

WORKSHEETS BASED ON VOCABULARY TO ENHANCE WRITING

Worksheets Based on Vocabulary Learning Strategies to Enhance Students' Writing

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Abstract

This study showed how worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies contributed to the development of fourth grade students' writing. This study was conducted in a public, rural school with fifteen students in Cajicá, Colombia. The data gathering instruments were field notes, students' artifacts and tests. The study followed the qualitative approach and was developed under the action research methodology. The findings indicated that the design of worksheets based on vocabulary strategies made students feel motivated not only to learn new words, but also to understand the strategies that allowed them to start the process of writing. Moreover, the writing strategies were a successful approach for students because they learned how to write simple sentences. Also, using the models provided they could write simple paragraphs. Finally, all of these activities allowed students to improve their performance. This study helped learners feel motivated to learn faster and encouraged them to understand the importance of the use of vocabulary, to learn new strategies and to value meaningful writing feedback.

Keywords: materials development, vocabulary strategies, learning strategies, writing skills

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Resumen

Este estudio mostró cómo las guías basadas en estrategias de aprendizaje de vocabulario contribuyen a los estudiantes de cuarto grado a escribir. Este proyecto se realizó en una escuela pública, rural, con quince estudiantes en Cajicá, Colombia. Los instrumentos de recolección de datos fueron notas de campo, artefactos y pruebas de los estudiantes. El estudio siguió el enfoque cualitativo y se desarrolló bajo la metodología de la investigación-acción. Los resultados indicaron que el diseño de guías basadas en estrategias de vocabulario hizo que los estudiantes se sintieran motivados no sólo para aprender nuevas palabras, sino también para conocer las estrategias que les permitan iniciar el proceso de escritura. Por otra parte, las estrategias de la escritura eran una estrategia acertada para los estudiantes porque aprendieron cómo escribir oraciones simples y después usando modelos ellos podrían escribir párrafos simples. Finalmente, todas estas actividades permitieron a los estudiantes mejorar su desempeño. Este estudio ayudó a los estudiantes a sentirse motivados para aprender más rápido, alentándolos a entender la importancia del uso de vocabulario y estrategias de aprendizaje y para valorar la retroalimentación significativa de la escritura.

Palabras clave: desarrollo de materiales, estrategias de vocabulario, estrategias de aprendizaje, habilidades de escritura

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Introduction

Nowadays, English is an important language that helps connect individuals with other cultures, thus opening their doors to the wider world. It is evident that the management of a single language is not enough in an interconnected world. Learning English is necessary for study and for work. For this reason, the purpose of this study is to give students the opportunity to learn vocabulary and to develop better writing skills in a new language, since this is a determinant for personal and social success.

This research study focused on the development and implementation of worksheets to enhance students' vocabulary and their writing skills. The worksheets gave students the opportunity to learn words which were incorporated by developing simple writing activities. Taking into account that vocabulary is an essential factor when students learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL), this study focused on developing and implementing worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies because the knowledge of many words allows people to write, to communicate properly, to understand others' speech and to develop students' writing. The worksheets helped students to learn vocabulary and, at the same time, to use it to write sentences or descriptions. Increasing students' vocabulary improved their writing skills and they were able to write simple sentences or descriptions.

This paper is divided into five chapters. The first one introduces the research problem, its justification, and the research question; the second chapter describes the theoretical concepts; the third chapter presents the methodological design; the fourth one deals with the data analysis and findings; and the last chapter shows the conclusions and the pedagogical implications of the research.

Chapter I

Research Problem

Statement of the Problem

This study resulted from the analysis of fourth-grade students and their need to learn new vocabulary to write. This was the reason why I designed worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies to improve students' writing. It was important to carry out a research study dealing with the lack of vocabulary considering that it provided the basis for writing. Without vocabulary, the process of language learning becomes difficult. Wilkins argued that "without grammar very little can be conveyed, without vocabulary nothing can be conveyed" (as cited in Thornbury, 2008, p. 13). The former quote summarises the author's view point on the importance of vocabulary, where we can see that without learning words we cannot develop the use of a language.

I had noticed that students' main problem during their learning process was the lack of vocabulary because they did not know the meaning of several words. Therefore, they could not write any ideas.

To identify this lack of vocabulary, I completed four informal lesson observations over a period of a month. Arthar, Kelly, and Kasten (2008) stated that "writing down our observations and reflecting on them help us to become aware of the point of view from which we observe" (p. 163). As a result, I noticed that students had difficulties retaining vocabulary and doing writing exercises. I realized that they needed some vocabulary learning strategies to improve their learning process in English. Nattinger (as cited in Jordan, 2007) affirmed that

Comprehension of vocabulary relies on strategies that permit one to understand words and store them, to commit them to memory, that is, while production concerns strategies that

activate one's storage by retrieving these words from memory, and by using them in appropriate situations. The priority this distinction assigns to comprehension is one of many reasons why a growing number of researchers believe that comprehension should precede production in language teaching. (p. 149)

In line with the former idea, it is important to activate vocabulary comprehension including strategies such as: matching, labeling, unscrambling, repeating, and using imagery that allow students to expand their vocabulary and retain the new words in long-term memory.

Research Question

How do the development and implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies enhance 4th graders' writing?

Research Objectives

General objective: To explore the contribution of the development and implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies in 4th graders' writing enhancement.

Specific objectives: (a) To assess the effect of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies to enhance students' writing in the EFL classroom; (b) to analyze students' vocabulary learning and its incidence in writing; and (c) to describe students' writing progress through the use of vocabulary learning strategies.

Related Studies

This research study dealt with worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies to develop fourth graders' writing skills. The three main constructs in which this study is framed are: materials development, vocabulary learning strategies, and writing skills.

The first related study considered in this paper was the one developed by Muñoz (2010) who proposed the design of instructional materials to improve the English language level. The

purpose of this qualitative action research study was to account for children's cognitive skills and writing development when using designed instructional materials. This study was carried out with twenty-seven (six-seven year old) children undertaking their first grade at a private coeducational school in Bogotá, Colombia. The researcher validated this study with four main instruments: students' artifacts, video tapes, field notes, and conferences. The researcher concluded that the children overcame difficulties by using cognitive strategies, these strategies include repetition, organizing new language, summarizing meaning, guessing meaning from context, using imagery for memorization, because they support the learner and involve deliberate manipulation of language to improve learning. This study was relevant to my study because it showed the need to consider the use of strategies to support the teaching process. This study considered vocabulary strategies in the design of the worksheets.

Additionally, Becerra (2006) carried out a qualitative action research study based on materials development to determine the criteria fourth graders use when they assess all the worksheets provided in English class. This study was implemented in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia, with a group of fourth graders who studied English as a foreign language. The data collection techniques used to support the proposal were questionnaires, semi-open interviews, and a teacher's journal. The researcher made different worksheets focused on a specific topic for students to learn the vocabulary and then use the words to write sentences, the researcher's objective was to guide students to improve in four skills. She concluded that instructional materials were difficult because the children did not understand either the instructions or the vocabulary. She found that it had been necessary to develop the activities with certain hints that helped students to solve the tasks easily. This study showed me that it is important to design materials with clear instructions. In this study a goal was to introduce vocabulary with certain

strategies and then give the students the guide to write simple sentences to allow them to understand and know how to write. In that way, understanding the instructions was crucial for students because they could develop all the activities and gain confidence.

Regarding the construct of vocabulary learning, I found one qualitative action research study developed by Díaz (2014), whereby she examined the effects of metacognitive strategies to help learners increase and retain vocabulary. The study involved ten third, fourth, and fifth grade students whose ages ranged from eight to ten, from a public university in Monteria, Colombia. As data collection instruments, she used journals, questionnaires, and field notes. The researcher found that the learning strategies had a positive influence in the students' vocabulary learning. It positively influenced their knowledge because they showed a more conscious process of awareness of the strategies they could use and recycle later. In this manner, students could manage obstacles encountered during the lessons by making use of different strategies. This research was significant to me because it led me to reflect upon my role as an English teacher and the importance of bearing in mind students' learning processes. In addition, it encouraged me to continue applying learning strategies to enrich students' vocabulary.

In a similar fashion, Martínez (2014) conducted a qualitative action research study on how vocabulary learning strategies contributed to second graders' English learning by using contextualized materials and short stories. This study was conducted in a private institution in Bogotá, Colombia. There were 38 students between the ages of seven and eight. The instruments used for collecting data were evaluation, students' artifacts, and questionnaires. The findings showed that students used several association strategies such as associations of images, sounds and words categories, to deal with the new vocabulary and to use it in written exercises. This study granted important insights for my study, as it provided examples of the implementation of

new strategies for improving vocabulary teaching and learning in the EFL classroom. These strategies provided students with useful tools to improve students' English skills, in particular their vocabulary awareness.

In another qualitative action research study, Lizarazo (2011) focused on the implementation of worksheets to guide students in writing descriptions. He designed some worksheets and some exercises implemented in a blog. The study was conducted with sixth grade students in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia. Regarding the instruments to collect data, the researcher used students' written exercises in their notebooks, in worksheets, and in a blog, as well as field notes, and students' artifacts. He concluded that students' progress was reflected in the descriptions that they wrote in their final post on the blog and in their level of confidence when handing in writing exercises. Students discovered that technology is a useful tool for their learning process. This study gave me ideas about going beyond the vocabulary learning process and beyond using innovative strategies, such as the use of technology tools to improve students' English level.

Additionally, Ruiz (2003) implemented a qualitative action research study to show the importance of observing children's attitudes and perceptions to guide them through the writing process. The study was carried out in a private school in Bogotá, Colombia. The participants were twenty-six second grade students. The researcher collected data through interviews, teachers' and students' conferences, students' samples, and a teacher's journal. After having analyzed the data, the author realized that oral activities helped increase students' confidence when writing, because children could interact with their partners or teachers when they did not know how to write a word or an expression. She also realized how vital it was to provide students with a rich literacy environment. This research study helped me appreciate that students learn to

write through reading activities that let students increase their vocabulary and that provide them with appropriate writing models.

Setting

I carried out this study at Rincon Santo sede El Misterio School. It is a public school located in Cajicá, Colombia. It provides formal education for preschool, primary, and secondary level students. The institution is involved in the education of the community and promotes a series of values, such as responsibility, commitment, competitiveness, leadership, and adaptability to the challenges of the changing world.

The fourth-grade students at the school used English booklets, and they received 2 hours of English class per week. The content of these booklets was very general; the topics were covered over very few pages and the suggested activities were not sufficient for students to internalize and learn a second language. Moreover, the resources were not enough to practice and improve their level. For this reason, it was important to design worksheets whose objective was to reinforce all the topics they needed for the school grade (fourth grade) under which this study was conducted. The materials were designed considering different vocabulary strategies and some grammar rules and tips, as well as taking into account activities addressing the need to learn to write.

Rationale

The school regards English learning as a fundamental component for optimizing its quality as an educational institution, and as an element that may help students to improve their future personal and professional lives. In this regard, the elaboration of these worksheets aimed to contribute to their general and linguistic academic development. The contributions to my students are related with the improving of their abilities because the worksheets and all the resources

offered, helped them to acquire the bases to learn in an effective way. The contributions for the school involved improving its academic ranking in comparison to other neighboring schools. For my colleagues, this study helped them too because they had the opportunity to review the materials and thus considered the idea of improving their teaching practices through the design of worksheets.

On the other hand, this research study constitutes a significant contribution to my professional development, as a teacher and researcher, since it helped me to propose innovative materials, based on an analysis and reflection of my students' needs.

Additionally, it is important to mention that this study is linked to the Materials Development field of study of the Masters' for Emphasis on English Didactics, and aimed to contribute to this research line in terms of Materials Development to foster the reinforcement of writing skills through the use vocabulary learning strategies worksheets.

Chapter II

Literature Review

This research study focused on the implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies to enhance students' writing. It was important to keep in mind that students needed to learn specific vocabulary to communicate effectively in a globalized world. Therefore, this study developed three important constructs that are materials development, vocabulary learning strategies, and writing. Thus, this study sought to help students to enhance their writing through the design of vocabulary-based worksheets.

Materials Development

It is a field in teaching that teachers undertake as part of their practice and which allows them to go further with the design, adaptation and use of some materials. Tomlinson (1998) mentioned that “materials development refers to anything which is done by writers, teachers or learners to provide sources of language input to exploit those sources in ways which maximize the likelihood of intake” (p. 2). Materials development should give opportunities to internalize the language and guarantee successful learning.

Types of Materials. The process of materials design may help to make teachers more aware of what is involved in teaching and learning. The materials can be books, cassettes, exercises, newspapers, worksheets, TV programs, the Internet, movies, songs, brochures, comics, literature, and texts. There are two kinds of materials: authentic and non-authentic materials. The authors have different opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of each one.

Authentic materials. Richards (2001) asserted “that authentic materials have a facilitating role in the learning process in the sense that the communication that takes place in the class must resemble as much as possible the communication observed in the real world” (as cited in Almi &

Bentouzi, 2015, p. 16). Guriento and Morley 2001 argued that “authentic materials is significant since it increases students’ motivation for learning, makes the learner be exposed to the "real "language” (p. 347). It means that these kinds of materials contextualize the culture to students. Hutchinson and Waters (1989) “set out that the term authentic usually means the real life-language taken from the target situation, and which are not designed for language learning purposes. (as cited in Almi & Bentouzi, 2015, p. 16). Here, authentic materials are connected to the students’ lives, since these kinds of materials transport the real world into the classroom. Sometimes, authentic materials lose their authenticity since they are removed from their original context.

Non-authentic materials. On the other hand, the teachers use non-authentic materials because they are created for pedagogical purposes. According to Flowerdew and Peacock (2001), non-authentic text "cannot represent real world language" (p. 182). Additionally, Wallace (1992) asserted that “as soon as texts, whatever their original purpose, are brought into the classroom for pedagogic purposes they have, arguably lost authenticity” (p. 72).

Some schools do not offer materials that are focused on students’ real needs. This is the reason why some teachers need to adapt the resources offered by schools or, even better, to take the initiative of designing materials. Graves (2000) affirmed that “materials development is the planning process by which a teacher creates units and lessons within those units to carry out the goal and objectives of the course” (p. 149). Indeed, designing materials needs to be planned carefully by the teacher when he/she starts to organize the syllabus for the subject. Graves (2000) stated that

Decisions about developing materials are rooted in your beliefs, understandings, and experience. They also depend on your goals and objectives, the way you contextualize the

content of the course, the way to organize and sequence your course, and your understanding of your students' needs. (p. 166)

Consequently, designing materials is a personal and professional decision that teachers should make to plan a class that makes students' learning process more meaningful. For this reason, teachers should use their creativity and knowledge of students' learning process to design materials that may provide learners with meaningful and enriching input, as well as use strategies that can enhance students' performance.

The benefits of developing materials. Involve being aware of students' needs. Hence, teachers gain experience. This should improve the design of appropriate and innovative activities that may lead teachers to become agents of change. Besides, students can value their own learning process because they find a close relationship between the materials and their context.

At the same time, teachers should learn about students' different ways of thinking and behaving to then adapt the materials based on their needs. Núñez and Téllez (2009) stated:

Acknowledging that students learn at particular speeds and succeed in different manners, teachers should consider this diversity when teaching the target language and when developing their materials trying, at the same time, to keep the balance among students' language learning needs, preferences, motivations and expectations, their affective needs, and the institutional policies. (p. 173)

Teachers should focus on the students' behavior to identify the best way to prepare the activities because the differences between students play an important role in students' learning process and in their own teaching experiences. Therefore, these differences should be considered during the development of any materials. Even if the students have different learning styles, the materials should offer them the opportunity to achieve goals.

Moreover, there are some aspects to consider when teachers decide to develop their own materials. There are also some principles to consider when developing materials. The development of attractive and innovative activities by taking into account students' individual characteristics and being conscious of students' feelings and expectations toward their learning process, promote confidence and engagement with the students' learning process. (Núñez & Téllez, 2009). These principles contributed to motivating students through attractive materials that encouraged students to learn new words and use them to start writing simple paragraphs. These principles also play a crucial role on materials development because students become active agents of their learning process. Besides, the principles could offer a remarkable way to improve learning strategies. As a result, teaching and learning become interactive activities in the classroom.

Additionally, designing materials requires an organized course of action to develop successful activities. For this reason, the present research study followed the materials development scaffolding proposed by Núñez, Téllez, Castellanos and Ramos (2009). As a first step, teachers should carry out a needs assessment to determine the students' perceptions about what they need and want to learn. The next step is to identify the approach or method to be used in the development of materials. Then, by considering the needs assessment results, teachers can start designing materials. Moreover, teachers should choose an approach related to the nature of language and language learning. The third step is to determine the general goals and objectives of the course. Teachers should decide the purpose of the activities included in the materials. Another important factor is that clarity is essential for students to understand the real purpose of their learning process, which should be meaningful to them. The fourth step is to design a syllabus where teachers should organize the content and know how to address it. The fifth step refers to

developing the materials: based on the needs assessments, the principles, and objectives, teachers can proceed to design materials that benefit students' learning. Finally, teachers should pilot and adjust materials. In this regard, the design of worksheets for this study took into account the principles, the use of vocabulary and teaching strategies named above and when the first one was finished, the piloting step helped me identify the changes needed to improve the activities. This whole process led to a successful result: accomplishing the objectives.

Vocabulary Learning

Vocabulary is crucial for language learning because when people acquire sufficient words and expressions, the communication process flows more quickly and easily. It also allows the individual to express thoughts and opinions. As Watkins (2005) stated, "learning some words and phrases in a new language allows people to start to communicate at once" (p. 34). When teachers provide new vocabulary, they should think about the use students can give to it. Once students find out the vocabulary's use and start using it, they realize how important it is to communicate in the foreign language. Consequently, they could start using that specific vocabulary for specific purposes such as for writing.

Some authors have defined vocabulary in different ways. Linse (2005) explained that "language consists of words. Vocabulary is the collection of words that an individual knows" (p. 121). Humans tend to need words to communicate in any language. Consequently, students should develop second language vocabulary in the same way they do with their first language. Jordan (2007) considered that "vocabulary development is of concern to all four language skills, but here it is treated as a link between reading and writing" (p. 14). In light of this, vocabulary is a tool to develop language skills. For this reason, it is necessary for language learners to acquire

enough vocabulary that allows them to understand and express their ideas through their skills' use.

Vocabulary learning strategies. Based on the facts mentioned before, teachers should seek for a methodology and appropriate strategies for students to assimilate, learn, and apply vocabulary effectively. Harmer (2007) proposed that “teaching vocabulary is a major part of teacher’s art. Students need to see words in context to see how they are used” (p. 229). Vocabulary should be contextualized for students to associate the words with their daily life; but it is even more important for them to know how to use it. Additionally, students learn vocabulary meaningfully and naturally when teachers provide a context and activities to use it. One example of learning strategies is the use of memory activities to learn vocabulary.

Memorization is an important strategy to learn vocabulary. It entails the ability to memorize words or situations; thus, it is fundamental to help students memorize vocabulary. Vocabulary is essential to acquire knowledge in a foreign language. As Nattinger (as cited in Jordan, 2007) affirmed:

Research in memory suggests that words are stored and remembered in a network of associations. These associations can be of many types and be linked in a number of ways. Words in our mental lexicon, for example, are tied to each other not only by meaning, form and sound, but also by sight. (p. 161)

Teachers should find strategies for students to make associations with the new words, using visual aids to guarantee their storage and later their use. It is worth noting that when teachers design materials, they should seek a plan to teach vocabulary that stores the vocabulary taught in long-term memory. More precisely, in Gairns and Redman’s words, “more meaningful tasks require learners to analyze and process language more deeply, which helps them to commit

information to long term memory” (as cited in Jordan, 2007, p. 161). It implies for teachers to adapt strategies to memorize words in a useful way for students to remember as many words as possible.

Therefore, vocabulary learning strategies are crucial when teachers design activities or materials: these strategies focus directly on what vocabulary to teach and how to do it by bearing in mind the context and the participants. Watkins (2005) pointed out that “there are many ways of teaching new words and phrases and teachers need to learn a variety of techniques, because some methods will work better with certain classes” (p. 34). The first step is choosing what vocabulary to teach, as this is a factor which may affect students’ learning. The author considered the following strategies for selecting vocabulary: make students feel the necessity to learn new words to understand and maintain interest when reading a text. Something important is that teachers should classify the use of words for students to assimilate them easily. This difference should be a process starting from the simplest vocabulary to the most complex.

Some authors like Scrivener (1998) and McCarten (2007) agreed on the use of different strategies to teach vocabulary. The first strategy that they proposed is to give students short lists of new words so that they can choose from pictures to help them identify the meaning of the word. The second strategy entails asking questions like “How do you say?” and “What does it mean?” It is also advisable to give phrases like “It’s a kind of” and “It’s like a” (p. 20). These strategies allow students to paraphrase the word, discover what it means, and relate it to their own context. The third strategy is repetition, which helps students practice the correct pronunciation and to learn the word. Finally, the authors propose giving students different activities that are focused on the vocabulary that the teacher wants them to learn.

These activities may include memory games, pictures, and exercises in which the learners match words, explain the vocabulary to other students and find synonyms, opposites, or related words. The strategies mentioned above can help students learn vocabulary, use it in different situations, and develop language skills. In this regard, my study included an array of activities that matched students' preferences and context. The strategies like repetition, using imagery, matching, listing words, drawing and making associations were tailored to their learning styles, language level and age. The strategies mentioned helped students develop their vocabulary learning process, for strengthening their writing, which is the construct that will be explained below.

Writing

It is fundamental to mention the definition of literacy. It entails the ability to read and write a language. According to the National Institute for Literacy (2016), "writing, however, is not just a method of communication and expression. Several researchers have found that, much like reading, improving one's writing skills improves one's capacity to learn, and learning to write well requires instruction" (section Key literacy component: writing, para. 1) For this reason, this study aimed to contribute to the development of better methods for learning how to write in the early years. Throughout this study the students were continuously practicing their writing, and started to write texts.

Writing is an important part of communication. Besides, writing is used in all fields; it is a skill that everyone should learn. Hamp-Lyons stated that "writing is a personal act in which writers take ideas or prompts and transform them into "self-initiated" topics" (as cited in O'Malley & Valdez, 1996, p. 136). Writing is a way to express ideas or opinions. Writing should

be a natural process when learning a language because it is one of the main forms of communication.

Harmer (2007) argued that “writing encourages students to focus on accurate language use and, because they think as they write, it may well provoke language development as they resolve problems which the writing puts into their minds” (p. 31). This quote focuses on the fact that when writing, learners can have more time for processing information, and therefore, they may have the opportunity to make more careful choices in terms of language use. In this regard, the writing process should be strengthened by using grammatical rules to allow students to learn to write in a correct way. It is also important for teachers to take into account what students need to learn to be able to write so that they feel comfortable in doing so.

Types of writing. Although there are several types of writing such as persuasive, instructive, informative, and descriptive, among others, in this study the main goal was that students were able to write simple descriptive paragraphs. In this study the main goal is that students be able to write a simple descriptive paragraph. According to Schacter (n.d.), “Descriptive writing describes a person, place, or thing in a way that enables the reader to visualize it” (p.5). Writing in a descriptively way allowed students to organize their ideas following the models provided in the worksheets. Through examples, students could learn how to write with clarity and purpose.

Stages of writing. To achieve the purpose mentioned above, Harmer (2007) asserted that the writing process has four main stages: planning, drafting, editing, and the final version. Planning means organizing the ideas and determining what is going to be written. The audience and content structure that they have decided to include should be considered. Drafting is defined as the first text people write. This means that this text may contain many mistakes and it should

be checked. Editing refers to analyzing and reflecting upon the unclear words or sentences. The final version refers to the moment when the writer is ready to send the written text. Under these circumstances, these four elements are important steps for teachers to bear in mind when starting the worksheets design. This process should encourage learners to communicate clearly. When students practice, and try to write better, they will be able to improve their writing. My research study, through the worksheets I developed, followed the stages mentioned above so that students had a clear idea on how to start to write, and by following the models they were given they understood the importance of step by step writing for a complete process.

Chapter III

Methodological Design

This chapter defines the approach, type of study, participants, and data gathering instruments. Then, it explains the instructional design with its components.

Research Design

Approach. My research study is based on the qualitative approach because I wanted to observe students' reactions when they developed the activities, by taking into account which ones they liked the most, and identifying the most useful ones for their learning process. Creswell (2009) asserted that

Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. (p. 4)

The above mentioned points lead to an understanding that this type of research originated from a social problem that must be addressed and given a solution. These problems are specific so the data analysis must start with a specific analysis and conclude with a generalized analysis.

This kind of approach allows people to observe, talk, and interact with others to understand what is important to them and how they can learn. In this way, teachers attempt to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people give to them.

Additionally, Denzin and Lincoln (2005) attested that “qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world” (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Van Maanen (1979) also affirmed that this approach “is an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive

techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world (as cited in Merriam, 2009, p. 13). Qualitative research gives teachers the opportunity to gain an understanding of students' opinions and interests, through observations and behavior analysis to study the problem in-depth, and carry out self-reflection on our role as teachers and on who the students are. Both the analysis and reflection processes are advantages of this kind of approach because the researchers will be able to use tools and strategies to identify the students' difficulties to improve their teaching practice.

Type of study. The type of study is action research. It is a process through which teachers investigate teaching and learning so as to gain more of an understanding of themselves as teachers, their classrooms and their students, to improve their own and their students' learning. Following the structure of an action research study, I identified a problem in my classroom, and then I decided to conduct a pedagogical intervention to solve the problematic situation. Burns (2003) highlighted that “the major focus of action research is on concrete and practical issues of immediate concern to particular social groups or communities” (p. 24). When some teachers want to go beyond teaching a simple topic, they find the way to reflect on their teaching practice and try to improve it. Action research is a process that requires the analysis of situations in classrooms to make good decisions and to improve the learning experience of all students.

Mills (2011) highlighted that “action research engages teachers in a four-step process: 1. Identify an area of focus, 2. Collect data, 3. Analyze and interpret data, and 4. Develop an action plan” (p. 5). The formerly mentioned steps provided an overview of the process of teacher research. The first step should be specific. The second step is deciding what information you need to answer your question and how it can be collected - most of the time you need to develop your

own instrument; and for the third step, the data must be analyzed to proceed to the last step: creating a plan to identify a solution to the problem. Considering these steps, firstly, I identified the population and its problem and designed my research question; secondly, I implemented the needs analysis as a tool to confirm the research question, when I finished collecting data; thirdly, I analyzed and interpreted it; and finally, I developed an action plan to solve my students' problem.

Participants. I developed this research in a public School called Rincon Santo, which is situated in Cajicá, Colombia. The social economic stratification of students is two or three. The group liked English but was concerned with the lack of vocabulary and, at the same time, with the difficulties they had when writing. For this reason, they did not feel comfortable about participating in writing activities. They had two hours of English class per week. Therefore, to maximize their learning in such a small period of time, this study aimed at improving students' vocabulary to support their writing skills.

Students . I worked with fourth graders, 12 boys and 13 girls, whose ages ranged between 9 and 12. However, I chose 12 students following the convenient sampling technique. According to Dubovskiy (2016), "this sampling method involves getting participants wherever you can find them and typically wherever is convenient. In convenience sampling no inclusion criteria identified prior to the selection of subjects. All subjects are invited to participate" (Convenience sampling section, para. 2). Following this technique, I chose the participants because they had similar characteristics, bad vocabulary, and difficulties with writing simple sentences.

Teacher-researcher and text developer . To carry out this study, I developed different roles. The first one as a teacher who sought to improve the environment and academic

performance of students. The second as a teacher-researcher in which I had the opportunity to observe, analyse, design, and implement the pedagogical intervention; and then, I played the role of materials designer where I made six worksheets considering the development of vocabulary to guide students through their writing process.

Data gathering instruments. Three instruments were used in this research: field notes, artifacts, and tests. These instruments fit the qualitative approach because they allow teachers to gather their observations and descriptions about students' behaviors.

Field notes. Macintyre (2000) explained that “notes are quick observations of something that is happening now, and so they have a liveliness and authenticity that is pleasing” (p. 62). Field notes allow the researcher to keep in mind many situations that make it possible to identify different issues. In my study they were also an important source of information, which is highly used in qualitative research. According to Burns (2001), field notes provide a detailed depiction and interpretation of the behaviors and situations we observe. This instrument allows the researcher to capture specific information to be thoroughly analyzed. These notes are written in real time, “in the heat of the moment, during observations of events, interactions, activities and so on” (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 35). Through this instrument, I was able to register the events that took place in the classroom, during the worksheets development.

Students' artifacts. They helped me obtain real evidence of the students' learning process. In Lankshear and Knobel' words (2006), “artefacts are concrete evidence and can alert researchers to useful avenues of investigation and provide additional insights into participants' everyday lives” (p. 235). Through the artifacts, I was able to observe how students performed each activity and were aware of their weaknesses. Students also had the chance to reflect upon their mistakes and performance when writing.

Test. The test was an instrument to identify and verify the process of learning vocabulary before and after the application of the worksheets and later students' writing process. This process is known as formative testing. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011) clarified that "formative testing is undertaken during a programme, and is designed to monitor students' progress during that programme, to measure achievement of sections of the programme, and to diagnose strengths and weaknesses" (p. 481). The purpose of this kind of test was to know if the activities proposed in the worksheets contributed to students' vocabulary learning and writing learning process. As the author already mentioned, the learning process changes every day, and teachers should be prepared to face these changes and to adapt the way of assessing learners.

Moreover, Cohen (1994) suggested that there are many reasons for conducting language assessment in the classroom, since this assessment encourages significant students' participation. Tests' goals should be clear for students to notice that they are useful and fulfil their needs. Tests are also significant for students because teachers can offer them feedback. Thus, students can learn about their strengths and weaknesses (Cohen, 1994). This process of accomplishing different objectives allows students to feel secure and aware of their own learning process.

Instructional Design

This section describes the pedagogical intervention, the objectives, the innovation of the intervention, the theory of language and language learning, the methodological approach, the instructional stages, the topic selection and finally, and one sample of the pedagogical intervention.

Pedagogical intervention. Using a wide range of vocabulary helps people to communicate in an effective way. If people do not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge, they will not always make sense when communicating. My concern was that students did not have

enough vocabulary. Thus, they did not feel comfortable when writing. The use of worksheets was an effective instructional set of materials to help students learn vocabulary and write properly. For Núñez, Pineda and Téllez (2004), “vocabulary and grammar exercises should be embedded in the topic that is being studied. Activities should promote exposure to the target language and opportunities to recycle the grammar and vocabulary points to be learned” (p. 132). For this reason, the topics in the worksheets that I developed offered words in context to foster students’ interest, so that they could write properly.

Furthermore, designing effective materials is a process that involves SLA (second language acquisition) principles, depending on teachers’ goals and students’ needs. Núñez and Téllez (2009) stated that, “materials development entails the blending of reasoning and artistic processes, which are guided by some tenets and essential ingredients that help both language learners assimilate and provide teachers with the groundwork to embark on the materials development route” (p. 175). The design of materials has a complete process that requires an artistic part that is able to motivate the learners and guide them to assimilate the language in a more understandable and easier way. Bearing this in mind, worksheets should be attractive to students through images that allow vocabulary knowledge, provide clear instructions, and should have punctual strategies.

To have a great impact on students, teachers should focus on the principles proposed by Tomlinson (2011), the first principle: “Achieve impact through novelty, variety, attractive presentation, and appealing content” (p. 2). One of the most outstanding features that worksheets have is the originality in the presentation of topics and activities to capture all the students’ interests and enthusiasm through colors, images, activities, and games. In the worksheets I designed the images were colorful and appealing. The activities followed the multidimensional

approach which allowed students to practice in a dynamic way. The second principle suggests that teachers should “help learners feel at ease. SLA Research has revealed that students seem to learn more and in shorter time when being relaxed and comfortably engaged in learning activities” (p. 3). The development of the worksheets was always under a good environment, students felt comfortable and the activities allowed them to open their minds and live through an unforgettable learning experience. In addition, another principle states that teachers should also “help learners develop self-confidence. Relaxed and self-confident learners learn faster” (p. 5). It is important to make students feel everything is going well in their learning process. For this reason, the worksheets had a space of feedback that gave students them the confidence to recognize their mistakes and improve on them. At the same time, teachers should always give feedback to their students. Teachers should avoid negative comments and provide constructive comments. In this study this principle is the most important one because for the writing activities students need feedback to gain self-confidence. Finally, the fourth principle establishes that materials “must be perceived as relevant and useful by the learner” (p. 6). This is the reason why the worksheets are based on topics related to students’ interests, which make them more meaningful to them. Students are more likely to pay attention and be excited about their learning when they view the class as relevant to themselves and connected to their interests.

Additionally, one significant component of this pedagogical intervention is that it incorporates different vocabulary learning strategies. Hatch and Brown argued that “vocabulary teaching strategies refer to everything teachers do or should do in order to help learners learn the vocabulary of the target language” (as cited in Takac, 2008, p. 106). In this research study, I designed materials including different vocabulary learning strategies with assorted vocabulary activities such as: matching, labeling, repetition, and using imagery, among others, after that they

had a little explanation of some grammar rules to start writing simple sentences which were later useful for students to organize the ideas and write simple descriptions.

Instructional objectives. The main instructional objective was to design and implement worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies to enhance students' writing. This study had three specific objectives: (a) to assess the students' writing development through the implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning; (b) to create a good environment for students to learn in a comfortable way; (c) to provide students with meaningful vocabulary to apply to their learning process; and (d) to raise students' awareness of the importance of using strategies to learn and use vocabulary to write.

Intervention as innovation. My research study focused on vocabulary learning to enable students to write simple descriptions. The main goal was to solve students' difficulty in obtaining enough vocabulary to develop the writing activities suggested by teachers. Ladino (2013) affirmed that "innovation is a plan or a set of strategies that teachers can use or implement to acquire new knowledge according to the context where the participants are" (p. 59). Innovation is creating new things to facilitate the students' process through contextualized materials that focus on the type of population and its needs. When the topics are related to students' needs and interests, they make vocabulary learning purposeful for students.

Markee (2001) defined innovation "as a proposal for qualitative change in pedagogical materials, approaches, and values that are perceived as new by individuals who comprise a formal language education system" (p. 120). This quote highlights that if any activity does not work, we can learn from it, modify it and try again - trying to be innovative. Teachers should use active learning techniques to engage students, and encourage innovation and creativity.

On the other hand, these materials were innovative because they gave students the opportunity to work on a different kind of materials, rather than having textbooks that often present themes that are not of any interest to students and that are not focused on their cultural background and local context. Besides, these worksheets could be used by future teachers at the school.

Theory of the nature of language and language learning. The theory of language that defined this study is the linguistic perspective. According to Tudor (2001), “it focuses on understanding the concept of language. This perspective of language answers the question of how the language can be analyzed and presented to students in an effective and meaningful manner” (p. 50). This theory was connected to the schools’ curriculum where this study was conducted. The school favors grammar teaching. Being congruent with the school’s linguistic view of language, this study tried to build through the target vocabulary enough bases to improve the students’ writing process. The focus was related to making the learning of vocabulary meaningful for students. Another view of language considered was the functional one. According to Richards and Rodgers (1986):

This theory emphasizes the semantic and communicative dimension rather than merely the grammatical characteristics of language, and leads to a specification and organization of language teaching content by categories of meaning and function rather than by elements of structure and grammar. (p. 17)

I chose this view because although it is true that the worksheets have a small explanation of grammar, the purpose of them was to guide the student in the writing process. Both views contributed to the process of designing the activities and allowed students to increase their motivation and self-confidence.

The theory of language learning underlying this research study was experiential learning. Tudor (2001) stated that with “experience in context: students learn a language to make a pragmatic use of it” (p. 12). Lived experience in different activities allows students to learn because activities are relevant to them. Therefore, fourth-grade students needed someone who could teach them to learn how to take advantage of their experiences.

Methodological approach underlying the pedagogical intervention . Through this pedagogical intervention, I developed six worksheets to help enhance students’ writing. To achieve that goal, I chose the multi-dimensional approach because students could experience learning through feelings, movements, and experiential activities that allowed them not only to change the class environment but also engage them in their own learning process. Keeping in mind these characteristics, Tomlinson (2003) claimed that “a multi-dimensional approach aims to help learners to develop the ability to produce and process an L2 by using their mental resources in ways similar to those they use when communicating in their L1” (p. 168). As stated above, this approach helped students learn through experiences, which allowed them to use all their senses, using the resources offered in the worksheets.

According to Tomlinson (2003), the multi-dimensional approach is based on four principles:

Engaging affect (activities that take into account personal experiences and good memories about attitudes creating personal mental representations); imaging activities (mental images that are very important to produce and process language); inner voice (activities that allow students to talk with themselves and internalize the vocabulary); and kinaesthetic activities (all about physical activities). (p. 168)

These activities when included properly in the worksheets can offer enriching learning opportunities for students.

It is worth mentioning that this approach gave me enough support to develop the pedagogical intervention because students liked dynamic activities and had different learning styles. Therefore, it was essential to engage them in activities that enhanced their self-confidence and made them feel at ease. The pedagogical strategy entailed dealing with vocabulary to write simple descriptions. In this regard, Ladino (2013) affirmed that “when students perceive the content as interesting and useful, they probably learn the language because they are motivated and there are more possibilities for successful learning” (p. 61). To work on topics that students like can make the activities more interesting and meaningful. In the case of this research study, the activities that were based on the multi-dimensional approach were Students can use all their senses through dynamic activities that help them connect with the topic.

Connection of the pedagogical intervention with the research question . The first stage I did was to implement the needs assessment to know about students’ interest. Then, I started designing the worksheets that were focused on the multi-dimensional approach proposed by Tomlinson (2003). This approach included activities based on experiential situations that allowed students to practice and learn using their senses. Also, I included some activities considering the vocabulary strategies like matching, repetition, labelling, and listing words among others. Moreover, the worksheets included explanations that were a useful strategy for students to write coherent sentences. The last exercise was the practice on writing a simple description following a model. All these contents were focused on giving an answer to the research question.

Suggested instructional phases. I developed some stages suggested by Núñez et al. (2009). The first stage comprises-implementing a needs assessment where I identified students' needs and interests and defined their profile. Second, I chose an approach that could improve students' English learning. Third, I wrote the general goals and objectives of the course considering the needs assessment findings. Fourth, I reviewed the topics considering students' input and selected the most appropriate topics. Then, I designed six worksheets based on vocabulary to enhance students' writing. I revised the materials, then I piloted them and finally, I adjusted and implemented them.

Proposed material development framework. I followed the framework provided by Núñez, et al. (2009) who proposed some phases to develop materials: “a) Needs assessment, b) setting goals and objectives c) content, d) selecting and develop materials and activities, e) organizing the content and activities, f) evaluation. g) resources and constraints” (p. 177). These features provided the stages to design six worksheets that were based on vocabulary learning strategies to enhance writing skills.

Informed consent. I wrote a letter (See Appendix B) to the school principal asking for permission to develop the research study with fourth grade students at the school. Then, I sent a consent form to the students' parents and had them sign it (See appendix B). Parents were informed of the benefits of the research study for their children. I also informed parents that the purposes of this research study were only used for academic purposes, likewise the responses be kept anonymous at any time. Participants were aware of their right to refuse to participate. Moreover, I wrote my email address and phone number so they could contact me if they had doubts regarding the research process.

Sensitization. I held a meeting with my students to explain the research study and implementation process to them. I talked to the students and told them about the importance of this for their learning process. I explained the significance of the development of the implementation of the worksheets to them as a complement to their English classes. I described the content of each worksheet to them and they identified with them because of their interest in the topics. I made them aware of the value, not only for me but also for their learning process and behavior during the development of the worksheets.

Implementation of the materials. After recognizing the problem with the needs assessment and choosing the topics, I implemented the worksheets that had the following characteristics: The first worksheet was about actions. The second one dealt with the use of bedroom vocabulary (*There is/there are* and prepositions). The third worksheet included fruits and vegetables vocabulary and recipes. The fourth one was related to classroom objects (*There is/there are* and prepositions). The fifth worksheet dealt with places in the city, prepositions of place, and asking and giving directions. The last one was about sports and hobbies including indoor and outdoor activities and future time “I am going to”. All the worksheets were designed based on the students’ likes and interests. The intended purpose of the implementation of these materials was: first, to give the students a diagnostic test; then, to implement the first three worksheets; after that, I conducted another test to see if they improved. After this, I implemented the other three worksheets. The last three worksheets were more complex than the previous ones. Finally, I implemented the last test to see if the process helped students to improve. I also designed a self-assessment form to make sure of some materials’ aspects, their impressions, learning of vocabulary and writing process.

The following worksheet corresponded to one of the six worksheets developed in the implementation process.

Sample of worksheets

Food

Fruits and Vegetables

Name: _____ Date: _____

Warm up!!

Vocabulary strategy

Give students short lists of new words and help them identify the meaning of the words.

1. Look for food words (fruits and vegetables). Circle them. Follow the example.



FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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

pineapple

onion

tomato

lettuce

banana

orange

carrot

pear

lemon

strawberry

apple














watermelon

broccoli

Learning strategy

Using imagery: Relating new words with meaningful visual imagery.









2. Write the name of the fruits and vegetables in the box below.


Fruits		Vegetables	
			
			
			
			


Learning Strategy


Reasoning deductively: Using general rules and applying them.


3. Look at the box and read carefully the rules to identify the plural form of fruits and vegetables. Then write the plural form for each fruit and vegetable. Follow the example.


Rules plural form	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plural form of most nouns is created by adding the letter "s". Example: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  orange  oranges </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nouns that end in a vowel a, e, o, i, u + "y" add "s" Example: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  Boy  boys </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nouns that end in a consonant + y, drop the y and add "ies": Example: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  Blackberry  blackberries </div>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nouns that end in -ch, x, sh, z or s require an "es" for the plural: example: <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  Peach  peaches </div>	


a.  Apple _____

b.  _____

c.  _____

 Apples

 _____

 _____



d.



e.



f.



Learning strategy

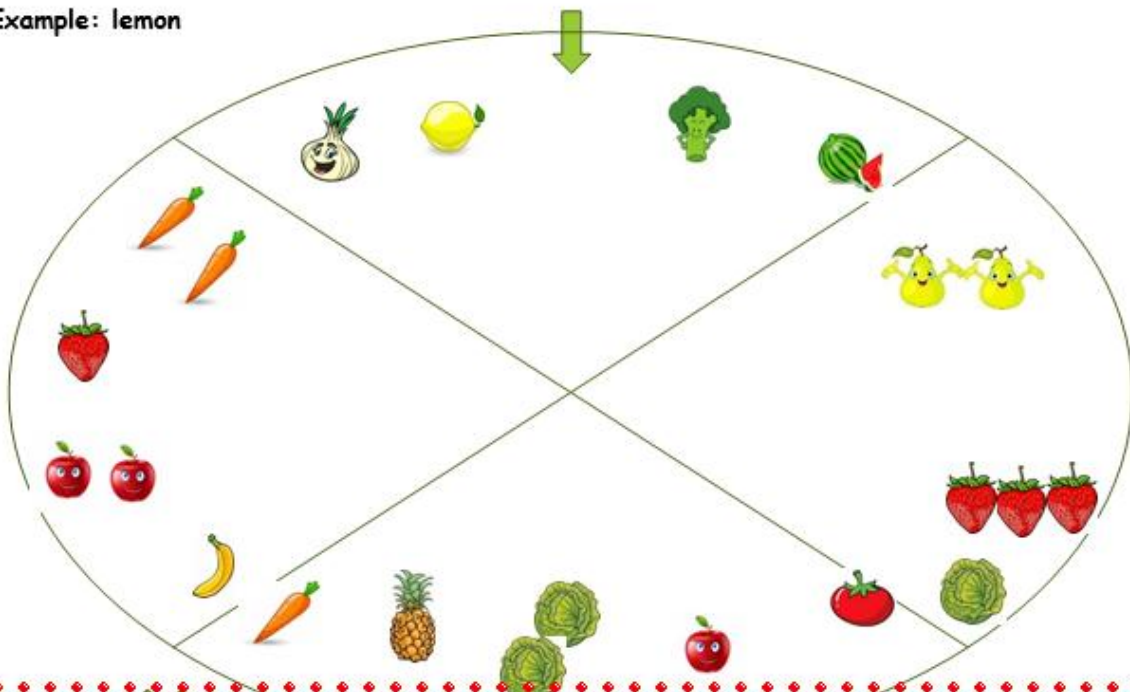
Making associations: Relating new words to the ones you remember.



4. Roulette game: Follow the instructions below.

- Work in pairs.
- Each pair will have the opportunity to spin the roulette
- Spin the roulette.
- Mention the fruit or vegetable name that the arrow indicates.

Example: lemon



Learning strategy

Using imagery: Using meaningful visual imagery.

5. At the supermarket

Look at the picture. There are a lot of fruits and vegetables. Make a list of the fruits and vegetables that you can see and remember.



List of fruits and vegetables

Fruits

Vegetables

6. Draw your favourite fruits and vegetables. Write their names.

Learning strategy

Using imagery: Using meaningful visual imagery.

7. Find the errors in the following sentences and correct them. There are six sentences with mistakes. Follow the example:



They are two apple There are two apples It is one
lettuces _____



They are tomato _____ It is one onions _____



It is three bananas _____ They _____ are one carrot _____



Learning strategy

Using mime or gesture: Use physical movements such as gestures to indicate a word or action.

8. Look at the pictures, read and listen to the pronunciation of the following actions.



Mix



Blend



Chop



Grate



Bake



Peel



Spread



Cook



Fry



Add



Pour



9. Work in pairs and mime the actions mentioned above.














10. Watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ytvM9Th464Y>.
Two kids are cooking. Identify the food they are mentioning. Put a check (✓) next to the fruits and vegetables.



- a. ___ Broccoli c. ___ Strawberries e. ___ Lemon g. ___ Pineapple
b. ___ Carrots d. ___ Mangoes f. ___ Onion h. ___ Banana

11. Watch the video again and tick the actions the kids do.



- a. ___  Mix Blend  d. ___  Cook Fry g. 
b. ___  Pour  e. ___  Peel k. ___ 
h. Bake
c. ___  Grate  f. ___  Chop i. ___ Add

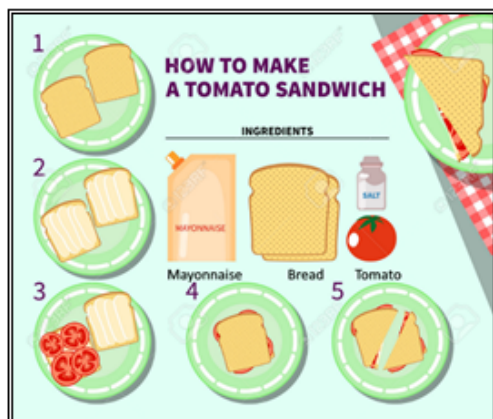
12. Look at the teacher preparing a recipe of sandwich. Touch and taste the food.



Learning strategy

Placing new words into a context: Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful sentence.

13. Complete the gaps in the recipe with the correct verbs. (Chop, spread).



1. Put two slices of bread on a plate.
2. _____ mayonnaise on the bread.
3. _____ one tomato and put the slices on the bread.
4. Serve the sandwich.
5. Cut the sandwich diagonally.

Image taken from:

https://www.google.com.co/search?q=kitchen+verbs&biw=1218&bih=739&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwj8rNO63MHOAhVJLSYKHadoBvYQ_AUIBiqB#tbs=isz:l&tbm=isch&q=how+to+make+a+hamburger+step+by+step&imgdii=W4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A%3BW4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A%3B-sAomRQFIEnFM%3A&imgsrc=W4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A

Do it by yourself

let's
cook!



14. Look at the example below.



Simple Salad

Ingredients: tomatoes, onion, carrots and lettuce.

Steps:



- Chop tomatoes, onion and lettuce.
- Grate carrots.
- Mix the ingredients.

Now, it is your turn. Write the steps to do the following recipe.

Fruit salad

Ingredients:

Steps:



Writing strategy

Drafting: write sentences following a prewriting plan.

15. First draft: Write the recipe with corrections.

Writing strategy

Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

16. **Second Draft:** check the mistakes once again and improve.

Self-assessment

Learning strategy

Self-monitoring: Identifying errors to producing the new language.

17. **Color** the face that describes you the best.

- a. Did I like the activities of the worksheets?



- b. Did I enjoy doing this worksheet?



- c. Did I like the pictures?



- d. Were the instructions clear to me?



e. Did I do all my work?



f. Did the gestures activity help me to learn about cooking actions?



g. Which senses did I use to learn words? Draw them.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a light green border, intended for drawing.

h. Did I learn new words? Write them in the frame.

A rectangular box with rounded corners and a light green border, intended for writing.

i. Did I use the new words to write?



1

j. Did I write my sentences following the writing strategies?



k. Did the second draft help me to write better?



l. Did I use the new words to write about recipes? Which ones?



Chapter IV

Data Analysis

Data Analysis Procedure

This chapter explains the stages that were followed to analyze the data and identify the categories and subcategories that emerged in the current study. It is of paramount importance to mention that the data analysis was an important stage in this process, which is in line with what Hubbard and Power (2003) indicated: “data analysis is a way of seeing and then seeing again. It is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the data, to discover what is underneath the surface of the classroom” (p. 88). For this reason, this process of giving meaning to the data helped me to answer the question in this study.

Following the qualitative approach, I selected the grounded theory. One definition presented by Moghaddam (as cited in Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) is that “grounded theory is a set of relationships data and categories that proposes a plausible and reasonable explanation of the phenomenon under study” (p. 598). This definition gave a clear idea of how through different qualitative pieces of evidence from the instruments and the emergent categories a researcher finds, he/she can give an answer to the research question. According to Freeman (1998), the process of naming, grouping, finding relationships, and displaying corresponds to the basic stages for identifying the categories and subcategories in the data analysis. First, I systematized the information gathered from different instruments. After that, I read the evidence provided in the instruments several times. Second, I took the key ideas using the color coding technique. Regarding this technique, Stottok, Bergaus and Gorra (2010) mentioned that:

It was of importance to use an effective way of coding and analyzing interview data.

Hence, the idea of Colour Coding was developed and subsequently refined as it offered a

way of moving quickly from open coding to the next step of focused coding. It permitted the use of a more abductive than inductive approach which resulted in the early development of initial categories and sub-categories, using a visual way based on colours that was perceived by the authors as intuitively superior and easier to use. (p. 3)

This process allowed me to create a categorization system for organizing all the concepts identified. Then, I used different colors to classify the topics and then I identified the patterns. The third stage corresponded to identifying common patterns by reading and thinking about the similarities to reduce the amount of information. The final stage related to the findings was shown in a process of triangulation where the three instruments were analyzed: artifacts, field notes, and tests. These sources permitted a triangulation process. Freeman (1998) stated that this process “can build stability and confidence in how you interpret your data and thus in what you find. It illuminates problems and anomalies, and thus raises new questions to pursue” (p. 98). The triangulation process helped me to be sure about the patterns found through the instruments and reduce information to see the emergence of categories and subcategories.

To achieve this process, I followed the methodological triangulation approach. Freeman (1998) affirmed that “it uses multiple ways to collect data, and thus to study the problem” (p. 97). As Freeman mentioned using methodological triangulation was helpful when using several instruments. In my case, I triangulated three instruments: artifacts, field notes, and tests to identify the categories and subcategories that gave answers to the research question.

I identified three categories that emerged with their corresponding subcategories as shown in the table below:

Table 1

Categories and subcategories for the research question.

Research question: How do the development and implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies enhance 4th graders' writing?	
Categories	Subcategories
1. Using materials as a key to enrich knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing attractive worksheets to motivate students' writing • Providing clear instructions to promote confidence to develop activities
2. Enriching vocabulary to challenge students' mind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applying different strategies to build up new vocabulary • Using the senses to learn new words.
3. Rewriting and following models to improve writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewriting drafts: an opportunity to improve compositions • Following models to enhance writing

Image Caption: Table 1

Using materials as a key to enrich knowledge. This category is related to how important materials are for learning. The worksheets implemented were useful resources to achieve the learning goals because they offered students the opportunity to learn in an organized way, to practice vocabulary, apply some grammar rules and use both vocabulary and grammar to write simple paragraphs. Likewise, they made students' learning process easier. Núñez et al. (2004) stated that "the materials should reflect opportunities to the learners to achieve the objectives set up" (p. 130). In this respect, materials should have clear instructions, vocabulary learning strategies according to the student's level and enough examples to guide students to achieve the main goal of this research. It is worth mentioning that the worksheets were designed following the second language acquisition and materials development principles, and vocabulary learning strategies to accomplish the objective. The worksheets offered the opportunity for students to learn vocabulary. Students were able to use vocabulary and grammar hints that allowed them to write sentences and enhance their writing skills by composing simple paragraphs. From this

category, two subcategories emerged, *Attractive worksheets to motivate students to write.*

Understandable instructions to promote confidence to develop activities.

Attractive worksheets to motivate students to write. At the beginning of the implementation, students expressed they felt discouraged to write in English because it was difficult for them due to their lack of vocabulary. They mentioned that they did not know enough words to write in a comfortable way. Ramos and Aguirre (2014) affirmed that “materials conceived by teachers are intended to increase students’ motivation, which also helps to decrease anxiety. This kind of materials fits in a much better way with students’ needs” (p. 139). Considering that materials were important to motivate students in their learning process, through the implementation and analysis of the self-assessment form, I realized that the design of worksheets allowed students to learn, apply, and recycle words to understand vocabulary and some grammar rules to write simple sentences. Finally, students could follow models to reach the main objective.

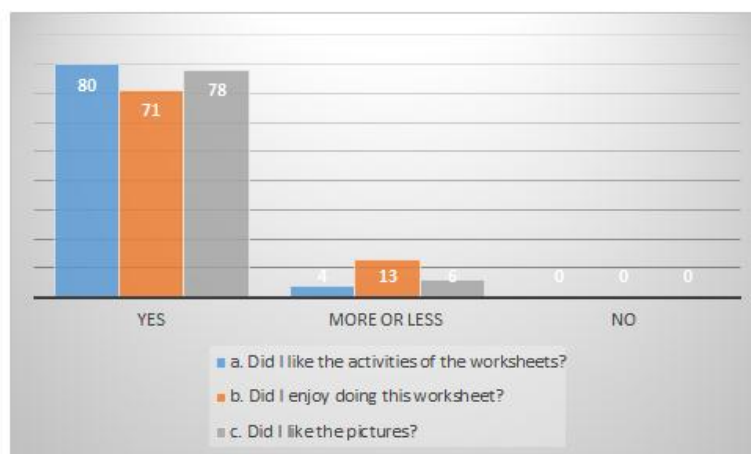


Figure 1 (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis p. 1*)

As it can be seen in Figure 1, the materials were relevant to the students and had a positive impact. They expressed their opinion through the self-assessment form which was included at the end of each worksheet. It was possible to conclude that most of them liked and

enjoyed doing the activities of the worksheet. Besides, the images seemed attractive to them. This confirmed the principles given by Tomlinson (1998), who suggested that “when materials have a noticeable effect on learners, that is when learners’ curiosity, interest and attention are attracted” (p. 7). If the materials make an impact through the images and vocabulary strategies used, the students not only learn in an easy way, but they enjoy the classes and all the activities that teacher proposed to improve their writing weaknesses.

The following artifact excerpt (worksheet No.4) displays how the images allowed students to identify vocabulary, learn new words, and relate them to the grammar rules to make short sentences and use them to construct a paragraph. The first activity consisted of practicing with vocabulary related to prepositions of place. Then, students had to complete some sentences with the correct preposition of place. After, the students had to write sentences using the prepositions. They looked at the picture, and read the paragraph. Finally, students had to follow the model, create a picture, and write a simple paragraph.

6. Look at the map and complete sentences below using the prepositions in the frame. Example: the cinema is next to the bank.

- Between
- Behind
- On the left
- In front of
- On the right
- ~~Next to~~

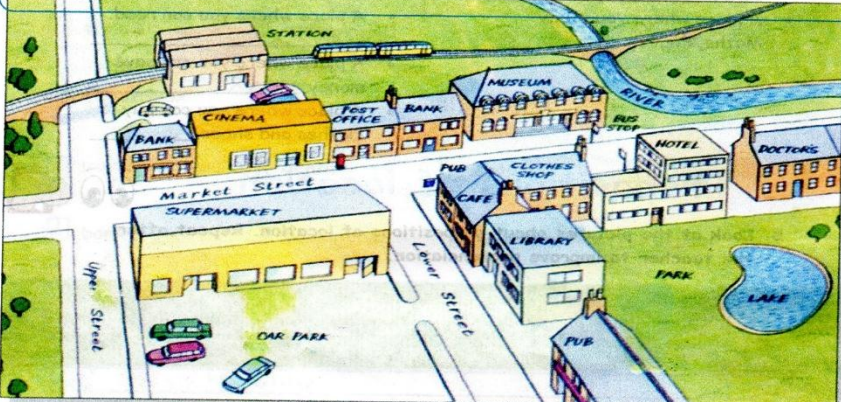


Image taken from: <https://cap-wikis-2012.wikispaces.com/file/view/Places+02.pdf>

- The train station is in front of the cinema (movie theater).
- The supermarket is on the right of the café (coffee shop).
- The library is on the left of the café (coffee shop).
- The museum is on the right of the bank.
- The clothes shop is between the pub and the hotel.



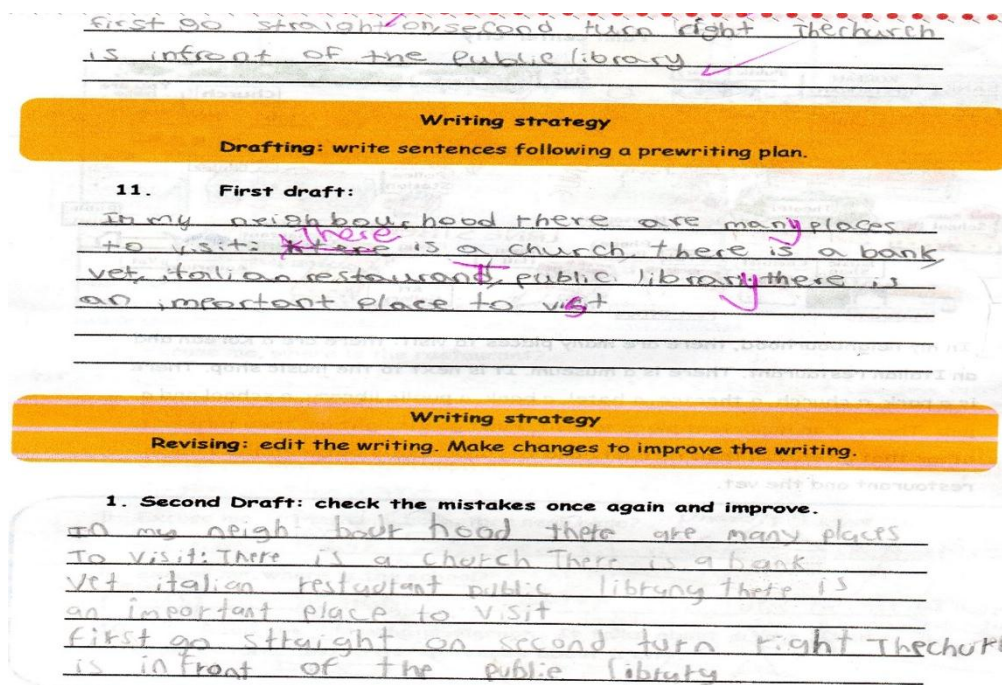
- The airport is in front of the Gym
- the zoo is in behind of the hospital
- the zoo is in the right of the park
- the flower is in the right of the cake shop
- the cake shop is in front of the park
- the hospital is next to the park
- the school is next to the park



In my neighbourhood, there are many places to visit: there are a Korean and an Italian restaurant. There is a museum. It is next to the music shop. There is a park, a church, a theatre, a hotel, a bank, a public library, a school and a pub. There is an important place to visit. First go straight on, then turn left, after that go ahead, then turn left and the aquarium is between the Italian restaurant and the vet.



In my neighbourhood there are many places to visit. There is a church, there is a bank, vet, Italian restaurant. Public library there is an important place to visit.



Additionally, the findings in the field notes showed the positive effect of worksheets on students' interest and motivation as the following example shows:

I started reading the worksheets and some students were very excited because they knew how important this task was for me and for them; they told me they wanted to help others and learn [*sic*].
(*Field notes-Worksheet 1*)

Students seemed concentrated because they had to analyze pictures and sentences. Then, they had to write sentences by linking them to the pictures. At the beginning, the exercise was not easy for them but they felt confident and happy afterwards because they had realized they could do it [*sic*]. (*Field notes-Worksheet 4*).

As can be seen in the field notes, the students' attitudes towards the development of the worksheets allowed me to identify their interests' and the activities that allowed them to get motivated. According to Gardner "motivation refers to the combination of effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning plus favorable attitudes towards learning the language (as cited in Chambers, 1999, p. 27). In this case, the motivation could be observed when students participated in activities that had a certain level of difficulty, and they felt motivated to improve which helped them achieve the goals: to learn vocabulary and to be able to write simple paragraphs.

8. Describe the picture below. Use prepositions (on-in-under-behind-next to-behind-in front of). Example: there are four books over the bed.

There is teddy bear on the bed. ✓
There is picture in front of wall. ✓
There is lamp on the table. ✓
There is teddy bear on the table. ✓

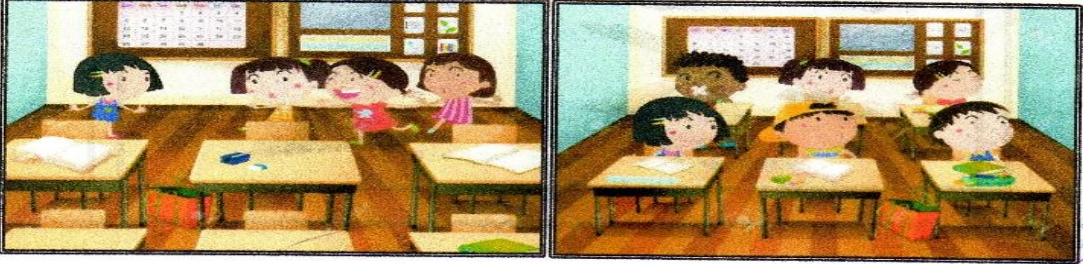
Image taken from https://www.google.com.co/search?7PYBw#tbn=isch&q=bedroom+dibu+jodi+ingrc=7NGAPjTlJht_AM%3A

The image presented above shows how through the images students could remember vocabulary and some grammar rules to make simple sentences. Then as you can see in the exercise below students read, analyzed the given paragraph model and do it.

3. Read the paragraph and color with orange the main idea, with green the supporting ideas and with yellow the closing sentences.

My classroom is a comfortable place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom. There is a wardrobe that contains all things to study. For example, there are some colors in the pencil mug. There are some books next to the notebooks. There are some scissors in the pencil case. There is a board, some chairs and tables. All these things make me feel comfortable every time.

4. Write a descriptive paragraph based on the following pictures. Choose one of them to describe.



My classroom is a good place to study. There are notebooks, there is one bag, there is one bag next to the table, there is a calendar, there are some pictures, there are six chairs, there are some tables.

Providing clear instructions to promote confidence to develop activities. While I was observing the class, I noticed that students enjoyed every activity after they had understood the instructions. They seemed very enthusiastic as they tried to do their best. The first and second worksheets were challenging for them and most of them felt afraid because it was a new experience in their learning process. As we can see in the self-assessment analysis in Figure 2, clear instructions allowed the students to do all the activities. According to Núñez and Téllez (2012) it is important to give instructions, “Giving clear instructions, making strategies explicit, balancing and organizing pre-and- post activities, providing variety in the activities” (p. 29). Instructions should be clear to the students for them to develop the activities by themselves without teacher’s intervention. Thus, students can gain confidence. As it can be seen in figure 2 below most of the students expressed that the instructions were clear to them.



Figure 2[sic] (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis, p. 2*)

This fact, the clarity of the instructions for students, can be also seen in the field notes. I was able to discover how students perceived the instructions when the materials were implemented. They expressed their confidence as shown in the following field notes excerpt, where they had to write about their future plans and the pictures played a very important role.

In the writing exercise, they had to write a letter to a friend about their future plans. They tried to do their best. One of them said that this was their last worksheet and expressed that he felt better writing things. The students said that he did not know many things before and that he felt happy and comfortable with his progress and did not want classes to finish. Another boy said that he wanted to continue completing these worksheets because he had learned a lot. They expressed they understood all the instructions. For that reason, they could develop the exercises in a correct way. [sic]. (*Field notes- Worksheet 6*).

As it can be appreciated in the field notes, students showed more awareness about their learning process because each step in the worksheet allowed them to write in the best way possible. In this respect, Núñez and Téllez (2009) considered that

Ideally, learners should be exposed to a set of carefully planned, graded, sequenced and very well-articulated learning activities that will eventually enhance students' self-confidence and self-worth as a result of learning at their own pace and in their own styles. (p. 180)

The former quote highlighted the importance of planning activities in the worksheets with easy to understand instructions because they play an important role in making students feel confident about developing the activities.

In the tests, instructions were a useful tool for students because students worked with confidence without the teacher's intervention. They did not ask the teacher to clarify any part. Through the tests, I was able to observe whether the students had understood the instructions and developed the exercises. This evidenced how clear instructions allowed the students' performance to be improved and to increase their confidence.

Test worksheets 4,5 and 6.

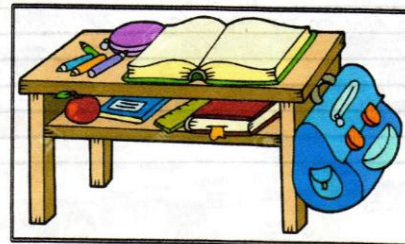
Name: Sare Date: 5/7

1. Complete the crossword by filling in a word that fits each picture.

Across

Down

2. Based on the picture, correct the sentences below.



- The pencil case is next to the ruler. the pencil case is behind the colors
- The red book is on the table. The red book is in the table
- The blue notebook is next to the colors. The blue notebook is under the colors
- The ruler is behind the apple. The ruler is next to the apple
- The colors are under the table. The colors are on the table
- The bag is on the table. The bag is next to the table

3. Read the paragraph and color with orange the main idea, with green the supporting ideas and with yellow the closing sentences.

My classroom is a comfortable place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom. There is a wardrobe that contains all things to study. For example: there are some colors in the pencil mug. There are some books next to the notebooks. There are some scissors in the pencil case. There is a board, some chairs and tables. All these things make me feel comfortable every time.

4. Write a descriptive paragraph based on the following pictures. Choose one of them to describe.



My classroom is a good place to study. For example: There is a ruler on the table. There are books on the table. The bag next to the table. There are colors in the pencil case. All these things make me feel comfortable every time.

The previous images show the complete process of understanding instructions. The first image shows a vocabulary activity in which students needed to complete the crossword according to the pictures they observed, then the instruction asked for the students to write simple sentences and finally students were asked to write a paragraph following the descriptive model.

Enriching vocabulary to challenge the mind. This category stemmed from the observation of how students developed the worksheets. They were focused on vocabulary. Its development is essential to learn a language. Mukoroli's (2011) study found that:

Without some knowledge of vocabulary, neither language production nor language comprehension would be possible. Thus, the growth of vocabulary knowledge is one of the essential pre-requisites for language acquisition and this growth of vocabulary knowledge can only be possible when teachers employ effective vocabulary teaching and learning strategies. (p. 8)

In this way, teachers should look for strategies for students to learn new words. In this second category, it is relevant to say that all the worksheets were designed for students to remember the vocabulary using strategies to understand the grammar rules and write short paragraphs. From this category, two subcategories emerged, *applying different strategies to build up new vocabulary and learning new words to activate senses*.

Applying different strategies to build up new vocabulary. This subcategory refers to the importance of the development of vocabulary strategies. The strategies proposed in the worksheets allowed students to identify and learn new words by practicing it in different ways. Some of the strategies were matching, using imagery, drawing, repetition, and labelling pictures.

Students became familiar with vocabulary learning strategies progressively. I was able to observe that the students increased the number of words in relation to the first worksheet.

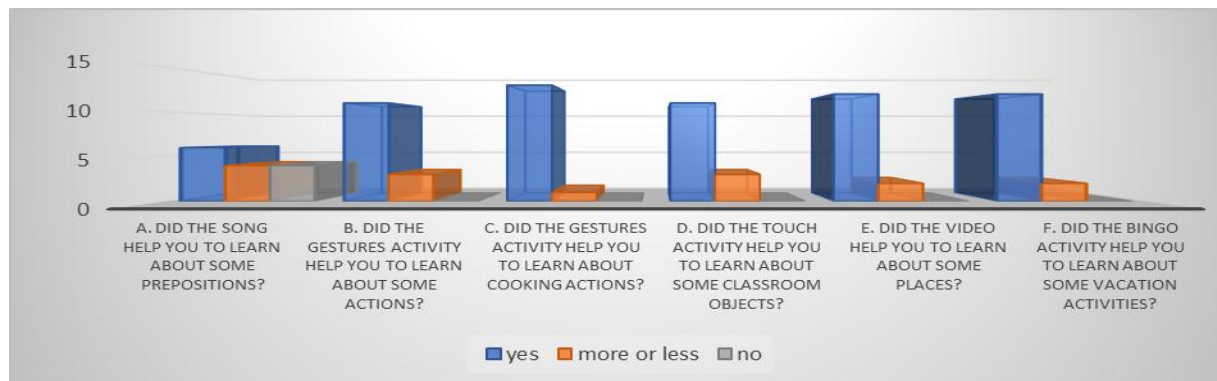


Figure 3 [sic] (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis p. 1*)

According to the analysis of the worksheets self-assessment, figure 3 shows the results from the questions students answered regarding vocabulary strategies. These results show that the strategies built into the worksheets allowed students to learn more vocabulary to complete the exercises and to write paragraphs using the words studied. Richard (2000) stated that “as a learner becomes more proficient and having the vocabulary to communicate on everyday subjects becomes less of a problem, the next step is acquiring enough vocabulary to begin to write texts” (p. 143). When students learn enough words, they will be able to write complete sentences.

The following artifact excerpt demonstrated how the strategies helped students to practice new vocabulary. The strategy for the first exercise was a matching activity where the students identified the plural form. Then, there was another exercise that allowed students to touch some objects and remember the name of each object. Next to these activities we can observe that students use the new words to their later activities to accomplish the main goal.

Vocabulary strategy
Matching entails a task that involves recognising words and pairing them.

3. Match the words to their plural form. Use different colors to draw the arrows.




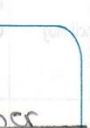






• Pencil	• Boards
• Bag	• Paint brushes
• Scissors	• Notebooks
• Ruler	• Glues
• Paint	• Bags
• Book	• Pencils
• Paint brush	• Colors
• Eraser	• Rulers
• Color	• Books
• Glue	• Paints
• Board	• Erasers
• Sharpener	• Scissors
• Notebook	• Sharpeners

Vocabulary strategy
Draw or make pictures that help to identify the meaning of words.

5. Work in pairs.

- One of the students will choose 5 different objects and put them into a bag.
- The rest of the students, who are blindfolded, will take out one of the objects from the bag and try to guess what it is by touching it.
- When the students have guessed all the objects, they need to draw and label them.
- All students will have their corresponding turn to guess the objects.

Draw the words you have guessed and label them.

 Ruler	 Pencil	 sharpener	 SCISSORS	 Book
 color	 scissors	 Glue	 pencil	 color

Descriptive paragraph example:

My classroom is a comfortable place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom. There is a wardrobe that contains all things to study. For example: there are some colors in the pencil mug. There are some books next to the notebooks. There are some scissors in the pencil case, there is a board, some chairs and tables. All these things make me feel comfort every time.

9. Number the following paragraphs to make a descriptive paragraph.

3 All these things make me feel very happy in this place.

2 There is a table that contains all things to study. For example: there is a sharpener next to the rulers. There are some scissors in a pencil mug, there are some colors and pencils in a pencil case. There are some books and papers behind the notebooks. There are some chairs and tables.

1 My classroom is a good place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom.

10. Describe your classroom in a descriptive paragraph.

Topic sentence.

My class room is a good place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom. ✓

Ideas, detail or examples.

There is one table. There are thirty one students. There is one board. There are books. There is a sharpener. There are scissors. There are colors. There are pencils. There are notebooks. There are chairs and tables. ✓

Concluding sentence.

All these things make me feel very happy in this place. ✓

First draft

1 My class room is a good place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom.

2 There is one table. There are thirty one students. There is one board. There are books. There is a sharpener. There are scissors. There are colors. There are pencils. There are notebooks. There are chairs and tables.

3 All these things make me feel very happy in this place.

Writing strategy

Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

11. Second draft: Rewrite the sentences including the teacher's suggestions.

1 My class room is a good place to study. I can do many activities in my class room.

2 There is one table. There are thirty one students. There is one board.

3 All these things make me feel very happy in this place.

The last exercise shows a puzzle activity where students used a list of new words. then, we can observe that the new words were necessary to construct a simple paragraph.

Vocabulary strategy

Give students short lists of new words and help them identify the meaning of the word.

1. Look for food words (fruits and vegetables) into the puzzle. Circle them. Follow the example.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

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

pineapple

orange

apple

14. Look at the example below.

Simple Salad

Ingredients: tomatoes, onion, carrots and lettuce.

Steps:

- Chop tomatoes, onion and lettuce.
- Grate carrots.
- Mix the ingredients.
- Serve on a plate.

Now, it is your turn. Write the steps to do the following recipe.

Fruit salad

Ingredients: Strawberry Icecream, ~~for~~ the cheese apples, bananas, pineapples and orange, cream.

Steps:

- Put-Mix.
- add the cream
- and add the Icecream.
- serve on a plate.

Writing strategy
 Drafting: write sentences following a prewriting plan.

15. First draft: Write the recipe with corrections.

Ingredients: strawberries, ice cream, cheese, apples, bananas, pineapple and cream

steps: put fruits, on a plate, add The cream and add The Ice cream. serve on a plate.

peel

chop

Writing strategy
 Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

16. Second Draft: check the mistakes once again and improve.

Ingredients: strawberries, ice cream, cheese, apples, bananas, pineapple, and cream.

steps: put fruits, on a plate peel bananas, peel apples, peel pineapple, and Then spread the cream and Then pour Ice cream.

Moreover, the field notes demonstrated the vocabulary strategies were helpful in the vocabulary learning process, because the students expressed that different ways of managing the class allowed them to have fun and enjoy the class.

In the matching exercise, they feel comfortable. They say this activity is very easy because the pictures help to connect the new vocabulary. The Chinese whispers activity, a repetition task, is useful and I can observe they look excited doing this exercise and most importantly, I was able to observe students learn new words while playing. *[sic]*. (*Field notes- Worksheet 2*).

As reflected in the field notes, the students enjoyed the activities that were focused on different vocabulary strategies. I noticed they had memorized the new words practiced and they related the words to the activities they developed. According to Alqahtani (2015), “A good teacher should prepare various and up to date strategies in order to be understood by students and make them feel interested in learning process” (p. 24). When teachers are aware of their role and understand all the implications of learning a language, they do their best in their practices. In the worksheets, the objective was to use vocabulary strategies that helped students to assimilate all the vocabulary to improve their writing skills.

Using the senses to learn new words. When students were completing the worksheets, they seemed to be connected with the new words they were learning. I realized that their senses helped them memorize and retain new vocabulary much more quickly and for a longer period of time. In the tests, sometimes students remembered the use of some words or grammatical exercises by remembering the activities where they had to use their senses. The next artifact shows students’ viewpoint of the senses they used to develop the worksheets.

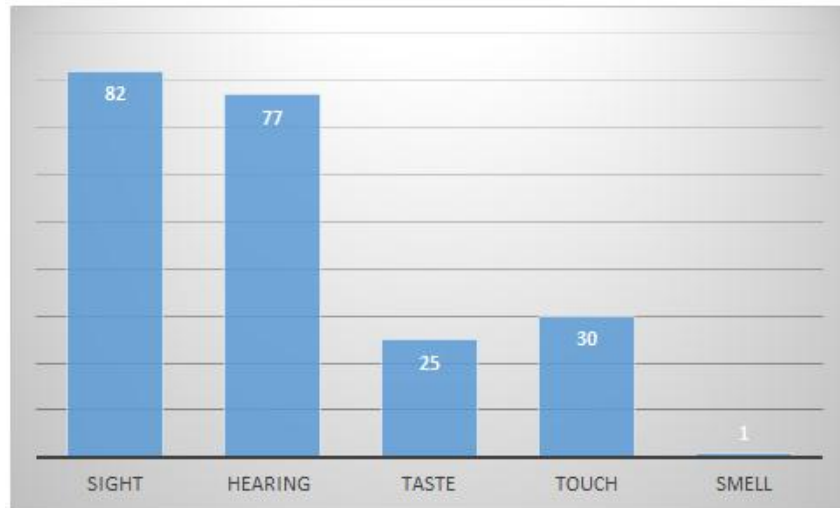







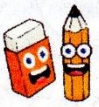

Figure 4 (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis p. 1*)

Some exercises focused on the use of different senses. They were intended for students to experience a new condition, and relate and internalize the new vocabulary. According to Wortman (1998), “To use senses to gain information helps learning to be more meaningful and useful. Children naturally learn with all the senses” (p. 1). The figure (4) above displays the senses they used the most, which let students live through a new experience in vocabulary learning. Students identified the senses they used in the different exercises. The use of senses helped them recognize their own best way of learning new words. The ideas came to their minds remembering the exercises done using the senses.

The following artifact includes pictures that highlighted the senses for students to identify the sense they used. Students used their senses in the exercises as is shown in the following excerpts.

6. Watch the video that appears in the following web page to remember prepositions (on-in-under-next to-in front of-over). 
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIoN176qLsY>

Then, choose the best option that describes the pictures in the exercise below. Follow the example.

 <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> a. The pencil is on the paper. b. The pencils are on the paper. c. The bag is on the paper. d. The color is next to the paper.</p>	 <p>a. The book is on the chair. b. The scissors are next to the chair a c. The books are next to the chair. d. The glue is on the chair.</p>
 <p>a a. The colors are in the pencil mug. b. The scissors are on the pencil mug. c. The glue is in the pencil mug. d. The pencils are next to the pencil mug.</p>	 <p>a. The bag is on the table.p a b. The notebook is in the bag. c. The notebook is next to the bag. d. The pencils are behind the bag.</p>
 <p>a. The pencil is under the eraser. b. The eraser is behind the pencil. a c. The eraser is next to the pencil. d. The pencil is over the eraser.</p>	 <p>a a. The scissors are under the ruler. b. The ruler is next to the scissors. c. The bag is over the book. d. The scissors are next to the bag.</p>

The exercise above shows that both hearing and sight were the senses the students needed to develop the activity that was about prepositions of place and then an extra activity that let them relate the vocabulary to the pictures and complete sentences. In the next exercise, sight, hearing,

and taste were the senses used by students. They prepared a sandwich and at the end they had the opportunity to taste their own recipe.

12. Look at the teacher preparing a recipe of sandwich. Touch and taste the food.

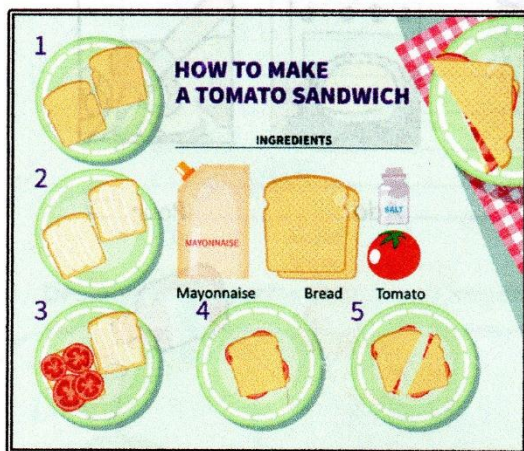


Learning strategy



Placing new words into a context: Placing a word or phrase in a meaningful sentence.

13. Complete the recipe with the correct verbs. (Chop, spread).



1. Put two slices of bread on a plate.
2. spread mayonnaise on the bread.
3. chop one tomato and put the slices on the bread.
4. Serve the sandwich.
5. Cut the sandwich diagonally.

Image taken from:

https://www.google.com.co/search?q=kitchen+verbs&biw=1218&bih=739&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&sqi=2&ved=0ahUKEwj8rNO63MHOAhVJLSYKHadoBvYQ_AUIBigB#tbs=isz:l&tbn=isch&q=how+to+make+a+hamburger+step+by+step&imgdii=W4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A%3BW4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A%3B-sAomRQFIEnFM%3A&imgcr=W4jXL0Lxaf46qM%3A

Do it by yourself

let's cook!

Additionally, the field notes confirmed that when students learn through senses, many words and situations are internalized as we can observe in the following excerpts.

The recipe is a wonderful exercise for them, they tell me they have never prepared a recipe in class and they say, "we like experiential activities" and I think they are enjoying a lot practical experiences. They try to do their best with their pronunciation and follow all the instructions and use the vocabulary learned. [sic] (*Field notes- Worksheet 3*)

The next activity is a touching exercise, I give the instruction, and they look very enthusiastic. They work in pairs, eyes blindfolded and I can realize they love the activity and most importantly they remember the vocabulary learned. [sic] (*Field notes- Worksheet 4*).

As can be seen in the former field notes students enjoyed experiential exercises where they could use their senses. The senses helped students learn in a meaningful way. Pitts (2012) stated that “we rely heavily on our senses to process information when learning and engaging more than one sense when teaching can help information processing. Using multiple senses allows more cognitive connections and associations to be made with a concept” (learning is multisensory section, para. 1). Considering that all the students have different learning styles, it is essential for teachers to design worksheets including the use of the senses in the activities for students to remember and retain vocabulary more effectively.

Rewriting and following models to improve writing. First, it was important for students to learn new words; then, to learn some grammar rules to understand how to organize and write sentences; and finally, to follow models to write simple paragraphs. Byrne (1993) claims that “in view of the many difficulties with which the students are faced in learning how to write a foreign language, the fundamental principle of guiding them in various ways towards a mastery of writing skills, and sometimes controlling what they write...” (p. 25). Following models and applying the strategy of revising, editing, and writing paragraphs two or three times was a successful activity because students improved their writing skills by doing two or three times the exercises and fixing the mistakes suggested in the feedback. From this category, two subcategories emerged: *Rewriting drafts: an opportunity to improve compositions* and *Following models to enhance writing*.

Rewriting drafts: an opportunity to improve compositions. Writing is a challenge for students since they must organize their ideas, remember the use of grammar to avoid mistakes, and know forms of expression to express what they want to communicate. The best way to learn to write is: first, practice writing every day; second, fix the corrections the teacher makes on your

drafts; third, reflect on the teacher's feedback to avoid making the same mistakes; and fourth, return the improved text. The teacher plays an important role in the students' process of writing because his/her feedback and suggestions should be done on time and should be clear for students to follow instructions and improve their writing skills. Rewriting was the most valuable step for students because they felt confident about what they had written and they could see their own progress.

The worksheets' assessment analysis was an important instrument for confirming that students had followed the instructions to improve their writing.

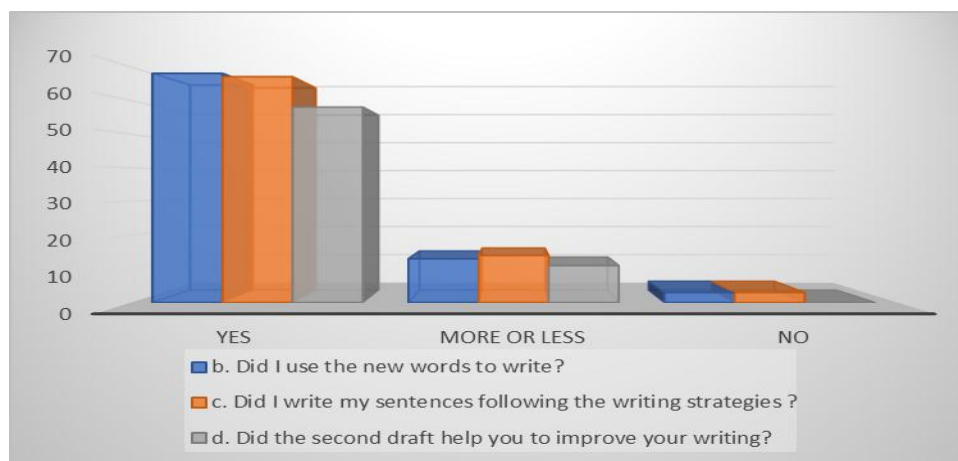



Figure 5 (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis p. 1*)

The figure shows three important aspects that were taken into account to evaluate the writing process. The first aspect was to check if they had used the vocabulary learned. Then, students analyzed the strategies and finally, they felt that the feedback helped them improve and see their own progress.

Progressive activities for students to write can be seen in the artifact (worksheet No2) below. Once the students learn the vocabulary and take into account some grammar rules they start doing simple sentences with visual aids. Then the worksheet showed a model of descriptive paragraph and the space to write the first draft.



- Example: Luis and Jose are reading a book.
- Paco is playing tennis. Concha is playing soccer.
- Margarita is flying kite. Pety is humming tone.
- Samantha is sleeping. Luis and Jose are reading a book.
- Paco, Johan and Lucia are playing with toys.
- Keta, Pipe, Santi and Sofi are viewing.

Writing strategy

Drafting: write sentences following a prewriting plan.

8. First draft: Look at the example. Then draw your classroom and write sentences describing the actions your classmates are doing. Follow the example.



Eg. My classmates are doing different activities in the classroom. Juan and Carlos are playing with toys. Maria is reading a book and Daniela is painting.

First draft



My classmates are doing different activities in the classroom.
 Tora is playing with toys. Pablo is jumping rope. Michael is playing soccer. Miguel and Franklin are playing instruments. Sara is sleeping. Juan is painting. Daniela is reading a book. Tiberio and Carlos are drawing.

Writing strategy

Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

9. Second draft: Rewrite the sentences including the teacher's suggestions.

My classmates are doing different activities in the classroom.

Tora is playing with toys. Pablo is jumping rope. Michael is playing soccer. Miguel and Franklin are playing instruments. Sara is sleeping. Juan is painting. Daniela is reading a book. Tiberio and Carlos are drawing.

The following artifact (worksheet N.5), showed more progress because students had to draw and then according to the picture they wrote a descriptive paragraph following the model and using more words in this case prepositions of place.

Palm center city

In my neighbourhood, there are many places to visit: there are a Korean and an Italian restaurant. There is a museum. It is next to the music shop. There is a park, a church, a theatre, a hotel, a bank, a public library, a school and a pub. There is an important place to visit. First go straight on, then turn left, after that go ahead, then turn left and the aquarium is between the Italian restaurant and the vet.

In my neighbourhood there are many places to visit: there is a church there is a bank vet Italian restaurant public library there is an important place to visit.

first go straight on second turn right The church is in front of the public library

Writing strategy

Drafting: write sentences following a prewriting plan.

11. First draft:

In my neighbourhood there are many places to visit: there is a church there is a bank vet Italian restaurant public library there is an important place to visit

Writing strategy

Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

1. Second Draft: check the mistakes once again and improve.

In my neighbourhood there are many places to visit: There is a church There is a bank Vet Italian restaurant public library there is an important place to visit first go straight on second turn right The church is in front of the public library

The following excerpt demonstrates the importance of rewriting for students:

Every time a student completed a worksheet, mistakes decreased. The difficulty increased but they expressed they were very happy because they could write more. Some students seemed a little bit bored because they had to correct and write again; but, at the end, they noticed their progress. [sic] (**Field notes – Worksheet 5**)

Each time they finished a worksheet, the students expressed their appreciation for having learned to write. Although they did not like the idea of correcting their writing completely, they recognized that it was important to learn from their mistakes.

Following models to enhance writing. The writing process involved a number of activities, including planning, drafting, reviewing, correcting and writing the final text. The teacher offered students some models that guided them to improve their writing skills in a

progressive but significant way. Graham and Perin (2007) stated that “students are encouraged to analyze these examples and to emulate the critical elements, patterns, and forms embodied in the models in their own writing” (p. 20). In the worksheets, a model was shown as a strategy of improvement in the process of writing. The following figure shows the results obtained in the analysis of the self-assessment.



Figure 6 (*Artifact: Self-assessment analysis*)

Due to the fact that writing is a complex skill, most students actually needed guidance to improve. Teachers have a crucial role in guiding students' writing process by providing them with models, feedback, and support to help students become self-confident and aware of their progress. The following artifact (worksheet No.5) shows the examples provided in each of the written activities as well as the teacher's feedback. This feedback highlighted those aspects students needed to improve on as it can be observed throughout the artifact.

8. Describe the picture using the information you have studied.

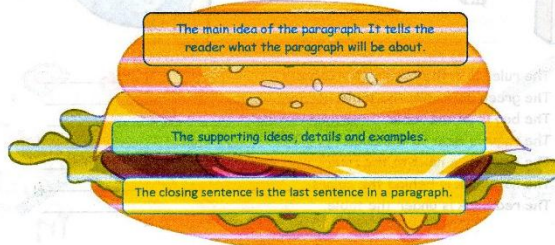


Example: there are three papers next to the scissors.

There is one pencil on table.
Pencil in front of Eraser.
Papers in front of glue.
Scissors in front of Pencil.
Glue behind Papers.

Descriptive paragraph

- To write a descriptive paragraph you have to take into account that it should have three important parts. Read the example below.



Descriptive paragraph example:

My classroom is a comfortable place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom. There is a wardrobe that contains all things to study. For example: there are some colors in the pencil mug. There are some books next to the notebooks. There are some scissors in the pencil case, there is a board, some chairs and tables. All these things make me feel comfort every time.

9. Number the following paragraphs to make a descriptive paragraph.

- 3 All these things make me feel very happy in this place.
- 2 There is a table that contains all things to study. For example: there is a sharpener next to the rulers. There are some scissors in a pencil mug, there are some colors and pencils in a pencil case. There are some books and papers behind the notebooks. There are some chairs and tables.
- 1 My classroom is a good place to study. I can do many activities in my classroom.

10. Describe your classroom in a descriptive paragraph.
Topic sentence.

My classroom is a good place to study.
I can do many activities in my classroom.

Ideas, detail or examples.

There are tables. There are books.
There are five windows.

Concluding sentence.

All these things make me feel very happy.
This place makes me feel happy.
Happy in this house.

First draft

My classroom is a good place to study.
I can do many activities in my classroom.
There are twelve tables, there are books.
There are five windows.
All these things make me feel very happy.
This place makes me feel happy.
Happy in this house.

Writing strategy

Revising: edit the writing. Make changes to improve the writing.

11. Second draft: Rewrite the sentences including the teacher's suggestions.

My classroom is a good place to study.
I can do many activities in my classroom.
There are twelve tables, there are books.
There are five windows.
All these things make me feel very happy.
This place makes me feel happy.
Happy in this house.

Using models such as examples of sentences and paragraphs had a positive effect in students, as we can appreciate in the following field notes excerpt.

After having done different exercises to learn vocabulary and then practiced simple sentences following grammatical rules, students began to analyse and read the writing model that was on the worksheet. Some of them asked me about some connectors and some extra words that they did not know the meaning of. After a few minutes, they started to write trying to follow the model; although some students asked me if they could write another idea to complement what they had in the example. When they finished writing, I observe that some of their reactions were positive. Some students stated that they could not believe that they had written so much. Then, I proceeded to provide the corresponding feedback to guide and to support them in their process of writing. [sic] **(Field notes – Worksheet 5)**

It was gratifying to realize that the writing strategies such as writing drafts and following models helped students improve their writing process.

This chapter reported the findings and all the process to deal with the data showing some categories and subcategories and then the findings were used to provide the foundation for the conclusions and implications outlined in the final chapter. In the next chapter, I present the conclusions of the research study taking into account the previous findings.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

In this last chapter, I present the main findings of my research with the consequential implications. It also presents the conclusion and the implications for the institution, material developers, students, and teacher researchers. Finally, it describes the limitations of this study and some questions for future research studies. The research question for this study was: How do the development and implementation of worksheets based on vocabulary learning strategies enhance 4th graders' writing?

Conclusions

Introducing a small amount of vocabulary at a time, starting with the most frequent, useful, and learnable, and returning later to more difficult vocabulary was an excellent strategy that allowed students to learn, memorize, recall, and use words correctly. I also concluded that for the participants, the use of different learning vocabulary strategies such as listing, associating, matching, organizing, classifying, and labeling words became essential for the achievement of the main goal.

The permanent use of vocabulary strategies such as labelling, matching, repetition, listing words, drawing, among others to foster vocabulary learning was an important element because students were willing to complete all the exercises to improve their vocabulary to learn how to write simple sentences and paragraphs. The worksheets involved students' needs, interests, and expectations. For this reason, students felt confident about their everyday activities and were more effective learners because teachers were responsible for choosing a methodology that gave learners the opportunity to gain as much knowledge as possible. This was a process where

students not only learned vocabulary, but also learned some grammar rules to write in a coherent way.

An appropriate piece of guidance, the strategy of writing first draft then received a feedback, the development of a second draft, following models, revising and editing were elements that improve students' writing. This guidance helped students write in a more effective way. They expressed they could do it because their vocabulary knowledge had increased significantly. Nevertheless, the fourth graders made some mistakes and it was clear that they needed to continue working on vocabulary learning strategies to foster their writing skills.

The implementation of the multi-dimensional approach in each worksheet played an important role in students' active participation. In addition, the use of senses to learn vocabulary or grammar rules resulted in positive effects.

Pedagogical Implications

This research study had a positive effect on my professional and personal growth because in my career because I was learning throughout the whole process, especially by identifying students' needs and searching for strategies to improve their overall English proficiency it allowed me to become more reflective about my teaching practice. The school also benefited from this research study because I gave students resources for motivating them to have a better level. Likewise, the creation of materials improved the methodology used in English classes at the school. Besides, the students had a permanent companion during the process. I was able to guide them through all the activities and helped them overcome difficulties. Similarly, this research study had a positive effect. This study contributed to the writing process on the students because fourth graders were motivated through the implementation of vocabulary learning

strategies that allowed them to enrich their knowledge and increase their confidence feeling to write.

Limitations

It is important to mention that there were some factors which became constraints during the study. The first factor was time because students received only two hours of English class per week. It would have been better to implement the worksheets more slowly as part of a continuous process. Consequently, I had to borrow hours of class to complete my research study. A second factor was that I took upon myself cost of the materials. In this way, I printed in color because the students preferred to do the activities with attractive layouts. Besides, the multi-dimensional approach required a lot of teacher time investment.

Further Research

To conclude, I propose the following question for future studies. How does the development of different kinds of writing texts following models help students to improve their writing?

How does the implementation of metacognitive strategies contribute to enhance argumentative writing?

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consents Form

Bogotá, Septiembre 01/ 2016

Licenciado

Nicolás Hernández

Rector Colegio Rincón Santo Sede Misterio

Ref. Solicitud para desarrollar un proyecto de investigación.

Apreciado rector, como ya es de su conocimiento me encuentro realizando una maestría en educación en la universidad Externado de Colombia, en este momento me encuentro haciendo una investigación en el marco de la investigación acción, la cual estudia como a través de la implementación de guías basadas en el aprendizaje de vocabulario, se mejora la habilidad de escritura en la asignatura de inglés.

La presente es para solicitar el permiso de desarrollar las guías mencionadas anteriormente con los estudiantes de grado cuarto durante el tercer periodo del año en curso. Esta investigación traerá grandes beneficios para los estudiantes debido a que despertará en ellos la motivación por el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Además, de tener la oportunidad de aprender el vocabulario necesario para que escriban oraciones y párrafos sencillos.

Este proyecto no representa ningún riesgo para los estudiantes. Debido a que las encuestas y resultados de la investigación solo se utilizarán para fines de la misma y se mantendrá en todo momento la confidencialidad de los participantes.

Si tiene alguna duda con relación al proyecto favor contactarme al WhatsApp o a mi correo electrónico @gmail.com.

Me despido de usted agradeciéndole de ante mano la atención prestada.

Atentamente:



AUTORIZACIÓN PARA PARTICIPAR EN UN PROYECTO DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Actualmente, me encuentro estudiando una maestría en educación en la Universidad Externado de Colombia y mi proyecto de investigación indaga cómo a través de la implementación de guías basado en el aprendizaje de vocabulario para promoverla escritura en estudiantes del grado cuarto en la asignatura de inglés.

Por tal motivo pido su autorización para que su hijo participe en el proyecto de investigación el cual se realizará durante el segundo y tercer periodo del 2016. Dicho proyecto beneficiará el estudiante con respecto al aprendizaje de vocabulario y el fortalecimiento de la habilidad de escritura.

Durante este proyecto se llevarán a cabo encuestas, grabaciones de audio, videos los cuales no presentarán ningún riesgo para los estudiantes debido a que estos instrumentos solo se tendrán en cuenta para fines de la investigación y se garantizará la total confidencialidad de los estudiantes.

El proyecto tendrá injerencia en las notas de los estudiantes debido a que el material realizado para dicha investigación se trabajará durante las clases y contendrá las temáticas propuestas en el plan de estudio.

Le agradezco de antemano su colaboración con el proyecto ya que beneficiará notablemente a su hijo y a mí como docente en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje del inglés.

Cualquier duda o inquietud sobre el proyecto, favor comunicármelo al correo

@gmail.com o al WhatsApp

Atentamente:

Julie Alexandra Páez | Grosso Docente de inglés
Estudiante de Maestría
Universidad Externado de Colombia

Appendix B: Need Assessment Form

COLEGIO RINCON SANTO
NEEDS ANALYSIS SURVEY

Taken from
<https://www.google.com.co/search?tbm=2188&bih=686&dpr=1.5&imgref=vzmbvjsqNQCdRM>

Dear student

Querido estudiante, esta es una encuesta que contiene algunas preguntas acerca de tu percepción o sentimientos en algunos aspectos de tu aprendizaje en el idioma inglés. Por favor, siéntete en completa libertad de contestar la información será confidencial y se usará con propósitos investigativos.

1. For me, writing is a/an _____ skill.

- ☐ Very easy
- ☐ Easy
- ☐ Somewhat difficult
- ☐ Very difficult

2. The reason(s) for my answer in the previous question is/are (you can choose more than two options if necessary):

- ☐ Vocabulary management
- ☐ Grammar accuracy
- ☐ Paragraph/text construction rules
- ☐ Translation
- ☐ other reasons like

3. When I face a writing task (either in class or as homework), I...

- ☐ Takes some time before starting to organize my ideas and plan my writing process
- ☐ Start immediately and let my ideas flow on the paper

4. When I am developing a writing task, I...

- ☐ Use my own tools to aid the process (dictionary, grammar books, online tools, other tools like

5. When I finish a writing task, I...

- ☐ Never revise it
- ☐ Just check the part
- ☐ Read it all again and make the necessary changes

5. When my teacher corrects my writing tasks, I...

- ☐ Focus on the final grade
- ☐ Read my teacher's comments and revise my errors
- ☐ Read my teacher's comments revise my errors and correct them

6. Is there anything I would like to say regarding my writing abilities? (feel free to express all your thoughts in this part if you feel they might help your teacher develop more effective writing tasks)

THANK YOU

Appendix C: Field Notes Form**COLEGIO RINCON SANTO SEDE MISTERIO****FIELD NOTES****WORKSHEET NUMBER:** _____ **DATE:** _____**HOUR:** _____

PRE-ACTIVITIES	
WHILE	
POST-ACTIVITIES	

Appendix D: Self-assessment form

Self-assessment

Learning strategy

Self-monitoring: Identifying errors to producing the new language.

17. ~~Color~~ the face that describes you the best.

a. Did I like the activities of the worksheets?



b. Did I enjoy doing this worksheet?



c. Did I like the pictures?



d. Were the instructions clear to me?



e. Did I do all my work?



f. Did the gestures activity help me to learn about cooking actions?



g. Which senses did I use to learn words? Draw them.



h. Did I learn new words? Write them in the frame.



i. Did I use the new words to write?



j. Did I write my sentences following the writing strategies?



k. Did the second draft help me to write better?



l. Did I use the new words to write about recipes? Which ones?

