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Didactic Activities to strengthen the writing ability through the English lessons in
9th graders

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Abstract

The teaching-learning process of the English subject is, in some occasions, a troublesome work, since the students are unable to develop all the abilities needed for mastering the language. Writing is considered the most difficult ability to be acquired. Generally, teachers do not provide a variety of exercises to improve writing and the necessary tools that the students will use to master the ability. Moreover, the author of this investigation supplies a proposal of exercises to improve the writing ability on nine graders. That is why, the author made a deep analysis concerning to the methodological guidelines of this course and the needs of the students requiring more motivating and appropriated exercises for this level, so the author suggests the use of puzzles, cross words among others.

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Introduction

Nowadays, communication constitutes the base of social, economical and political relationship among countries. There are more than 80 countries around the world where English is spoken, making evident that this is the most spoken language in the world. In these countries English is an official or a second language, and in some others it is used as a way to enrich their cultural level.

The teaching of a foreign language is a very complex and difficult process, because it is necessary to create a series of methods and procedures, which facilitate a successful development of the teaching–learning process.

Nowadays, the teaching of foreign languages in our country is given a great importance, and it has been included in all educational levels. The teaching of English language in our country is valuable since it is important from economic, social and political point of view.

The main objective of the teaching of a foreign language is to develop habits and skills as well as to provide the students new knowledge about this language, and to contribute to the scientific conception of the modern world starting from the quality of language as a social phenomenon and the relation thought-language-culture.

There are four linguistic skills that are fundamental at the time of teaching English. One of the skills that should be given priority is the one related to writing. This is a language skill, which is difficult to acquire and it is not easy for the students since it has to do with a process that leads them to final products: paragraphs, compositions and so on.

Traditionally one of the roles writing takes is to provide a way of checking the student's understanding of what has been taught, giving chances for language practice. It can also be provided by a way of checking language use.

The process of writing is that of recording the spoken language, and it is based on the association among meaning, the sound image and the graphic image. Once you learn about the graphic images the function falls over the visual analyzers.

Writing is nothing else but the representation of the oral language: letters represent each sound. The ability of writing is conformed by the habit of representing the signs of writing (habits of handwriting), the habit of correct recording of sounds into the written signs of writing (habits of orthography and the habit of written expressions (habits of wording).

In the action of writing we should have in mind the auditive, the visual and the motor analyzers. Psychological investigations showed that any material is remember faster and also wrapped quickly if you have already perceived it through the auditive ways, practiced it orally and practiced it by writing.

Teachers have to find alternatives to awaken the interest of learners, because it is the teachers' task to help students in the development of writing skill.

Many authors have given valuable ideas about this topic offering solid elements related to the teaching-learning process of English Language. But the experience accumulated in the pedagogical practice and the results obtained after the application of scientific methods showed that there are still difficulties in the development of writing ability in the students. Through the observation of classes, the interviews to the professor and the inquiries to the students, it could be determined the following insufficiencies:

- The treatment given to the development of the writing ability in English classes is insufficient.
- The activities planned in the program to strengthen the development of the writing ability are not sufficient.
- The activities developed on classes to strengthen the development of the writing ability are not enough.

For the development of this research work, the investigator took as point of departure the following scientific problem:

How to strengthen the writing ability in 9th grade students at "Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría" Junior High School?

In order to give solution to the problem it is intended the following objective:

Elaboration of some exercises to strengthen the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School

In order to give solution to the problem it is intended the following Scientific Questions:

1. Which is the historical background of the writing ability in the teaching-learning process of the English language?
2. Which is the theoretical foundation that supports the writing ability in the teaching- learning process of the English language?
3. What’s the real situation of the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School?
4. What proposal of activities could be used to strengthen the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School?
5. What level of effectiveness would the application of the proposal of activities have in the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School?

In order to fulfill with the objective proposed, it is intended the following Scientific Tasks:

1. Determination of the historical background of the writing ability in the teaching-learning process of the English Language.
2. Determination of the theoretical foundations that support the writing ability in the teaching- learning process of the English language.
3. Diagnosis of the real situation of the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School.
4. Elaboration of activities to strengthen the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School.

5. Valuation of the effectiveness that the activities proposed has to strengthen the writing ability in 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School.

Methods and instruments applied:

1- From the theoretical level

- Analysis and Synthesis: They permitted to make a deep study of the information obtained and to synthesize the elements studied during the process.
- Induction and Deduction: They gave the possibility of making generalizations based on the study the researcher previously made concerning writing and also facilitated to arrive at logical conclusions about the problem.
- Historical and logical: They were applied in order to gather the historical evolution of the object of investigation in the educative practice.

2- From the empiric- experimental level:

- The interview: It was applied to the professors for getting some information about their mastery concerning the problem object of investigation, as well as the way the work is oriented in the teaching learning process.
- The observation of classes: It was used so as to get a general and direct view of the object of investigation.
- The study of bibliography: It is essential, a great part of the necessary information is stated in some documents and books related to this aspect. And a detailed consult and study are essential at the time of analyzing them.
- The inquiry: It was applied to the students in order to gather some considerations about to what extent they are involved in the problem the investigator is searching about.

3- From the mathematical and statistical level:

- Mathematic method: Elaboration of graphics and tables to illustrate the results from the methods of the empirical experimental level.
- Perceptual analysis: For the tabulation of the results obtained from the methods of empirical experimental level.

Universe and Sample

The instruments of investigation mentioned were applied to a sample of 35 students (31.25%) of a universe of 112 students of 9th grade at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School and the English professor of the group.

Development

Historical background

The analysis of the historical evolution of the teaching-learning process of the English subject is an indispensable premise in understanding the concepts that are supported in Cuba nowadays. There are three stages of this process.

The first educational revolution, the main educational transformation, took place in 1961 with the literacy campaign.

In this 1st stage there were difficulties according to the planning, organization, direction and control of the teaching learning process.

The curricular development in the English subject in Cuba was conditioned in the decade of 60s. Many English courses were taught by foreign teachers. In the 70s there were some changes in the education policy. It established new study programs and didactic materials.

In the 80s it was obtained better results in the teaching learning process of the English subject. Professors of the epoch were well prepared according to the methodological preparation, but there were still some difficulties with the domain of the subject of the programs.

In the 90s the methodological work was headed to a better perfection in national system. The quality of classes and methodological activities were improved, but there were not enough the work in the writing ability.

From 2000 on, there was a change in the English curriculum; the teaching of English has been improved with the introduction of the new technologies such as: computers, televisions, videos and the elaboration of new workbooks and educative software.

Nowadays the Cuban family has the opportunity to learn a foreign language by the TV program "Universidad para todos".

Analyzing the historical background it can be determined the following regularities:

- In the different historical stages it has been observed the continue transformation in the methods used for the teaching learning process of English subject.
- In each stage it is necessary to improve the teachers' methodological preparation and the development of the teaching learning process of the English subject.

Theoretical foundations

Writing is the act or art of forming visible letters or characters, specifically handwriting.

Webster's Dictionary.

No existen otros conceptos sobre escritura dados por otros autores????

Cuáles tu asumes y por qué???

Theoretical Foundation

Language learning is a long process. Many language teachers think that teaching writing is more difficult than teaching other language skills. Learning to write is largely a process of learning to think more clearly.

Writing involves production, so more effort which evades many of us, in our mother tongue, or in many other languages may wish to learn, and this is in spite of the many years, which are frequently devoted to the development of the skill.

The teaching of English has long been central in all educational systems, and there are many views of the best ways of going about it.

Writing is one of the most widely misunderstood of human activities. It is odd that after all the years we have spent in school, after all the hours we have spent reading other peoples' writing and producing our own, most of us cannot say what really happens when we write. We can describe other complicated tasks-driving a car, baking bread, building a radio or programming a computer- but to most people the act of writing is a mystery. Not that we don't have theories, either those told us in school or those we have arrived at ourselves. But many of these theories are misconceptions that actually hinder our efforts to write.

Learning to write is one of the most difficult tasks few people can be said to fully master. Learning to write well is a difficult and lengthy process, one that induces anxiety and frustration in many learners.

Writing is used as evident of successful learning or as a mean of learning. Because writing leads to a product that can be examined and reviewed

immediately, it provides feedback to the teacher and also to the learner on what can be understood. It can also guide the process of understanding and organizing ideas during reading and listening.

Writing will, therefore, continue to occupy a predominant role in the curriculum. Writing is an instrumental skill, so teachers generally listen and speak, read and speak, read and write.

The writing skill is a way to support the learning of the other aspects of the verbal activities. That is why, writing is considered as an instrumental objective.

The writing exercitation is a useful way to learn a foreign language, because the frequent and varied work helps learners to fix the grammar and the lexicon.

Reading and writing are closely related, that is why, at the time we are writing, we develop the ability of reading. Reading and writing are processes of association between the graph and the sound. Besides, when people write, words are inside of them. The learning of writing contributes to the formation of habits and abilities of the oral expression. Reading and writing are based on the same communicative code. The difference between these two aspects is the character of the operation. The writing is codified, and the reading is decoded. This relation is similar to the one between speaking and listening. Reading is an ability of recognition and it is more difficult to produce it than recognizing it.

Almost all the English learners feel that speaking is their primary need. They just think on being able to answer the phone, to greet visitors, and to understand when they hear things in English.

The inclusion of writing in their courses of study might also be justified for language learning reasons, on the grounds that it will help them to focus on accuracy and remember things that arise in classes. It is a key to enter a new stage of preparation in the development of reading and writing skills, will, however, need to be included early in the programs to help them to consolidate their language learning.

The ability of writing in a foreign language does not constitute a goal, but a way to support the learning of the other aspects of the verbal activity. Therefore, writing is considered instrumental.

However, the development of the writing ability is of a great importance since it is a very successful way to know a foreign language. A systematic and varied work with writing helps the students to fix grammar and vocabulary, to know the phoneme-grapheme correspondence and some prosodic aspects, to learn and apply orthographic rules. Together with the writing ability of oral production is developed since the students have to develop the habit of organizing their ideas.

The writing ability is integrated by habits:

- Habits of penmanship.
- Habits of grammar and lexicon.
- Habits of orthography.
- Habits of writing.

The author of this research work consider of a great importance to call the attention on some aspects on writing that should be taught to the students, since they differ from the mother tongue. The aspects are the following:

- The mechanics- punctuation, spelling.
- The sound- spelling correspondence.
- The organization of an appropriate expression of an idea.

For these reasons writing requires:

- A necessary relation between the oral and writing expression.
- To develop the auditive and the visual perceptions.
- To develop a muscular control different from the one of the mother tongue.

Although writing is an ability that requires time to be learned. The author thinks that it cannot be developed independently. That is why the presence of teachers is necessary in order to teach not only writing, but also listening, reading and

speaking. That is all of them because the students learn to write with the aim of expressing feelings in letters, compositions and so on. The professors can get the message the students want to give through all the things they make, because to have abilities at the time of writing is to have abilities to put down on papers some phrases, words or sentences which are important at the time they must be in mind.

1. Mechanics and punctuation.
2. Logical organization.
3. Coherence.
4. Unity.

The writing ability allows the students to know:

- How to write correct letters
- Its correspondence with the sounds and the prosodic elements.
- How to apply the orthographic rules.
- How to express in writing what they know orally.

In the teaching learning process of a foreign language, the use of exercises should contribute to the moral formation and the development of habits and attitudes. That's why the necessity of combining every linguistic elements.

So, for developing the writing ability, it is very important to maintain the relation with the oral language, so as to have the process of analysis and synthesis working adequately and to develop the auditive and the visual perceptions.

In English the oral system differs greatly from the written one. So the writer's work should be, above all, a repetition or consolidation of what is done during the oral class. The teacher should be aware of not making an identically repetition but a similar one.

The orientation of the written activity should be simple; clear and precise. The students should have the necessary elements to develop the given task, because,

apart from fixing the new contents, in the written work the vocabulary and the structures are also used systematically. This fact makes writing a creative process.

The writing teacher should provide the students with the opportunity to actually experience the process of writing and understand what writing is. Some teachers make writing a chaos for the students, because they do not provide a supportive environment in the classroom, having the students work collaboratively. Teachers should work as facilitators, not as assessors, so as to help the students to develop for generating ideas.

The acquisition of certain mechanical abilities as the first stage in the ability of writing is of a great relevance. This includes the ability to put down on paper words, starting with capital letters and ending with some punctuation mark.

In early stages, the students should develop imitate practice (copying) so as to include gradually new structured activities.

According to the level of assimilation the written exercises can be divided into:

- Recognition.
- Reproduction.
- Production.

According to the content:

- The penmanship.
- The phoneme- grapheme correspondence and the orthography.
- The point of grammar and the vocabulary they have practiced orally.
- Expression exercises (they must be guided).

Another division of the types of exercises is:

- Preparatory exercises.
- Expressive exercises.

Preparatory exercises are the way to achieve the organization of the ideas. Exercises to teach grapheme, penmanship, orthography, grammatical and lexical elements studied orally are preparatory and productive exercises as the combination of ideas are expressive exercises.

Writing also demands familiarity with spelling patterns, which can be developed through specific practice of spelling sound relationships. Since native speakers of English have considerable trouble with spelling, it should not be seen strange to devote time to spelling when teaching English to speakers of other languages. Writing has two stages.

1. Preparation of knowledge to put into practice.
2. Acquisition of abilities.

The author consider these stages are important for keeping and reinforcing the habits acquired in classes, and for preparing the knowledge to be put into practice.

There is no reason why writing at the level of communication should not be practiced in association with such subject, using the written language as a natural expression of his personal perceptions, feelings and thoughts, developing the student's confidence and to develop their imaginative potential.

There are three aspects that should be taken into account for learning and teaching writing in English. They are the following:

1. Writing as a channel of foreign language learning: That is the use of writing alongside listening, speaking and reading in the process of learning important elements of the language and developing command of the language.
2. Writing as a goal of foreign language learning: it is concerned with the development of writing skill to fulfil such purposes as taking-notes, narrating and reporting for some real life situations.
3. Writing with cohesion: that is the employing the various linguistic means by which the parts of any written text are made to relate one to another and to constitute an organized whole.

These three aspects are inseparable and any piece of written practice may be expected to contribute to all of them, but it may assist to clarify thinking if we consider them one at a time, thus, we should constantly keep the purpose of communication and the requirements of the writing medium. They can not just say “write” but he/she must discuss with the students the occasion of each piece of writing. All these will add interest to the writing task and effectiveness to the product. To work on this matter, guided or controlled writing exercises are suggested: copying completion, answering questions, dictation and substitution, but without forgetting productive exercises.

These guided exercises should begin from the simplest towards the more complicated working, that is why, we should take into account some requisites:

- In the first level, the written work should be a repetition or consolidation of what students practice orally.
- The instruction should be simple with clear and practice explanations.
- Contextualize the sentences whenever possible.
- Never ask the students to change from affirmative to negative or to interrogative.
- Written exercises should be assigned to be done out of classroom, once the students have learned the mechanisms and worked on examples in the classroom.

To fulfil those requisites, the teacher should take into consideration the following aspects for the preparation of the exercises:

- Be sure that answer of an item does not appear as part of the content of another item in the same exercise.
- Be sure that the answer of an item does not depend on the correct answer of the previous one.
- Do not write the item in the same words they appear in the text when the exercise is about it.

- The sentences used should be taken from the natural model of the language.
- Do not select strange sentences.
- Do not ask the students to answer with complete sentences.

Provide the situation that requires those answers.

- Be sure that the students have a logical content.
- Do not use personal pronouns if the name has not been mentioned before.
- Use the vocabulary students know to exercise grammar.
- Give clear instructions.
- Try to do the exercises before applying them to the students.
- Tell the students the way they have to answer.

Writing is a process and it has some steps to follow:

1. Pre-writing (planning).
 - a) Select a topic and narrow it.
 - b) Identify your audience and your purpose.
 - c) Gather supporting information (brain storm).
 - d) Organize and strengthen your list of details.
2. Writing the first draft.
 - a) With your purpose and audience in mind begin to write.
 - b) Do not be concerned with grammar or mechanics at this stage.
3. Rewriting (pay attention to the topic).
 - a) Be sure that all important details have been included.
 - b) Write interesting and strong topic sentences.
 - c) Organize your ideas in a logical order.
 - d) Use precise language.
 - e) Have you accomplished your purpose?

4. Preparing the final copy.
 - a) Write carefully.
 - b) Make your copy as neat as possible.
 - c) Make correct paragraph corrections.
 - d) Leave good margins.
 - e) Read it aloud, sometimes your ears catch errors your eyes missed.

The result of this process is the product.

Finally, the author wants to sum up that writing is an efficient way to assimilate a foreign language due to the fact a varied and constant work keeps the students to fix the grammar vocabulary as well as the content of any objective. It also facilitates the students to establish the phoneme-grapheme correspondence, learning this in a more active and rapid way because while they write, they are reading ability.

It can also be said that the written expression allows developing and creating habits and oral expression, so as it increases the habit of organization of the ideas. It is also important to point out that a good teaching and orientation of writing helps to a better comprehension of the content of the subject and in a short period of time.

Presentation and analysis of the results

To carry out this investigation it was selected a group of 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School. Forty classes were visited, and all of them were classes of drilling, in order to diagnose the way in which teachers reinforce the writing ability in the students through the English classes.

According to the interview to the teachers, it can be said that they are not doing enough for reinforcing writing ability in their students. Besides to that, they neither teach orthography nor punctuation marks to them.

The author of this research paper considers that if teachers want their students of learn to write, they should devote some time to this activity.

It could also be obtained from the analysis of the instruments applied that the exercises used to reinforce the writing ability in the students were the reproductive ones, mainly, exercises in which the students had to complete spaces in blank and answering yes or no questions. The teacher did not take into consideration the different levels of assimilation at the time of applying those exercises, which contribute to help the students to work in a mechanical way. So the teachers should explore the different kind of exercises they can develop, such as: copying dictation, substitution, addition, and making sentences.

All this explained the researcher of this paper that writing ability was not being reinforced a lot through the English classes. That is why; the students were not working consciously as a result of the superficial way this labour was done.

In respect to the inquiry to 9th grade students, it could be obtained that most of the students like English, so, this is a fact that favours the work of the teachers to reinforce writing ability.

According to the answers given by the students, it could be inferred that writing is difficult for them; also the time devoted for working on this aspect was not enough. It could be deduced since the new way of teaching English provided a hard work on the oral aspect. So, the ability of writing was left out. It can also be said that the work with writing was not being developed systematically and consciously.

It is important to point out that this inquiry was of a great significance for this investigation, since it and the observation of classes permitted the researchers to know the common way in which the teachers developed writing ability through their classes.

It is noticeable that in most of the classes the author visited, the written exercises were assigned by the teachers in a correct way, but in most of the cases, at the time of controlling them, they did not evaluate the students. That makes the students think that what they are doing is not very important, so they do not have to worry about it.

It could also be inferred that the professor did not know consciously the effectiveness and potentialities that writing offers to reinforce the other abilities.

To work to reinforce writing ability was frequently developed so mechanically which did not contribute to the development of the teaching learning process.

It is the author opinion that professors should explore the potentialities writing offers for the development of the other abilities, mainly, speaking. It is that the students have to learn to write well, for speaking correctly. They should learn the ways of combining the different tenses to express what they want to, and of course, that is why they should be taught about grammar, punctuation marks, and so on.

Proposal of exercises

The researcher of this investigation could realize that teachers do not develop writing in a productive way. On the other hand, they worked superficially with this ability due to the mechanical way they develop this skill through their classes. Productive exercises could help the students at the time of learning English.

Teachers must develop more creative classes in which written exercises should be developed in a competitive way for getting the interest and attention of the students. Teachers should prepare lessons with sufficient practice of writing so as to give everyone the necessary preparation to know what they think and how to write it. To achieve that, the teacher has to create the adequate conditions in his classroom in order to have the students concentrated in what they are doing, especially if it is concerning writing.

It is important to say that all the exercises proposed are just examples of what teachers can do in the classroom. That is why; these activities could be adapted by teachers according to the content and the specific characteristics of the students. In all cases the professor should check comprehension by asking one student to explain what they are supposed to do.

From the difficulties the teacher develops activities that promote the development of writing skills, allowing the students a better condition at the time of writing

This means that the activities developed by the teacher to guide the student toward the realization of the act of writing should be specific, clear and for each of the performance levels. It also takes into account the relationship between cognitive and affective as learning and communication process that requires dialogue and joint work, teacher-student. The teacher must guide students so that they can get by their own means to a new knowledge by means of independent work, proposal of activities

All these exercises propitiate a discussion that is allowed to be done in Spanish with the objective of strengthening moral values, aesthetics education, and attitude towards others in the students.

1- Title: Writing sentences.

Unit 1: Summer vacation.

Objective: To have the students to form affirmative sentences in simple present tense.

Ability: Writing.

Method: Independent work.

Procedure: The students should organize the given words in order to form sentences. The first sentence should be brought by the teacher as an example. He should copy it on the board. The teacher should pay special attention to the slow learners while walking through the classroom.

Orientation of the activity: Those words are in a wrong order. Organize them to form sentences.

- a) Afternoon-classes-are-in-the-Susan's-only
- b) Are-Tuesday-classes-on-English
- c) Likes-Peter-sports
- d) In-the-morning-always-Marie-up-early-gets
- e) Novels-never-I-read
- f) not beans do They eat

Evaluation: For checking this exercise, the students will be sent to the board, for copying their answers. The teacher should evaluate them as they participate.

2- Title: Inviting someone.

Unit 2: Travel time.

Objective: to describe places, attractions and monuments in a brochure or advertisement.

Ability: Writing.

Method: Independent work.

Procedure: The students are going to work individually. The teacher will ask the students if they know something about the Seven Wonders of the World. The teacher will present the students a puzzle in which they are going to find out some adjectives they can use to describe places. Then, the teacher will ask them to write a short paragraph telling information about one of the world wonders using the adjectives already found in the puzzle. They can provide as much information they can. The students are going to begin writing the first draft without taking into account grammar rules a mechanics. After finishing they will re-write the paragraph being sure that all important details have been included and correcting the mistakes in regard to grammar, cohesion, unity and coherence. During the development of this activity the teacher will pay special attention to the slow learners.

Orientation of the activity: Find out all the adjectives used for describing places in the puzzle.

- a) Write a short paragraph talking about one of the world wonder, monuments and jewels of universal culture.

H	A	D	G	E	O	I	G	B	F	H
I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T	I	N	G
S	F	A	M	O	U	S	A	G	U	O
T	A	E	A	U	I	O	S	F	G	R
O	L	M	G	B	N	G	D	O	G	G
R	G	Y	E	Q	C	A	Z	T	J	E
I	R	E	S	T	H	J	M	L	P	O
C	S	S	T	F	E	H	E	I	O	U
A	N	C	I	E	N	T	J	U	Y	S

L	X	F	C	O	L	O	N	I	A	L
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Evaluation: written way.

3-Title: I would like to be...

Unit 3: The News

Objective: to have students write simple sentences about news.

Ability: Writing.

Method: collective work.

Procedure: the teacher will ask the students to work by teams of 6. The teacher will give to each team a card with a relevant event. The teacher will ask the students to imagine they are a team of journalist and they have to write a news report for the Granma newspaper. The teacher will present them some questions that will guide to write the news report. Each student will be asked to answer a question and at the end they are going to make a paragraph with all sentences they made before. At the end one of them will write his paragraph on the board to be analyzed.

Orientation of the activity: imagine you are a journalist and you work for Granma newspaper, write a paragraph answering the following questions about a relevant event you have in your card.

1. What happened?
2. When did it happen?
3. Where did it happen?
4. How did it happen?
5. Who is involved?
6. What is the result of that event?

(Cards)

An earthquake, a robbery at a bank, the five Cuban heroes

A hurricane, a famous wedding, the economic crisis

Evaluation: written way.

4-Title: Likes and dislikes

Unit 4: Hobbies

Objective: to narrate activities they like or dislike doing.

Ability: Writing.

Method: independent work

Procedure: the students are going to work individually. The teacher will ask them to write a paragraph telling what they and their family like doing on vacations. They will also be asked to include 2 or 3 themes they do not like doing. The teacher will remember the students the steps of the writing process. Then they can start writing the first draft. They will re-write the paragraph in order to correct the grammar and mechanics mistakes. During the development of this activity the teacher will develop the required seatwork and will pay special attention to slow-learners.

Orientation of the activity: Write a paragraph telling what you and your family like doing on vacation. Include 2 or 4 teams you don't like doing.

Evaluation: they will be evaluated in a written way

5- Title: Summer drinks

Unit 6: Pastimes.

Objective: To describe a sequence of a process.

Ability: Writing.

Method: independent work

Procedure: The teacher will ask the student to mention some beverages they use to drink on Summer. Then, the teacher will ask them to choose the one they prefer the most. After that the students will be asked to make a list of ingredients they

need for doing this Summer drink. Then they will write the instructions of how to make their drinks. For doing this activity the teacher can ask them to bring the beverage already done and they will explain to the rest of their partners how to do it.

Orientation of the activity: Mention all the beverages you use to drink on summer.

- a) Choose the one you prefer the most and write the ingredients you need for doing it.
- b) Write the steps to be followed to do it.

Evaluation: written way

6-Title: My duties.

Unit 7: Important Personalities

Objective: to have the students write sentences to describe someone personalities traits.

Ability: Writing.

Method: Independent work.

Procedure: Teacher will give the student a card with a puzzle in which they have to find the qualities that describe someone's personality. Then the teacher will give them the names of some outstanding personalities of our history and the students are going to make a sentence with each of them using the adjectives they should find in the puzzle.

Orientation of the activity: find all the qualities that describe someone's personality. Make a sentence describing the following personalities using the adjectives you find.

Ernesto Che Guevara

Mariana Grajales

Camilo Cienfuegos

Fidel Castro Ruz

José Martí

Antonio Maceo Grajales

Carlos Manuel de Céspedes

R	E	S	P	O	N	S	I	B	L	E	F
E	A	D	F	G	H	J	K	R	L	E	R
V	B	U	I	P	O	S	G	A	N	N	G
O	T	R	E	W	Q	A	B	V	E	E	N
L	F	A	H	Z	C	B	M	E	R	R	J
U	U	B	O	L	D	Z	X	O	V	G	M
T	N	E	N	H	G	I	Z	V	S	E	S
I	N	T	E	L	L	I	G	E	N	T	V
O	Y	O	S	P	S	E	U	F	U	I	F
N	T	G	T	Y	H	A	M	J	U	C	W
A	K	I	L	O	E	M	J	U	Y	H	A
R	F	G	C	H	E	E	R	F	U	L	R
Y	Q	A	Z	X	S	W	E	D	C	V	F

Evaluation: written way.

7-Title: Let's help the environment.

Unit 8: The environment.

Objective: To have the students write an environmental message.

Ability: Writing.

Method: independent work

Teaching aids: cards

Procedure: the students will work individually. The teacher will write the word environment, on the board and the students will be asked to write a word with a close relation with the one written on the board. Then, the students will be asked to say a way in which the environment can be damaged. After that, the teacher will present the students a big card containing a T-shirt in blank. The students will be asked to write a message to protecting the environment in the T-shirt. They can be as much creative as they can, they can use colours and other means to beautify their work. So, the students will begin writing the first draft of the activity without taking into account grammar and mechanics aspects. After finishing they will be asked to re-write the message in order to correct their mistakes. At the end, each student will give the teacher his/her message in a piece of paper. This activity can developed as a game and the winner will write his message in the T-shirt presented by the teacher and will receive a prize from the teacher. During the development of this activity the teacher will develop the required seatwork paying special attention to slow-learners.

Orientation of the activity: write a word related to environment.

- a) Mention one of the ways in which people damage the environment.
- b) Write a message for protecting the environment in the T-shirt. You can use all the means you want to beautify your work.



Evaluation: The students should be evaluated in a written way.

8-Title: Do you know...?

Unit 9: A trip around the country

Objective: To write texts sharing information about Cuban important places taking into account actions that occur in past.

Ability: Writing.

Method: Independent work.

Procedure: the teacher will ask the students to mention some historical and cultural Cuban places they have visited. The teacher will orient some questions to the students and they will write a paragraph describing a historical or cultural place they have visited. During the development of this activity the teacher will develop the required seatwork paying special attention to slow-learners.

Orientation of the activity: Mention some historical and cultural Cuban places you where you have been before.

a. Write a paragraph answering the following questions.

- Where is this place located?
- Is it a historical or cultural place?
- Can you describe this place?
- What kind of things did you find there?
- What was the object you like the most?
- Was it a nice place or not? Why?
- What do you think about it?

Evaluation: written way.

9- Title: Future plans

Unit 10: All in all

Objective: to have the students write about future plans.

Ability: Writing.

Method: independent work

Procedure: The teacher will ask the student to mention some things they will be doing. The will ask the students to write a paragraph about what they will do in twenty years' time. In order to guide them the teacher will give to the students some questions. During the development of this activity the teacher will develop the required seatwork paying special attention to slow-learners.

Orientation of the activity: Write what you will be doing in twenty years' time.

- a) How old will you be?
- b) What will you be?
- c) Where will you be?
- d) Will you be married?
- e) Will you have children? How many?

Evaluation: they will be evaluated in a written way

Valuation of the effectiveness of the activities proposed

For carrying out this experiment it was selected a group of 9th grade students at “Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría” Junior High School.

There were 35 students in the group (18 females and 17 males). They come together since seventh grade. According to the learning level, there were 10 advanced students, 17 average students and 8 slow ones. All this information could be obtained by means of an interview to the head professor of this group.

The author of this investigation thinks it is important to point out that the students selected were not able to write things in English or making sentences by themselves. Because the work to reinforce writing ability was frequently developed so mechanically, that did not contribute to the development of the teaching learning process.

The author of the paper, in order to reinforce writing in the students, oriented this experiment towards the following indicators:

- The student’s capacity for writing in English by themselves.
- The student’s knowledge about orthography and punctuation marks.
- The student’s capacity for recognizing the different tenses.

The experience was applied during classes of drilling.

The author started the experiment with the application of a diagnostic test to know the situation of the indicators mentioned before. To accomplish this, there were observed 9 English lessons. A survey to the students was also carried out in order to get other aspects of a great importance for the initial part of this experiment.

The analysis of the results emitted by the diagnostic test permitted to detect the following difficulties:

- Most of the students cannot write in English by themselves and the ones who can are just able to copy individual words and very simple sentences.
- The students know almost nothing concerning orthography and punctuation marks.

- The great majority of the students do not recognize the different tenses.
- The students do not know how to use conjunctions, prepositions and so on.

After getting all this information, the researcher started to apply the exercises suggested in this paper in order to reinforce writing in the students.

At the very beginning, the students were not accustomed to develop that kind of activities. The exercises were adapted to the group's characteristics, but without changing their principal objective. To achieve the objective of some exercises it was necessary to train all the slow learners of the group taking into account to be treated in those exercises. The researcher also noted that during the exercises that were developed in a complete way, it was propitiated a higher motivation, and the students got more interest at the time of participating.

Another noticeable aspect was that the students were supposed to write some sentences and most of them wrote three or four sentences more than the ones they were asked to, in each exercises .It tells the author that they were learning new aspects about writing, and so they were surprised they could write things by themselves in a foreign language. They were eager of increasing their vocabulary, so they used the dictionary, asked the professor about words they did not know, and so on.

To check the results of the proposal 20 drilling classes were observed. During this observation, the researcher could realize on the positive changes of the students concerning writing skill.

The researcher would like to make reference to exercise 5, where the students were given some questions so as to write a paragraph about Cuban important places. In this exercise, the students applied new words and expressions. So we can say that each of them had the opportunity to show what they had learned concerning writing.

The researcher of this paper could realize that professors from the school were also satisfied with the group's positive changes.

In order to demonstrate that the proposal suggested is really effected, it was selected another group of 9th graders. There were 35 students in the group (21 females and 14 males). In the final part of this experiment, the exercises suggested in this work were applied to them. It can be said by the researcher that as they did not receive the necessary treatment, they presented a lot of troubles at the time of answering the exercises.

The investigator could realize that much time was needed to explain the exercises and also to develop them than the time experimental group needed. They committed a lot of mistakes at the time of answering the exercises. Especially concerning spelling, capitalization punctuation marks, grammar, vocabulary, unity and coherence.

For all this results, the author of this investigation considers the experiment of validation developed as satisfactory.

That is why the exercises proposed constitute a way to solve the problem obtained from the investigation.

It is the author's opinion to continue this important labour with all English professors to get the most effective results in our classrooms while developing the writing skill in the students.

Conclusions

The teaching of the English Language in our country is used to increase our cultural level. But, it is the teacher's task to carry out this complex work. That is why; they should look for better ways for making the students develop the necessary abilities. Writing is an important ability which nobody can say to fully master, and also the students present troubles at the time of writing. After having developed this scientific work, the researcher has arrived at the following conclusions.

The nine grade teachers had troubles dealing with the reinforcement of the writing ability during their classes. In a general way, they work with this ability in a superficial way, which affected the successful development of the teaching learning process at `` Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría `` high school.

As a result of the difficulties detected, a proposal of a set of exercises was made. It could help teachers at the time of reinforcing writing ability in the students during their classes.

The author considers that the application of the proposal helped to lessen the problems already exposed. Moreover, the motivation of the students towards the written ability has been increased in a higher degree and what is more, the students were able to express in writing what they heard orally.

Recommendations

The researcher recommends the following:

1. To demand teachers to implement the variety of written exercises so as to reinforce writing ability in the students.
2. To put into practice this proposal of exercises as a guidance for English teachers.
3. To continue searching about this topic because of its importance for the teaching learning process.

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Annexes

Annex # 1

Observation guide

Objective: To observe the teacher's work so as to contribute to the development of the writing ability.

- Type of class
- Use of the punctuation and marks.
- Professor's work with writing ability.
- Treatment given to the development of the writing ability.
- Activities developed to reinforce the writing ability

Annex # 2

Inquiry to the students of 9th grade

Objective: To know the students' opinion about the state of the writing ability.

Dear student, an investigation related to writing ability is being carried out at school, that's why, it's necessary that you answer the following questions honestly.

1. Do you like English?

_____Yes

_____No

_____A little

2. How are the writing lessons in English?

_____ Motivating _____ Interesting _____ Boring

3. How frequently does your teacher develop writing class?

Always__ Sometimes__ Never__

4. How do you think you write in English?

___Excellent ___ Good ___ Not bad

___Not good ___Bad ___Awful

5. Mention which are the difficulties you present at the time of writing?

___ Spelling of words

___ Coherence

___ Mechanics punctuation

___ Tense

Annex# 3

Answers of the students

Question # 1

Do you like English?		%
yes	25	71, 4
No	2	5, 7
A little	8	22, 8

Question # 2

How are the writing lessons in English?		%
Motivating	10	28.5
Interesting	5	14.2
Boring	20	54.1

Question # 3

How frequently does your teacher develop writing class?		%
Always	12	34.2
sometimes	15	42.8
never	8	22.8

Question # 4

How do you think you write in English?		%
Excellent	-	-
Good	9	25, 7
Not bad	11	31, 4
Not good	7	20
Bad	2	5, 7
Awful	6	17, 1

Question # 5

Mention which are the difficulties you present at the time of writing?		%
Spelling of words	6	17, 1
Mechanics punctuation	7	20
Coherence	8	22, 8
Tense	14	40

Annex #4

Interview to teachers

1. Do you receive any orientation of how to work with writing ability?
2. What activities do you make in class to develop writing ability?
3. How do you value the process of assimilation of writing in the students?
4. Do you think that the objective of developing writing in the students of this grade is fulfilled? Why?
5. What do you suggest to improve writing in the students?

Annex# 5

Answers of the interview to the English professor of the group

1- Yes, I received a preparation through the department meetings and the methodological preparation, but it is not enough.

2- The kind of activities concerning to the writing ability I developed in class are very superficial because in most of them the students are asked to unscramble words to make sentences and they are in a reproductive.

3- I think the students have a lot of problems at the time of assimilating the writing activities because it is a very difficult skill and they don't like to write even in their mother tongue.

4- No, I do not think the objective of developing writing in the students is fulfilled in this grade, because the exercises are enough motivating for the students.

5- I suggest for improving writing in the students, more motivating exercises for the different levels of students we have in our classroom,.

Annex 6

Inquiry to students (II)

Objective: To know the effectiveness of the activities applied for strengthening the writing ability in of 9th grader students of ``Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría`` Junior High School.

1- Did you like the activities developed?

Some of them____ All of them____ None of them____

2- Do you consider that the activities had helped you to develop your writing skill?

Yes____ No____ A little____

3- These writing activities developed were:

Interesting__

Motivating__

Useful ____

Exciting__

4- What activities did you like the most? Why?

5- What activities were more difficult at the time of developing them?

Annex # 7

Results obtained from the inquiry (II)

Question 1

Did you like the activities developed?	Quantity of students
Some of them	2 (5.7%)
All of them	33 (94.2%)
None of them	0(0%)

Question 2

Do you consider that the activities had helped you to develop your writing skill?	Quantity of students that considered it
yes	34 (97.1%)
no	0 (0%)
A little	1 (2.8%)

Question 3

These writing activities developed were:	Quantity of students that considered it
Interesting	8 (22.8%)
Motivating	7 (20%)
Useful	11 (31.4%)
Exciting	9 (25.7%)

Question 4

Activities they liked the most	Quantity of students
2	30 (85.7%)
8	34 (97.1%)
9	31 (88.5%)

Question 5

More difficult activities	Quantity of students
5	20 (57.1%)
6	15 (42.8%)

Annex # 8

Interview to teachers

Objective: To know the teachers' consideration about the activities in regard to writing applied at "Prudencio Martínez Hechavarría" Junior High School.

- 1- Do you consider important the activities developed in regard to writing?
Why?

- 2- Do you consider the activities suitable to develop them in new coming generation of students?

- 3- Do the activities developed contribute to reinforce just the writing ability or it may influence in other aspects?

- 4- Did you feel motivated as a teacher at the time of applying the activities?