

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

The Development of Student Self-efficacy through Modeling Strategies for Writing Skills

Judith CARDONA GALLEGO, Ann Lilibeth NOVOA TORRES

Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master in English Language Teaching for Self-Directed Learning

Directed by LILIANA CUESTA

Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures

Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, Colombia

2013

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

2

Declaration

I hereby declare that my research report entitled:

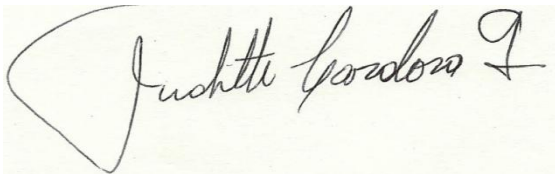
**The Development of Student Self-efficacy through Modeling Strategies for
Writing Skills**

is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work
done in collaboration except as declared and specified in the text;

- is neither substantially the same as nor contains substantial portions of any similar work submitted or that is being concurrently submitted for any degree or diploma or other qualification at the Universidad de La Sabana or any other university or similar institution except as declared and specified in the text;
- complies with the word limits and other requirements stipulated by the Research Subcommittee of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures;
- has been submitted by or on the required submission date.

Date: _____

Full Name: Judith Cardona Gallego, Ann Lilibeth Novoa Torres

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature reads "Judith Cardona Gallego" in a cursive script.A handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is highly stylized and cursive, appearing to read "Ann Lilibeth Novoa Torres".

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

3

Abstract

EFL learners' low engagement and proficiency in writing have been everlasting difficulties in public and private education. This study explores the implementation of modeling strategies for writing skills to ease the angst faced by learners during the writing process. This report of a collaborative action research project involving two teachers-researchers and twenty students focused on how action research helps the teachers-researchers to improve difficulties in order to facilitate the learning of writing strategies by students. Theoretical principles underpinning this study include cooperative and autonomous learning processes developed at a private and a public school. This study is framed upon a qualitative collaborative research process in which posing a question, planning, implementing, observing and reflecting were required stages. Data were collected through different instruments: questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, observation field notes and writing tasks. Data analysis involved data organization, coding the data, analyzing and interpreting the data through a grounded theory approach. The groups in the study reach self-confidence and improve their writing skills to support their arguments based on pro-con essays. Analysis of the information collected provides evidence to support modeling as a useful writing strategy to develop argumentative essays and to increase self-efficacy and teamwork. Finally, the teacher's role in fostering support emerged as a fundamental issue required to handle the modeling strategy.

Key words: modeling writing strategy, autonomous learning, cooperative work

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

4

Resumen

El escaso desarrollo de la competencia escritural y la baja motivación hacia la misma han sido las dificultades más persistentes en los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera tanto en la educación pública como privada. Este estudio pretende implementar estrategias de elaboración de modelos que fortalezcan las habilidades escriturales con el fin de disminuir el temor que enfrentan los estudiantes durante el proceso de escribir. Este proyecto de investigación basada en la acción colaborativa involucra a veinte estudiantes y a dos investigadores docentes activos en la actividad profesoral que pretenden disminuir las dificultades presentadas y mejorar las estrategias de escritura de los estudiantes.

Los principios teóricos que sustentan el estudio incluyen los procesos de aprendizaje autónomo y cooperativo en un colegio público y uno privado y está enmarcado en un método cualitativo de investigación- acción colaborativa, en donde se siguen los pasos de planteamiento de una pregunta, planeación e implementación de la intervención, observación y reflexión en el proceso investigativo. Los resultados fueron obtenidos a través de la aplicación de diferentes instrumentos tales como: cuestionarios, entrevistas semi-estructuradas, observaciones recopiladas en diarios de campo y actividades de escritura.

El análisis de datos se logró mediante la organización de los datos, la codificación de los resultados, la interpretación y el análisis por medio de una teoría fundamentada.

Finalmente, los grupos de estudio lograron fortalecer aspectos como el mejoramiento de su confianza, auto-eficacia y sus habilidades en la escritura estructurando argumentos y categorías para respaldar sus ensayos argumentativos.

El análisis de la información compilada a lo largo de este trabajo, proporciona evidencias importantes relacionadas con la elaboración de modelos, vista como una estrategia útil para desarrollar ensayos argumentativos y aumentar la auto-eficacia, la postura crítica, la autonomía y el trabajo en equipo. Finalmente, el rol del maestro se destaca como criterio esencial para promover el uso de la elaboración de modelos como estrategia de enseñanza.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

5

Palabras claves: estrategia de elaboración de modelos en la escritura, aprendizaje autónomo, trabajo cooperativo.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

Table of Contents

Resumen.....	4
Table of Figures.....	6
Introduction	8
Literature review	12
Methodology	19
Data collection procedures	22
Pedagogical intervention	24
Data analysis procedures	26
Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation	36
Conclusions	38
References	41
Appendix A Needs analysis questionnaire	45
Appendix B Lesson Plan sample	47
Appendix C Pro and con comic	52
Appendix D Task performance	56
Appendix E Pro and con essay based on modeling strategy.....	57
Appendix F writing paper sample of the student with learning disability.....	58
Appendix G Pro and con essay based on modeling strategy.....	59

Table of Figures

<i>Figure 1.</i> Diagram of Categories and Sub-Categories, Type of analysis	27
---	----

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Introduction

Writing is a demanding task which employs many thinking processes such as brainstorming, selection and organization of ideas, facts, thoughts or opinions, and the negotiation of grammatical rules while maintaining focus on a specific writing topic. Learners typically use writing as a tool to express their knowledge and thoughts, and as Raimes (1983) says, they use it even as a form of learning. In other words, writing is a means that allows learners to set the ground for other language skills. In so that, with it, learners can learn to give arguments defend ideas and reach to conclusions. This skill might be enhanced if learners build vocabulary through input sources (mainly from listening and reading tasks), so they can expand their knowledge and start establishing a model to express their opinions. All in all, for the purposes of this study, writing is seen as a sequence process that should be dynamic and constantly monitored.

However, despite the numerous benefits that writing offers, it has not been a highly-trained competence for most foreign language learners mainly due to the writing exposure they have had in their language classes, which has mainly emphasized on structural aspects rather than on rhetorical ones. The importance given to grammar in writing has been noteworthy. According to Al-Khasawneh (2010), grammar has been traditionally perceived as an extremely important component to convey meaning accurately. Thus, learners will not have the confidence to write freely and accurately if they are not certain about the grammar component. Moreover, as Hartley (1998), Rabab'ah (2003) and Al-Khasawneh (2010) assert, there are other problems with learners' writing, such as their limited vocabulary, their limited range of expressions, their limited ability to support thoughts in a foreign language, and their spelling and punctuation mistakes. All in all, for language teachers, writing could be a difficult area to develop, assess and improve.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

In addition to this, language teachers can find a scarcity of teaching procedures regarding this area, primarily because writing is conceived as an assumed skill and is, therefore, not often covered explicitly in class. Byrne (1998) found that writing tends to get relegated to exercise-making and thus developed as homework without any support. In response to this, we believe that when teachers attempt to develop writing consistently through the development of a customized plan/strategy, students not only gain knowledge in grammar, vocabulary and other related language areas, but they are also able to communicate more effectively, being able to go beyond structure and meaning relationships within a written text.

With this in mind, the purpose of the present study was to show how learners' writing skills can improve based on a target modeling strategy, and how students can foster their self-efficacy and competence in their writing process in a cooperative environment. The modeling strategy made use of peer- feedback, as a means to influence learners' self-efficacy beliefs positively.

As a strategy, modeling provides an outline of procedures to follow when students write. Therefore, as Schunk (1987), argued, when using modeling as a strategy, foreign language learners' confidence in their writing process can be increased as a result of an improvement in their self-efficacy beliefs. Through modeling, learners can have initial support to express their arguments efficiently and display better performance and proficiency on their compositions because they develop metacognitive skills as they identify, select, evaluate and reconstruct their cognitive knowledge through the repetitive process of planning, writing, monitoring, evaluating and re-writing. In fact, learners can also develop gradually as proficient writers since they initially learn through a model, which can be adapted based on their needs. They can evaluate their performance using it, and are also able to recognize and reflect about its applicability on their subsequent compositions and formulate further changes, as it is necessary.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

On the one hand, this intervention was developed for a group of twenty (20) adolescent students, who have demonstrated certain skills; proper of the A2 language level, as verified through the diagnostic test applied in both contexts. These students attend two different schools, but share similar features regarding the language profile. Both groups have showed recurrent problems in their writing processes, specifically in accuracy, cohesion, coherence and the organization of paragraphs. On the whole, there are serious weaknesses in their writing process.

According to the results obtained from the needs analysis stage, learners demonstrate numerous problems in their writing, namely, in reference to cohesion and coherence, lack of linking words to connect topic sentences and supporting ideas, and over repetition of lexical units in their compositions, fact that demonstrates an extremely limited vocabulary. Briefly, they do not use any paragraph structure accurately.

On the other hand, this project attempts to highlight the positive impact of cooperative learning procedures, the advantages of the modeling strategy to foster learners' self-efficacy beliefs in their autonomous learning process and, illustrate how the modeling strategy might enable learners to display new writing abilities mainly fostered through the comparison and contrast of arguments.

In summary, as Bangert-Drowns, Hurley, and Wilkenson (2004), and Graham and Perin, (2007) stated, it is expected that through writing, learners can learn to clarify their own thoughts, ideas, and concepts and review inherent connections in new learning. We concur that it is not easy to start writing compositions from scratch because learners may get confused in drafting their initial thoughts or may write ideas in a way that cannot be easily understood by the target audience. As a result, we decided to frame the study upon the assumption that learners work better in writing when they have a sample/model.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

11

Additionally, during the intervention, learners worked cooperatively, so they had to recognize their strengths and weaknesses to participate as part of a group. Slavin (1989) claims that a member who is part of a team can be encouraged to participate if he perceives that the group's benefit constitutes his/her own gain as well. At the beginning, students were ashamed to accept their writing errors or correction from their peers, but they worked very hard to overcome their difficulties, identify their writing mistakes and accept their partners' comments. Their awareness of the importance of enhancing their individual performance transcended as they worked cooperatively since they realized their peers had similar goals and pursue common outcomes.

This project guides students in their writing process using an outline based on a modeling strategy to code the information, incorporate model explanations and demonstrate their writing ability, producing texts supported by pro-cons ideas. Consequently, learners could promote their cognitive, behavioral and motivational engagement through the development of writing skills and also foster their self-efficacy to ensure lifelong learning goals. Students realize that modeling is an efficient strategy to enrich their writing skills.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Literature Review

Modeling as a writing strategy

The writing process requires a great effort by learners because the ability to write is not an acquired skill; it has to be developed and honed through practice. With this in mind, teachers can use a modeled scheme to guide students through their writing process, while students follow a model, produce a writing outline and draft/edit a final version of a text. Modeling provides information about what sequence of actions students have to follow in order to develop and reach the target writing performance. As a result, students might be more likely to raise their self- efficacy beliefs as they trust in their writing abilities, leaving aside the feelings of frustration when they are developing a writing task. Pajares and Valiante (1997) stated that writing self- efficacy does not directly increase individual's writing competence, but helps individuals generate greater attention and more efforts for writing. This was revealed in this study, which unveiled learners' persistent and effort-making attitudes at the time of writing their compositions and improving their initial drafts.

The modeling approach under this study is framed upon various stages. An initial stage, considered as an observational phase, occurs when learners observe and incorporate new tools, allowing them to improve their writing skills. Meichenbaum(1977) found that an important form of observational learning takes place through cognitive modeling, which combines modeled explanations and demonstrations with verbalizations of the model's thoughts and reasons for performing the actions. Accordingly, students have an initial moment to boost their self-efficacy as they are aware of their capabilities regarding the fulfillment of the task, its structure and required skills.

Secondly, according to Michembaum (1977) and Schunk (1981), there is a cognitive modeling and a social feedback stage, wherein the teacher presents a complete

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

outline sample with a target explanation. This stage is important as students recognize the benefits that the model provides and they are able to observe its success on their peers' products, after that, learners have the opportunity to practice, with the aid of the teacher's assessment. Writing is guided and every mistake is corrected during the process. Moreover, in this phase, learners work cooperatively and have the opportunity to receive feedback from their partners and their teacher. These components might enable students to produce more effective compositions. In addition, students can reflect and be conscious of their improvement.

Thirdly, there is another stage which involves social feedback but without any explicit cognitive modeling stage. On it, learners can share their writing papers to have a different perspective from peers and enrich their compositions. Despite teachers undertake the corresponding assessment; they do not give any direct feedback regarding the possible corrections that learners can implement. Instructors wait for learners' actions, since it is believed that they should be able to discover how to correct their mistakes and express their thoughts through a clear argumentation.

The final stage used in this study denotes the absence of cognitive modeling and/or social feedback. In this stage, students produce the writing task, without receiving any help or feedback. Furthermore, they assess their compositions without a guide. This phase is important for learners to develop their own self-monitoring pathway, and boost their self-efficacy in the development of a particular task, in this case, a pro-con essay.

Some advantages can be highlighted when modeling is implemented. First of all, the permanent monitoring and feedback which learners are exposed by working with their classmates and the teacher might prove beneficial. Learners can use their feedback to avoid writing pitfalls as their writing style can be constantly adjusted based on the target writing outcomes.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Furthermore, under this view, teachers might state that (as in any developmental stage) there is an inevitable tendency to make errors but learners can correct them as a part of the writing process itself. Learners need to be trained in reflecting about their compositions and the ways of overcoming the possible difficulties. In addition, teachers should provide students with the opportunity to practice with specific activities to improve their writing skills. By engaging learners in the writing process through a structured process that follows pre-writing, planning, drafting and post-writing stages, they would be more likely to adapt their learning needs and skills throughout each of these stages.

Hence, as Manz (1981) referred to vicarious learning, teachers can use modeling effectively to enhance the achievements of organizational and personal goals, in day-to-day modeling and in formal training, to affect behavioral changes. Therefore, vicarious learning, or modeling (in this case), encompasses motivational processes because when the model writing is attractive and competent enough, it provides students with opportunities to recognize proper schema to express their thoughts and ideas through writing. Additionally, in agreement with Bandura (1986), educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also by what they do for children's beliefs about their capabilities, which affect the way they approach the future. Students who develop a strong sense of self-efficacy can be well-equipped to educate themselves when they have to rely on their own and comply with the requirements of their target life domains. All in all, as the focus of this study relies on empowering students' writing abilities through modeling, the project principally aims at providing students with means to have a successful academic performance and a better lifelong learning experience.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

The importance of cooperative work in writing practices

Early Piagetian (1973) and Vygotskian (1978) contributions to learning promote the idea that there is a better chance of learning when people interact with one another. Cooperative learning was defined by Cohen (1994), Weidner (2003) and Slavin (1995) as a variety of teaching methods in which students work in small groups to help one another learn academic content. In cooperative classrooms, students are expected to help each other, to discuss and argue with each other, to assess each other's current knowledge and fill in gaps in each other's understanding. In this view, mutual support for common procedures can promote the attainment of group objectives, as well as the individual's ones too.

According to Kagan (1994), cooperative learning is a teaching arrangement that refers to small, heterogeneous groups of students working together to achieve a common goal. Students do not only work together to reach their personal goals but they are also responsible for their teammates' goals too. According to Guilles (2007) and Weidner (2003) there are five important aspects in Cooperative learning; positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face interaction, group processing and social skills.

First of all, positive interdependence occurs when students have a specific role in a group, so when writing, they might be more able to be engaged in the activity as they feel more comfortable developing it. Secondly, individual accountability suggests that students do not only have to achieve their personal learning goals but the collective learning ones at the same time. Thirdly, face-to-face interaction involves teamwork activities where students can interact and see each other and are engaged in the same kind of tasks where they have the same opportunities to participate, fourthly, group processing is enhanced when students get support from their partners as they work on their compositions and they

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

are also able to provide feedback to their teammates and reflect about their own objectives and how to reach them, lastly social skills ensure to have interpersonal and small group skills such as effective communication which are needed to cooperate successfully, Indeed, working cooperatively in a writing environment suggests the identification of roles and skills to meet target writing outcomes and generate a pleasant writing and interpersonal atmosphere.

Cooperative environments might reduce the perceptions of differences among individuals which have been highly promoted through the traditional systems of education since many years ago, what is more, to experience peer pressure has a positive impact on all individuals to understand that one needs to rely on and have connections with others to succeed. Students who engage in cooperative practices tend to see other students as similar individuals, leaving aside feelings of competition, and constant comparison, and instead, fostering equal work opportunities to achieve personal and collective goals. Additionally; social and interpersonal skills are modeled by other group member as a valuable advantage to take part of a safe atmosphere to learn and develop their thinking and writing abilities.

However, educators should note that peer work is not a necessary expression/condition of cooperative learning. However, it can be a factor that promotes its effectiveness considering that group work involves working together in a small group wherein everyone participates in a previously assigned task (Cohen, 1986), it is essential to promote a positive and sharing atmosphere that provides feedback for each participant of the group. As Millis and Cottell (1997) point out, all members of the group might feel a sense of identity when they have new responsibilities, challenges or tasks to perform to achieve a common goal.

Nevertheless, there are peers that cannot establish enough confidence to work fully in a cooperative learning environment. However, when teachers provide equal

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

opportunities to interact socially in a group and are attributed with equal opportunities and challenges among members, this practice becomes more meaningful and attainable to learners in so that they can be acquainted of the benefits of working cooperatively, and understand the commitments and standards to be reached.

By the same token, the teacher as a mediator must have skills to identify students' weaknesses and strengths to achieve meaningful work in cooperative learning scenarios. According to Dörnyei and Malderez (1997), teachers' skills in managing groups in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom originate primarily from educators' knowledge of group dynamics. Engaging teachers and learners in cooperative writing practices suggest a change in the teachers' roles. Students might, per se, perceive them as facilitators who can offer support and assessment. Accordingly, Johnson (1999) discusses to the importance of monitor students' attitudes to gather information regarding their performance and development, to improve the quality of student work, to enrich the assessment process and therefore, contribute to a more enriching learning experience.

Nonetheless, teachers have to make sure their students are willing and committed to develop the assigned task, and also are able to monitor their progress.

Self-efficacy in writing

According to Zimmerman (1995), self-efficacy is the source which drives students' motivation and learning. Researchers have made emphasis in their success through verifying different motivational outcomes, such as students' activity choices, effort, persistence, and emotional reactions. Additionally, Schunk (1981) has portrayed self-efficacy as the progress and motivation influenced by goals, social models, rewards, social comparisons and forms of feedback.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Bandura (1986) describes this process as humans' beliefs about their capabilities, and such beliefs play a crucial role in motivating human behaviors, in other words; motivated students foster their self-efficacy as they are aware of the purpose and process of writing pro-con essays and they are able to focus their attention on the development of their writing skills. Moreover, Bandura (1997) and Schunk and Zimmerman (2006) agree that learners who have high self-efficacy for acquiring a skill or completing a task work harder and persist longer when they face difficulties compared to those who doubt their capabilities. Through the writing pro-con essays, students might also activate their previous knowledge or schema, as they plan to write their first draft, which is assessed and later modified by them. In this way, learners engage in a process of making adjustments towards the final product, and they also work on enhancing their confidence and motivation, which will surely impact their writing performance.

Self-efficacy can be defined as the individualized self-perception that can diverge through activities, situations, and circumstances, rather than a goal to be achieved (Bandura, 1986). Therefore, Self efficacy in writing could be verified by the ability of giving arguments and recognizing how progress is made. Thus, Self-efficacy is not a goal that can be assessed by a compilation test (Bandura, 1986). It is a capability that can be verified through the development of specific writing besides, as Latham and Locke (1991) have noted. Self-efficacy also develops adaptability, creativity, resourcefulness, perseverance, and supposed aptitudes to complete complex actions. Therefore they cannot only master the writing task but also, they are able to express and produce their arguments smoothly, and adapt their learning conditions to attain their goals.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

19

Methodology

Context

This research study was conducted with a group of twenty students from two different schools. The first group of ten students (A) belongs to an upper class school, Los Pinos, located in northern Bogotá. Students from Los Pinos School have received a bilingual education for more than eight years. These students are currently in 7th grade. Among this group, there is a student who was born in Japan, but his first language is Spanish. There is another student with a Down syndrome disability.

The other group of ten students (B) is composed of 11th grade students from a public school, named Colegio Integrado de Soacha, which is located nearby to Bogotá, in a town called Soacha. These students belong to a lower social class. They started school at the elementary level; however, they began taking English classes in the fifth grade. The school only has three or four hours of English instruction per week, it depends to the grade. Both groups were integrated by gender, i.e., ten boys and ten girls, 13 to 16 years old.

Regarding the characterization of both groups, it was established that their English level is A2 according to the Common European Framework, based on a diagnosis test applied. It is noticeable that both groups of learners have the same interests to foster their English level, due to their current needs to initiate argumentative practices (based on cognitive and procedural stages proper of their age). They recognize that English is a tool to attain learning and they feel they need more vocabulary to be able to talk about their favorite conversational topics: TV commercials, readings and Web videos. All in all, both groups are aware of the need to improve their English language performance, and to find out ways that help them to be successful while they are learning.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

20

The needs analysis revealed that the students of the two groups presented nearly the same writing characteristics. They were able to write short paragraphs, but their sentences were poorly connected. There were not solid arguments to support ideas and they lack outlining strategies to categorize the information. Writing is a skill which is not important for them, contrary to what they believe regarding speaking, listening and reading. However, learners are aware of the benefit that an integrated language approach can bring to their learning process.

Method

This is a qualitative action research study that aimed a development of self-efficacy for writing skills in a group of A2-level adolescent English learners. According to Merriam (1988), qualitative research is an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit. In this context, the chosen method provides researchers with valuable data to interpret and analyze the impact of the intervention on this group. Moreover, as argued by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), the value of this action research study, also relies on the fact that it is carried out by current practitioners, it is collaboratively conducted, and it is aimed at developing improvement in the target educational conditions.

Given these conditions, upon the identification of the problematic situation of the target population, researchers predicted the possible effect that implementing an intervention should have on learners' writing abilities. For Cohen and Manion (1985), action research is situational and focuses on solutions in a specific context. In this respect, the main purpose of this study is to provide means to tackle the phenomenon being examined.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

This action research project involves various practitioners committed with their professional development. Its collaborative nature enriches the understanding of the context and area studied, and enhances a mutually supportive teaching and research scenario.

Instruments

Four instruments (questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, field notes, writing tasks) were used to gather and interpret the data obtained and collected from the intervention. All of them provided information on learning behaviors so the learners' evolution could be effectively traced. Instruments brought the necessary support to analyze data regarding learners' writing development and the impact of the model strategy.

Data triangulation procedures were used to increase the validity of the study. Firstly, questionnaires were used to enable the researcher to collect data in field settings. Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted to allow the researcher to elicit more information about the project from the students. Thirdly, observation, collected through field notes, allowed the researcher to collect data from the students' naturally occurring interactions. Finally, writing tasks and products from the students allowed the researcher to analyze the advances in the process by contrasting and comparing the students' production.

Teachers' roles

Researchers took an active part in the development of the study. They guided, assessed and supported the learners' writing process. They reinforced the procedure through the collection of relevant data from their observations, condensing and analyzing salient information resulting from this project. They acted as participant-observers.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Data collection procedures

The study was developed according to the following stages: pre-needs analysis, instrument analysis, literature review of writing strategies and Self- Directed Learning (SDL), needs analysis, planning, intervention, plan adjustment, lesson plan design, implementation, including data collection stages in which data was collected and analyzed. Questionnaires and interviews held, and teacher journals' analysis supported the examination of modeling as a writing strategy with the target group. Lastly, the data analysis and the reporting stage were developed.

The researchers first identified writing as the main area of the project. They formulated the research question according to the problem and the context of the participants, once the needs analysis took place. There was a motivational stage when all the subjects were asked to participate. They discussed the importance of scaffolding in the improvement of their writing competence for their professional life. Parental forms were sent to their families as a requirement to guarantee their participation in the project and ensure ethics on it.

During the needs analysis stage, a self-efficacy questionnaire was used as an instrument to characterize students. Students reported about how they felt about their writing abilities and their confidence when they developed their writing tasks. Following the completion of the questionnaire, students participated in a writing task (Appendix A). They were asked to write a pro-con essay about a given topic to identify their initial writing abilities. These writing tasks were evaluated by the researchers using a targetassessmentcriteria through a rubric created for this specific purpose. Having these results, the intervention stage was implemented with lesson plans designed for the study. The learners participated in the development of writing tasks for pro-con essays, using modeling as a strategy to impact their compositions. They worked cooperatively on their

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

writing compositions. The duration of the intervention was two (2) months and its progress was monitored by sequential and progressive writing activities.

As the intervention developed, the participants' writing process was guided by the researchers (teachers) as they were collecting relevant data from their observation (in field notes). At this stage, researchers participated actively, guiding and reinforcing the writing process. There was constant feedback, which was fully exploited by the learners. In addition, learners received positive feedback from their partners, who were working with them in a cooperative mode.

Finally, the students were interviewed to obtain information about the advances in their compositions and to gain information about the impact of the modeling strategy on their writing process. The instruments used to gather the information were a survey, a semi-structured interview and their writing products (artifacts).

The semi-structured interview comprised six questions. It was divided into two main topics, self-efficacy beliefs and writing improvement. The purpose of the survey was to obtain information about the impact of the intervention; thus it was read many times to identify salient information. There was also a contrast among the different writing products delivered by the students to identify quality and writing improvement.

Focusing on the entire intervention, the teacher took notes about students' interaction and the development of the writing activities. At the end of the procedure, students compared their compositions and reflected on them. Hence, the teacher could obtain information about the intervention, analyze the data and make conclusions.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

24

Pedagogical intervention

This study was supported by the implementation of a pedagogical intervention which lasted six weeks. There was a total of twenty four hours in which learners were assessed and monitored until they mastered the target writing task: a pro-con essay. Each session had a lesson plan which was designed according to the purpose of this study and each session (Appendix B).

The first task was developed using a template focused on a comic strip. The teachers introduced and explained the comics sequence and demonstrated how to categorize the ideas according to their importance (Appendix C). After that, the teachers provided opportunities to learners to choose a topic according to their interest and design their own comic. The main purpose was to activate previous knowledge and to introduce linking words as they completed the comic by following the steps that the teacher had previously explained. Learners participated in the task and showed interest while developing the assignment while they constantly required support from the teacher.

During the following sessions, the teachers gave specific details on the task development and expected performance indicators. Thus students thought about means of transportation, they identified motorcycles as one of the most popular way to transport so students receive as input a task where they start making connections from the easiest arguments to the most difficult ones(Appendix D).

Teachers demonstrated and explained the phases for each task and assisted students throughout. Moreover, they took into account what Boekaerts and Corno (2005) emphasized, in reference to the teacher's actions through modeling: when teachers model and explain their own thought processes necessary for completing activities and assignments, students are more apt to understand and begin using those same processes on their own. In fact, the participants were more able to reproduce and create their own

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

composition by creating their own model in their mind which was similar to the demonstrated model. This also occurred in Rosenshine`s (1983) study in which it was evidenced that teaching was effective if it was well structured into small and sequential steps. Thus, practice is again emphasized so that the skill or response becomes automatic.

Students were aware of the target process based on the process developed to produce arguments and the establishment of a sound rationale of use (against or in agreement) and the guidance obtained through the modeling strategy.

As the implementation developed, each student took into account the teachers´ recommendations to identify the underlying main and supportive sentences in other texts. Therefore, students were constantly trained in the recognition of aspects pertaining to the genre (argumentative) and they were gradually prepared to start the next phase: writing about popular pets and motorcycles, topics that were of the interest of the group.

During this stage, students had no serious difficulties in writing their pieces, as they had become more independent as they were more involved in the intervention. They had no problem in recalling and reproducing the modeled steps and therefore, in mastering the writing task.

Type of analysis

The study was performed from a qualitative perspective that according to Jorgensen (1989) assembles or reconstructs the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. In this context, researchers focus their attention on the analysis of relevant data and its meaningful inference on the project. This study includes an analysis of the grammatical construction of sentences, the meaningful supporting sentences and the development of cognitive thoughts that the learners use in their pro-con essays. In like manner, this type of qualitative analysis allows researchers to examine data to identify general themes that will be used to understand the meaning of the data.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

26

Data analysis procedures

Following the principles of grounded theory which was defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research, the teachers-researchers collected, organized and analyzed the raw data gathered from the study in order to discover relevant patterns and trends, so the process of examining, categorizing, tabulating and recombining was developed by the implementation of three important data analysis: open, axial and selective coding.

Open Coding

As a first step of this procedure and using a questionnaire as an instrument, the teachers-researchers gathered data obtained from the students' answers and this was broken down into pieces, it was examined, and it was compared for similarities and differences, as a result main key aspects were taken into account and they were coded according to its frequency and its meaningful relevance in the study. From this procedure the teachers-researchers compared their results and related them to the research question: How does the use of modeling influence the development of self-efficacy for writing in a group of A2-level adolescent English learners?

Axial Coding

At this step, concepts and categories emerged from the first analysis open coding was compared, interconnected and analyzed to find out their relation and connection to understand what was happening to the study, thus; these new categories let teachers-researchers to triangulate and validate them and explore their relevance in the study itself.

Selective Coding

At this final step the main category was built up after to analyze, connect and validate the relation among the previous categories emerged from the axial coding; thus the

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

core category “Growing individually and collaboratively in the writing process “emerged, which explains and supports the research study. These categories and sub-categories are displayed below

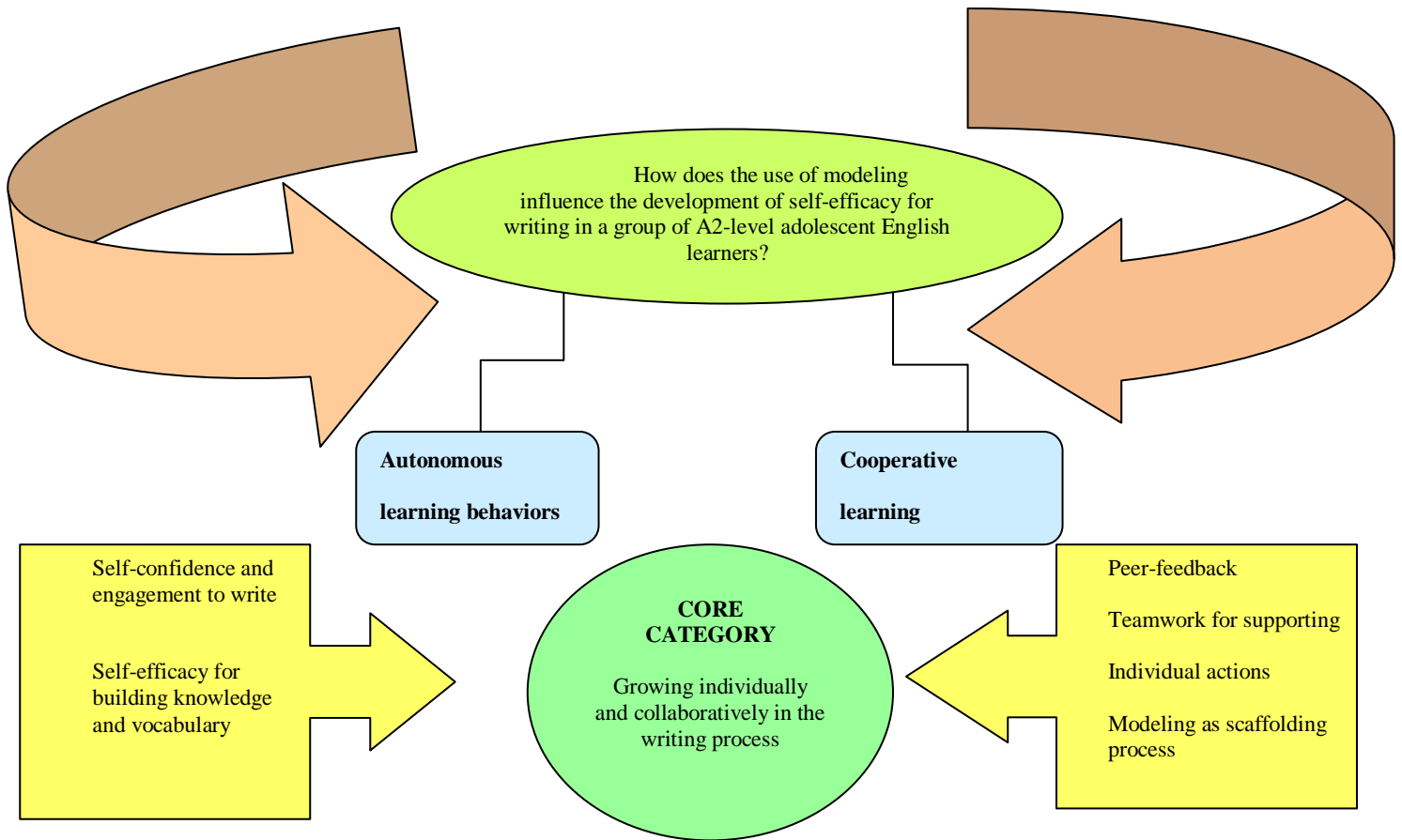


Figure 1. Diagram of Categories and Sub-Categories

Core Category

The participants in this research study presented difficulties in the development of their writing skills and their low self-confidence when they performed any task related to writing. In this view, the teachers-researchers attempted to find answers related to the effectiveness of the use of modeling strategy and the cooperative work to tackle the aforementioned problems. Researchers constantly examined whether the strategy would

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

28

help learners to improve their writing skills through the production of pro and cons essays. The modeling strategy was also thought to be a mechanism foster learner` writing skills and encouraged them through cooperative learning actions

Findings revealed that modeling fostered the development of self-efficacy for writing through a gradual development of learners` autonomous and cooperative behaviors. An improvement in the learners` confidence was a result from the permanent rehearsal of writing assignments and their cooperative work. Additionally, participants increased the effectiveness in the use of linking words and in the support of arguments. Indeed, they showed better coherence in the construction of the paragraphs and they were able to categorize advantages and disadvantages from a target topic by giving adequate arguments to support their thoughts.

On the other hand, the implementation of the modeling strategy (in which peer`s feedback was an essential component) provided learners the opportunity to write essays autonomously as well as to develop abilities to work in teams, as they selected the topic to write about, and classified, organized and analyzed their ideas to create an original and consistent piece of writing.

Through the learners` production and collected experiences, the researchers observed that the intervention enhanced the development of autonomous and cooperative work.

Categories

There are two main categories that emerged from the study “Autonomous Learning behavior” and “Cooperative Learning behavior” both of them will be explained as follows.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

29

Category one: “Autonomous Learning Behavior”

According to Little (2003), autonomous learners understand the purpose of learning, accept responsibility for their learning, share in the setting of learning goals, take the initiative in planning and executing learning tasks, and regularly review their learning to evaluate its effectiveness, these are desirable characteristics which empower and motivate learners to achieve the target goals. Therefore, during the intervention plan learners work individually and with their peers in order to observe their reactions face to activities. Additionally, through the semi-structured interview, students reported, that modeling strategy has been useful and helpful because it had allowed them to boost their self-confidence and self-efficacy to start and develop the target proand con essays:

“I think that English writing is difficult, sometimes I look at my essay and I think about...It’s looking great so it’s cool”

(Student No. 3, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

“I feel confident because I know the process and the steps of an essay”

(Student No. 6, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

“I think is better to let me write pro and con essay because I can judge me and not let other judge me”

(Student No. 8, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

Field notes. September 10, 2012 (7:00 am-8:40 am Room 213)

Students received instructions and comic models to establish pros and cons. Some of them were confused since some of their favorite topics did not have cons for them. But, after the comic model they started to go beyond their likes. Each one wrote a

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

30

brainstorming text of advantages and disadvantages about Facebook™ and music to create a sequence of events to get the final comic product.

Learners` reactions confirm the usefulness of a sample to feel encouraged and recognize their abilities to express ideas on their own. At the beginning, learners were not encouraged since some of them thought that the comic will be based on the teachers` choice, however, they were excited to write about their preferences.

“I know how to write my own”

(Student No. 1, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

“The model helps me to know what I`m going to write”

(Student No. 8, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

This study showed the positive impact of modeling strategy in the improvement of the learners` writing skills, and on their self- efficacy beliefs; even though at the beginning of the project, the students did not want to participate on it because of their lack of confidence, the poor writing performance and the lack of training in these areas. However, when they realized that the process would be guided and supported by the teacher, this particular behavior changed. This confirmed the claims that students felt more comfortable when they have a model to follow up. Hence, Schunk (2000) stated that models can raise efficacy among observers who –individually– tend to believe that they will be successful if they follow a sequence. The participants of this project were developing the planned writing tasks, and they were supported by a scaffolding process throughout. They developed these tasks in a sequential manner and the quality of their writing products increased as they were working under the guidelines provided by the teachers and their peer`s feedback.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Likewise, results suggested an association between students' previous knowledge about the topic of their writing pieces (whether they liked the topic or not) and their previous experience in writing. According to Andrade, Wang and Robin (2009), previous experiences have an influence on how students perceive their capability level and how confident they feel accomplishing difficult writing assignments. Thus, it was important to select topics according to students' interests and their cognitive level, contributing positively to the vocabulary and knowledge enrichment and as they improve their writing self- efficacy beliefs.

A predictor for self-efficacy is related to the degree of engagement shown while learners fulfill a given task. Therefore, positive outcomes of task completion help students maintain a high rate of confidence in them. In this study, students reported that apart from their preferences to write about topics that they liked and had some knowledge on; students always developed the task and followed the patterns indicated in the pro-con writing procedure. Students could identify the topic of the essay, activating their prior knowledge of it, structuring the draft, and organizing ideas and thoughts. In other words, they identified, organized and categorized the ideas, structuring coherent and cohesive paragraphs.

Category two: "Cooperative Learning Behavior"

Cooperative learning involves learners working as teams and it is a valuable skill which *actively* engages learners in their learning process by creating an opportunity for learning to occur between peers. The positive peer pressure on each member of the group to reach group goals is an important impact on their individual accountability. Besides, the experience of cooperative learning facilitates a connection with others to succeed and provide a safe environment to develop and practice new skills. After the implementation of writing tasks (including the development and support of ideas to establish pro and con arguments, and the exchange of ideas to enrich their writing papers) it was found that peer

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

feedback, teamwork for supporting individual actions and scaffolding were effective complements to the modeling strategy to and enhanced the establishment of a cooperative learning environment.

“It’s funny when you work with them, because always they give a smile while you are working, the class works are easily”

“Great, all suggestions are intelligent and important to the activity, even the bad ones, always they are funny, so you’re always happy” (Student No. 3, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

“I feel like I need to take them into account because they can give good and interesting ideas and suggestions” (Student No. 8, Semi-structured interview, October 24, 2012)

Field Notes. October 2nd, 2012 (7:00 am-8:40 am Room 22)

The class was completely dedicated to Writing a Pro and Cons essay about any topic (that caught their attention). Students suggested and chose a topic to write about, then, there were questions like “can I write about parrots”. Then, learners started working on the four paragraphs by their own, after that, students compared their composition with some classmates and tried to find out weaknesses and strengths, (peer assessment). Some of them made modification on their own composition using their peers’ contribution, then; some of them received feedback immediately and worked on corrections, there were questions about spelling, vocabulary, accuracy to the others. (Appendix E)

All in all, students’ cooperative work fostered their self- confidence and their self-efficacy beliefs as a result of the interaction and feedback received from their partners, and the constant practice in which they were immersed. Former studies (Kitsantas & Zimmerman, 2000; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2000; and Zimmerman, 2007) have suggested

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

that novice learners acquire new skills and strategies through four sequential levels: (a) observational, (b) emulative, (c) self-controlled, and (d) self-regulated. Focusing particularly on the observational level, the participants of this project demonstrated a great interest to know the structure of a pro-con essay and carried out certain actions such as the verbalization of their skills and the ability to perform and adjust different strategies to complete a specific task.

It is necessary to keep in mind that at the beginning of the process, the modeling strategy was developed through paragraph completion tasks. Some students made mistakes related to spelling, coherence and cohesion levels; however, these mistakes diminished as they developed their tasks, and reflected about their writing performance showing improvements at the argumentation level and at the use of vocabulary. Consequently, learners made evident their progress and gradually showed the strengthening of their self-efficacy through the recognized efforts to modify and adjust their writing products.

Besides, most of the participants wanted to know about the essay's topic to search for information about it to share some ideas with their partners. At this point, students felt more confident with their writing skills and more comfortable with the corrections and suggestions made by their peers.

Findings also revealed salient information regarding the student with a slight learning disability. His writing skills and self-efficacy improvement were demonstrated by analyzing the results of his questionnaire and the quality of his last essays. At the beginning, he had difficulties to establish the pro-cons categories, but since comics were one of the topics that caught his attention, he started enquiring and demonstrating interest and progress as he worked on his own. After that, he used the outlining strategy to write his essay, and despite it was a challenging task, it was evidenced that he adapted information from the sample given and carefully worked on the sections (introduction, body paragraphs

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

and conclusion). At the end of the intervention, he started to use the strategy without any guideline given and he clearly expressed he felt confident about his results. It could be said that his scaffolding process led to the emergence of positive self-efficacy beliefs (Appendix F). Accordingly, research conducted by Graham and Harris (1989) and Sawyer, Graham and Harris (1992) has shown that teaching students with learning disabilities in a normal instructional environment is important to foster their self-efficacy. This study follows this line of thought since it illustrates how positive could be the impact of a modeling strategy in a student of this kind.

Peer correction was another key aspect to examine. When the intervention began, the participants were timid and reluctant to show their compositions to their partners. They preferred to show them to the teacher instead. However, after becoming aware of the importance of sharing ideas with their partners and identifying peer correction as a tool to improve their essays, they felt more comfortable working cooperatively than by themselves, and made great efforts in order to achieve the expected outcomes.

With regard to such displayed behavior, there are many benefits to be gained from the usage of cooperative learning. One of them relates to the influence of peer correction. When learners interact they can positively affect their partners' learning process because they can share their thoughts and not only monitor their partner's process, but their own. Cooperative learning provides opportunities to establish peer models which at times, may be more effective than teacher models. Additionally, learners can increase their motivation as they recognize success on their peer models.

According to Hattie and Timperley (2007), feedback from another person can influence students' learning outcomes because they become aware of those strategies that are effective for others, thereby enhancing their own performance. As learners were working on their compositions, they began to put into practice what they had learnt from

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

the modeled instructions given by their teacher at the beginning of the project. Then, they compared their products while they were working together as a team.

The feedback gained also enhanced the accuracy of students' essays. They were aware of their strengths in writing and they could meet the standards set. As a result, they became more motivated to continue working on their own and to acquire higher levels to master their learning.

In sum, the resultant categories, from the analyzed data, demonstrated that the implementation of modeling as a strategy to foster self-efficacy in writing skills had a positive impact on students who were involved in the intervention and participated in this research. It allowed them to enhance their writing abilities and reduce spelling and grammar mistakes. They were able to identify particular strategies to use to write an essay. Moreover, their self-efficacy increased as they started writing on their own and they incorporated effective strategies to write with coherence and cohesion. Additionally, when learners are motivated to write, they become more confident and they can increase their own knowledge. Thus, the improvement of the students' self-efficacy is the result of their effort, persistence and practice when they are trying to master a model which was demonstrated and further explained.

As another important finding, was the improvement of the students' language level which was seen through the use of the connectors that was in order to make the writing pieces more comprehensible. However, it was easier to handle the structure pro con essays, in the learners from Gimnasio los Pinos school which is bilingual institution than for the learners from the Institución Educativa Integrado de Soacha which has not any emphasis.

Additionally, learners from Integrado required more monitoring than the other learners since they ask for more feedback to ratify their writing, moreover students from

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

36

Gimnasio los Pinos have a considerable extent of vocabulary bank which has been acquired by bilingualism process, so the improvement of language and self-efficacy levels were not the same. However, the monitoring process and the impact of modeling strategy on the students' writings was considerable and they experienced great changes in the way they write.(Appendix G)

Finally, the student with disabilities was involved in the whole process as another participant and there was not any special treatment for him. Nevertheless, the student needed more attention to carry out the instructions of the modeling strategy.(Appendix H)

Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation

Peer feedback gives students the possibility to revise and evaluate their compositions in a collective activity. At the same time, they can shape their process to include effective strategies to enhance their learning. According to Fitzgerald (1987), peer groups are often used in writing, as members critique each other's writing and offer suggestions for improvement. This was demonstrated in this study given that participants enjoyed writing in a cooperative environment where they showed their essays to their classmates and they reflected about their personal writing improvements.

Another implication was the creation of a safe environment to develop writing skills. Classrooms can adequately offer students a comfortable environment to work in which models selected can lead students to success and feedback strategies are used when they experience their peers' achievements along with their own, their self-efficacy tends to increase.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

When students worked on their compositions, by being assisted by their teachers and peers, they were also involved in a cooperative environment. In this process, each member of the group helped them to recognize both their writing difficulties and writing strengths.

Teachers can implement strategies to empower their students' self-efficacy because they can provide models and positive feedback during the learning process. The cycle formed by pre-writing, planning, drafting, revising and re-writing stages is essential in the development of autonomous work. Through modeling, students can raise awareness of their writing abilities.

In the pre-writing phase, the presentation of the outline opens a window for students to start thinking about how they can write their essays. The planning stage encourages them to persist to find their own way to organize their thoughts. The best part is when they are ready to start working on their first draft, and they begin the real independent writing process.

However, the revising or editing, stage is always demanding. Teachers must make their best effort to provide adequate support in checking the draft compositions because students need to identify their mistakes to overcome them. Then, they can re-write their compositions with better quality, incorporating their peers' and teacher's recommendations.

Teachers can give students models of writing to be checked and they also can use their own students' essays to be contrasted among the group. In this way, peer feedback could be a positive influence because they are prepared to accept their mistakes and to provide comprehensible input. In addition, students' self-efficacy increases as they realize they are able to work to reach their goals and as they use writing as a mode of expression and social interaction.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

By using modeling strategies, students are able to build a better performance in writing as they start working. They do it at first, depending on a model and as they practice, they progress and are able to shape their own style at their own pace with their teachers' and partners' support. Moreover, cooperative learning provides opportunities to students who are not the strongest in writing to achieve higher self-efficacy standards, thus allowing them to become more independent in their academic work.

Conclusions

This project showed that learners from a public and private school alike could improve their writing abilities and enhance their self-efficacy and autonomous work through the implementation of modeling as a strategy.

Modeling is proven to be a suitable strategy to train learners in writing, since in this case, they could effectively use the given input/model each time they developed a written task and this served to be engaged in autonomous learning practices. Students experienced a process of constant reflection and monitoring along their sequential production of a pro/con essay.

Additionally, this strategy develops confidence, motivation as an individual and team work given the various opportunities provided to learners in which they can opt by planning and attaining target goals, and also work on the development of their argumentative writing skills.

In a broader perspective, modeling is probably one of the most useful strategies to teach writing, in so that it provides learners with a master example of a task, and as they follow it, they ensure their cognitive development and the improvement of their abilities. This gradually leads them to increase their self efficacy. Learners are able to enrich their

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

English learning process by means of the identification of their learning strengths and weaknesses, their capabilities as writers, and a continuous analysis which not only helps them reach their particular goals, but also assists instructors in the planning and development of writing patterns, models and sequences.

By the same token, the experience to teach writing using modeling as a strategy was really enriching for the two instructors involved. It gave them the possibility to guide and assess learner`s writing skills by focusing on a structured model, and instilling feelings of encouragement in learners, so they progress academically and discover how to build up their own path to be successful learners.

Additionally, as a result of the implementation, participants demonstrated an improvement in the development of their writing tasks. The latest essays were written under the given parameters and most of their ideas were supported and the use of connectors also increased. Moreover, the participants decreased the time invested to write pro and cons essays, and since they had been exposed to writing tasks that require critical thinking operations, could exercise them and use them to write logically and coherently.

However, if teachers do not accompany the modeling stage with monitoring and scaffolding actions, this strategy cannot prove to be effective. It is important to give the adequate feedback while learners master the model itself. Teachers should be aware that teaching writing with this strategy is not as simple as it seems to be, but if teachers trace a well-designed plan, they can avoid problems during its implementation.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that cooperative learning provides students opportunities to perform independent tasks as they work in a group. In addition to this, they become aware about their individual abilities and they put them at the service of their

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

peers. Thus, each member of the group is able to be involved in cognitive development processes as their interpersonal dynamics is also being promoted.

The usage of cooperative work practices altogether with the modeling strategy raises important pedagogical considerations that deem to be examined in future studies. Firstly, teachers and learners have to assume specific roles during its implementation to be able to attain target goals. Secondly, all instructions and goals have to be set clearly so the patterns modeled are clear and straightforward to follow. Thirdly, this approach suggests being aware of a gradual change from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred perspective.

Additionally, aiming at the development of cooperative attitudes and behaviors, all members of the team have to be aware about their responsibilities and commitments. Learners in this way, can boost their self- efficacy, in so that they can compare their goals and their performance (both current and target) as an evidence of their progress.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

41

References

- Andrade H. L., Wang, X.; Du, Y. & Robin, L. A. (2009). Rubric-referenced Self-assessment and self-efficacy for writing. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 102(4), 207-301.
- Al-Khasawneh, S.M.F. (2010). Writing for Academic Purposes: Problems Faced by Arab Postgraduate Students of the College of Business. *ESP World*, 9(2), 28.
- Bandura, A., & Schunk, D., H. (1981). Cultivating competence, self-efficacy, and intrinsic interest through proximal self-motivation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 41, 586-598
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of Control*. New York: Freeman
- Bangert-Drowns, R. L., Hurley, M.M., & Wilkinson, B. (2004). The effects of school-based writing-to-learn interventions on academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 74, 29-58
- Baumann, J. F., Kame'enui, E. J., & Ash, G. (2003). Research on vocabulary instruction: Voltaire redux. In J. Flood, D. Lapp, J. R. Squire & J. Jensen, (Eds.), *Handbook of research on teaching the English Language Arts* (2nd ed.) (pp. 752-785). Mahway, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Boekaerts, M. (2005). Self-regulation: With a focus on the self-regulation of motivation and effort. In W. Damon & R. Lerner (Series Eds.) & I.E. Sigel & K.A. Renninger (Vol. Eds.), *Handbook of child psychology, Vol. 4, Child psychology in practice* (6th edn.). New York: Wiley.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press
- Byrne, D. (1988). *Teaching Writing Skills*. London; New York: Longman
- Cohen, L. & Manion, L., (1985). *Research Methods in Education*. London.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

42

- Cohen, E. G. (1986). *Designing group work: Strategies for the heterogeneous classroom*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1997). Psychological processes in cooperative language learning: group dynamics and motivation. *Modern Language Journal (in press)*
- Fitzgerald, J. (1987). Research on revision in writing. *Review of Educational Research*, 57, 481-506
- Ghabool, N. (2012). Investigating Malaysian ESL Students' Writing Problems on Conventions, Punctuation, and Language Use at Secondary School Level. *Journal of Studies in Education*. School of Educational Studies, Universiti Sains Malaysia 11800 Penang, Malaysia
- Graham, S. & Perin, D., (2007). *Writing next: Effective Strategies to Improve Writing of Adolescents in Middle and High School*. Washington DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.
- Hartley, J. (1998). What Difficulties do First-Year University Students Find in Essay Writing? Some Results from a Questionnaire Study. *Proceedings of the 5th Annual Writing Development in Higher Education Conference*, 1–2 April 1998. Reading Centre for Applied Language Studies. University of Reading.
- Hattie, J., & Timperley, H. (2007). The Power of Feedback. *Review of Educational Research*. 77(1). 81-112.
- Johnson, K. E. (1999). *Understanding Language Teaching: Reasoning in Action*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishing Company.
- Jorgensen, Danny L. (1989) *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*, Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Kagan, S. (1994) Cooperative Learning and LEP Students. *Bilingual Multi-Cultural Personnel Training Alliance Annual Meetings*. Reno, NV.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart R. (1988). *The Action Research Reader*. 3rd ed. Geelong, Australia: Deakin University Press.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

43

- Kitsantas, A. (2002). Test Preparation and Performance: A Self-regulatory analysis. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 41, 231-240.
- Manz C., & Sims, Jr. (1981). Vicarious Learning: The Influence of Modeling on Organizational Behavior. *The Academy of Management Review*.
- Meichenbaum D.B. (1977). *Cognitive-Behavior Modification: An Integrative Approach*. Plenum Publishing, NY, USA.
- Merriam, S. (1988). *Case Study Research in Education: A Qualitative Approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Millis, B., & Cottell, P. (1997). Managing the cooperative classroom. *In Cooperative learning for higher education*. Phoenix: American Council of Education.
- O'Connor, M. (2011). The Impact of Participating in a Class Blog on the Writing of a Struggling Adolescent Learner. *Journal of Classroom Research in Literacy*
- Pajares, F., Hartley, J., & Valiante, G. (2001). Response Format in Writing Self-efficacy Assessment: Greater discrimination increases prediction. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 33, 214-221
- Pajares, F., & Valiante, G. (1997). Influence of Self-efficacy on elementary students' writing. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 90(6), 353-360.
- Pajares, F., & Johnson, M. J. (1996). Self-efficacy Beliefs in the Writing of high School Students: A path analysis. *Psychology in the Schools*, 33, 163-175.
- Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Piaget, J. (1973). *To Understand is to Invent: The Future of Education*. New York: Grossman.
- Rabab'ah, G. (2003). Communicating Problems Facing Arab Learners of English. *Journal of Language and Learning*, 3(1): 180-197.
- Raimes, A. (1983). *Techniques in teaching writing*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(2), 181-221.


THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

44

- Sawyer, R., Graham, S., & Harris, K. R. (1992). Direct teaching, Strategy Instruction, and Strategy Instruction with Explicit Self-regulation: Effects on learning disabled Students' composition skills and self-efficacy. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 84, 340-352.
- Schunk, D. H. (1987). Peer models and children's behavioral change. *Review of Educational Research*, 57, 149-174.
- Schunk, D. H. (1995). Self-efficacy and education and instruction. In J. E. Maddux (Ed.), *Self-efficacy, adaptation, and adjustment: Theory, research, and applications* (pp. 281-303). New York: Plenum.
- Schunk, D.H., & Ertmer, P.A. (2000). Self-regulation and academic learning: Self efficacy enhancing interventions. In M. Boekaerts, P.R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp. 631–650). San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Schunk, D.H., & Zimmerman, B.J. (2006). Competence and control beliefs: Distinguishing the Means and Ends. *Handbook of educational psychology*, Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum. (2nd ed.) (pp. 349–367).
- Slavin, R. (1988). *Educational Psychology*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Slavin, R. E (1989). Cooperative learning and achievement: Six theoretical perspectives. In C. Ames and M. L. Maehr (Eds.), *Advances in motivation and achievement*. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press
- Slavin, R. E. (1995). . *Cooperative learning: Theory, research, and practice* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Zimmerman, B., & Bandura, A. (1994). Impact of self-regulatory influences on writing course attainment. *American Education Research Journal*, 31, 845-862.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (1995). Self-efficacy and educational development. In A. Bandura (ed.), *Self-Efficacy in changing societies*, (pp. 202-231). New York: Cambridge University Press.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

Appendix A

INSTITUCION EDUCATIVA INTEGRADO DE SOACHA		
English Class.		
		
NEEDS ANALYSIS QUESTIONNAIRE		
(Modeling strategy for Self Efficacy)		
<p>Objective: Gathering information about the influence of the modeling strategy in the improvement of self- efficacy focus on writing.</p> <p>Allowed time:10 minutes</p> <p>Date:_____ Course:_____</p> <p>Mark your corresponding age: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17,18 Female: Male:</p> <p>Please read carefully the next items and answer them base on your experience in the English class.</p>		
MY CLASS` PERFORMANCE	YES	NO
1. I believe I will get an excellent grade in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I`m confident I can understand the basic concepts taught in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I think I can do well in the different tasks and tests in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I believe I can develop writing skills in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Considering the difficulty of the class, I think I can do well in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Considering the teacher`s methodology, I think I can do well in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Considering my English skills, I think I can do well in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I`m confident I can understand the complex concepts taught in this class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

		YES	NO
MODELING-WRITING SKILLS			
1.	Do you think it is useful to share your writing papers with your partners to correct your mistakes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	You are confident when your teacher gives you a model to write an essay.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Do you frequently share your writing papers with your partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Do you follow a model when you write?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Do you think that it is easy to give feedback to your partners in a writing paper?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	What do you currently like to write? _____		

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

Appendix B

LESSON PLAN sample

Adapted from Dr. Joan Rubin's Lesson Planner, ICALT lesson plan template and Weekly Planner 2012-02 Department of Languages
and Cultures, Universidad de La Sabana

Name of co-researcher: Ann Lilibeth				
University Code Number: 201122469				
Institution: Gimnasio los Pinos				
Date of Class: DAY MONTH YEAR			Time of Class: 4hours Length of class:	
Week No. 1 10th 09 2012			200'	
			Time Frame:	
			2 hours	
Class/grade: 7B, 7th graders			Room: 213	
Number of students: 33			Average age of Students: 12,13,14	
Number of years of English study: 5			Level of students	
			A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2	
Lesson Number				
1	2	3	4	Research Circle Leader: Liliana Cuesta
5	6	7	8	
Set Lesson Goals				
Students will receive comics related to Batman and other super heroes. Furthermore, they use English in Mind text book.				

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

<p>Language Goal</p> <p>Students will be able to categorize thoughts and information and recognize linkers of contrast.</p>	<p>Assessment Criteria</p> <p>Students will underline the linkers of contrast and extract opinions and thoughts to establish pros and cons in a format.</p>	
<p>Learning to Learn Goal</p> <p>Reading</p> <p>Students will be able to distinguish pros and cons base on a comic to create their own one.</p>	<p>Assessment Criteria</p> <p>Learners create their comics base on the comic model</p>	
<p>Identify a topic for the lesson</p> <p>The topic is not a goal, but it will help you develop your goals. The topic may be determined largely by your curriculum and textbook. If you have some flexibility in the choice of topic, consider your students' interests and availability of materials at appropriate level.</p> <p>Music and social networks in comics</p>		
<p>Materials and Resources</p> <p>Describe and write a rationale (why will you use it) for all the materials that you are going to use in the lesson, and attach copies/photocopies with their proper referring citation. Write a list appropriate level materials (video, audio, worksheets, copies, online resources, etc.) to support your goals. Include copies of your materials and number them.</p>		
<p>Material 1 Name: Comics samples magazines</p>	<p>Rationale: It provides the samples to acquainted pros and cons according to comics</p>	
<p>Material 2 Name: Format/pros and cons</p>	<p>Rationale: Categorize and distinguish pros and cons</p>	
<p>Material x Name: English in Mind book</p>	<p>Rationale: It's the base to have the grammar structure to write contrasting ideas.</p>	

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

Assumed knowledge	
Students have classified pros and cons in the first intervention. Furthermore, they used linkers of words. Therefore, they could identify easily main and supportive ideas.	
Anticipated problems and planned solutions	
Describe briefly what problems may your students face in the lesson and the proposed solutions to overcome them	
Students get confused to identify main and supportive ideas, so learners receive the template that guides them. (main and supportive	
Design the comic; Students receive different samples to start this task.	
Description of language item / skill(s)	
Form	Simple past, simple present
Meaning	Linkers of contrast
Use	Connect ideas and contrasting ideas
Skill(s) and sub skill(s)	Writing
(For CLIL) Content	
Communication	
Cognition	
Culture	

Detailed Intervention plan

WEEK	STRATEGY
1	Students choose a topic based on their likes and classify their ideas through the format template. They make up a comic using their previous ideas from the format. They include linkers of contrast in the conversation that they include in their comic.

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

	Teacher shows a way to present a comic giving sample about Pro and Cons ideas and different linkers to be used.
2	Identification of main ideas and support ideas. Teacher models the topic using a graphic organizer. Teacher shows the main ideas of each paragraph, the supportive arguments and the linking words used to connect the ideas and to support the topic, then, in order to use and practice the linking words, the students match some topic sentences with their supporting ideas.
3	Identifying the structure of a Pro and Cons essay. Teacher uses a power point presentation to talk about the structure of this type of essay, then; the teacher using the essay called “ Pretty Polly- Popular pets, Despite the problems” explains its structure according to the last explanation, after that, students start to write their own paragraphs based on the presented model.
4	Writing a complete essay using students` ideas but with the teacher`s help (Modeling). Teacher presents a TV commercial, then, students start giving Pro and Cons ideas about it, students suggest complete ideas with their supporting and argument sentences and teacher begins writing the essay using them, the teacher follows the Pro and cons essays` structure, explains it again and gives some punctuation rules. The whole activity is guided by the teacher (Modeling strategy) so students reinforce their knowledge about it.
5	Writing a Pro and Cons essay about any topic. Students suggest and choose a topic to write about, then, they start working on the four paragraphs by their own, after that, students compare their composition with some classmates and try to find out weaknesses and strengths, (peer assessment) they can make

**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

	<p>modification on their own composition using their peers' contribution, then; teacher reads students' production and gives feedback about it. After that students check their teacher's correction and re-write the essay taking into account the teacher's feedback.</p>
6	<p>As a final part of the intervention, the teacher and the students make a Gallery with all their final essays, decorating the classroom, after that, they reflect about their personal experience with the different tasks and identify the Pro and Cons of this procedure. (Modeling and peer strategy).</p>

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Appendix C Comics



Student Number 3, Pro and con comic. Gimnasio los Pinos, September 10,

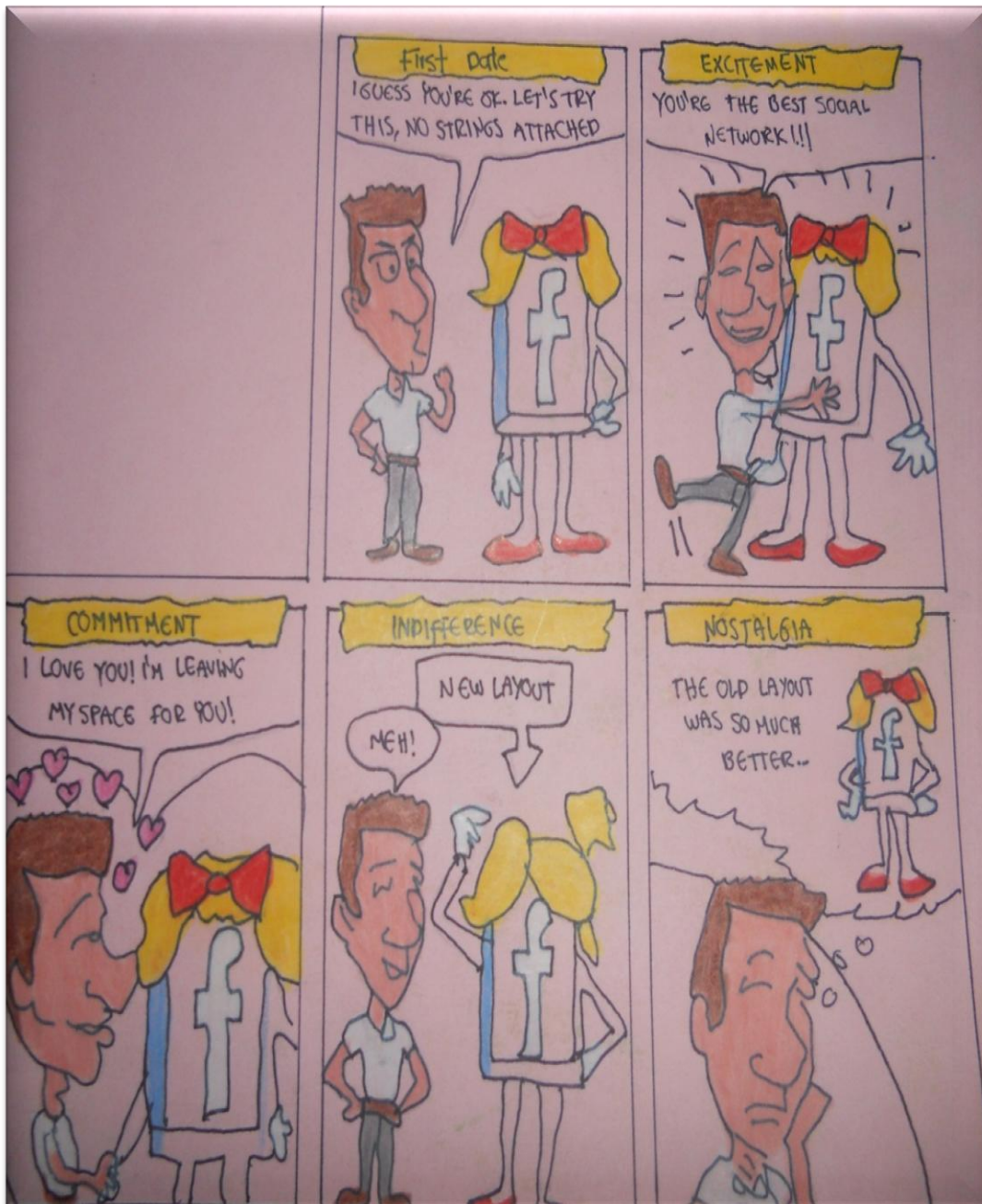
**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

<p>If I was you I would give up reggaeton is the best</p> <p>Are you kidding me . That's sucks. Rock music is all rock fight or risk and nowadays is elegant NO!</p>	<p>NO, regaeton is clear that you can express what you are feeling</p> <p>It might be a form to express but is not. Don't have rythms and is not good for society regaeton dance is bad!</p>	<p>You don't afraid regaeton you can learn something, your lyrics SUCKS!</p> <p>Mmmmm calm down that's my opinion face with a singer like you is immosible to talk!</p>	<p>Something that I love music is that you can express yourself</p>
<p>Music have the power of making us feel good when we're down...</p>	<p>mhmm, I think you're right</p> <p>Of course, I'm right</p>	<p>You know, I haven't listen to rock in a long... time...</p> <p>You should rock is the best, instead of reggaeton music because</p>	<p>Reggaeton has no respect for women instead rock talks sometimes about love</p>
<p>Love music, love life</p>	<p>You must listen to rock pop, or anything rather than regaetton!</p>	<p>I'll do it, thank you, you open my eyes!</p>	<p>The end</p>

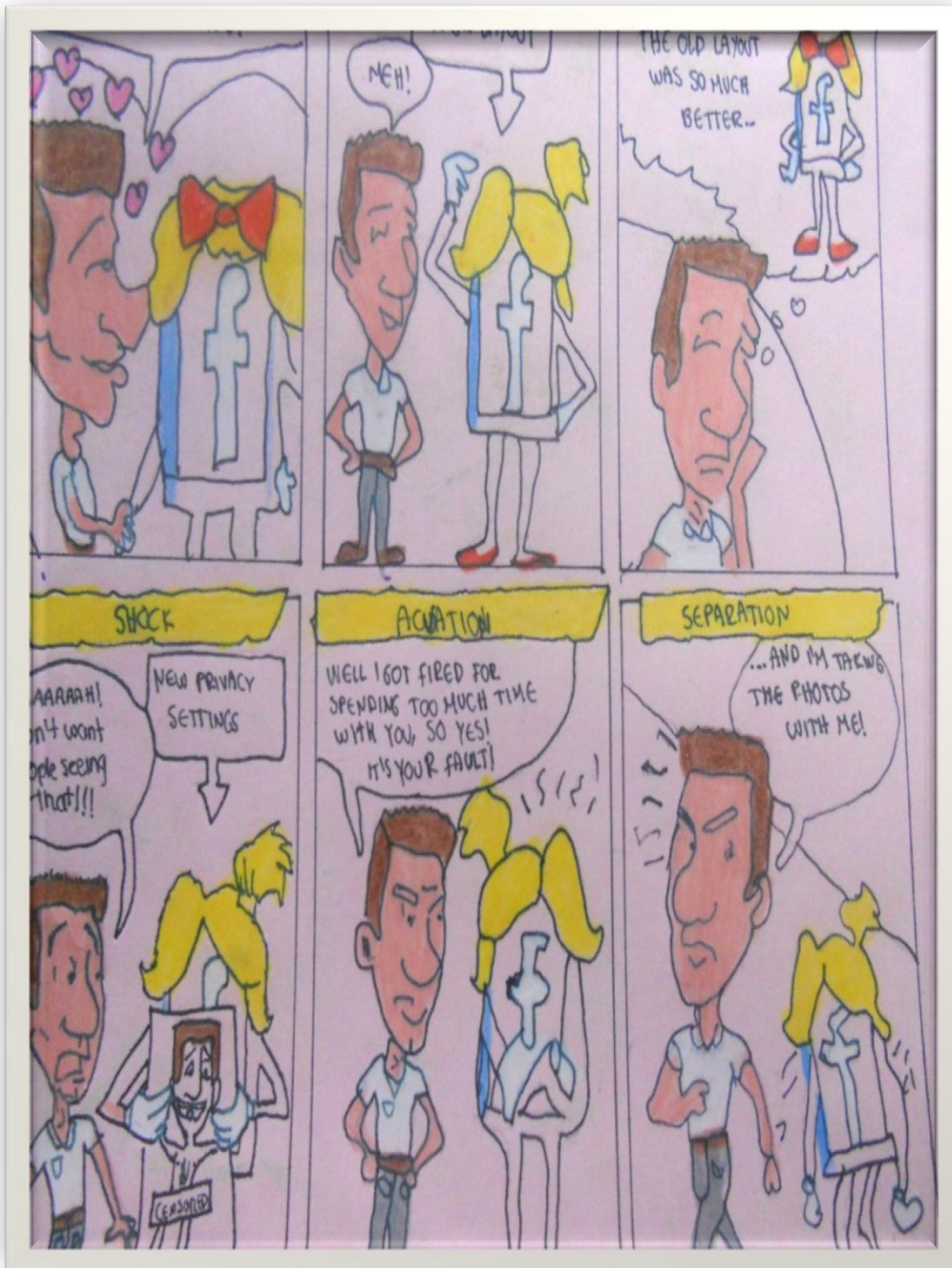
Student Number 3, Pro and con comic. Gimnasio los Pinos, September 10, 2012.

Illustration Appendix C

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS



THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS



**THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS**

Appendix D

Task performance

Arguments and Justification (against or agree) guide.

Read the opinions about motorcycles and match them to their justification. Which are points for motorcycles and which are against?

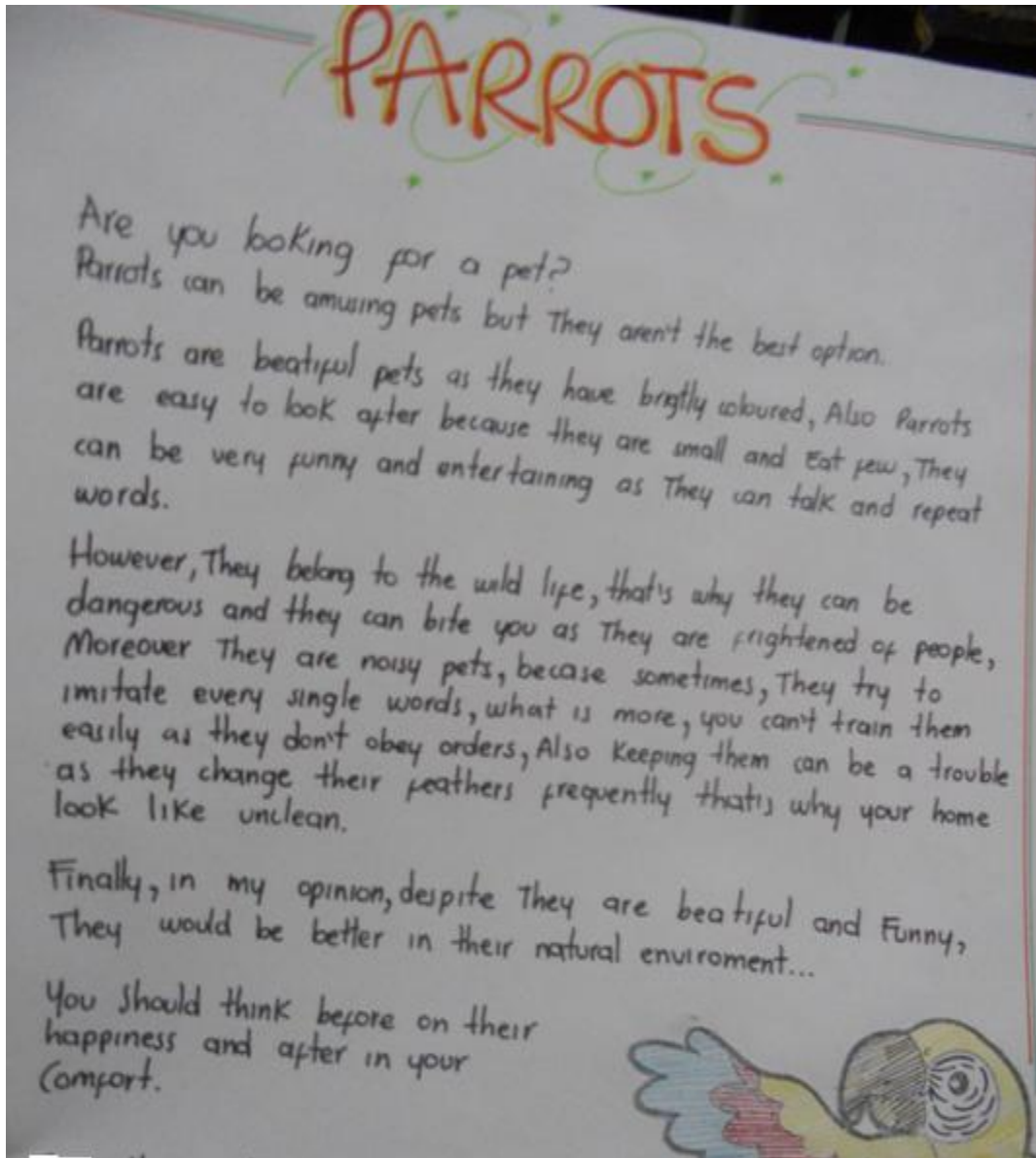
<i>Arguments</i>	<i>Justifications</i>
1. They are very convenient... <input type="checkbox"/>	a. They use less fuel and need fewer expensive repairs.
2. You can't travel with your friends. <input type="checkbox"/>	b. You do not need to rely on public transport, and you can park them easily.
3. They aren't as safe than cars. <input type="checkbox"/>	c. You cannot sit back and relax on them and you are exposed in bad weather.
4. They are cheaper to run than cars. <input type="checkbox"/>	d. They travel as fast as cars and you never get stuck in traffic jams.
5. They can be quite uncomfortable. <input type="checkbox"/>	e. You aren't well protected and you can get badly hurt if you fall of.
6. You can get to your destination quickly and easily. <input type="checkbox"/>	f. There's only room for one passenger.

Classify the arguments according to the following chart and add more by your own.

Pro opinions about Motorcycles
Cons opinions about Motorcycles

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

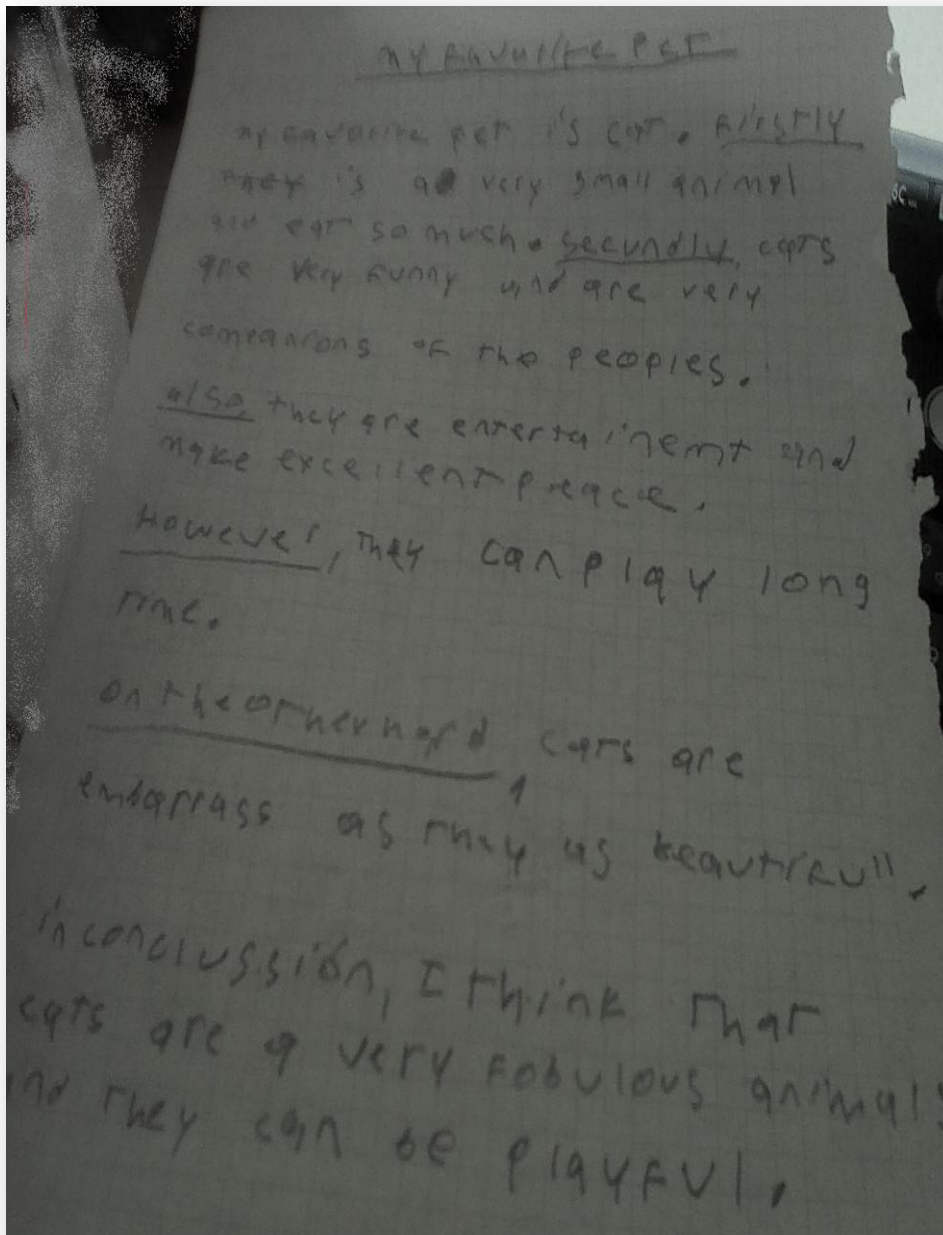
Appendix E



Student Number 11, Pro and con essay based on modeling strategy. Colegio Integrado de Soacha, October 2nd, 2012

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

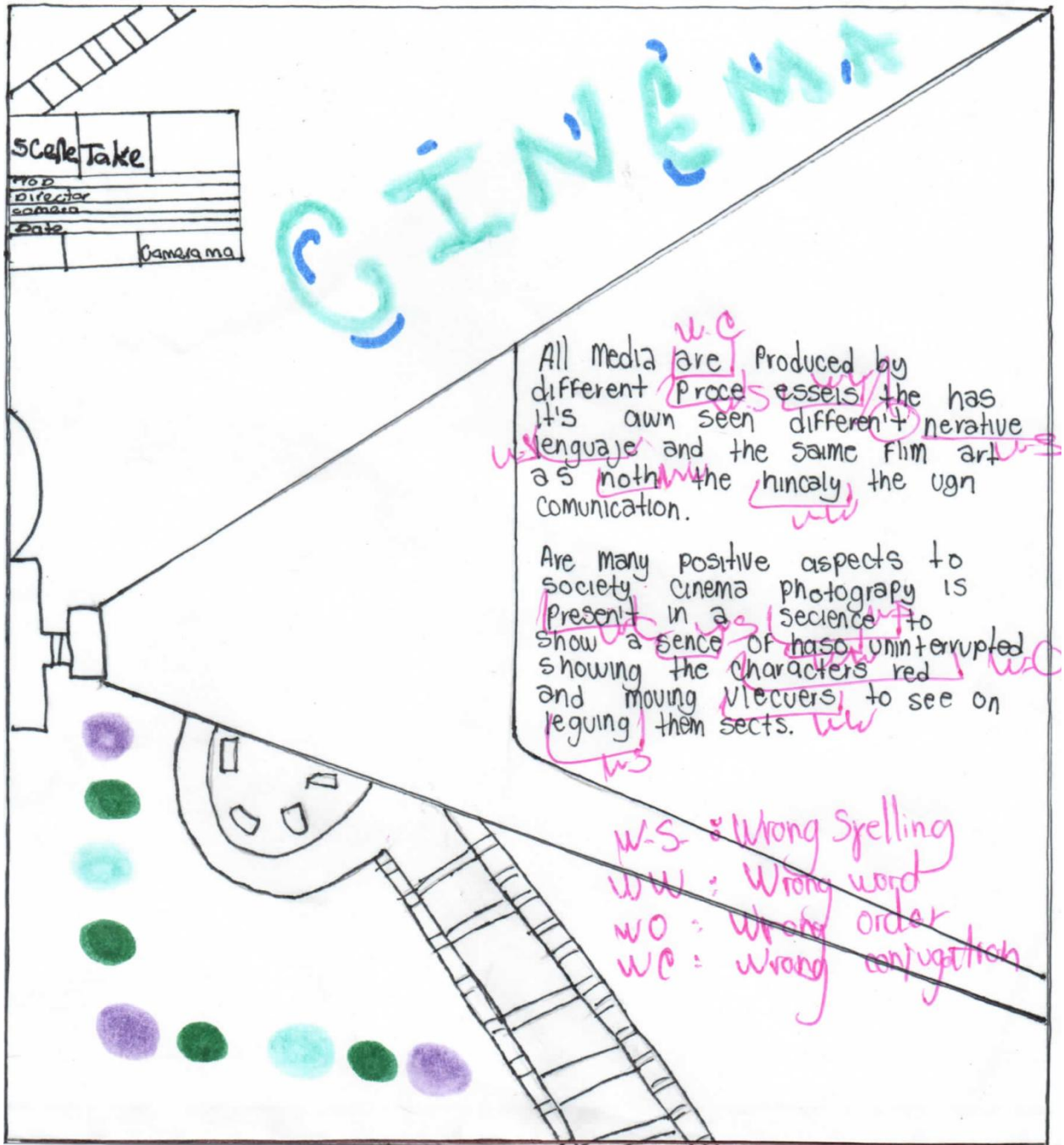
Appendix F



Student Number 10, This is a writing paper sample of the student with learning disability following instructions to reach the modeling strategy.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

Appendix G



Student Number 7, Pro and con essay based on modeling strategy. Colegio Integrado de Soacha, September 17th, 2012

THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT SELF-EFFICACY THROUGH
MODELING STRATEGIES FOR WRITING SKILLS

60

MANGA ANIMATE



The manga animate is originally from Japan, it's a kind of drawings that pretend to tell you a story about all kinds of topics for every kind of people.



The manga can be very fun as it has so interesting stories, moreover is a good way to spend your free time because it's very entertaining, also, with the manga you can live new experiences, travel to new worlds as the stories are different and varied, finally the manga is the most traditional kind of drawings because it has been in the history year after year in Japan and then around the world.



The manga doesn't have so negative points, the only exception is that you don't change your thoughts.

In conclusion you can enjoy of this kind of drawings if you don't change your mind and your way of be.

Student Number 7, Pro and con essay based on modeling strategy. Colegio Integrado

de Soacha, October 8th, 2012