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Diploma Paper

*Learning Tasks to Improve the English Written
Expression in Tenth Graders at “26 de Junio” Senior
High School*

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When we ask, process and evaluate questions of children, the children teach us about themselves and their writing. These insights about our children provide the grounds for our teaching.

Lucy McCormick

Dedicated to

- ❖ My parents, especially to my mother, whose will is that I go on
- ❖ My husband, who gives me breath to go ahead
- ❖ My brother, who motivates my way of living every day

To all the people I love

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Thank you very much

Abstract

The empirical study carried out at “26 de Junio” Senior High School from Moa showed that there are insufficiencies in the teaching-learning process of the English written expression in tenth grade students. In order to solve the problem, the work proposed ten learning tasks to enhance the formation and development of the English written expression in tenth grade students. This work is structured in three chapters. Chapter One offers a theoretical foundation about written expression, analyzed from different points of view in a critical way. Chapter Two is devoted to the proposal of the ten learning tasks elaborated by the authoress of the work to improve the students’ written expression. Together with the tasks, the authoress offered some methodological considerations and requirements, which were taken into consideration for both, the structure of the learning tasks and the formation and development of the English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School. Finally, Chapter Three shows the corroboration of the learning tasks by means of the application and evaluation of an in-depth survey and through a pedagogical experience.

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Introduction

The origin of language dates back to the very beginning of humanity's emerging process. Since the emergence of man, according to Marxist theory raised by Engels (1896), communication developed as a social product in the interaction of men with each other. English, specifically, is a West Germanic language that originated from the Anglo-Frisian dialects, brought to Britain by Germanic invaders and/or settlers from the places which are now called North West Germany and the Netherlands, that is why; it is considered as a "borrowing" language.

Language is a functional and intentional instrument for communication, for thinking, and for learning. People for all cultures use language in particular contexts for specific purposes

For many years the English language has spread worldwide as a communication tool. English has become the language mostly used in printed information; myriads of scientific, economic, literary and technical works circulating in the world are written and published in English. Thus, English has become an important means of globalization of information. Over three hundred million people around the world, particularly, use English. It is the official language of many nations and of most of the spoken and written business and scientific production globally. Likewise, English has the status of official language in 53 countries and in major international organizations, as in the case of the United Nations, European Union, and the Commonwealth of Nations. Today few people might doubt that English is the most studied spoken and read language in the world.

Writing is an activity that people engage in throughout their lifetime for a variety of personal and professional purposes: to communicate with family and friends, to perform a job-related function, to keep a private record of events, to express a political viewpoint or opinion, and, for some to publish an authored work. Children's writing ability, whatever their purposes may be, will develop in a positive, supportive environment that focuses on the writing process and fosters personal writing.

In Cuba, knowing English has gained a great importance, mainly since the 90's, a period in which Cuba began the fast development of tourism, which plays a dynamic role in the national economy every day. The study of English as a foreign language aims at training professionals in accordance with the requirements of the cognitive-communicative competence, which is constantly renewed and updated with the use of technologies that improve teaching for enhancing the achievement of this goal in an optimal way.

The teaching of this language in Cuba begins as a curricular discipline of primary education in third grade and is extended up to the tertiary education. In primary education, the inclusion of English in the curriculum has as its main goal to enhance children's interest in their initial studies on this Language. It has been proved that childhood is an appropriate age for the learning of a foreign language, due, mainly, to the fact that children have a great power of imitation and remembering patterns, thus making the learning process easier.

The inclusion of English as a subject within the different curricula throughout the different levels of education responds to the political, economic and social policies of the country, based on the development of the teaching of foreign languages. Therefore, the teaching of English should contribute to the general and comprehensive formation of learners in all these levels. As the students form certain skills to communicate in this target language, it contributes to their future scientific, technical and professional development. Besides, the learning of this language also contributes to satisfy in the students the need of cultural expansion. Finally, this learning should also influence upon their ability to transfer what is learned through language communication to specific situations in the mother tongue, and the creation of a linguistic sensitivity.

The main task of teaching English in senior high school is to prepare the students to comprehend the basic language structures in simple texts. Nevertheless, even when the final goal of a foreign language course is reading in this language, it is necessary to learn first the spoken language, in order to acquire the skills to handle its structures.

In the senior high school syllabus, writing is a means to consolidate what the students have learnt orally and to establish the phoneme-grapheme relationship in order to read pointed material.

Written expression has been taught for many years; therefore, countries around the world have occupied a large place in teaching and learning procedures in school, which has implied to read and to write to be literate. Written communication, reading mainly, is done through the visual channel, which allows the transmission and acquisition of a greater volume of information than through the orally produced communication. The former offers the possibility to follow some procedures, when dealing with writing as a process, which goes from careful planning to accurate revision, or even doing proofreading. Another advantage of the written expression over oral communication is its durability: written materials remain in time.

Empirical methods were applied by the authoress of this diploma paper during the teaching training period in order to find out how written expression was dealt with in the level. As a result, the following inferences on potentialities and insufficiencies were made:

Potentialities:

- ❖ Students' great capacity for learning English
- ❖ High motivation of the students in their interaction with the language

Insufficiencies:

- ❖ Students see English written activities as one more element to pass.
- ❖ The exercises developed in class are not according to the students' interests and needs, that's why they are not motivated toward writing.
- ❖ The students cannot write the texts they intend to, because they have not developed this ability properly enough to attain their intention.
- ❖ There is not time enough to work properly with the phoneme-grapheme relationship; therefore, it makes very difficult for the students to pronounce and write the words containing the sounds that do not exist in their mother tongue.
- ❖ The students show several problems regarding the development of writing in their mother tongue; this brings about the transference of difficulties to foreign language learning and places them in a position of disadvantage while learning English.

Taking into account the results from observations, critical analysis of documents, interviews and surveys, the researcher of this work considered necessary and important to include in the senior high school problem bank the following **research problem**: How to improve the English written expression through learning tasks in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School?

Therefore, the **research object** is the teaching–learning process of English in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School.

In order to direct the research toward the scientific problem, the **research objective** consists in devising learning tasks to improve English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School.

Consequently, the **scope of action** is **the English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School**

With the aim of attaining a proper research rationale, the **research questions** below were posed:

1. What is the theoretical foundation that supports the English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School?
2. What is the current state that identifies the English written expression at “26 de Junio” Senior High School?
3. What kind of learning tasks might best contribute to develop the English written expression in 26 de Junio” Senior High School?
4. How effective are the learning tasks to improve written expression from tenth graders at 26 de Junio Senior High School?

Such questions have entailed the formulation of the **research tasks** below:

1. To determine the theoretical basis that supports the teaching-learning process of the written expression of English as a foreign language in tenth graders
2. To diagnose the tenth graders' current state of English written expression at “26 de Junio” Senior High School

3. To elaborate learning tasks to improve the English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School
4. To corroborate the effectiveness of the learning tasks elaborated.

In order to carry out this investigation, the following **research methods** were used:

FROM THE THEORETICAL LEVEL

Analysis-Synthesis: To scrutinize the most relevant features of the English Teaching-Learning Process of written expression in tenth graders in order to analyze each component and then synthesize them all. It leads to a full understanding of the theoretical basis based on potentialities and limitations

Induction-Deduction: To contribute in making a reasonable analysis of specific and general traits that evince the individual phenomena that are involved in the Teaching-Learning Process of English written expression in tenth graders at “26 de Junio” Senior High School

From Abstract to Concrete: To conceive an abstract view of the Teaching-Learning Process of English written expression in tenth graders and propose a solution to their handicaps in this skill which gives room to its further implementation.

FROM THE EMPIRICAL LEVEL

Observation: This method was applied throughout the English lessons to perceive the potentialities and difficulties in the teaching-learning process of English written expression in tenth graders.

Critical analysis of documents: To analyze critically some essential normative documents that teachers have at their disposal to control and manage the Teaching-Learning Process, as well as their students’ evolution.

Interviews: This method allowed the research to exchange orally with teachers to focus on their experiences and opinions about English written expression.

Surveys: This method permitted to interact with the teachers and students to enquire into English written expression in tenth graders.

Pedagogical experience: In order to put into practice the theoretical elaboration and corroborate the effectiveness of it.

In-Depth-Survey: In order to know some specialist's opinions about the learning tasks structured as well as widen the learning tasks elaborated.

The **population** selected for this investigation was made up of 118 students at "26 de Junio" Senior High School and 10 professors in Moa municipality, and the **sample** is a group of 40 students which constitute the 33,89 % and 10 professors which constitute the 100 %.

The Diploma Paper's **novelty** lies on the communicative tinge given to the English written expression in the learning tasks and the contextualization to the students' interest and needs according to their environment.

CHAPTER I: Theoretical-Methodological Basis that Supports the Teaching-Learning Process of the English Written Expression in Tenth Graders

1.1 A Theoretical Analysis of the Teaching-Learning Process of English Written Expression in Tenth Graders

Written communication goes beyond the limits of space and time to the absence of the receptor, the interaction is not immediate or it is never produced, generally the one who writes does not know for sure who or whom will read the text, that is why, it is said that words are alone in the written text. It is adjusted hardly to grammatical rules that make possible the textual coherence, its syntactical structure is complex and possesses more lexical richness and precision.

Written expression has a central place in communication because, depending on the situation, sometimes it is more feasible than speaking. This skill has a specific importance in the teaching-learning process of a language and serves as a fundamental tool.

Written expression, as well as the rest of the skills in the teaching learning-process of a foreign language, takes into account the acquisition of knowledge, and the development of skills and habits.

According to Senior High School syllabus, there are mainly four ways to practice writing in this education:

- Copying
- Dictation taking
- Grammatical exercises
- Composition

Grammatical exercises contained in the students' text bond oral and writing skills. They are based on a structuralize grammar, that is, the components of the linguistics patterns which are going to be used in complete exercises, substitution exercises, conversations, additions exercises, etc., until the student get to produce the linguistic pattern as a whole in a dialogue, a description or a narration.

It is the authoress opinion that grammar or any other subject must be taught in a communicative approach.

It is mainly through written language that persons acquire the necessary knowledge to improve themselves and their society. Science and technology would soon die away without writing to perpetuate and divulge them. It would be not possible to spell out the reward that humanity derived from the invention of written language. It is adequate to say that evolution would not exist without it.

Writing is a way of representing speech, and conventional systems of orthography are always incomplete and imprecise in their representation of language as it is spoken. The useful conclusion to be drawn is that letters represent sounds, not the other way around, and persons most base all their thinking on this fundamental fact. When professors show their students this way of thinking, they are going to carry out a better and more successful written process.

According to Moffett, James (1973): "... the better way of writing is getting feedback during it instead of only afterwards allows the learners to incorporate it into his or her final product."

This author makes emphasis in the importance of being attentive to the students' needs throughout the writing process with the intention of helping them to incorporate the necessary elements for a successful writing. It is to say to teach the students how to write developing the process in such a way that the students can correct their mistakes during the process and not when it finishes.

According to Cazabon, María J (1974):

Language can be of two kinds, oral or written... People, who can read and write, find it hard to keep speech and writing separate in their minds... The process of learning to speak is a natural one, and the process of learning to

write is artificial. The child cannot help learning to speak, and he learns with no conscious effort. But learning to read and write requires some kind of conscious effort and conscious instruction... Writing never becomes really automatic in the sense that speech does, because there is necessarily a longer interval between the situation or idea and the achievement of the word or sentence. Besides, he/she will still have to solve question of spelling and form, and physical problems of marking it down on the paper.

To this authoress language involves equally oral and written forms and the two ways have a strong connection. Writing requires to be taught in a conscious way for the students to get all the rudiments the process involves such as spelling, grammatical items and the punctuation marks as well.

To express what the students orally think is the most important goal of the communicative approach, but the integration of the abilities oral expression and written expression is also essential. Graves, Donald H. (1983) states this as follow: "If children do not speak about their writing, both teachers and children lose. Until the child speaks, nothing significant has happened in the writing conference. The simple, yet highly complex act of helping someone to speak cannot be left to chance".

Writing is also a way of widening people's information. When a person can write he/she can be conscious of how much she/he knows about the subject. It is so that reason that Stillman, Peter,(1984) stated: "Writing is a good way to find out how much we know(and do not know) about anything, whether it is a puzzling artifact...or a bit fossilized human, or some amorphous problem that is bothering us".

Peter Stillman sees this ability as a research way, which helps the writer of examining his /her understanding about the theme he /she is dealing with, solving the problem one has by investigating the desired information.

According to McInnes,J. [et al] (1985): "The integration has to do not only with oral expression and written expression, but with all the communicative skills". He sees this integration as follow:

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are psycholinguistic skills in which the language user interacts with, and through, language to get and create

meaning... Each language process makes special demands on the language user. Writing demands the shaping of thoughts in visible ways, either for personal use alone, or for communicating with an audience... Language users become aware of the process strategies they are using, particularly in reading and writing. They monitor their success continually. As they experience success and failure, children draw conclusion about themselves as learners. Observed successes build confidence, which encourage curiosity, inventiveness, and risk taking all language process required. Errors must occur if learning is to take place; however, repeated observed failures can damage the child self-image and interfere with his or her efforts to learn.

This author pays direct attention to the reading and writing processes in which the students can figure out about their success or failure, motivating their creativity. They can also make a self-correction after finishing their writing, which helps them accomplish a better-concluded work. He also states that the practice of an ability is a prevailing means to develop it. Referring to what it is said above he expresses:

“All the language processes involve self-correction... Self-correction takes place in spelling and in editing and revising written work... Competence grows through extensive experience with all the language processes. Children learn to talk by talking, to listen by listening, to read by reading and to write by writing. As reading and writing become personal useful, children discover more and more ways of responding... An important function of language instruction is to provide the child with information about his/her growing competence in all the language processes”.

Even when the receptor of certain writing is not present and there is not input, the writer must verify his/ her writing taking into account that writing must contribute with the formation of written expression. At this regard Antich, R. (1986) stated: “It is a process where the immediate receptor is missing and there is no feedback, the writer can check out his own writing process and verify the coherence of ideas. Writing contributes, therefore, to the formation of the written expression.”

According to Hedges, G. [et al] (1987) “Writing is a communicative language process...regular opportunities are provided for children to write both short,

exploratory pieces and more extended, polished pieces. These allow young authors to develop confidence and fluency on the one hand, and control of their communication skills on the other.” This author also states:” Writing is an activity that is always directed at the readership even if the reader is the writer along. Reading is a response to writing, a journey into the heart and mind of a writer how has a message that the reader may agree or disagree with, find exiting or dull, useful or unhelpful both writers and readers, as they became more skilled, develop points of view and critical approach to text. ”

It is of major importance to take this judgment into account when ordering the students to write. For 10th graders it is appropriate because it is in this grade they continue writing and they must have enough information to be capable of writing statements or texts, but, first, they need to obtain this knowledge through reading short texts. Sometimes, the information they need is obtained through another resource (video lesson, documental, etc), but it is the professor's job to encourage reading as a means of getting information, increasing the students capacity to develop their critical thinking.

Abbott [et al] (1989) express that: “There are good reasons why writing should be fully integrated with listening, speaking and reading to develop the written expression, and not to be treated in isolation or neglected.”

The authors previously mentioned point out the relevance of teaching the communicative skill in integration. In the teaching-learning process it is of supreme importance that professors teach the communicative skill in this way for the students to be taught on how to communicate themselves in an appropriate way in a foreign language.

Even though the teaching of the written expression should be acknowledged as a special part of language, it is necessary, teaching it with its own aims and techniques, because it has pedagogical purposes:

- ❖ It is one way to integrate skill properly.
- ❖ It provides one more way to learn, especially for those students who do not learn easily only through oral practice.
- ❖ It provides the learners with some evidence that they are making progress in the language.

- ❖ It provides variety in classroom activity.
- ❖ It increases the amount of language contact through work that can be set out of class.
- ❖ It is needed for testing the other skills. In practice, the time allotted for the lessons and the number of students in class demands the use of some forms of written test.

In the book: *Teaching English in a World at Peace*, written by Terroux, G. and Woods, H. (1991): they exposed some reasons which are of leading importance to know because they express the reasons the students have an aversion to writing when teaching this language. They expressed:

There are four reasons why students dislike writing:

1. Since writing leaves a more permanent record of proficiency than speaking, unrehearsed writing seems a threat.
2. The students feel that they lack sufficient knowledge of the language.
3. Students believe that writing must be grammatically correct.
4. They think that formal correctness must be achieved at their very first attempt.

According to Rodolfo Acosta (1996):

The written expression involves the correct association of conventional graphic symbols with sounds which have no meaning and no significant interrelation for the writer. In a more complicated process, the graphic symbols (letters, numbers and diacritic signs) have to be arranged into words, according to certain rules. Words have to be arranged to form sentences and these are linked together in a certain way to form a text around a topic. In this sense, writing involves the encoding of a message for someone who is generally not physically present. Thus, the writer has to ensure that what he/she writes can be understood successfully.

To bear in mind these reasons is useful for all the English professors when attempting to develop this skill in their students, namely, 10th graders who are learning how to develop properly this ability and consequently they feel fear to produce their own written texts for the reason mentioned before.

In the book *Lectures on English Phonetics and Phonology* (2001) it can be read:

There are some points which are of supreme importance to make a reflection about. The consequence of primacy of speech over writing is that we must not only analyze the situation, but also formulate relationships in term of speech first and writing second. We cannot begin our analysis by taking up letters and the way they are “pronounce”, we must first know what the sounds of a language are, such as English in our case, and then we must see how and to what extent they are representing in spelling. When we analyze the relationships of letters to sounds, we can then see that there are degrees of complication in these relationships- in other words, that some English spelling are more straight forward and systematic than others.

In learning how to write, it is needed to take into account the vital connection between phonemes and graphemes. Related to this subject it is expressed in the book beforehand mentioned:

In talking about the English spelling system, we require only two technical requisites, which are here defined and exemplified:

The phoneme is a significant unit of speech sound. The term significant means “making a difference in meaning“. Thus in English speech, the difference between /t/ and /d/ is significant, because there is a difference in meaning between, say tot and dot, and the difference between the last sound of path and that of pad is likewise significant, for the same reason. In any given language, phonemes can be simple or compound, the latter as in the case of diphthongs.

The grapheme, as a unit, is to visual shape what the phoneme is to speech sound. Thus, in English spelling, the basic grapheme units are the twenty-six letters of the Roman alphabet like phonemes-graphemes can also be either simple or compound: instances of the latter are English th, ng, au, ea, which are

combination of two single graphemes but which in themselves function as one phoneme.

After making a deep analysis of all the concepts and theories exposed in this Diploma Paper, the authoress of this research considers that all of them make an important theoretical contribution to it; nevertheless, the authoress also considers as the most appropriate for the investigation the concept given by Medina Betancourt, A.R. (2006) who stated that:

Written expression: process through which the student-writer thinks and elaborates meaning and then transforms it into written text, this going from short phrases, brief paragraphs and texts of medium complexity up to the level of expressing his/her ideas and meanings to a possible reader, according to the rules of writing which correspond to the different types of writing texts. As a skill in formation, it passes through different stages and requires of the apprehension of writing strategies and of a strong entailment between affective-motivational and cognitive elements.

1.2- A Theoretical Approach to the Learning Tasks to Improve English Written Expression in Tenth Graders

Learning is acquiring new, or modifying and reinforcing existing knowledge, behavior, skills, values, or preferences and may involve synthesizing different types of information. Progress over time tends to follow learning curves. Learning is not compulsory; it is contextual. It does not happen all at once, but it is built upon and it is shaped by what it is already known. To that end, learning may be viewed as a process, rather than a collection of factual and procedural knowledge. Learning produces changes in the organism and the changes produced are relatively permanent.

The purpose of learning in education is to produce behavioral change in desired direction, develop capacity and skills to learn better, become self-actualized, autonomous and full participation in communities of practice and utilization of resources. In his/her role as an educator, the teacher:

- ❖ Arranges environment to elicit desired response,
- ❖ Facilitates development of the whole person,

- ❖ Structures content of learning activity
- ❖ Works to establish communities of practice in which conversation and participation can occur.

On the one hand, task-based language learning has its origins in communicative language teaching, and is a subcategory of it. Educators adopt task-based language learning for a variety of reasons. Some moved to task-based syllabi in an attempt to make language in the classroom truly communicative, rather than the pseudo-communication that results from classroom activities with no direct connection to real-life situations.

A task is a classroom activity or exercise that has an objective attainable only by the interaction among participants, a mechanism for structuring and sequencing interaction, and a focus on meaning exchange; a language learning endeavour that requires learners to comprehend, manipulate, and/or produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans. (Lee 2000)

The components of a Task are:

1. Goals and objectives
2. Input
3. Activities
4. Teacher role
5. learner role
6. Settings

On the other hand, according to Medina Betancourt, A. R. (2006):

Learning task: traditionally, the terms used to designate the means of interaction between the learners and the foreign language content for learning to take place are: exercises, activities, techniques, and teaching activities. However, with the purpose to emphasize learning, as contrasted the other term which emphasize teaching, the term learning task might be used. Accordingly, in general terms, learning tasks are the means of subject _object interaction; that is, between learners and the language content, under the guidance of Foreign Language teacher, for learning to take place. That is, focus on the

learners to fulfill the aims of a given syllabus. It shares the other term mentioned before that they are structural units which organize not only language material but also the learner's actions and operations.

At this point the investigator considers appropriate to express that using learning tasks for improving English written expression, teachers can keep the students busy and out of mischief because learning tasks are easy to handle and poor qualified teachers may take them directly from the workbook. The kinds of tasks teachers orient the learners should be motivating, relevant or indeed very communicative. Teachers need to give learners tasks that are intellectually satisfying, especially when writing. Besides, teachers must take into account the contextualization of these tasks according to their student's environment.

1.2- An Empirical Diagnosis of the English Written Expression

After applying some observation of the teaching-learning process (see Appendix 1) and the critical analysis of the English 10th grade syllabus (see Appendix 2) as well as some interviews and surveys to professors (see Appendixes 3 and 4) and surveys to students (see Appendix 5) the researcher could realize that:

Through the observation of lessons in 10th graders (see Appendix 1) in order to diagnose how teachers give treatment to the English written expression at "26 de Junio" Senior High School the authoress gathered the following results:

- ❖ The objectives of the lessons visited were fulfilled in most of the cases. Some of them were partially fulfilled because there was not time to put into practice the content the students learned in a written form.
- ❖ The exercises were treated only orally because the students spent plenty of the time devoted to the exercises to copy them
- ❖ All the communicative skills are worked in the same lesson. They do not give time to develop the skill. Written Expression is just practiced when the students copy the exercises or examples given in the lessons.
- ❖ There is scantiness of exercises for the students to write. They are just limited to copying the exercises as fast as they can.

- ❖ Only one of the professors visited used some flash cards for the students to work with; the rest copied the exercises on the board, which took more time than the necessary to develop the exercises.
- ❖ The exercises developed in the lessons are intended only to develop the oral communication, which is the main objective in all the lessons visited.
- ❖ During the lessons checked, most of the exercises had to do with the practice of oral communication, some others were for the students to tick the correct answer or complete blank spaces, and some others to say true or false.
- ❖ There was limited existence of visual support and teaching media, mainly in the presentation lessons when the students have the first contact with the content of the unit. The method mostly used by teachers to get through the meaning of new words or phrases was the Grammar Translation Method.
- ❖ There was a good degree of cooperation while working in pairs. The students helped each other when they were preparing a dramatization under the teacher guidance, but there was a poor participation when checking the exercises in front of the class.

After making a critical analysis of the syllabus in order to evaluate its pertinence to fulfill its function in the teaching-learning process of English in senior high school, it was realized that:

- ❖ There is a progress in the objectives related to the communicative approach, although there is not a syllabus specifically for the subject and the objectives are in Spanish, but they are planned in communicative functions, but they are referred to video lessons that do not exist in the present time.
- ❖ The content is structured in communicative functions, but there is a lack of specification of the content in grammar and vocabulary.

- ❖ Written expression is only seen as a means to an end because the authors declared that it has to be used as a support instrument to fix the acquired knowledge.
- ❖ The methodology used tries to sustain the communicative approach, but they are designed for the three stages of the video lessons (before-while-post viewing the video lesson).
- ❖ It is focused on the development of video lessons, although it suggests some other teaching media such as pictures, pocket chart and body language.
- ❖ The evaluation proposed is based on a scale from 1 to 10 points, but there are some useful suggestions about some indicators to be taking into account when evaluating oral expression, reading comprehension and written expression.
- ❖ The scale of values proposed to make a self-evaluation is also designed in the scale 1 to 10 and includes some indicators to make it.

According to the results of the interview made to professors it was concluded that:

- ❖ All the interviewed professors expressed that written expression is very important because it is one of the basic aspects in communication.
- ❖ They also agreed on English written expression being useful to develop logical thinking in the students.
- ❖ 65, 4% of the professors expressed that it has to be integrated to other skills.
- ❖ 100% of the professors stated that to develop this skill is of vital importance to prepare learning tasks to improve it.
- ❖ 51,32% of them considered that to develop this skill it is necessary to take into account the students' interest and select specific themes to prepare the learning task in accordance, in order to stimulate students to write.

- ❖ 100% of the professors stated that the learning tasks were not always varied and stimulating because they did not know how to prepare motivating exercises.
- ❖ Most of the professors said that the exercises they used to develop this skill were “yes” or “no” questions, “true” or “false” exercises, “match-in- meaning” exercises and writing sentences or short paragraphs.
- ❖ Most of the professors said that the learning tasks they planned were the ones that were oriented in the workbook, so they were already made, not according to what the students needed.
- ❖ They also said that most of their students refused to write because they did not know how to write because English is pronounced in a way that is not the same it is written.

The surveys applied to English professors led to the following results:

- ❖ All the surveyed professors considered that it is important for the students to know how to write in English.
- ❖ 83, 33% of the teachers considered that this skill is not properly developed in 10th graders because professors try to develop the four communicative skills in the same lesson.
- ❖ They stated that it is not develop in a properly way because the fundamental goal is that the students learn how to speak, not to write.
- ❖ Most of the professors sated they know the methodological stages to develop this communicative skill, but they considered really difficult to put into practice these stages because there is not a lesson devoted to the written expression.
- ❖ Most of the professors said that although written expression can be taught in interrelation with other skills, it is also necessary to implement a lesson where written expression could be reinforce.

❖ 66,66% of the professors used the syllabus and workbook as bibliography to prepare themselves to teach written expression. 33,33% of them mentioned as bibliography used: *English Composition* by Rosa Antich, *Writing your way* by Stillman Peter [et al] and *English Conversational Grammar for Spanish Speakers* by Jaime Garza Bores.

❖ Professors suggested increasing English written expression exercises, to develop redaction abilities, to describe something using pictures, organizing ideas and writing short texts and sentences for reaching the development of the students' written expression.

The researcher of this Diploma Paper also surveyed on 40 students, 18 males and 22 females which constitute the 33, 89% of the registration.

❖ 76, 27% of the students declared that they do not know how to write in English, 20, 33% declared that they sometimes write some things and sometimes they have to write the words in the same way they pronounce them; 3, 38% of the students declared that they know how to do it.

❖ 96, 66% of the students declared that they could not write in English in the same way that they write in Spanish because the pronunciation in English makes difficult the way to write.

❖ Most of the students stated that the phoneme-grapheme relationships that interfere in their written skills are /ŋ/ -ing in words such as following, building, /h/ in him , high heel shoes, / ə/ in bath, /ð/ in weather, that, /ʃ/ in shoes, shirt, /tʃ/ in armchair, watching, the final /m/in classroom, problem, the initial /s/ in students,/dz/ in bridge.

❖ 83, 05 % of the students recognize that the sounds produced in English are very difficult for them to write; 16, 95% considered that the sounds are easy to be written.

❖ 76, 66% of the students considered as quite necessary a lesson where the teacher shows them how to develop this ability; 23, 34% declared that it is not necessary.

❖ 93, 33% of the surveyed students declared that it is very important to write in English. It is valuable for their future career, for communicating with foreign people, for writing letters and traveling to different places, knowing about their culture and 6, 67% of the students declared that English is suitable for writing emails, working in different places and for learning new and different words.

The results obtained demonstrated the existence of the problem, so the researcher can say that:

❖ The students' written expression is not properly developed because they cannot establish the phoneme- grapheme relationship when the sound does not exist in their mother tongue.

❖ They do not have the necessary exercises to foster written expression.

❖ There is not time enough to develop the necessary stages to form and develop the communicative skills specially written expression.

Partial Conclusions of Chapter One

Chapter I was devoted to establish the theoretical foundation of the research, with a critical and reflexive approach based on the empirical findings declared and presented. It gives a deep analysis to the reality of the teaching-learning process of writing, exposed the main difficulties students have while getting involved in that process, and approximated to some elements concerning the development of writing, categories that are essential to the investigation as a whole.

CHAPTER II: Elaboration of Learning Tasks to Improve English Written Expression in Tenth Graders at 26 de Junio Senior High School

Obtaining and expressing meaning is central to communication. Meaning occurs when attention is focused on the wholeness of a message, whether oral, written, or visual: students' first experience and respond to language as a whole. As they become familiar with the whole, they explore and investigate the parts, form and structure, sentences, phrases, and images, print and visual conventions. Optimum learning involves a judicious flow from the whole to the part and back to the part again.

The purpose of writing in principle is the expression of ideas, the conveying of a message to the reader; so the ideas themselves should arguably be seen as the most important aspect of the writing. On the other hand, the writer needs also to pay some attention to formal aspects: neat handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation, as well as acceptable grammar and careful selection of vocabulary.

This is because much higher standards of language are normally demanded in writing than in speech: more careful constructions, more precise and varied vocabulary, and more correctness of expressions in general. Also the slow and reflective nature of process of writing in itself enables the writers to devote time and attention to formal aspects during the process of production something it is difficult to demand in the course of the real time flow of speech.

Good writing also conveys a meaningful message and uses English well, but the message is more important than correct presentation. If one can understand the message or event part of it, the student have succeeded in communicating on paper and should be praised for that. For many English-as-a-foreign-language learners, writing skills will not be used much outside the class. This does not mean that they should not be encouraged to write, on the contrary, their needs should be considered and class time should be properly balanced. Many of the students who do not need to write will enjoy it for the purpose of

sharing their thoughts and personal stories, and they appreciate a format where they can revise their work into better English than if they shared the same information orally.

Writing is an activity that people connect in all through their life time for a diversity of personal and professional objectives: to communicate with family and friends; to perform a work-related function; to keep a confidential record of actions: to express a political perspective or estimation. Children's writing ability no matter what their purposes may be, must be developed in a positive and helpful atmosphere that focused on the writing and encourage personal writing.

Terroux, G. And Howard Woods, (1991) proposed some stages to fulfill his process in a successful way. They stated:

"Writing is a creative process Professors can actually teach students how to write. An effective way to do this is to make students aware of the steps involved in an effective writing."

For leading the students through the different stages of the writing process these authors projected some basic steps:

1. The teacher requires the students, working in pairs...
2. To generate ideas, a brainstorming session is held and the ideas are written on the board. The teacher initiates this process by asking some questions on the subject.
3. The teacher suggests ways of organizing the wide range of ideas. However, she reminds the students that this organization of these ideas is arbitrary; there are other possibilities.
4. After jotting down their ideas, the students confer with their partners and with the teacher, if necessary.
5. After conferencing the student tentatively agree on the topics their paper will cover.
6. Each attempt is a very rough draft of the letter. Further conferencing leads to changes in the order of the topics. The whole process is tentative. Students generally do not begin with an outline. But, if they do, the writing process will almost surely change the outline.

7. As the process continues, topics are dropped and added as the students see they fit.

8. Throughout this process and especially towards its conclusion, the different elements of the revision list (cited earlier) are dealt with, though not in a linear fashion.

2.1- Main Characteristics that Identify the Learning Tasks

In this epigraph the authoress proposes some learning tasks in order to improve the students Written Expression. To do so, the researcher takes into consideration the following:

1. The learning tasks are structured in such a way that during their development, the four communicative skills are worked out with in an integrated way. However, close attention is paid to written expression, which is the goal of this investigation.

2. The learning tasks are designed in such a way that the students can be approached to written exercises, for them to find out how to communicate themselves in an authentic way and in written form whenever possible .

3. The content is selected from a functional, graded and concentric viewpoint that results important to the student individual and collective needs and the future use they are going to give to the language and taking into account all the communicative stages of the written expression.

4. The learning tasks are structured so as to make possible the interaction among the students under the professor's guidance which is based on a collaborative approach, taking advantages of the opportunity given to foster value formation.

2.2 Methodological Considerations in the Direction for the Formation and Development of the Written Expression Skill

It is very important for professors to direct and form the written skill in a proper way. Medina, A. (2006) in his book **Didáctica de los Idiomas con Enfoque de**

Competencias provides some methodological considerations on how to do it. It can be read:

- ❖ Writing is a very complex thinking process and its learning must be directed in such a way, the professor must allow the students to express their ideas in an open and free way, because it constitutes a basic element to highlight the intrinsic motivation.
- ❖ The linguistic abilities are transferred from one language to another in a positive or negative way. In consequence, the most relevant contextual fact to take into account by Spanish and English teachers to form and develop the written expression skill is the development level of this ability in the student's mother tongue. This forces them to make an exhaustive diagnosis of it and a whole work with the general comprehensive teacher, specially the one who attends the humanistic area.
- ❖ The professor must take into account the cultural knowledge and the linguistic development in both, the mother tongue and the foreign language because it can constitute a difficult source.
- ❖ The efficiency of the Written Expression is measured because of the quality of the product in the last instance. However to reach it, it is required to fulfill the process' rigorous stops, analyzing and making adjustments to the students individual characteristics with a dialectical sense and an adequate balance between the product 's and the process' approach.
- ❖ To fulfill a proper written text, the students need to dispose of his professor's and classmates' feedback during the whole writing process.
- ❖ The direction of the written expression teaching-learning process should result in the capability of the students to develop strategies which allow them to be an efficient "writer". Among the essential requirements are: to center the writing in a specific

purpose or a communicative function; to use "hooks" for the potential readers. Besides, to plan what is going to be expressed with an efficient use of the time; to let his/her ideas flow in a free way in the paper and to check it as many time as it is necessary before getting to a final version.

❖ The correction of the written mistakes can start departing from the first versions of the written process. The most Instructive evaluation that can be offered to the students is the commentaries (as much specific as general) about their work to stimulate and challenge them to perfection. The qualification (if necessary) has to be given to the final version.

❖ It is advisable for each student to keep the written text checked by the professor in order to evaluate his/her progress. In the same way the professor must keep a record of the students' individual results in order to make inferences.

❖ Writing must be learned as a means (to learn new lexical elements, to practice some grammatical rules, etc) and as an end (to express their own ideas, to make a narration, to write letters, short stories, etc). The balance between both approaches depends on the students' level and the purpose of the syllabus.

❖ The efficient development of the four communicative skills in a foreign language necessarily passes through the integration of them. In written expression, specifically, it must be attended in a particular way the relation between it and reading comprehension. Students learn to write in a proper way, by observing what is already written by others, it is to say by reading and analyzing a variety of written texts which have to be important for their apprenticeship.

2.3 Elaboration of Learning Tasks to improve the English Written Expression

Learning task 1: From another language

Objective: to use some borrowings that are also used in their mother tongue, in making sentences, after having identified them

Skill: written expression

Level of assimilation: recognition

Elements to be given special attention: similarities between Cuban spoken language and English spoken language

Procedure: The teacher writes a variety of words in some cards, which are going to be handed out to the students. The students must circle the word/s that they consider as a borrowing/s. Then, the teacher picks up the cards and he/she reads the students' answers for them to copy the words they listen to. The teacher will emphasize on the right spelling of these words.

Organization: pair work

1) Circle the word/s that we use in our mother tongue that are from English spoken language.

a) Use these elements to make sentences with some of the words used in the previous exercise.

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------|----------|
| 1) software | computer | hardware |
| 2) father | baby | mother |
| 3) interchange | interview | internet |
| 4) out | over | owner |
| 5) short | she | shoes |
| 6) nylon | never | nether |
| 7) speak | sport | spend |
| 8) robot | machine | phone |
| 9) house | homerun | hope |
| 10) brother | sister | cousin |
| 11) tennis | football | chess |

| | | |
|----------------|----------|------------|
| 12) pants | pullover | t-shirt |
| 13) hot | home | how |
| 14) students | struggle | strike |
| 15) volleyball | baseball | basketball |

Learning task 2: Crossword puzzle

Objective: to express personal information

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Elements to be given special attention: communicative competence in written form related to personal information.

Organization: pair work

Procedure: The teacher writes a crossword puzzle in some cards. One card is going to be given on each table; the students are going to complete the sentences and the crossword puzzle. Later, they are going to use this personal information for dramatizing a conversation.

- 1) Complete the crossword puzzle to know what information is requested from you to make a conversation.

- a) After figuring it out, dramatize the conversation with your partner.

Across clues

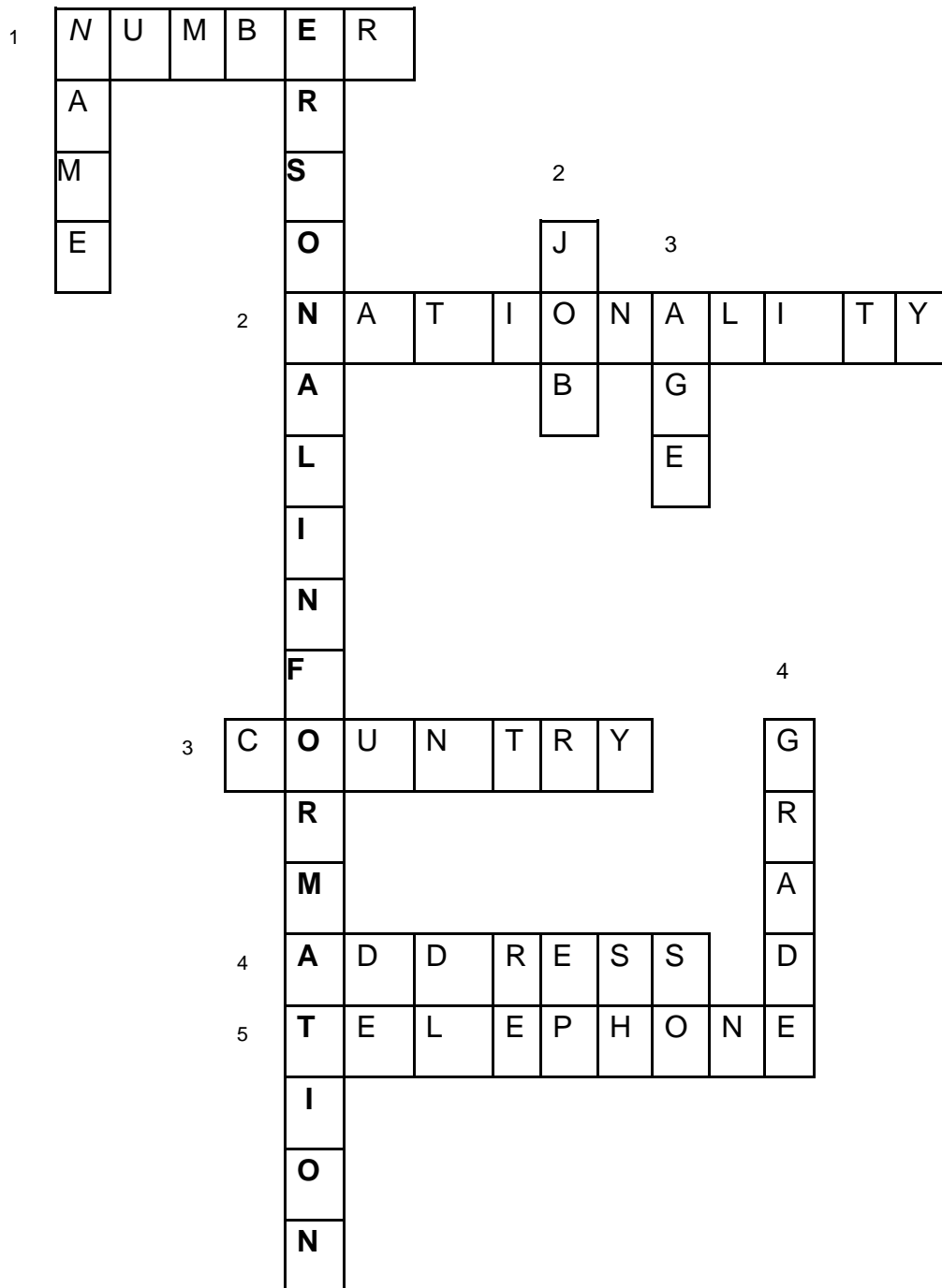
1. My favorite (1) ----- is five.

2. My (3) ----- is Cuban.
3. Cuba is my (5) -----.
4. My (6) ----- is 45, 11th Street, La Laguna Moa Holguin.
5. My (7) ----- number is 6-0-7-0-4-5.

Down clues

1. My (1) ----- is Denise.
2. My father is an engineer. This is his (2) -----.
3. My mother's (3) ----- is 40.
4. I am in 10th (4) -----.





Learning task 3: My Town

Objective: to describe important places

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension.

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to adjectives.

Procedure: The teacher will show the students a little text describing a school. Then, they are going to select another important place of their town. Following this model text, they are going to make a description using different adjectives studied.

There are many schools in my town. 26 de Junio is the name of a senior high school. It is beautiful. It is small, old and magnificent. Its classrooms are comfortable and wonderful. It is so interesting to be there. I really like it.

a) Select one important place of your town and make a description of it. You can follow the teacher's text. Be as creative as you can.

b) Be ready to read your description.

Learning task 4: What is your house like?

Objective: to describe the house

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: pair work

Elements to be given special attention: to express existence of the different parts of the house.

Procedure: The teacher orients the students to draw a map representing their houses. They are going to write the different parts of the house inside the map.

1) Draw a map of your house.

a) Locate its different parts.

b) Write a paragraph describing what there is in each room.

c) Be ready to report the description you make. You can begin like this:

There are seven rooms in my house...

d) Try to make a dialog using the information of your descriptions. Be ready to report it.

Learning task 5: My Own Story

Objective: to express actions that occur habitually and in the moment of speaking

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: group work

Elements to be given special attention: grammatical aspects related to Present Continuous and Simple Present Tense

Procedure: The classroom will be divided up into two groups. Then, the teacher makes some drawings on the board or takes some pictures to the classroom and then writes some questions for the students to answer them by using a creative way of writing their own story. The teacher will guide the students to fulfill the stages of the written process.

You are going to observe some pictures/drawings where Alice's family is doing some activities. Write your own story. Use your imagination. Answer these questions to guide your writing. Be ready to report your writing.



a) Who are they?

b) Where are they?

c) How many children do they have?

- d) What are the children's names?
- e) What do they usually do?
- f) What are they doing?

Learning task 6: A Letter to a Pen Friend

Objective: to summarize the communicative functions studied

Skill: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: production

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: communicative competence in written form

Procedure: The teacher brings a letter to the classroom for the students to reply to it. The students are going to reply to the letter by responding the questions which appear in the letter. The letter will be copied on the board for guiding the students to answer it. The response to the letter has to be handed in (TBHI)...

Peter wrote to the Cuban "Pionero" Magazine. He is looking for a penfriend. Write him back; answer his questions in order to be his penfriend. Be ready to read your answer. You can mail the letter to him or to a penfriend you select from the magazine named before.

14 Vic Street Koin

December 3rd

Hi, my friend,

How are you? My name is Peter. I am a German student. I am fourteen. How old are you? I speak English, German and a little French. I like reading, writing letters and going to the cinema. I also like pop music. I like going to disco too. My favorite singer is Ricky Martín. He is great. I do not like cleaning and I also dislike staying at home especially on Saturdays. I like going to parties with my friends. What do you like?

Please write soon.

Peter.

Learning task 7: Important Places from my Country

Objective: to describe important places

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: pair work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to the verbs in past tense and reinforcement of the value patriotism in a natural way.

Procedure: The students will work in pairs to make a dialog about the most important characteristics of the places they mention. They can also write that information on their notebooks. Professor can emphasize on the historical places in our municipality in order to draw attention to patriotism

1. A tourist is visiting Santiago de Cuba. He/she wants to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Please make a conversation and act it out.

A: You are a tourist and you are visiting Santiago de Cuba. You want to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Ask the tourist guide: Its name, location, what happened there, who participated in the historical events.

B: You are a tourist guide. A tourist is visiting Santiago de Cuba he/she wants to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Answer him/her about its name, location, what happened there, who participated in the historical events.

2. Select a historical place from your municipality and write a paragraph by changing the information you used about the former Moncada Garrison to the ones that belong to the place you select

Learning task 8: A Composition

Objective: to express personal opinion in written form about a given topic

Skills: written and oral expression

Organization: individual work

Level of assimilation: creation

Elements to be given special attention: Simple Present and Present Continuous Tense.

Procedure: The students are going to work in pairs in order to complete sentences using their own words. Professor can highlight a specific topic. Later, they are going to select one topic for making a composition and they are going to report it orally.

1. Complete the following sentences with your own words. Use only habitual actions and actions in the moment of speaking.

- a) E.g.: One of my... teachers knows Chinese
- b) Some of my...friends are coming to visit me
- c) All of my rooms...
- d) In my country, there...
- e) A lot of...
- f) The people in my country...
- g) English...
- h) The Unite States...

2. Select one of the topics given and write a composition. Be ready to make an oral report.

Learning task 9: Internationalist Doctors

Objective: to compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries by using comparison items

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to comparatives given special attention to irregular adjectives (good and bad) and reinforcement of the value patriotism and solidarity.

Procedure: The students will make a research about the doctors who are fulfilling mission in their community. They will write the information, they will also compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries, later they will report it by reading what they have found. Professor can highlight the role of Cuban doctors in other countries.

1. Search information about internationalist doctors who live in your community. You may visit your policlinic or other source of information. Try to answer the following questions:

- How many internationalist doctors live in your community?
- Where is/are he/she/they working?
- What specialty is/are he/she/they performing there?
- Find out name, age, likes, dislikes, sports, languages, etc
- Compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries

Learning task 10: My Favorite Book

Objective: to express personal opinion in written form about a written text.

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: phoneme-grapheme relationship, fluency to express opinions in written form.

Procedure: The students will write the information they have obtained from a book interrelating written expression and reading comprehension. The teacher can give them some questions for them to guide the structure of what they are going to write. Later, they will report it by reading what they have written. Professor can highlight the role of Cuban writers in order to draw attention to

patriotism.

1. For one minute, think about a book you have read.
2. Now write about the book for two minutes.
3. Stop for two minutes, read what you wrote and think again about the story.
4. Now write again for two minutes. Start over from the beginning. (Do not continue for what you wrote in step 2.)
5. Repeat step 3.
6. Repeat step 4.

Partial Conclusions of Chapter Two

In order to develop this chapter it was necessary, first, to name some characteristics that identify the elaboration of the learning tasks. The results obtained from the application of empirical methods were thoroughly taken into account when selecting the elaboration of learning tasks which solve the problem previously declared in the design of this Diploma Paper. The learning tasks consists of ten learning tasks aiming at the development of writing skill in tenth graders, taking into consideration the main contents the students received

and some other elements the authoress considered important while elaborating the learning tasks.

CHAPTER III: Corroboration of the Effectiveness of the Learning Tasks to Improve the English Written Expression on 10th grade in “26 de Junio” Senior High School

3.1 In-Depth Survey Applied to the Professors

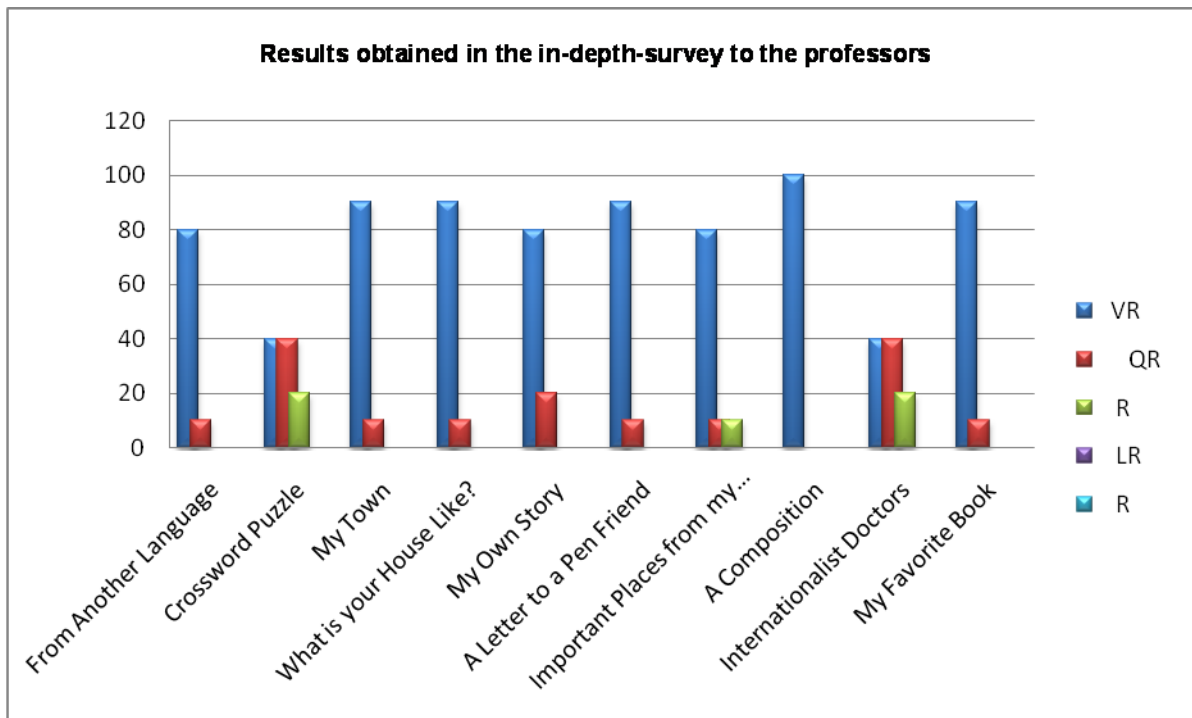
After having finished the theoretical and practical elaboration and with the objective of corroborating the effectiveness of this contribution, it was necessary to apply an in- depth-survey to English professors in Moa Municipality (see annex 6). It was the authoress' consideration that finding out the real preparation professors had was more relevant than the number of professors consulted.

All the professors consulted are bachelors in education specialized in English language. Three of them are registered in the course to obtain a master degree in educational sciences. The teachers' experience ranges from 14 to 29 working years, all of them have worked in this level of education and have been in touch with the theme of this investigation (written expression). This adds an extra reliability of their capacity to corroborate the subject to be researched on.

The requirements put under the professors' consideration were the theoretical and methodological supports that constituted the basis for the further elaboration of learning tasks; these requirements were considered as **Very Relevant** by most of the professors consulted.

Partial Conclusions from in-Depth Survey to Professors

A deep analysis of the results obtained in the surveys shows that the learning tasks elaborated have enough potentialities, therefore, they qualify as a suitable alternative to be applied in the teaching-learning process. The prevailing categories marked moved between **very relevant** and **quite relevant** with remarkable **very relevant** selections on the indicators. Another outstanding element is that no professor marked **little relevant** or **not relevant**. The fact that the categories selected moved from **very relevant** to **relevant** allows the researcher to state that the learning tasks are a positive contribution and an alternative that can be developed in class and marks them as a proper choice to be applied. Nevertheless, one of the surveyed professor pointed out some elements to take into account in the learning tasks elaborated by the researcher of this Diploma Paper, these suggestion permitted to enrich this investigation.



(See Appendix 6)

3.2 Practical Application of the Learning Tasks to Improve the English Written Expression

3.3 Application of the Learning Tasks through a Pedagogical Experience

With the objective of corroborating the effectiveness of the learning tasks as a vital contribution of this research, the authoress considers to make a practical application, determining to do it through a pedagogical experience with one of the groups of 10th grade at “26 de Junio” Senior High School.

In the academic year 2014-2015, there are six groups of 10th grade. In this context, it was selected group 1 which has a registration of 40 students.

The intervention began on September 2014, after the researcher had concluded the first learning task elaboration and it ended in January. During the time the experience went on, the researcher could realize the effectiveness of the learning tasks.

During all the process, the researcher interchanged point of view with some other professors of the department and the municipality in the methodological training. To lead the process of corroboration and to describe the results, the following indicators were selected:

1. Learners´ Attitudes towards the Development of the Learning Tasks

Departing from a general consideration, the students accepted the learning tasks structured by the researcher. Even though, the level of acceptance defers from pupil to pupil and from learning task to learning task. One of the reasons that the students demonstrated and in some occasions, they talk about in reference to the acceptance of the learning task was that the new learning tasks are different. It was so because sometimes they get bored at completing sentences or writing long texts, despite the fact that the learning tasks involved a challenge for them to write and communicate among them most of the time, what motivated them in expressing their opinions in oral and written form. The learning task they preferred the least was learning task 4: “What is your House Like?”, for they expressed: “*Teacher I do not like this learning task because I*

have to say how my house is and I prefer to speak about how I would like it would be.”

2. Non-verbal Communicative Responses to Manifest their Acceptance or Rejection towards the Learning Tasks

There are some learning tasks towards which the students express acceptance. They show their acceptance by using gestures such as smiling or nodding. The way they stood up to make a dramatization or even to go to the black board demonstrated their disposition to participate on the learning tasks in a spontaneous and conscious way. For example, in Learning Task 6: “A letter to a Pen Friend” and Learning Task 9: “Internationalist Doctors”. It is the researcher’s opinion that it was so, because through those learning tasks the students have the probability to make friends from other places and countries. They can share different themes that concern adolescents at the present time. In addition, they also develop their vocational formation when making their research about the different work doctors have to do to help people. This kind of task also stimulates their value formation when realizing about the importance of the work Cuban doctors carry out in those places, as an example of solidarity with other countries.

3. Concentration of Attention during the Development of the Learning Tasks

The students centered more much attention on Learning Tasks 6, 8 and 9 because they had to complete sentences using their own words and then, they were supposed to select a topic for composition. As they were asked to express themselves orally, in pairs, the most advanced students could help the less advanced students, showing their will to help each other. They also had the opportunity to interchange ideas with a pen friend; they had the chance of talking about the task made by health people in other countries of the world, which make it possible to deepen on the development of the written skills.

4. Communicative Skill(s) towards which the Students Showed Higher Level of Interest while Developing the Learning Tasks

The researcher provided the same level of attention to the four communicative skills, working them in an integrated way. It was demonstrated that the students were motivated when working in pairs, to express themselves, both, orally and in writing. Consequently, it is the authoress' opinion that the highest level of interest was towards oral expression and written expression. It is important to say that many students expressed they had improved their knowledge when they said: "***Professor, it is easier for me to write now, or Professor, following these steps it is better to write and to speak.***"

5. Type of Class Organization the Students Prefer for the development of the Learning Tasks

It is very difficult to organize a language class due to the amount of students per group (between 30 to 40) in 10th grade. Nevertheless, it was possible to have the students work in free pair work because of the way of planning the learning tasks. This way of lesson organization was the one students liked the most_ mainly the less advanced students. While working in fixed pair work the professor took into account to combine students with different levels of assimilation of the language. That is, she combined an advanced student with average or low-level student, thus enhancing cooperative learning among them.

6. Changes in the Writing Skill Level Evidenced by the Students

At the beginning of the investigation and through the application of the first learning tasks, the students were capable of writing simple texts (such as simple sentences, short paragraphs) under the guidance of the professors or with the collaboration of advanced students. While the investigation was going further, the students were showing more acceptance in the realization of the learning tasks because they gained more confidence, in the same way they practiced the phoneme-grapheme relationship which were more difficult for them (especially the sounds that do not exist in Spanish). No matter the great advance achieved by the students during the experiment, it is fair to say that the

time allotted for the realization of the pedagogical experience was not enough for them to reach all the desired level. Therefore, it is necessary that the professors continue working hard in order to succeed in the development of this skill.

7. Effect of the Learning Tasks in Students' Value Formation

Cuban education has an important objective at present: value formation. During the learning tasks development there was an environment of cooperation, solidarity, responsibility and patriotism. All the values stimulated during the learning tasks allowed students to widen their knowledge. It was demonstrated in their way of behaving much more responsibly when doing the learning tasks or the activity demanded by the teacher. They also began to appreciate the different Cuban places, stimulating their love for their homeland and municipality. It is worth to say that the work in pairs allowed the students to enhance their collaborative work, thus, reinforcing their solidarity value.

8. Potentialities for the Students' Interaction and Cooperation during the Learning Tasks

It was established that the students did not enjoy group work; they would rather enjoy the activities that involved them in pair work, like Learning Task 1 "From another Language" and, Learning Task 7 "Important Places from my Country". In order to solve these learning tasks they worked together in their seats. However, they also enjoyed individual work because of the chance they had to write by they own using the best possibility of every individual for the development of the different steps. Examples can be Learning Task 5 "My Own Story" in an individual work which allows them to use a creative way of writing their own story and gives them the chance of writing or rewriting wherever it was necessary to correct their own mistakes. As they were able to solve the different learning tasks with ease, showed them how capable they are in relation to writing and communicating their opinions by means of putting into practice the knowledge they have acquired.

Conclusions

After having answered the scientific questions through the development of the scientific tasks, it is the authoress' opinion that the objective of this Diploma Paper is fulfilled, so the authoress can draw the following conclusions:

- The theoretical analysis and further description of the main categories related to written expression and learning tasks permitted these categories emphasizing written expression as one of the main objective to fulfill in this investigation
- The empirical characterization of the teaching-learning process of English in senior high school in Moa Municipality made it possible to determine that the students have not properly developed their written expression skill. In some way, it could be determined that they do not know how to improve it in a proper way
- In the evolution of the investigation it could be determined that the theoretical and practical elaboration of learning tasks can contribute to solve the scientific problem, resulting in ten learning tasks which were structured taking as basis that:
 - The learning tasks selected must be used to stimulate the students in the development and formation of the communicative skills, specially written expression without disregarding the interaction of the four communicative skills
 - The learning tasks selected may be used to stimulate written expression, which is the main goal of this research
 - The language level used by the authoress is comprehensible to the students' level.
- The application of the In-Depth-Survey method allowed the investigator to corroborate the relevance of the application learning tasks as very relevant.
- Those opinions enriched the structured learning tasks.

➤ The practical application of the learning tasks made possible to corroborate its effectiveness through the results obtained in the observation of the pedagogical experience and the students' way of acting.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Observation guide

Objective: to diagnose how teachers give treatment to the English written expression through the lesson

Indicators:

1. Achievement of the objectives
2. Strategies used by the teacher to develop the written expression
3. Relationship between the developed exercises and the goal of the class
4. Type of exercises
5. Variety of methods and techniques
6. Interaction among the students

Appendix2: Critical Analysis of the English10th syllabus

Objective: to evaluate the pertinence of the syllabus for the English subject in Senior High school

1. Objectives
2. Content
3. Methodology: approach, methods, techniques and procedures
4. Teaching media
5. Evaluation

Appendix3: Interview to teachers

As you know and investigation is conducted. Due to the importance of written expression as one of the basic skill for training students, this research has focused on it.

The following interview is intended **to obtain information on aspects related to the preparation and presentation of some learning tasks to improve the written expression efficiently**. The researcher asks your sincere cooperation for the evaluation and improvement of the written expression in tenth grade students.

Teacher's name: _____

Degree _____

Diploma _____

Master _____

Years of experience in teaching the English subject: _____

- 1.-What importance do you give to written expression?
- 2.- What criteria do you consider to prepare learning tasks to improve the written expression?
- 3.- What kind of tasks do you develop in class?
- 4.-Are these tasks varied and stimulating?
- 5.-Are you aware of your students' attitudes and disposition towards written expression in class?

Appendix 4: Survey to teachers

Objective: to know the English written expression in the teaching-learning process.

Dear teacher,

The following questionnaire is being used in a searching for raising the quality of the written expression in the teaching-learning process, so the researcher hopes you will be sincere and close to the truth.

Name of the
teacher: _____

Years of experience in teaching the English subject: _____

1 – Is it important for the students to write?

Yes _____

No _____

2 – Is this skill properly developed in 10th grade students?

Yes _____

No _____

3 – Do you know the methodological stages to develop written expression?

Yes _____

No _____

4 – Must written skill be taught in interrelation with other communicative skill?

Why? Why not?

Yes_____

No_____

5 – Could you mention the name of appropriate bibliography to prepare yourself to teach written expression?

6 – What sort of aspects can you suggest to reach the development of the student's written expression?

Appendix 5: Survey to students

Encuesta a los estudiantes

Objective: to know the student's opinion about the English written expression.

Compañeros estudiantes, estamos enfrascados en una investigación acerca de la expresión escrita en las clases de Inglés, con su respuesta usted contribuye a nuestro trabajo por lo que se les pide la mayor sinceridad y seriedad posible al responder y se les da las gracias por su ayuda y colaboración.

Sexo: _____

Municipio de residencia: _____

Marca con una (x) la respuesta que más se acerque a la tuya:

1. ¿Sabes escribir en inglés?

Si _____

No _____

2. ¿Se escribe en inglés igual que en español?

Si _____

No _____

3. ¿Cuáles son las palabras que más se te dificultan para escribir o que sonido te es más difícil reconocer?

4. ¿Crees necesario que tu profesor dedique una clase para enseñarte a escribir en Inglés?

Si_____

No_____

5. ¿Conoces la importancia de dominar la habilidad de expresión escrita?

Si_____

No_____

¿Cuál es la
importancia?_____

—

—

—

—

Appendix 6: In-Depth-Survey

Compañero (a):

Esta investigación se está realizando con el objetivo de estimular la escritura en la asignatura de Ingles en los estudiantes de 10mo grado. Reconozco en usted un(a) experimentado(a) profesor por lo que le solicito su participación en el desarrollo de la investigación dando sus opiniones y sugerencias sobre la(s) propuesta(s) realizadas. Necesito que su respuesta sea lo más objetiva posible.

Datos generales del profesor:

| | |
|--|--|
| Nombre y apellidos | |
| Centro de trabajo | |
| Cargo que ocupa | |
| Nivel en el que labora | |
| Años de experiencia docente en la educación superior | |
| Años de experiencia docente en la educación media | |

Sobre el basamento teórico metodológico necesario para una propuesta de tareas de aprendizaje para estimular la escritura en la asignatura de Ingles en los estudiantes de 10mo grado en el pre-universitario "26 de Junio".

Antes de proceder a realizar la propuesta fundamental de esta investigación en tareas de aprendizaje para estimular la escritura, se ha considerado proponer los requerimientos que han de servir de base a la propuesta.

Marque con una x en cada celda que corresponda a los respectivos requerimientos el grado de relevancia que usted otorga a cada una de ellas, considerando como 5 muy relevantes (VR), 4 bastante relevante (QR), 3 relevante (R), 2 poco relevante (LR) y uno no relevante (NR).

Requisitos:

1. The learning tasks are structured in such way that during their development, the four communicative skills are worked with in an integrated way. However, closely attention is paid to written expression.

| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| | | | | |

2. The learning tasks are designed in such way that the students can be approached to written exercises, for them to find out how to communicate themselves in an authentic way in written form whenever possible.

| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| | | | | |

3. The content is selected from a functional, graded and concentric viewpoint that results important to the students' individual and collective needs and the

future use they are going to give to the language and taking into account all the communicative stages of the written expression.

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

4. The learning tasks are structured in such way as to make possible the interaction among the students under the professor' guidance which is based on a mutual approach, taking advantage of the opportunity given to foster value formation.

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Si lo consideras pertinentes, adiciona cualquier otro elemento que pueda enriquecer estos requerimientos para estimular la escritura en los estudiantes.

Learning task 1: From another language

Objective: to use some borrowings that are also used in their mother tongue, in making sentences, after having identified them

Skill: written expression

Level of assimilation: recognition

Elements to be given special attention: similarities between Cuban spoken language and English spoken language

Procedure: The teacher writes a variety of words in some cards, which are going to be handed out to the students. The students must circle the word/s that they consider as a borrowing/s. Then, the teacher picks up the cards and he/she reads the students' answers for them to copy the words they listen to. The teacher will emphasize on the right spelling of these words.

Organization: pair work

1) Circle the word/s that we use in our mother tongue that are from English spoken language.

a) Use these elements to make sentences with some of the words used in the previous exercise.

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|------------|
| 1) software | computer | hardware |
| 2) father | baby | mother |
| 3) interchange | interview | internet |
| 4) out | over | owner |
| 5) short | she | shoes |
| 6) nylon | never | nether |
| 7) speak | sport | spend |
| 8) robot | machine | phone |
| 9) house | homerun | hope |
| 10) brother | sister | cousin |
| 11) tennis | football | chess |
| 12) pants | pullover | t-shirt |
| 13) hot | home | how |
| 14) students | struggle | strike |
| 15) volleyball | baseball | basketball |

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 2: Crossword puzzle

Objective: to express personal information

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Elements to be given special attention: communicative competence in written form related to personal information.

Organization: pair work

Procedure: The teacher writes a crossword puzzle in some cards. One card is going to be given on each table; the students are going to complete the sentences and the crossword puzzle. Later, they are going to use this personal information for dramatizing a conversation.

1) Complete the crossword puzzle to know what information is requested from you to make a conversation.

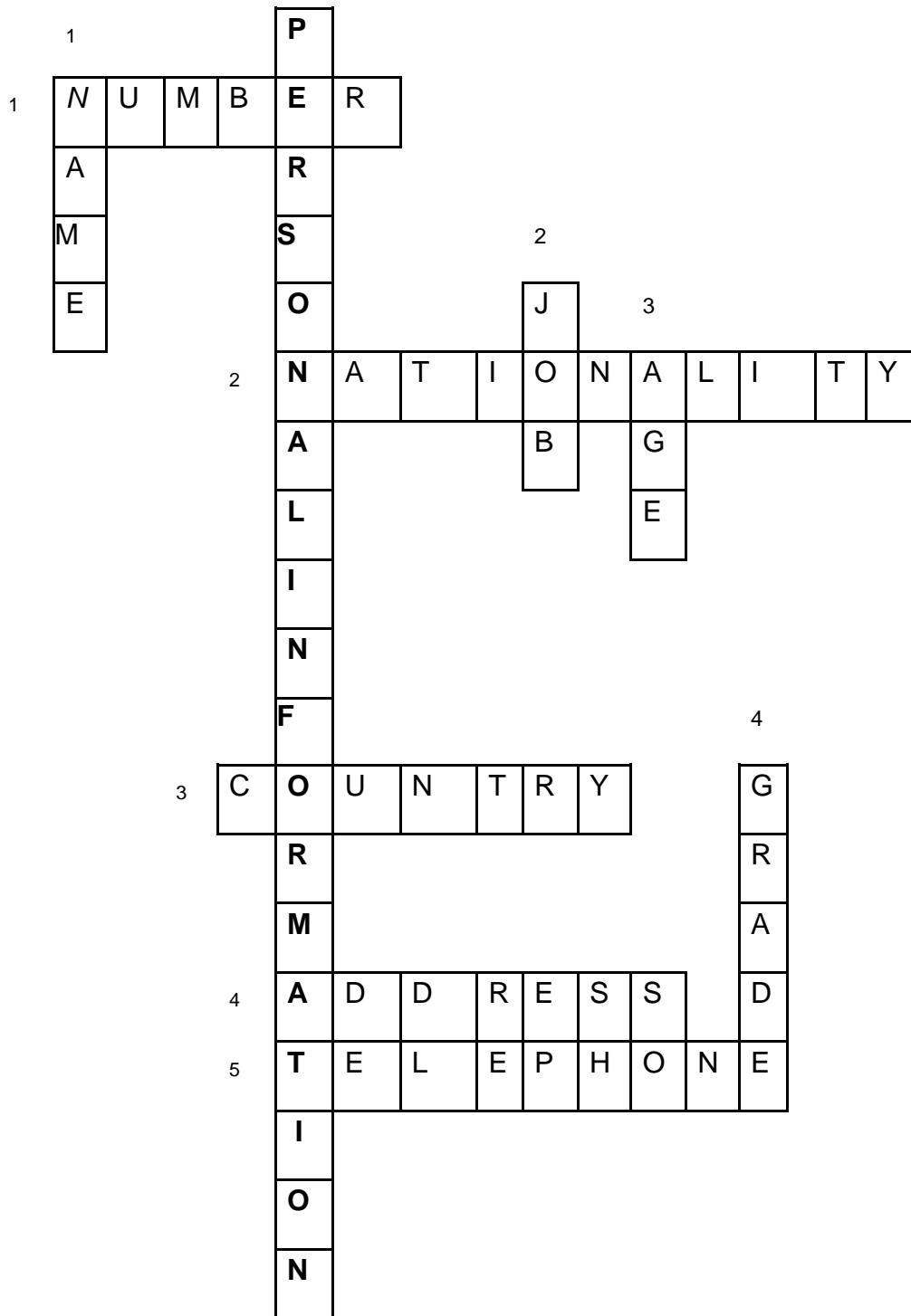
b) After figuring it out, dramatize the conversation with your partner.

Across clues

6. My favorite (1) ----- is five.
7. My (3) ----- is Cuban.
8. Cuba is my (5) -----.
9. My (6) ----- is 45, 11th Street, La Laguna Moa Holguin.
10. My (7) ----- number is 6-0-7-0-4-5.

Down clues

5. My (1) ----- is Denise.
6. My father is an engineer. This is his (2) -----.
7. My mother's (3) ----- is 40.
8. I am in 10th (4) -----.



¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 3: My Town

Objective: to describe important places

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension.

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to adjectives.

Procedure: The teacher will show the students a little text describing a school. Then, they are going to select another important place of their town. Following this model text, they are going to make a description using different adjectives studied.

There are many schools in my town. 26 de Junio is the name of a senior high school. It is beautiful. It is small, old and magnificent. Its classrooms are comfortable and wonderful. It is so interesting to be there. I really like it.

a) Select one important place of your town and make a description of it. You can follow the teacher`s text. Be as creative as you can.

b) Be ready to read your description.

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 4: What is your house like?

Objective: to describe the house

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: pair work

Elements to be given special attention: to express existence of the different parts of the house.

Procedure: The teacher orients the students to draw a map representing their houses. They are going to write the different parts of the house inside the map.

1) Draw a map of your house.

a) Locate its different parts.

b) Write a paragraph describing what there is in each room.

c) Be ready to report the description you make. You can begin like this:

There are seven rooms in my house...

d) Try to make a dialog using the information of your descriptions. Be ready to report it.

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 5: My Own Story

Objective: to express actions that occur habitually and in the moment of speaking

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: partial production

Organization: group work

Elements to be given special attention: grammatical aspects related to Present Continuous and Simple Present Tense

Procedure: The classroom will be divided up into two groups. Then, the teacher makes some drawings on the board or takes some pictures to the classroom and then writes some questions for the students to answer them by using a creative way of writing their own story. The teacher will guide the students to fulfill the stages of the written process.

You are going to observe some pictures/drawings where Alice's family is doing some activities. Write your own story. Use your imagination. Answer these questions to guide your writing. Be ready to report your writing.



- a) Who are they?
- b) Where are they?
- c) How many children do they have?
- d) What are the children's names?
- e) What do they usually do?
- f) What are they doing?

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 6: A Letter to a Penfriend

Objective: to summarize the communicative functions studied.

Skill: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: production

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: communicative competence in written form.

Procedure: The teacher brings a letter to the classroom for the students to reply to it. The students are going to reply to the letter by responding the questions which appear in the letter. The letter will be copied on the board for guiding the students to answer it. The response to the letter has to be handed in (TBHI)...

Peter wrote to the Cuban "Pionero" Magazine. He is looking for a penfriend. Write him back; answer his questions in order to be his penfriend. Be ready to read your answer. You can mail the letter to him or to a penfriend you select from the magazine named before.

14 Vic Street Koin

December 3rd.

Hi, penfriend,

How are you? My name is Peter. I am a German student. I am fourteen. How old are you? I speak English, German and a little French. I like reading, writing letters and going to the cinema. I also like pop music. I like going to disco too. My favorite singer is Ricky Martín. He is great. I do not like cleaning and I also dislike staying at home specially on Saturdays. I like going to parties with my friends. What do you like?

Please write soon.

Peter.

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| | | | | |

Learning task 7: Important Places from my Country

Objective: to describe important places

Skills: written and oral expression

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: pair work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to the verbs in past tense and reinforcement of the value patriotism in a natural way.

Procedure: The students will work in pairs to make a dialog about the most important characteristics of the places they mention. They can also write that information on their notebooks. Professor can emphasize on the historical places in our municipality in order to draw attention to patriotism

1. A tourist is visiting Santiago de Cuba. He/she wants to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Please make a conversation and act it out.

A: You are a tourist and you are visiting Santiago de Cuba. You want to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Ask the tourist guide: Its name, location, what happened there, who participated in the historical events.

B: You are a tourist guide. A tourist is visiting Santiago de Cuba he/she wants to know everything about the former Moncada Garrison. Answer him/her about

its name, location, what happened there, who participated in the historical events.

2. Select a historical place from your municipality and write a paragraph by changing the information you used about the former Moncada Garrison to the ones that belong to the place you select

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 8: A Composition

Objective: to express personal opinion in written form about a given topic

Skills: written and oral expression

Organization: individual work

Level of assimilation: creation

Elements to be given special attention: Simple Present and Present Continuous Tense.

Procedure: The students are going to work in pairs in order to complete sentences using their own words. Professor can highlight a specific topic. Later, they are going to select one topic for making a composition and they are going to report it orally.

1. Complete the following sentences with your own words. Use only habitual actions and actions in the moment of speaking.

- a) E.g.: One of my... teachers knows Chinese
- b) Some of my...friends are coming to visit me
- c) All of my rooms...

- d) In my country, there...
- e) A lot of...
- f) The people in my country...
- g) English...
- h) The United States...

2. Select one of the topics given and write a composition. Be ready to make an oral report.

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 9: Internationalist Doctors

Objective: to compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries by using comparison items

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: the use of some grammatical items related to comparatives given special attention to irregular adjectives (good and bad) and reinforcement of the value patriotism and solidarity.

Procedure: The students will make a research about the doctors who are fulfilling mission in their community. They will write the information, they will also compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries, later they will report it by reading what they have found. Professor can highlight the role of Cuban doctors in other countries.

1. Search information about internationalist doctors who live in your community. You may visit your policlinic or other source of information. Try to answer the following questions:

-How many internationalist doctors live in your community?

- Where is/are he/she/they working?
- What specialty is/are he/she/they performing there?
- Find out name, age, likes, dislikes, sports, languages, etc
- Compare Cuban doctors with doctors from other countries

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Learning task 10: My Favorite Book

Objective: to express personal opinion in written form about a written text.

Skills: written expression and reading comprehension

Level of assimilation: creation

Organization: individual work

Elements to be given special attention: phoneme-grapheme relationship, fluency to express opinions in written form.

Procedure: The students will write the information they have obtained from a book interrelating written expression and reading comprehension. The teacher can give them some questions for them to guide the structure of what they are going to write. Later, they will report it by reading what they have written. Professor can highlight the role of Cuban writers in order to draw attention to patriotism.

1. For one minute, think about a book you have read.
2. Now write about the book for two minutes.
3. Stop for two minutes, read what you wrote and think again about the story.

4. Now write again for two minutes. Start over from the beginning. (Do not continue for what you wrote in step 2.)

5. Repeat step 3.

6. Repeat step 4.

¿Cómo considera usted esta propuesta?

| | | | | |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|
| 5VR | 4QR | 3R | 2LR | NR |
| | | | | |

Results obtained from in-depth-survey to the professors

| Evaluated Aspects | Total of Teachers | Categories / % | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------|------|-------|-----|-------|------|---|------|---|
| | | 5 VR | % | 4 QR | % | 3 R | % | 2 LR | % | 1 NR | % |
| Learning tasks elaborated | 10 | 5 VR | % | 4 QR | % | 3 R | % | 2 LR | % | 1 NR | % |
| From Another Language | 10 | 8 | 80,00 | 1 | 10,00 | 1 | X | X | X | X | X |
| Crossword Puzzle | 10 | 4 | 40,00 | 4 | 40,00 | 2 | 20,00 | X | X | X | X |
| My Town | 10 | 9 | 90,00 | 1 | 10,00 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| What is your House Like? | 10 | 9 | 90,00 | 1 | 10,00 | X | X | X | X | X | X |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----|----|-------|---|-------|---|-------|---|---|---|---|
| My Own Story | 10 | 8 | 80,00 | 2 | 20,00 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| A Letter to a Pen Friend | 10 | 9 | 90,00 | 1 | 10,00 | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Important Places from my Country | 10 | 8 | 80,00 | 1 | 10,00 | 1 | 10,00 | X | X | X | X |
| A Composition | 10 | 10 | 100 | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Internationalist Doctors | 10 | 4 | 40,00 | 4 | 40,00 | 2 | 20,00 | X | X | X | X |
| My Favorite Book | 10 | 9 | 90,00 | 1 | 10,00 | X | X | X | X | X | X |

Appendix 7: Observation guide for the pedagogical experience

Objective: in order to put into practice the theoretical elaboration to corroborate the effectiveness of it.

Indicators

1. Learners attitudes toward the development of learning tasks
2. Non-verbal communicative responses to manifest their acceptance or rejection towards the learning tasks
3. Concentration of attention during the development of the learning tasks
4. Communicative skill(s) towards which the students manifested higher level of interest during the learning tasks development
5. Type of class organization the students prepared for the learning tasks development
6. Changes in the writing skill level evidenced by the students
7. Manifestation of the effect of the learning tasks development towards value formation
8. Potentialities for the students' interaction and cooperation during the learning tasks.