warm up

- The students will sit down in a circle with their eyes closed. The teacher will play a video called "This is not the end" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBGvOmUhhq4. Students will listen attentively while reflecting on what they are listening to. At the end, they will share some reflections about the message given in the audio.

II. Presentation

- In pairs, ss will receive a set of statements related to mental health *(WS #1)*. They will decide whether those statements are true or false based on their background knowledge. At the end, every pair will

share their opinion of one of the statements. The rest of the group will give their opinion.

- Finally, the teacher will provide feedback if necessary.

III.   Practice

a.   Pre- writing

- The ss will be in groups of three. The teacher will assign each group a mental illness (Depression, bipolar disorders, anxiety, eating disorders, obsessive- compulsive disorder) and they will write on a spider map (*WS #2)* the ideas that come to their mind. Then, they will share their answers with the rest of the group without telling them the name of the illness. Based on their partners' ideas, the classmates will try to guess what the mental illness is.

B R A I N S T O R M I N G

It is a pre-writing strategy that consists on generating and writing down ideas collectively. In the same way, "brainstorming is not just a way to encourage new ideas, but to encourage all participants to contribute to teamwork (Wahib & Zidane, 2001).

b.   While- writing

- In pairs, ss will receive a worksheet in which there is a chart with some mental illnesses (*WS #3).* They will complete it by answering what they know and what can be done to reduce its effects.
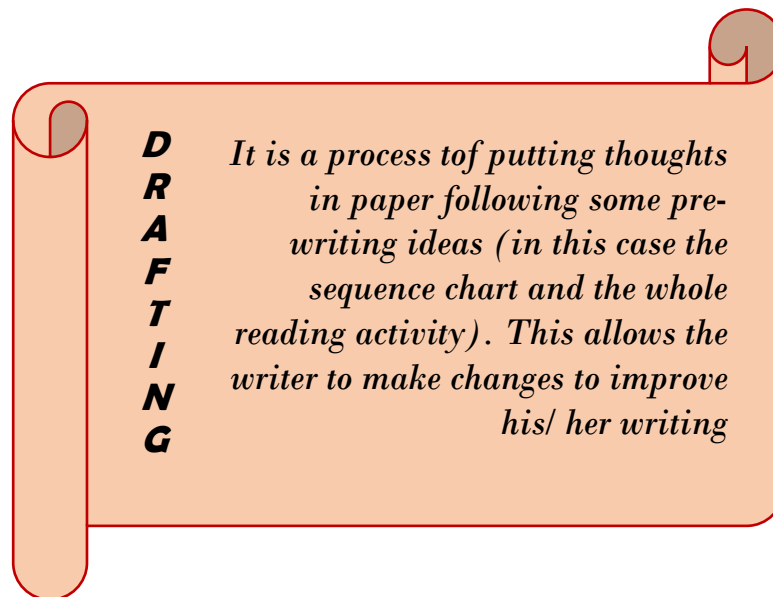
c. <u>Post- writing</u>

- Each pair will present their chart to the rest of the class. While listening, ss will write down the definitions or solutions that they find more accurate.
- At the end, with the help of the students, the teacher will write on the board the most common answers.

IV. Production

- Based on the previous activities, ss will get in pairs to write a draft in which they include a description of the way in which culture influences the view of mental illnesses. They will research online two myths that people have about mental illnesses and the facts, an example of a situation that might lead to a mental illness, and three suggestions of how society can help people who suffer of mental illnesses.
- At the end, ss will exchange drafts among them to get some feedback.

D R A F T I N G *It is a process tof putting thoughts in paper following some pre-writing ideas (in this case the sequence chart and the whole reading activity). This allows the writer to make changes to improve his/ her writing*

V. Evaluation

- In the same pairs, ss will design and present a brochure with all the ideas that they wrote in the draft. The teacher will give

them some guidelines **(WS #4)** to do it. The teacher will collect the brochures and give ss feedback at the beginning of the following class. Then, the ss will take pictures of their brochure and share them on the facebook page of the University.
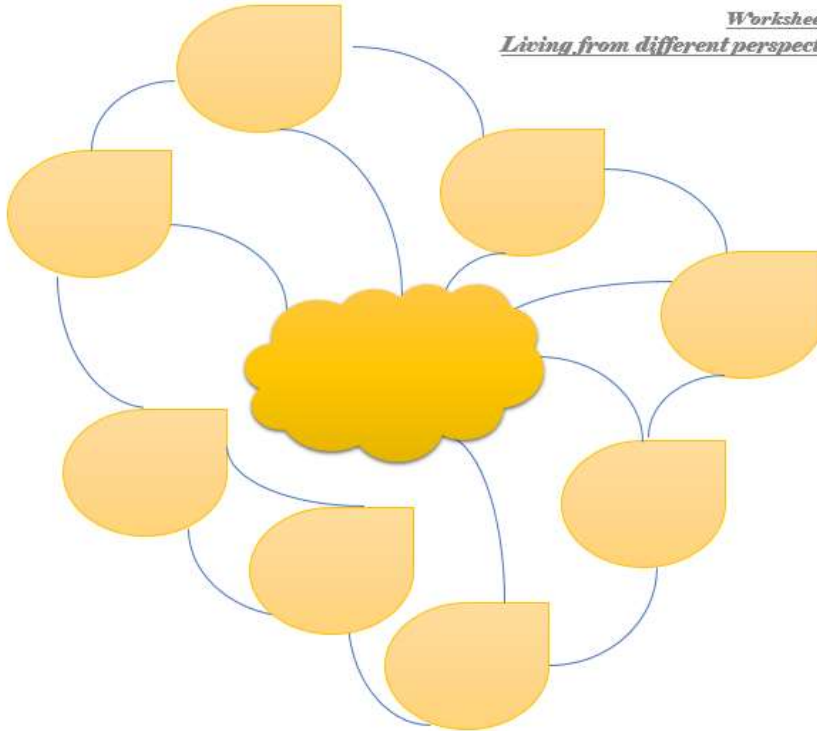
WORKSHEET #1

Worksheet #1
Living from different perspectives

Decide whether the following statements are true or false

1. People with mental illnesses are violent and unpredictable.
   True / False
2. Mental illnesses are a consequence of a weakness in character.
   True / False
3. There are effective treatment options to people with mental illnesses. *True / False*
4. As a friend, you cannot do anything for a person with mental health difficulties. *True / False*
5. People with any mental illness can work. *True / False*

WORKSHEET #2

WORKSHEET #3

Worksheet #3
Living from different perspectives

Complete the following table: What do you know about every illness, what can be done?

Mental illness	What you know	What to do
Depression		
Anxiety		
Bipola disorder		

Eating disorders		
Obsessive-Compulsive disorder		

WORKSHEET #4

Brochure Guidelines

1. Create a design for your brochure (Include 3 faces per side)
2. Use the ideas that you wrote down in the sentence strip to write the following elements on your brochure:

   ✓ On the first face, a title and an image to represent it.
   ✓ On the second face, write one common myth and its fact regarding mental illnesses. Illustrate it.
   ✓ On the third face, write another myth regarding mental illnesses. Illustrate it.
   ✓ On the fourth face, write an example that might lead to a mental illness.
   ✓ On the fifth face, write three suggestions of how society can help people who suffer of mental illnesses.

3. Be as creative as possible.

Life after coronavirus
Workshop N°6

Writing objectives:

- Students will learn about different strategies to write an infographic about lessons learned from Coronavirus.
- Students will design an infographic using the six traits of writing: Ideas, sentence fluency, word choice, organization, voice, and conventions.

Problem-solving Objective:

- Students will compile different suggestions and ideas about the lessons the world should have learned from Covid-19.

Writing strategies:
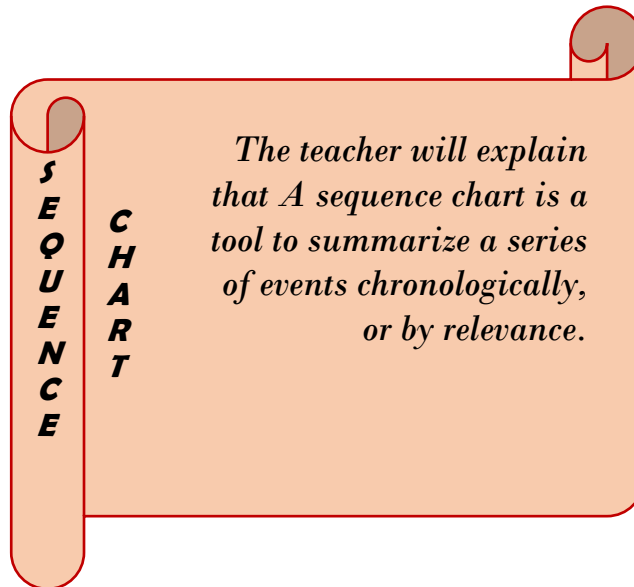
- Sequence chart - Clustering

I.   Warm-up

- The teacher will provide students with some prompts to complete a survey related to Covid-19. They will answer it and then share it orally with the rest of the class. While doing so, the teacher will ask to expand them by referring to their own experiences.

II.   Presentation: Public chatroom

- Taking into consideration the answers to the previous activity, students will complete a diagram posted by the teacher on

the webpage <u>nearpod.com</u> This will be completed using a sequence chart as a pre-writing strategy. The teacher will remind them of its definition and usefulness for the writing process. In this chart, they will answer the question *"How has your life changed since the Covid-19 outbreak?".* Then, the teacher will show everybody's answers and participants will read them, find commonalities, and share them with the rest of the class.

S E Q U E N C E   **C H A R T**

The teacher will explain that A sequence chart is a tool to summarize a series of events chronologically, or by relevance.

III.   Practice

a.   Pre-listening

- The ss will answer the questions: Is it possible to predict an epidemic? "is the world ready for the next pandemic?". This will be some time for discussion and analysis. Then, they will share their answers and reply orally to their classmate´s responses.

b.   While- listening

- After discussing the previous questions, ss will watch the TedTalk video *"The next outbreak? We're not ready"* made by Bill Gates in 2014. (https://www.ted.com/talks/bill_gates_the_next_outbreak_we_re_not_ready). They will identify the most important points presented by Bill Gates. Then, they will socialize them with the rest of the class.

c. Post- listening

- Ss will be divided into groups of 3 in Breakout Rooms. They will identify any coincidences in Gates' words and the current situations that the world is experimenting because of Covid-19. Then, they will make a two-minute oral presentation comparing the information of the video with what's happening in the world right now.

IV. Production

In the same groups, ss will answer the question posed in the video (*The next outbreak? We're not ready"*) by using clustering as a writing strategy to explore their ideas and to be critical of the topic. They will give their responses based on the experiences related to their context, in terms of social, political, academic, and economic views.

CLUSTERING

The teacher will explain that clustering is a strategy that allows ss to explore many ideas as soon as they occur, and to explore the relationships among them.

V. Evaluation

- In the same groups, ss will design and present an infographic telling what the world should have learned from this pandemic, and using facts to support their arguments and the information they wrote in the sequence chart and clustering activities The teacher will collect the infographics and give ss feedback at the beginning of the following class. Then, the ss will publish their writing outcomes in the Facebook group of the class.

Appendix 5: Teacher's journal format

UNIVERSITY OF QUINDÍO
MODERN LANGUAGES PROGRAM
PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TO FOSTER EFL PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS' PERSUASIVE WRITING.
TEACHER REFLECTION JOURNAL

NAME OF THE WORKSHOP: _____   **DATE:** _____

Which students captured my attention today? Why?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Which activities really worked today? Why?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What can be improved from the workshop?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

What did I find challenging in today's workshop?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

If I had to describe in one phrase today's workshop, what would it be?
_____
_____
_____

Appendix 6: Persuasive writing rubric

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MODERN LANGUAGES PROGRAM

	Novice (1.5)	Developing (3.0)	Proficient (5.0)

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TO FOSTER EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' PERSUASIVE WRITING.

Objective: To assess the students' persuasive writing skill.

Ideas	Does not state arguable claims or proposes solutions or ways to approach the problem of concern.	Arguable claims or solutions to approach the problem of concern are confusing or inconclusive.	States arguable claims and proposes solutions or ways to approach the problem of concern.
Sentence fluency	Sentences are awkward, incomplete, and difficult to understand.	Some sentences are awkward or unrelated to the main issue.	Sentences are clear, complete, coherent, and in varied length.
Word choice	Vocabulary is repetitive, inappropriate, or confusing to the reader.	Some words are repeated or irrelevant.	Vocabulary is precise, varied, and relevant.
Organization	Presentation does not show a clear sequence and writing seems to be aimless or disorganized.	Presentation is somewhat organized and there are some off topic ideas, but most of it is connected to the main problem of concern.	Presentation is logical and natural, each paragraph has a clear purpose that links the arguments to the problem of concern.
Voice	Writer's tone is neutral and does not attempt to appeal to the audience's emotion or reasoning.	Writer's tone is skeptical but it contains some arguments that make the audience reflect on the problem of concern.	Writer has a definite tone and the arguments employed appeal to the reader's emotion through credible facts.
Conventions	Writer makes a lot of mistakes regarding grammar, spelling or punctuation that make the text hard to understand.	Writer makes some mistakes that may distract the reader's attention.	Writer generally uses correct conventions, there are few mistakes that do not impede understanding.

CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDENT WRITING PERFORMANCE	DISAGREE	NOT SURE	AGREE
Ideas	I proposed solutions or ways to approach the problem of concern.			
Sentence fluency	I used clear and complete sentences in my writing.			

ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON LEARNER'S PERFORMANCE:

Appendix 7: Self-assessment form

Word choice	I employed varied and precise vocabulary.			
	I stated a clear purpose on each paragraph and supported it with arguments.			
	I wrote credible arguments and stated my opinion in a clear way.			
	I used appropriate grammar, spelling and punctuation to facilitate understanding.			

UNIVERSITY OF QUINDÍO
MODERN LANGUAGES PROGRAM
PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING TO FOSTER PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS'
PERSUASIVE WRITING.
STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT FORM

SECTION I: YOUR PERCEPTIONS ON YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE: Select the best option according to your performance on the writing process.

SECTION 2: YOUR REFLECTIONS **ON WRITING LEARNING EXPERIENCE**:
Complete the following prompts with your reflections on your writing experience in this workshop

Regarding writing skills, in this workshop, I learned
_____
_____

In terms of writing, I found difficult
_____
_____

In this workshop, I enjoyed
_____
_____

To improve the writing process, I would like to
_____
_____

My attitude during this workshop was
_____
_____