

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



Research Topic:

“Writing Difficulties of the English Composition II Students of the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador Influencing the Quality of Writing on their Expected Products to Improve their Writing Skill, Semester I-2018”

JUAN CARLOS CRUZ CUBÍAS, MsD

ADVISOR

MAURICIO SALVADOR CONTRERAS CÁRCAMO, MsD

GRADUATION PROCESS COORDINATOR

PRESENTED BY:

ANDRADE REYES, BARTOLOMÉ REMBERTO	AR03095
LOPEZ ROSALES, ROXANA GUADALUPE	LR01035
VÁSQUEZ CONTRERAS, JORGE OMAR	VC12025

TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF

Bachelor of Arts in English: Emphasis in Teaching

MAIN CAMPUS, SEPTEMBER 28TH, 2018, SAN SALVADOR, EL SALVADOR

AUTHORITIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR

ROGER ARMANDO ARIAS

RECTOR

MANUEL DE JESÚS JOYA

ACADEMIC VICE-RECTOR

NELSON BERNABÈ GRANADOS ALVARADO

ADMINISTRATIVE VICE-RECTOR

CRISTOBAL HERNÁN RÍOS BENÍTEZ

SECRETARY GENERAL

AUTHORITIES OF THE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

JOSÉ VICENTE CUCHILLAS MELARA

DEAN

EDGAR NICOLÁS AYALA

DEPUTY-DEAN

HÉCTOR DANIEL CARBALLO DÍAZ

SECRETARY

AUTHORITIES OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

JOSÉ RICARDO GAMERO ORTÍZ

HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT

MAURICIO SALVADOR CONTRERAS CÁRCAMO

GENERAL COORDINATOR OF THE GRADUATION PROCESS

JUAN CARLOS CRUZ CUBÍAS

ADVISOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank to all people who in one way or in another contributed in the completion of this thesis. First, I give thanks to God for protection and ability to do this work.

I am so grateful to the Universidad de El Salvador, for making it possible for me to study here. I give deep thanks to the Professors, classmates and friends that help and supported me to finish this project. My special and heartily thanks to my advisor, Professor MsD. Juan Carlos Cruz, who encouraged and directed me. His challenges brought this work towards a completion. It is with his supervision that this work came into existence. For any faults I take full responsibility.

I appreciate the trust, time, support and dedication to my teachers: Mauricio Contreras, Francisco Rodriguez, Peter Salazar, Jorge Aguilar, Jorge Homero Llanes, and the rest of the teachers for having taught me through during the whole major.

I am also so thankful to Teacher Diana Marengo, for give me the opportunity to developed me in one of her subjects. I took it and finish my major. I say thank you very much teacher, I did it!!

Furthermore, I am thankful to Hotel Real InterContinental San Salvador, for supporting me to complete my studies here in UES.

I also thank my family who encouraged me and prayed for me throughout the time of my research. This thesis is heartily dedicated to my mother.

May the Almighty God richly bless all of you.

Remberto Andrade

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I thank God for having accompanied me and guided throughout my career, for being my strength in times of weakness and for giving me a life full of learning, wisdom, experience and above all happiness.

I thank my father Mauricio López Calderón for supporting me the whole time, for the values that he have instilled on me, and for giving me the opportunity to have an excellent education in the course of my life; a lot of thanks to him especially for being an excellent example of life to follow too.

To my sister, Virginia Guadalupe López Rosales, and my brother Mauricio Alberto López Rosales, for being an important part of my life and representing the family unit and for being part of my professional development in order to get my major finished.

To my little girl, Shirley, for being a very important part of my life, for having supported me in both in good and bad moments, especially for his patient and unconditional love. I love you Baby, you are my treasure and my reason to finish this University career.

I appreciate the trust, time, support and dedication to my teachers: Juan Carlos Cruz Cubías, Pedro Antonio Salazar, José Ricardo Gamero, Jorge Homero Llanes and the rest of the teachers for having taught me through during the whole major. For having shared with me their knowledge and above all their friendship.

To my friends, for trusting and believing in me during the university stage and making a journey of experiences that I will never forget.

I thank my fellows, Bartolomé Remberto Andrade Reyes and Jorge Omar Vásquez Contreras, for the adversities during this thesis process.

To my mother and father-in-law, although they are no longer physically present, will always be present in my heart, for having believed in me until the last moment.

By Roxana Guadalupe López Rosales

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To whom I want to express my gratitude firstly is God, for having provided me with health, physical strangeness, patience, motivation and intelligence to finish this Research successfully and in the expected time. Second, to whom I am much obliged to is to my parents, Reina Esperanza Contreras Méndez and Marcos Antonio Vásquez and Unidad de Estudios Socioeconómicos (UESE), who supplied me with financial support, advice, recommendations on how to do things better, how to treat others, for having not only showed me the way on how to face problems and difficulties in life but also how to avoid them as well.

I also want to recognize the unconditional cooperation of my counterparts in this research project, Roxana López and Remberto Andrade to succeed in this Project.

To my advisor, Master Juan Carlos Cruz Cubías, who focused in our research Project every time we looked for his cooperation in order to review this paperwork and give recommendations on the elaboration of the thesis.

As well as to the Graduation Process Coordinator of the Foreign Language Department, Mr. Mauricio Salvador Contreras Cárcamo who advised in a general way since the registration on the Graduation Project online, how to carry out our investigation in the best way. Also, the feedback that I received from him was of quite importance every time it was required.

The rest of the employees of the Foreign Language Department could even be left without mention in this prestigious occasion.

By Jorge Omar Vásquez Contreras

August 17th, 2018

INDEX

Content	Pages
INTRODUCTION.....	i
I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.....	1
A. OBJECTIVES.....	2
GENERAL OBJECTIVE.....	2
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES.....	2
B. RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
1. GENERAL RESEARCH QUESTION.....	3
2. RELATED QUESTIONS.....	3
C. RATIONALE.....	4
D. DELIMITATION.....	5
II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	6
III. METHODOLOGY.....	24
A. Purpose of the study.....	24
B. Qualitative study.....	24
C. Purposive sampling.....	24
D. Data collection techniques.....	24
1. STUDY POPULATION SAMPLING.....	25
2. SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA.....	26
5. TECHNIQUE AND RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.....	26
6. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH TECHNIQUE (INTERVIEW).....	26
7. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (QUESTIONNAIRE).....	26
8. DATA COLLECTION	27
9. INFORMATIONAL ANALYSIS PLAN.....	28

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS.....	29
QUANTITATIVE RESULTS.....	29
QUALITATIVE RESULTS.....	42
V. CONCLUSION.....	44
VI. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	46
VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	52
VIII. ANNEXES	
ANNEX 1	
ANNEX 2	
ANNEX 3	

INTRODUCTION

This study covers a research within the area of writing difficulties in the EFL Classroom. This research project aims to give a look at writing professors' attitudes and reactions towards working with writing difficulties when teaching Composition. The data for this study was collected through the mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative method.) Therefore, face to face interviews and a written questionnaire were applied to get the data. The informants who participated in this study were students of the subject, *English Composition II*, from groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 and professors of the previous groups from the Foreign Language Department at the University of El Salvador, semester-1 2018. The surveys (interviews) were conducted during the informants' lessons and also in the professors' offices. The study presents that the professors feel that it is challenging to work with students who have writing difficulties, since those students might be unmotivated, lacking of misspelling problems, deficiencies in grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, when using cohesive devices and capitalization. However, the informants believe that teachers need to motivate their students to write more, use peer assessment, give feedback to the students that might have difficulties at the moment of writing a paragraph or an essay in order to achieve development, good essays, academic papers or good grades.

Moreover, the study shows that professors do not use any specific method when working with writing; instead each professor tries to see what his/her students have difficulties with, and subsequently he will look for solutions based specifically on every student's needs. That is why at the end of this study some recommendations are given in order to improve the writing difficulties Composition II students, semester I-2018 presented.

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The writing skill difficulty is one of the most significant problems that affect not only native English speakers, but also students around the world that are learning English as a foreign language.

Many students have learned to disguise their deficiencies of reading and writing. Therefore, it is hard for teachers to identify the student's weaknesses until it is required to present handwritten documents or take exams. Then writing deficiencies are obvious. Thus, it is important for teachers to pay attention and put into practice several writing techniques, so students can avoid difficulties and complications at the moment of writing essays or report papers.

Due to the requirements that academic writing demands to students when delivering an English composition at the Foreign Language Department, it was necessary to carry out an investigation showing whether or not students had strong difficulties for writing reports, essays and other types of documents, or the skills that they are able to apply when asked for compositions. On the opposite, good writing requires practice and appropriate feedback; which teachers must never de-emphasize and give more indicators of students' failures and strategies and making teachers' feedback easier on the composition field.

A. OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVE:

To find out several writing difficulties English Composition II students have at the moment of composing a text in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To identify weaknesses that students from Composition II have at the moment of writing ideas.
- To describe the difficulties that students from English Composition II present when applying techniques during the writing process.
- To present diverse writing strategies those teachers can implement in the classroom in order to increase the students' writing skills.

B. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the main writing difficulties that affect the performance of the English Composition II students at the University of El Salvador?

1. GENERAL QUESTION

What are the main writing difficulties that affect the performance of the English Composition II students at the University of El Salvador?

2. RELATED QUESTIONS

1. Do writing difficulties of English Composition II students depend on the quality of the techniques that teachers apply?

2. Do writing difficulties of English Composition II students depend on the strategies they apply when writing?

3. Is it useful for the students to have previous knowledge in writing for the composition requirements at the University?

4. Are the methods that teachers apply the most appropriate to the level of knowledge of the English Composition II students?

C. RATIONALE

The following research illustrates the possible problems and situations that students from Composition II, of the English Major (Teaching Option) might have when writing paragraphs, essays, reports, and other documents in the subject of Composition II.

The main problem is that students do not understand some topics and other topics are not clear enough, or the methods, techniques or strategies that teachers apply during the classes are not very helpful at the time of writing an academic essay. Therefore, it was indispensable to gather all the information regarding the difficulties that students go through when it is required to apply writing skills. In this manner, it is important to suggest some recommendations to all English Composition teachers in order to improve the learning process of the English Composition II students and help them to understand

The importance of this research relies on the following facts:

1. To improve teaching techniques and strategies.
2. To improve student's writing quality.
3. To establish a previous knowledge on both teachers and students for a better performance when writing.
4. To design a new study plan for the major offered by the FLD in which English Composition II should be given an appropriate status.
5. To develop FLD student's learning strategies through writing exercises, and this cannot be attained in English Composition classes if the students do not possess the level for those exercises.

D. DELIMITATION

This investigation project was divided according to the following delimitations:

Time: The investigation was developed from February to July 2018.

Place: The research project took place at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus.

Scope: It was to identify the main writing difficulties that students from Composition II, Semester I-2018 have at the moment of writing essays in order to give recommendations.

Model: The research was studied under both methods (qualitative and quantitative methods.)

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since early times, human beings have felt the necessity for writing, but the need to share and preserve their knowledge and culture encouraged them to create rustic written texts that were going to be read and improved by future generations (B. C.) But there was not any writing system to record them during that time. Later on, written communication consisted on coding symbols and letters, appearing in this way the first mode of recording. There was a need to decode those symbols systems. At this point, writing started to become essential in human life. For instance, there were found some ancient ways of writing that represented communication in many civilizations worldwide.

In our country, El Salvador, we do not have the culture of writing a paragraph, texts, and letters not of even reading a book, such as magazines, newspapers, literature, and scientific articles. Therefore, when we attend to university we do not have any idea about how to create good letters or academic essays. Furthermore, at the moment of writing in a formal paper, we face some writing difficulties. For example, we are not able to write in a correct way a paragraph or an essay because we do not have what it takes. For instance, we as students do not have enough vocabulary, spelling, grammar and cohesive knowledge.

Starting to study at UES, it is like starting a new life. This happens with the students of Composition II of the University of El Salvador. In the first years of study students struggle with many kinds of problems that affect them as they advance step by step during the whole major. That is why students try to motivate themselves doing the best effort to write essays. One of the main reasons why the students chose this subject is because the previous experience as school students. In the investigation, the researchers could realize that students from Composition II, semester I-2018 from the Foreign Language Department, in the University of El Salvador, faced many writing difficulties, such us: the lack of organization, deficient grammar, and lack of confidence or the habit of not reading. Subsequently, the majority of students had trouble organizing ideas, wrong spelling, slow thinking and rethinking the simplest writing at the moment of writing a text.

When students have deficiencies in these areas, their writing may be unsatisfactory in multiple ways, for instance; from grammatically poor and unclear organization to weak reasoning and arguments. Also, it is important to know if students have deficient reading implicate to write badly, for that reason it is necessary to read more so as to improve and write in a better way.

Therefore, when students have to present their works in front of the class; the rest of their classmates do not understand what the other students wanted to communicate in their paragraphs or essays. Moreover, at this level, students are asked to write texts individually, and *cooperative learning and peer-assessment* strategies take place. Thus, the previous writing strategies are applied to corroborate if they are writing on the one hand, good essays, or on the other hand, too long or boring texts. Also, students are asked to make a review of their own work identifying each other's writing difficulties so as to improve their writing skill.

For those reasons, this research intends to determine the writing difficulties and the writing strategies that will be applied by professors for the improvement of students of composition II by developing good writing skills at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. Therefore, this is one of the main reasons why this research is focused on writing as one of the most important skills to compose an essay or a composition.

In addition, teaching writing provides opportunities for students to develop clear thinking skills and at the same time it promotes the need for good communication skills. However, English composition II professors from the Foreign Language Department mentioned that is not easy for the students to develop the writing skill ad equating their knowledge with the type of writing when they are asked to write to something and that students do not show that much interest that it is needed to increase the students' interest for writing. According to these writing professors from the FLD, most of the students find difficult to get rid of thinking in their mother tongue when writing in English. So, it is not easy for them to put their thoughts into English written words. Besides that, it is hard for students to focus their ideas and thoughts on a single topic. Also, it has a result of poor-construction paragraphs or essay. Then, it is necessary to find out what are the problems

that students need to overcome to improve their writing skill. Despite the strategies professors use to encourage their students to be creative and organized, this it is not enough, because students must take into account many mechanics aspects at the time of writing, such as: vocabulary, grammar, and organization without leaving out of consideration every single detail related to the field of composition. To continue, another problem is that Composition II students do not care about the kind of essays they are creating, and they do not follow the correct steps that will provide the easiness and all the sources needed for creating compositions. Even though they just care about the grade they will receive at the end of a homework assignment.

The problems that students face today in the development of the Composition II subject, is that learners have to maintain effective strategies that will impact on the performance of not well-prepared students. Also, the learning of these writing strategies will change context of the reality adding the diverse expectations getting better results about the characteristics and attitudes that each one have to maintain. On the other hand, in the case of the professors, they need to teach strategies to expect or maintain high grades in their students' performance.

There are several aspects that we as researches will take into account in this research work and they are the following:

Bad Spelling:

It is difficult to see mistakes in their own work. But the students can easily spot a mistake in someone else's document at first glance. A single spelling error can cut the thread of an interpretation when making a composition. Also, it is very important to recognize and identify that a little error can seriously impact your message, as well as your level of credibility and professionalism.

Grammar:

If a reader observes several lacks of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, he has innumerable doubts of the quality of the written product therefore the reader prefer to abandon reading because they do not feel the deepest interest to continue reading through the points mentioned above. They do not know how to use a comma, period, etc. For that

reason it is necessary to take into account that writing a correct way really require knowing grammar structures.

On the other hand, **punctuation** presents an obstacle in writing. Carroll and Wilson (1993) illustrate three problems linked to punctuation. The first problem is that punctuation rules are not totally exact, punctuation is complex, and it depends on one's style to determine the meaning. The way a student punctuates writing can change the meaning completely, because each punctuation mark is a distinctive way of interpreting the meaning. Therefore, students need to pay attention to the way they punctuate, which is in most cases a problem for them.

Grammatical Problems

Learners have a number of problems in their attempts to write in the second language. In addition, “as verbs take different forms depending on tense and subjects they are used with, they create problems for foreign language writing students” (Tyner, 1987.) Similarly, Kharma (1987) in Melese (2007: 12) states that students have problems with subject verb agreements, pronoun references, and connectors.

Problems of Sentence Structure

Sentences reflect various syntactic structures (Reid, 1983). However, incapable learners use run-on, incorrect, and fragmented sentences (west 1966, in Tsegaye 2006:16). Kharma (1986) states that those students who have the problem of writing good sentences structures are unable to produce longer sentences requiring subordination and coordination. According to Zamel (1983:22), cohesive devices are crucial in writing. However, the linking devices have been found to be problematic for English language students.

Problem of Word Choice

A good writing or composition should consist of appropriate and varied range of vocabularies used along with proper grammar and varied range of sentence structures (Norish, 1983; Alamirew, 2005). According to Reid (1983) in Melese (2007: 13), when the

writer practices the choice of vocabulary that would reflect a concern for the reader and the purpose of writing, the composition written by the student would become sensible to his/her reader. However, writing in a foreign language using the appropriate words in the appropriate place is a problem for students. For example, White (1980) states that usually students use 'big words' in their essays to impress the reader, their teacher. The effort to impress the reader leads to a problem of diction.

Cognitive Problems

The cognitive problems that students face include problems of punctuation, capitalization, spelling, content, and organization.

a. Punctuation Problems

According to Byrne (1988: 16), the fact that punctuation has never been standard to the extent as spelling, makes it is problematic. Similarly, Carrol and Wilson (1995: 191) state "students' writing encounter punctuation problems as there are no universal rules of punctuation."

b. Capitalization Problems

Capital letters are useful for sentence initials, the beginning of important words, in topics, headings, etc (Kroll, 1991). However, learners have problems in using capitalization properly. There are reasons for students' problems in using proper capitalization. "The rules of capitalization are not universal and classifying nouns as proper and common nouns is difficult for students" (Gowere et al., 1995)

c. Spelling Problem

Due to the influence of other languages, variant pronunciations and other historical reasons, the English spelling system which has become inconsistent is complex for students (Gowere et al, 1995.)

d. Content Problem

International Journal of English Language Teaching Vol.3, No.3, pp.40-52, May 2015 Published by European Centre for Research Training and Development UK (www.eajournals.org)

Learners of English as foreign language face problems of exploring ideas and thought to communicate with others (Clifford, 1987). According to Leki (1991) this could be because of the traditional methods teachers use to teach writing for spelling, punctuation, and mastering grammar. Clifford (1987) suggests that teachers should encourage students to focus on the message, ideas or thoughts they wish to convey rather than grammar, spelling, punctuation and others.

e. Problem Organization

According to Kharma (1986), learners have the problem of structuring the paragraph, topic development of a paragraph, structuring the whole discourse and a theme in a discourse. “The most common students’ problem in paragraphing is either the paragraph is not limited to a single topic or the single topic is not developed or exemplified adequately” (West, 1966: in Tsegay 2006: 17). Raimes (1983) states that the other problem of organization in student’ writing is the difficulty of differentiating a topic and supporting ideas or generalizations and specific details. Pincas (1982) has also showed that learners have the problems of writing united paragraphs because of their failure to use cohesive devices appropriately.

f. Lack of Motivation

Actually, motivation is essential in every needed success. As far as language learning is concerned, two (02) essential questions are raised; *why do students show low motivation to write in the foreign language? And how to raise their motivation to write?.* In hope to answer these two questions, Harmer (2006a) claims that there are various factors that prevent them from writing. First, fear of failure, that is, fear of not being able to achieve their goals especially in contexts where they are asked to reflect their knowledge about the language and their abilities in putting this knowledge in different frameworks. Second, the fear from committing mistakes is another factor that prohibits them from

writing. In this sense, EFL students feel uncomfortable over the structure of the essay or any piece of writing that they are intended to follow. Therefore, failure comes to play.

Thirdly, there are some learners who are uncertain to show their productions; they shadow their weaknesses and convince themselves not to carry on writing as they feel a beforehand failure. In order to decrease this, EFL professors are invited to bring relaxed topics to make their learners feel at ease to voice their thought, Dornyei (2005).

g. Anxiety

Anxiety is another issue among these learners as it most of the time engenders to negative attitudes towards the writing into the target language. Hence, instructors need to establish what is called "*writing habit*" among these students.

Influence of the First Language on Target Language Writing

In addition to the lack of reading among EFL students, they still encounter another obstacle that hinders them from writing. In this respect, almost all students mention in the construction phase, Arabic is activated in their minds instead of thinking in the target language. Such a fact has inspired some researchers to investigate this dilemma. Thought EFL teachers do insist the need for EFL students to think and write in English, their students sometimes deviate from such a call. In this regard, an investigation done by Frieddlander"s (1997, p. 109) shows that "writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second, or third language". Another view has been voiced by Carson, Carell, Silberstein, Kroll and Kuehan (1990) who points out that it is not necessary for EFL learners to be good in the first language to be so in the second or the foreign language. However, as mentioned by Blanchard and Root (2004, p. 204) "writing remains a difficult skill to acquire and each language has its own writing conventions that the writer needs to learn them without interfering with other language or languages". The section that follows attempts to provide overtly the sample selected for the study, with the identification of the research instruments to see what results are to be obtained.

Subsequently with the purpose of dealing with the several writing difficulties that affect English Composition II students, semester I-2018 from the FLD at the University of El Salvador a variety of writing strategies are recommended in order to improve students' writing abilities and the way they perceive the matter of composing a text.

Students that learn English as foreign language face problems of exploring ideas and thought to communicate with others (Clifford, 1987). According to Leki (1991) this could be because of the traditional methods teachers use to teach writing for spelling, punctuation, and mastering grammar. Clifford (1987) suggests that teachers should encourage students to focus on the message, ideas or thoughts they wish to convey rather than grammar, spelling, punctuation and others.

Overview of the strategy

The professor demonstrates the act of writing by thinking aloud as text is composed in front of students. This allows students to hear the thinking that accompanies the writing process, such as choice of topic, how to begin the piece, and how to look for interesting vocabulary. Modeled writing also includes revising and editing what has been written.

Strategy procedure

1. Choose a text to compose. The text should serve a well-defined purpose and should be aimed at a particular audience, e.g., instructions for a student assignment or an invitation to a school open house for parents. Modeled writing may be used to introduce students to new writing skills and genres.
2. On an overhead projector, a board, or chart paper, compose a meaningful, coherent message for the chosen audience and purpose, showing students how to think aloud about actions and choices in writing. As you write, demonstrate:
 - The correct use of grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and print directionality
 - Spelling strategies
 - The connection between spelling and phonics
 - Rereading as a process to help students remember what they are writing about.
3. Choose another audience and purpose, and ask students to compose another text, using the strategies you have modeled.

Source

D. H. Graves, *A Fresh Look at Writing* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1994.)

WRITING Strategy → Interactive Writing

Overview of the strategy

The professor and students interact to compose a text. The teacher shares with the students, at strategic points, the actual writing of letters and words. The professor and students collaborate on the content of the text. They should work together to construct words through the analysis of sound, helping students to increase their letter knowledge and gain familiarity with many sight words. Interactive writing encourages students to search, check, and confirm during the writing process.

Strategy procedure

1. Demonstrate how to begin writing. Ask students to provide ideas and help you plan the text. Decisions about content and organization should be made jointly between yourself and the students.
2. Record class ideas in a format that all can see.
3. Collaborating with the students, compose the text. Have students participate in the writing at strategic points by asking individuals to write known letters, words, or phrases. Move students to independence by not doing for them what they can do for themselves.
4. As you compose, demonstrate the conventions of writing (capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and print directionality), and reinforce students' phonemic awareness and application of phonetic principles. Make connections between unknown words and known words, such as student names or words that generalize a spelling pattern.
5. When you have finished drafting the text, have students read and reread the composition with you, editing for clarity, completeness, and correctness.

Source

McCarrier, G. S. Pinnell, and I C. Fountas, *Interactive Writing: How Language and Literacy Come Together: K-2* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2000.)

WRITING Strategy → Guided Writing

Overview of the strategy

The teacher works with individual students or a small group of students who have similar needs and offers assistance as the students write. This activity provides focused writing instruction to students to enable them to become independent writers.

Strategy procedure

1. Choose a writing assignment for a particular purpose and audience, and discuss it with the students. Explain that they will be writing individual texts but working in small groups, using a variety of resources, including the word wall, dictionaries, and thesauruses. Explain that they will read and respond to the writing of their groups and that you will be available to give guidance.
2. Divide students into small groups according to writing ability and needs. Ask them to begin composing.
3. Circulate around the room, prompting, coaching, and guiding students through the writing process. Encourage students to use the available resources, and prompt them with open-ended questions. Encourage, accept, and expect approximations of spellings for new and unusual words. Expect conventional spelling of grade-appropriate words.
4. When students have finished composing, ask them to share what they have written with the other students in their groups. Readers should respond, making suggestions for revision in areas such as organization, word choice, spelling, and punctuation.
5. When everyone has shared his or her writing, have students incorporate suggestions and corrections as necessary.

Source

P.M. Cunningham and R.L. Allington, *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write*, 2nd ed. (Reading, MA: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999.)

WRITING Strategy → Posting the Writing Process

Overview of the strategy

As students begin to write, it is important to explain to them that writing is a process used by *all* authors, even their favorite children’s book authors. Students, too, will use this process to share their thoughts through stories, letters, narratives, poems, and a variety of other writing genres. As the students learn the stages of writing – prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and sharing with others, they can apply them to their own writing processes. Posting the stages of writing in a conspicuous place in your classroom will emphasize the value of this strategic process, and by learning the process, students may appreciate the purpose of writing and value their own writing and the writing of others.

Strategy procedure

1. Make a poster representing the steps of the writing process, and post it in a prominent place in the classroom. (For an example, see *A Sample Writing Process*, next page.)
2. Preview the writing process, and demonstrate each part, using brief, focused writing lessons.
3. Refer to and review each component of the writing process as needed until the students are comfortable with the process and know it.
4. Ask students to begin using the stages of the writing process in their own writing.
5. Support the students as writers by referring them back to the writing process poster. Ask pointed questions about their writing, referring often to the writing process.
6. Talk the “talk of writers” with students, using terms such as *topic*, *author*, *drafts*, *revising*, *thinking*, *brainstorming*, *picturing*, *describing*, and *audience*. Using the terms helps students think, speak, and work like writers. They will come to think of themselves as authors if you treat them as such.

Source

L. Schaefer, *Teaching Young Writers: Strategies that Work, Grades K-2* (New York: Scholastic, 2001.)

WRITING Strategy → Brainstorming Topics for Writing

Overview of the strategy

The teacher guides the students as they brainstorm topics for writing. The teacher records the topics and the students' names on chart paper, and the list is kept on display in the classroom so that students can refer to it when they need help thinking of a writing topic. This strategy works well as an introduction to the writing process for any grade level.

Strategy procedure

1. Think aloud two come up with two or three topics, such as “Pets,” “My Mother,” or “My Little Brother.” Write these on the chart paper.
2. Have students think of topics with which they are familiar, and ask them to take turns naming the topics.
3. Record each topic and the student's name on chart paper. Ask students to contribute some of the known letters or words of the topics as you transcribe them.
4. Display the list of topics in the classroom. Title the list “Ideas for Writing; Topics I Can Write About.”
5. Read the list of topics to review for the students.
6. Encourage the students to add to this list throughout the school year.

Provide each student with his or her own topic sheet to compose a personal list of topics for writing. (A sample topic sheet is provided on the next page.)

WRITING Strategy → Using Strong Action Words to Spark Interest

Overview of the strategy

Young students tend to use weak or overused verbs in their stories. The professor assists the class in creating a list of strong verbs that is displayed in the classroom and to which more verbs are added over time. The professor models writing using a weak verb and then substitutes the stronger verb to demonstrate how it can spark the reader's interest and clarify the meaning of the story. Students then use the list in their own writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Use explicit teaching to point out action-packed verbs used in a children's book. Discuss how this use of strong, precise verbs in writing clarifies meaning. Help the students understand that the stronger action words add interest to the writing and the use of just the right verb describes exactly the action that is taking place.
2. Lead the class in creating a list of strong verbs that students can use in their writing.
3. Display the list of words in the classroom.
4. Write sentences, using weak verbs; model revision of the same sentences, using stronger verbs from the list.
5. Collaborate with the students to record and add strong verbs to the list. Ask students to think of words that are more precise than *ran*, *said*, or *jumped*. For example: *darted* or *galloped* for *ran*; *explained* or *replied* for *said*; and *leaped* or *dove* for *jumped*. Older students can create their own list of words.
6. Demonstrate using the list of action words during prewriting, writing, and revising.
7. Ask students to use the list during planning, writing, and revising a piece of writing.

Source

N. Atwell, *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, and Learning*, 2nd Edition. (Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann 1998.)

WRITING Strategy → Combining Sentences

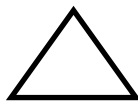
Overview of the strategy

Students tend to write short simple sentences because they are safe. When they write longer sentences, they risk the danger of writing run-on sentences. Teaching sentence combining gives students greater control over sentence variation.

Strategy procedure

1. Share a paragraph that consists of only simple sentences. (You may have to create this.) Have students describe what they think of the paragraph and its downfalls.
2. Have students suggest which sentences should be combined and how that can be done. As a class, write a revised paragraph.
3. Teach students the coordinate conjunctions. They should memorize these. The acronym FAN BOYS (*for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so*) can be used to do this. These are coordinate conjunctions because they are used to join two sentences (two independent clauses) of equal importance. Writing the compound sentence on a see-saw that is level can demonstrate this. The comma and conjunction are placed at the fulcrum point.

I like French fries, and I like pizza.



4. If combining sentences that are not of equal importance, a subordinate conjunction is used. The subordinate phrase is of less importance. Writing the sentence on a tipped see-saw can demonstrate this.
5. Students can begin to generate lists of subordinate conjunctions. There are too many to memorize, but common ones should be noted.

Source

G.R. Mushula, *Writing Workshop Survival Kit* (West Nyack, New York: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1993.)

WRITING Strategy → Finding Misspellings

Overview of the strategy

Students will learn strategies to identify possible misspelled words.

Strategy procedure

1. Provide instruction in and opportunities for students to practice the following strategies:
 - Moving your mouth. Students move their mouths as they silently read their papers. This technique activates a different portion of the brain than that used when students read silently without moving their mouths. When reading silently, the brain is more apt to correct misspellings unconsciously. By activating the mouth, the brain is not fooled into making unconscious corrections. Students should circle all questionable spellings.
 - Reading it backwards. Students read their paper backwards, word by word. This strategy helps the eye become more discerning of each word's spelling.
 - Knowing your demons. Everyone has certain words he or she struggles to remember how to spell. Students should be aware of their “demons” and have a strategy for overcoming them. For example, *necessary* is often a demon because students find it difficult to remember the order of the *c* and the *s* and which one is double. A helpful strategy is to remember that the *c* and the *s* are in alphabetical order and that the first one is single and the second is doubled — i.e., 1, 2. Known “demon” words should always be checked until the spellings are memorized. Students should be persuaded that avoiding the use of a demon word is not a legitimate strategy.
 - Using a spelling buddy. After a student has checked his or her paper, a spelling buddy can be asked to circle words he or she thinks are misspelled, but not to correct the spellings. The circling indicates only that the words need to be checked, as they may or may not be spelled correctly.

Source

Irene C. Fontas and Gay Su Pinnell, *Guiding Readers and Writers: Grades 3-6* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2001.)

WRITING Strategy → Putting in Punctuation

Overview of the strategy

Emergent and beginning writers need direct instruction in learning to punctuate their writing. The best way to learn this skill is by using the students' own writing. This strategy helps writers take a second look at a piece of writing to determine if all of the punctuation is in place and the ways in which punctuation enhances meaning. This strategy works best if the teacher has previously modeled appropriate types of punctuation through Morning Messages or other writing.

Strategy procedure

1. Select a piece of student writing that needs punctuation, and transfer it to a transparency. Ask the student if you may share his or her writing with the class.
2. Gather the students around the overhead projector. Invite the student who wrote the piece to read it to the class.
3. Ask the students to pay close attention to where the student's voice pauses or stops in reading. Point out to the students that this is probably a place where punctuation is needed.
4. Ask the students for suggestions to correctly punctuate the sentences. Assist the student to place the appropriate punctuation behind the sentences.
5. Ask the students to reread the story with the correct punctuation. Discuss with the students how punctuation assists the reader in understanding the meaning of the writing.
6. Encourage the students to reread a piece of writing that needs editing for punctuation. Instruct them to listen to where their voice pauses or stops to determine where punctuation needs to be placed.
7. Alternatively, place the students in small editing groups to listen to each other's writing and assist each other in editing for punctuation.

Source

L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach*
(Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001.)

WRITING Strategy → Capitalization: A Way to Begin a Sentence

Overview of the strategy

In order for young writers to understand capitalization, they need to understand that a sentence is a complete thought and that punctuation comes at the end of the sentence. Examples of this are everywhere. The professor can share examples from books, newspapers, etc. and place an example on a transparency. In doing this, the professor prepares the students to observe that capital letters begin a sentence.

Strategy procedure

1. Copy a section of a book onto a transparency to demonstrate complete sentences. Show the students where the sentence ends with the punctuation marks. Guide the students to see that each sentence begins with a capital letter. Circle or underline the capital letters that begin each sentence.
2. Use a piece of student writing that has been previously edited for punctuation and needs to be edited for capitalization. Read the piece of writing with the class. Show them how to edit for capitalization by drawing three lines under the letter that begins each sentence. Explain that these lines will remind them to go back and edit for capitalization in their final draft.
3. Have the students apply this strategy to another piece of writing that has been edited for punctuation. Place the students in small groups to assist each other in editing for capitalization.

Source

L. Dorn and C. Soffos, *Scaffolding Young Writers: A Writers' Workshop Approach* (Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers, 2001.)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Purpose of the study

The research team developed a descriptive research. Descriptive studies allow us to detail situations and events that is to say, how a particular phenomenon is and how it manifests and seeks to specify important properties of people, groups, communities or any other phenomenon that is subject to analysis.

The reason why the researchers decided to conduct a *descriptive research* was because the team looked for describing the problem selected and to provide an explanation about the phenomena. This study allowed the team to identify the problem, describe it and suggest some solutions.

B. Descriptive Study

The research team chose this method of investigation because the target of this research was to describe some of the different problems students have when writing compositions in English as well as to determine and analyze the techniques that teachers use when teaching English Composition.

C. Purposive sampling

The team applied this sampling technique because it allowed the researchers to study the entire population. It means that the whole universe was studied under this technique according to the stated objectives.

D. Data collection techniques

1. Interview

The group used the face to face and written interview as an instrument for collecting data from 4 professors of English Composition II. The research team chose the interview as an instrument to collect data because it was necessary to get as many information and details in relation with the difficulties that students have when applied writing, problems that professors have to face when teaching writing skills, and possible solutions for these problems.

2. Survey

The research team selected the survey as the instrument for collecting information from the students; it was addressed to the groups 1, 2, 3, and 4 of English Composition II in the first semester of 2018. A sample of 18 Students of 22 Students that enrolled for English Composition II was selected to fill-in the survey.

3. Content Analysis

This research technique was applied for examining the results of the instruments addressed to students and teachers. The technique was selected due to the fact that through this research it was necessary to analyze in a profound way the content collected from the data which made easier the process to understand the way students and teachers exhibit the difficulties at the moment of putting in to practice the skills taught in English Composition II course.

1. STUDY POPULATION SAMPLING

The participants were Students of Composition II major form the First Semester from FLD, besides that, it was important to interview four professors that impart the same subject from FLD from University of El Salvador counting with 74 students in total. The population studied had the following characteristics: Salvadoran and they were chosen in a real work-day environment. Half of the interviewed educators have a permanent job at the University of El Salvador and the rest of educators have not permanent job; there was no restriction to talk with them. Researchers took the sample of the four professors they were very interested and available at the time were interviewed, without prior notice; all of them had the same chance to be approached.

Considering that each professor has a different opinion, it was necessary to interview them individually to obtain better results for the investigation, it does not matter about age, experience or gender only the interest of writing correctly and leave aside the difficulties students have at the moment of doing it and what are the contributions to this research.

2. SAMPLE SELECTION CRITERIA

A questionnaire was administered to 22 students of the four groups of Composition II of the University of El Salvador semester I from FLD's major, they were all visited at their classrooms and had to answer fourteen multiple choice questions, the responses are according to the referring topic, additionally, the students had to include their own previous experience. Furthermore, eventually the team included some comments associated to the fourteen questions this helps to write their personal thinking about English Composition II. All surveys were made in a real work-day environment that made the process easy and eventually conformable for participants.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH TECHNIQUE (INTERVIEW)

This investigation used the **technique of the person to person interview**. What kind of interview? Before getting immersed in this subject of interest, it is fundamental to remark that perhaps not all of us might know there are three different formats of interviews (structured, semi-structured and unstructured) but this time we have chosen **the unstructured interview** which includes **open-ended as type of questions**. A total of 14 questions were administered to four English Composition II professors (all the groups) at the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador; some of them were visited at their offices and other at their classrooms and were asked with 14 open-ended questions about their experience in the University environment.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT (QUESTIONNAIRE)

The questionnaire as the research instrument it is a commonly used matter of interest. There are many different types of surveys, several ways to administer them, so it is necessary to mention that the two most common types of survey questions are closed-ended questions and open-ended questions, but this time we have already paid attention to the survey design. Thus, we will focus exactly on close-ended questions. Why? Because, Survey respondents were provided with 15 closed-ended questions and the possible response categories, that is to say, letter (A), (B), (C), or/and (D)) then Composition II students were asked to circle each question according to their personal criterion. The research conducted to the English Composition II students from the Foreign Language Department (100 students) of the University of El Salvador, Main Campus.

5. DATA COLLECTION

The first thing considered in order to collect data was to pilot a set 15 of questions with a reduced group of 4 English Composition II professors. Then, the investigation team decided to use an unstructured **interview face to face** with **open-ended questions** for professors in their respective offices with a nice environment and some other times in some classrooms since an English Composition II professor was not a permanent professor and had no an assigned office in the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador. The purpose of the interviewed process was successfully completed. Also, this process allowed researchers to have a general idea about the impression professors had about the role of Writing difficulties in Composition II from the personal and professional from the professors. The piloting procedure provided excellent data, after having looked for 4 professors the team decided to implement the interview as the instrument of the research study.

The second thing taken into account in order to collect data was to pilot a set of 15 questions with a considerable group of 100 English Composition II students divided in 4 groups of approximately 22 students each. Then, we as researchers decided to use the **questionnaire** as another kind of survey but, it is necessary to remark that this time the questionnaire included **closed-ended questions** rather than open-ended questions, which were aimed to English Composition II students. The purpose of the interviewed process was successfully completed with the worthy cooperation of English Composition II students who made this activity possible and let them put into practice and reflect about what they have already learned in Composition I and Composition II so far.

6. INFORMATIONAL ANALYSIS PLAN

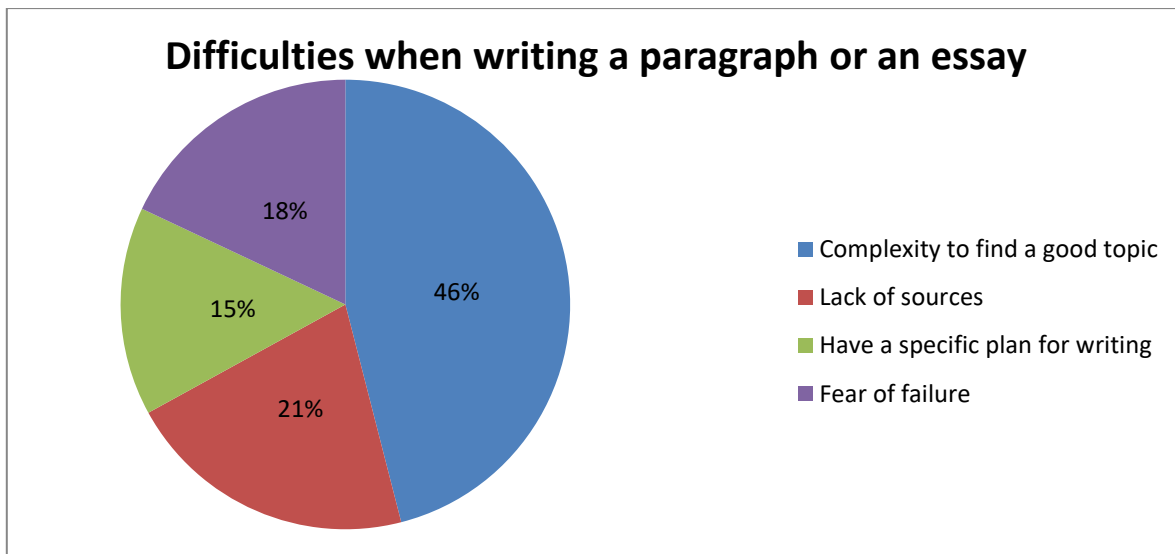
The qualitative data (oral interviews for writing professors of Composition II, semester I, 2018) was analyzed throughout description, the most important opinions and aspects about writing difficulties will be remarked and emphasized. The interview process will take place using the artifact of the cellphone to record the opinions of writing professors; then, the previous opinions will be transcribed in texts which will consequently be taken into account firstly for collecting information and letting us as students of English Major to know what are the writing difficulties that we are facing in the Foreign Language Department for making conclusions and give suggestions at the end of this research.

The present quantitative data will show some tables and graphs that correspond to the information collected in the surveys carried out in students of composition II from taken from different groups in the Foreign Language Department at University of El Salvador. Each table of information was made with its respective graph to observe the tendency of the answers obtained, after an analysis to the results to throw an accurate conclusion of the same one

IV. PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

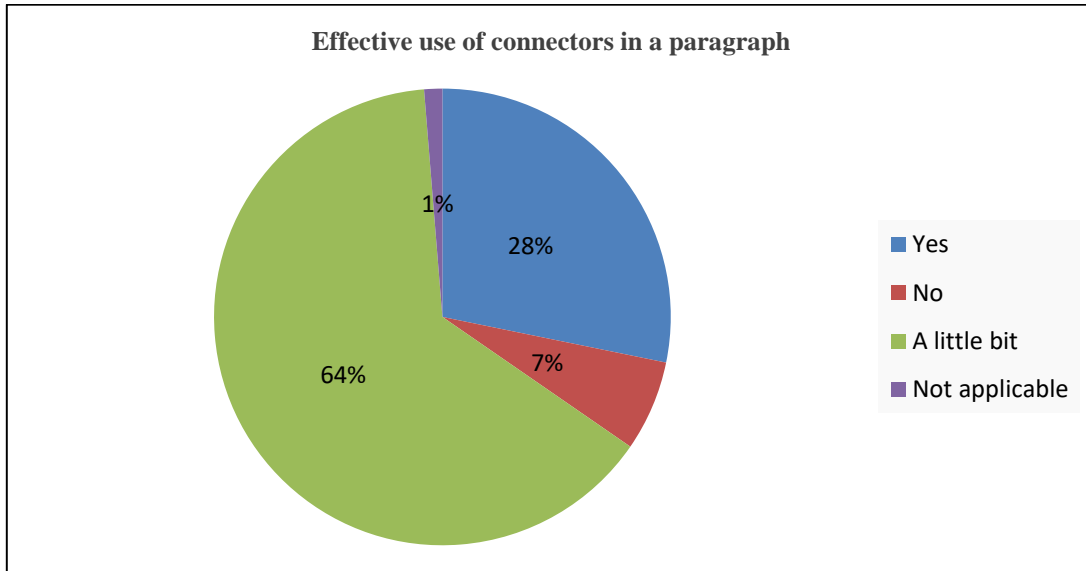
1. What difficulties do students have to face when writing a paragraph or an essay?



In this question we expect to determine the difficulties that students face when writing a paragraph or an essay and we observed some strategies that can help in order to improve students' writing performance.

The students were asked to feel confident before writing a text but they have **complexity to find a good topic**, in this percentage we obtained 46% of population. Also, other percentage of students expressed they have **lack of resources**, due to this does not allow them to contribute better knowledge to this ability and develop a good paragraph or essay in this case we obtained 21% of population. As a third point, the population manifested that **having a specific plan for writing** can help to improve their writing performance, in this answer we obtained a 15% and finally and in the last answer we obtained a 18% about **fear of failure**. Therefore, this population is aware that the latter does not allow them to advance their ideas but they must evaluate the adequacy of this last argument to put aside the fear and be able to perform well their writing skills.

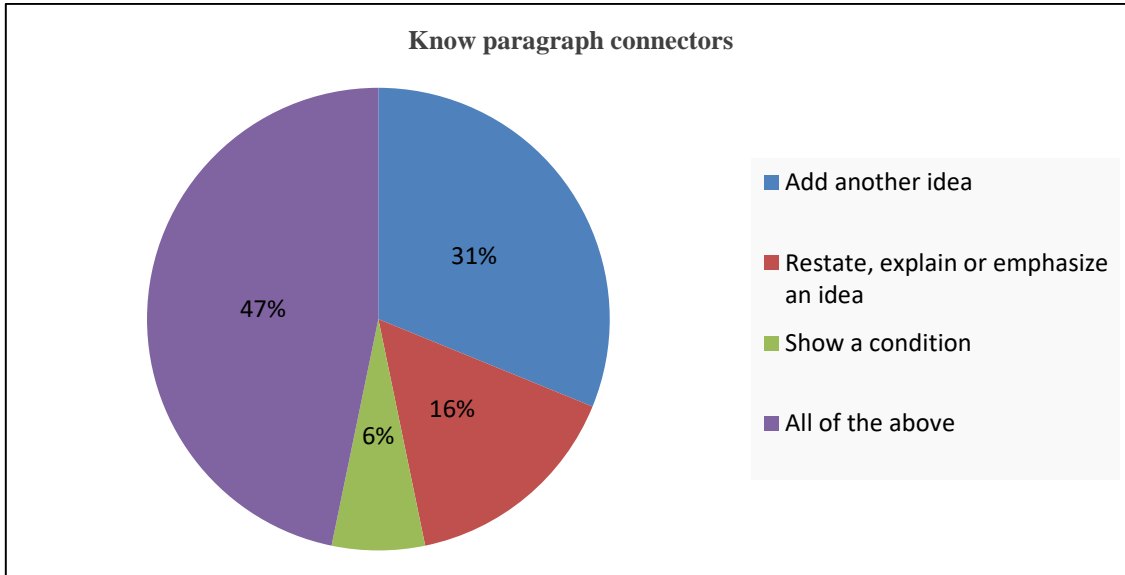
2. Do you know how to effectively use the connectors in a paragraph?



In question number 2 we evaluated how often the population uses connectors when writing paragraphs or essays and how effective are for them.

A 28% answered **Yes** of 22 of Population, Other 6% says **No** because in this case they do not use connectors but other 64% of population answered A little bit because sometimes they use it. Also we have a little percentage of population in this case we obtained just 1% answered **Not applicable**.

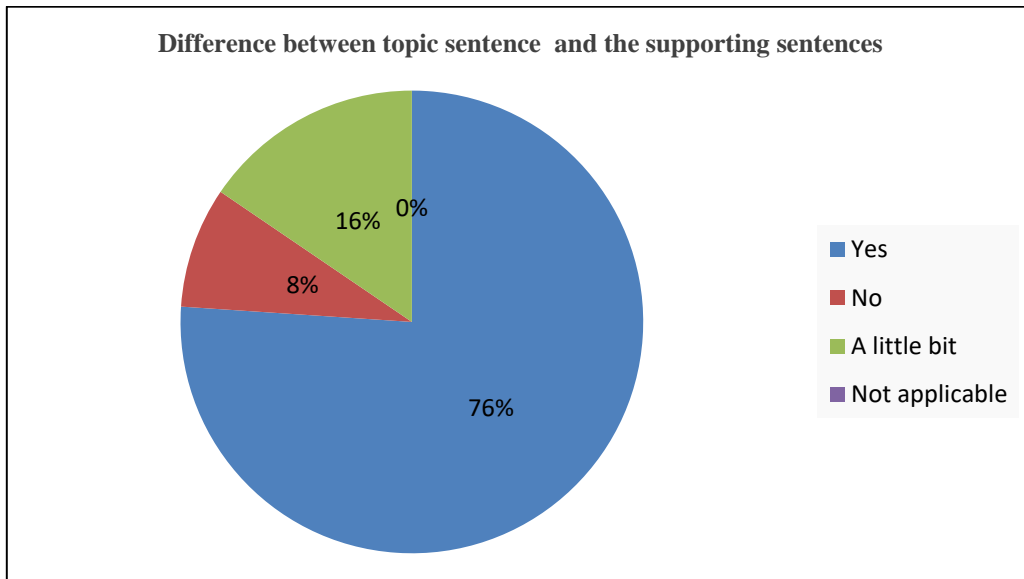
3. Which paragraph connectors do you know?



In question number three we asked to the population about which paragraph connectors do they know in order to improve paragraph 's writing and get better results on this.

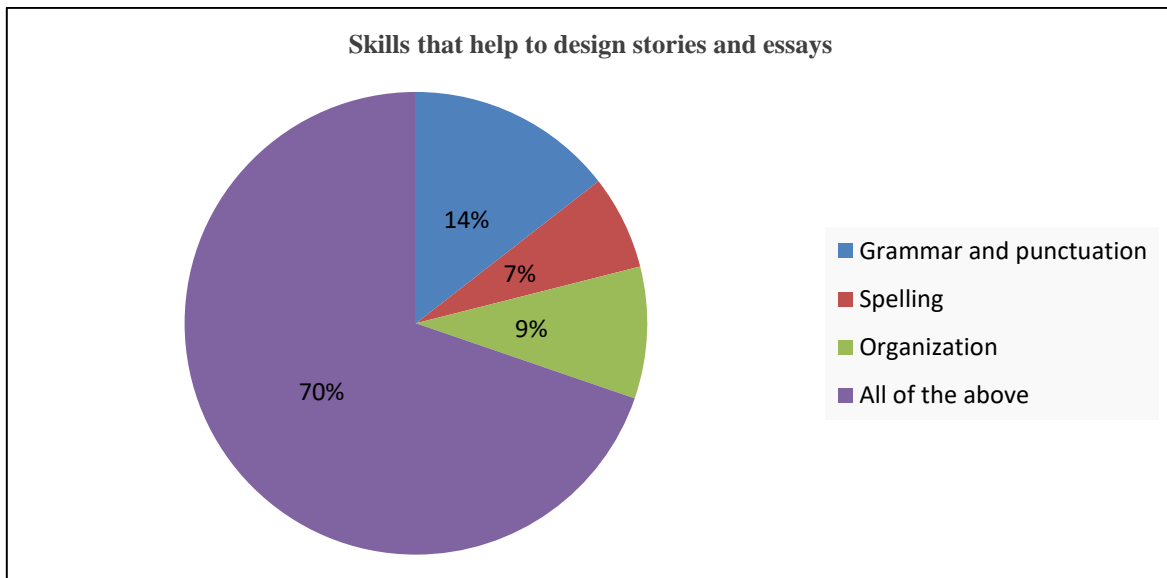
In this opportunity population expressed that they prefer **adding another idea** because it helps to have greater coherence at the moment of joining a paragraph; here we obtained a 31% as a result. But, other group of population manifested that, **restating, explaining or emphasizing an idea** it is very important at the moment to interweave two paragraphs o more. Since this will help to have good sense of fluency and coherence of the paragraph, here we obtained 16%. Another point that the population responded was showing **a condition**, this can present an idea that limits or denies the idea previously expressed in this result only obtained 6%. And with the highest percentage was **all of the above**, for this population all the previews answers have been very well seen because they help to obtain the correct way to write a good paragraph, with this last result it was obtained 47%.

4. Do you know the difference between a topic sentence and the supporting sentences?



To know a little bit more about the knowledge of the population, we asked which is the difference between a topic sentence and a supporting sentence, the participants concluded to know more about the difference **a 76%** answered **Yes**, but only a 8% responded NO. In this case, population expressed they do not know about the difference between a topic sentence and the supporting sentences. On the other hand, a 16% said they know **a little bit**, and a 0% was **not applicable**.

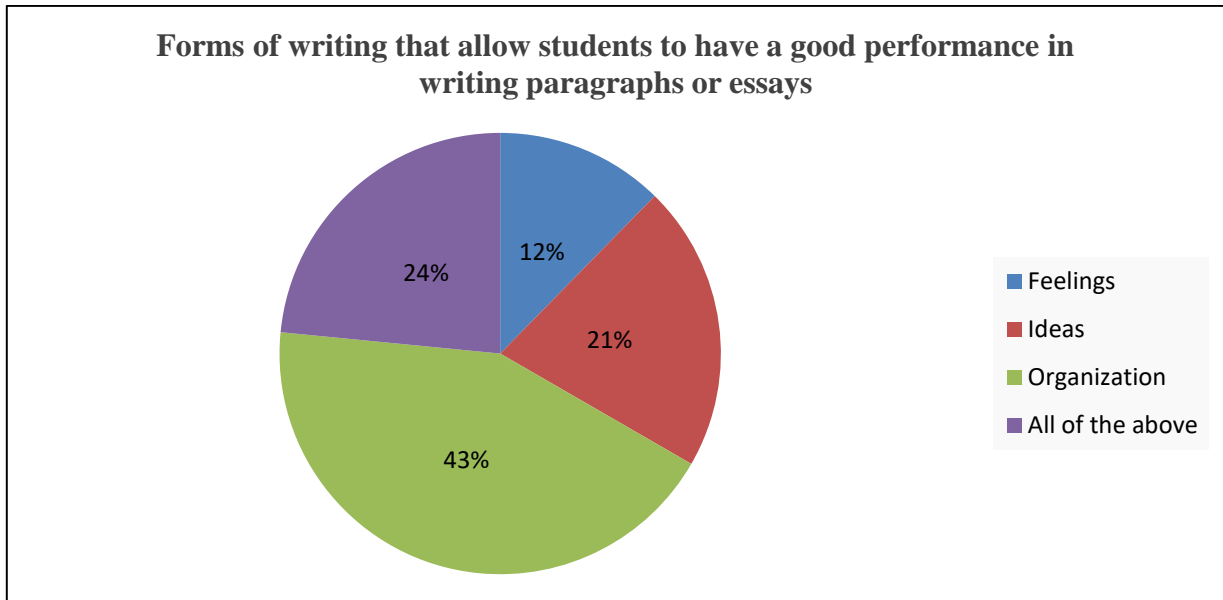
5. What are the main skills that help students to design stories and essays demonstrating an advanced writing process?



The main skills that help students to design stories and essays demonstrating an advanced writing process.

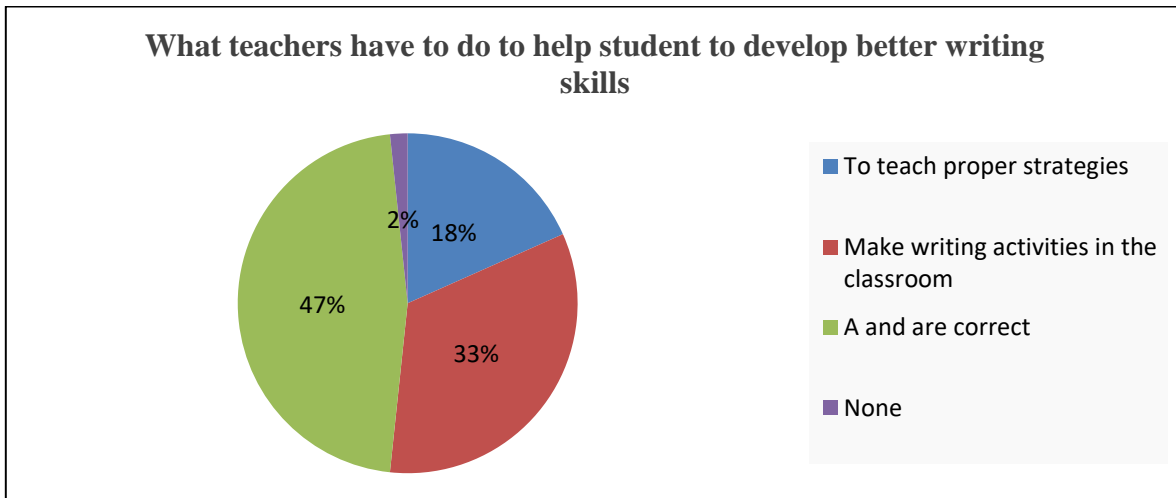
Among the surveyed population it was found that the 14% of population mentioned that **grammar and punctuation** helped to design good stories and essays, followed by a 7% in **spelling**, with a 9% getting higher score on **organization**. But most of the respondents as shown in the graph obtained a 70% with the answer **all of the above**.

6. Which of the following forms of writing do you think allow students to have a good performance in the writing of a paragraph or essays?



Among the surveyed population it was found that the 12% is more focused on **feelings**, another group expressed that **ideas** are more important than feelings which was added to 21%. Besides that there is a third percentage that affirmed that a good **organization** allows students to have a good performance in writing paragraphs or essays in this result it was obtained a 43%.

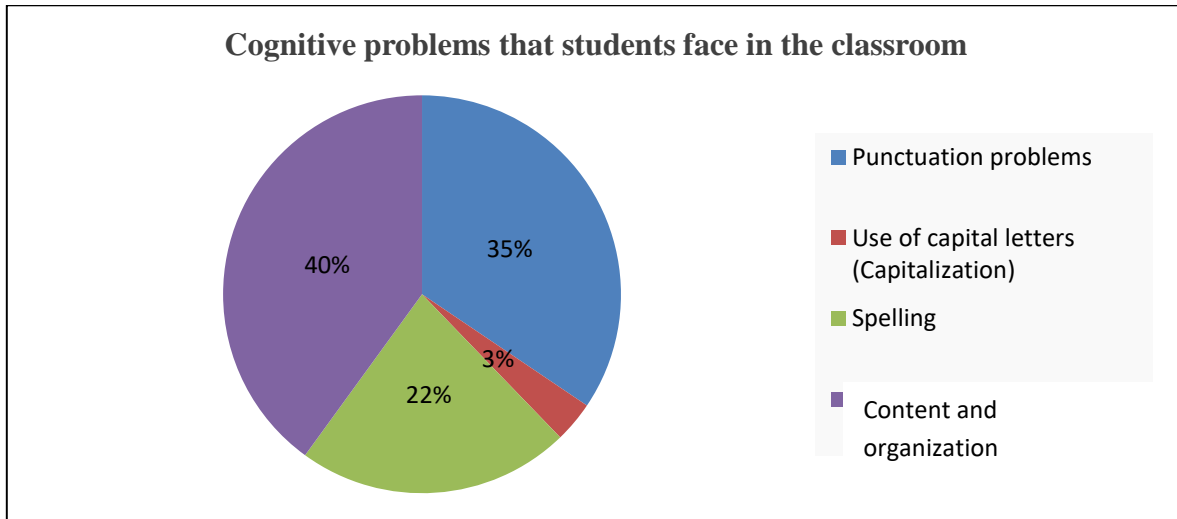
7. What do you think teachers have to do in order to help students to develop better writing skills?



To teach proper strategies	11	18%
To make writing activities in the classroom	20	33%
A and B are correct	28	47%
None	1	2%

According to this statistics population believes that **to teach proper strategies** it is necessary to guide students in the correct writing of words to obtain better results, in this percentage we obtained 18%. Also, another part of the population took into account that **making writing activities in the classroom**, it is pretty important to create more ideas to improve their writing skill, to this it is added a 33%. Additional to this, we verified other 47% thinks that “A” and “B” are correct and finally other 2% think that **none**.

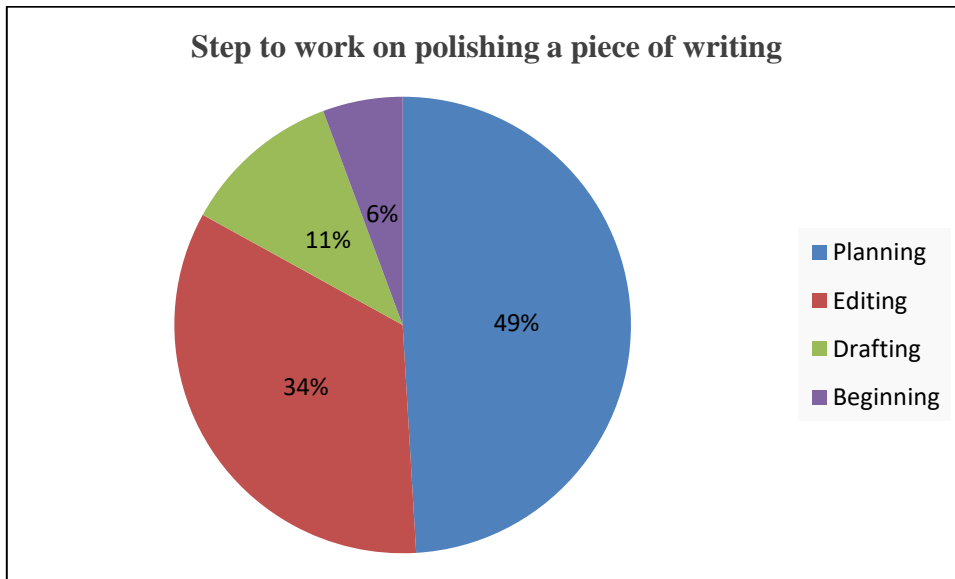
8. According to your own experience, what are the cognitive problems that students face in the classroom?



Punctuation problems	31	34%
Use of capital letters (Capitalization)	3	3%
Spelling	20	22%
Content and organization	36	40%

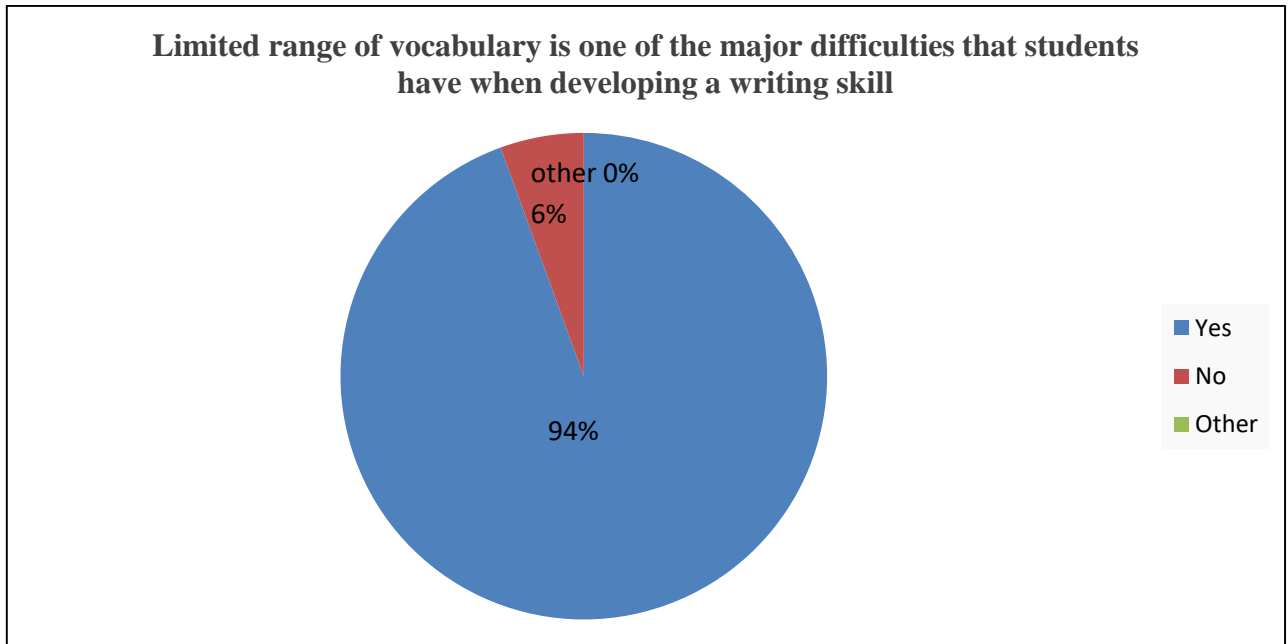
In the interpretation of the results obtained, respondents were asked what are the cognitive problems that students face in the classroom? a part of the population with 34% took into account that **punctuation problems** are relevant in this kind of skill, because it is an important part of good writing. Also, 3% said that the use of capital letter it is less important; but necessary to not lose the harmony of what is being written. Also, other group said that the use of **spelling** is the skeleton that holds all the writing, in here we have an 22%. As a last argument in this question, we have that 40% have given the highest score to the Content and the organization because they play the most important role in writing.

9. Which is the step to work on creating a polished piece of writing that will make the author proud of?



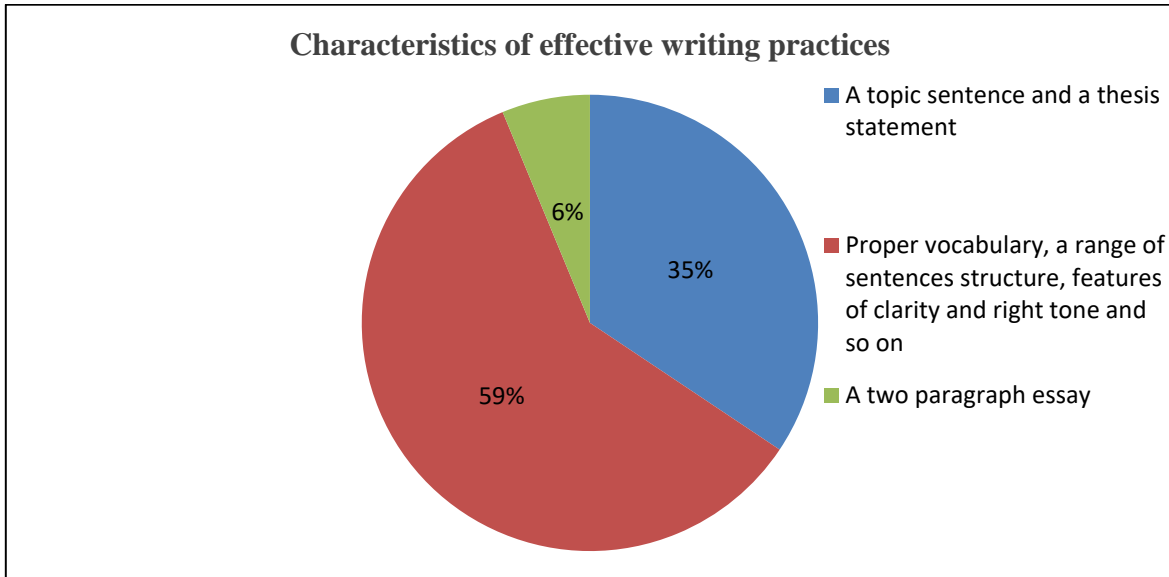
The population think that having a good **planning** help to develop a good essay. In this opportunity, the result was 49%, followed by **Editing** with 34% because this involves looking at each sentence carefully, and making sure that it is well designed. The third percentage with 11% it is **Drafting**, this prepares to the writer to create the first draft of an essay. At the final of this question is evaluated by 6% with the term of the **Beginning** because just a little of percentage agreed because this situation can help guide in the beginning of the writing process.

10. Do you think having a limited range of vocabulary in one of the major difficulties that students from Composition II have to handle when developing the writing skill?



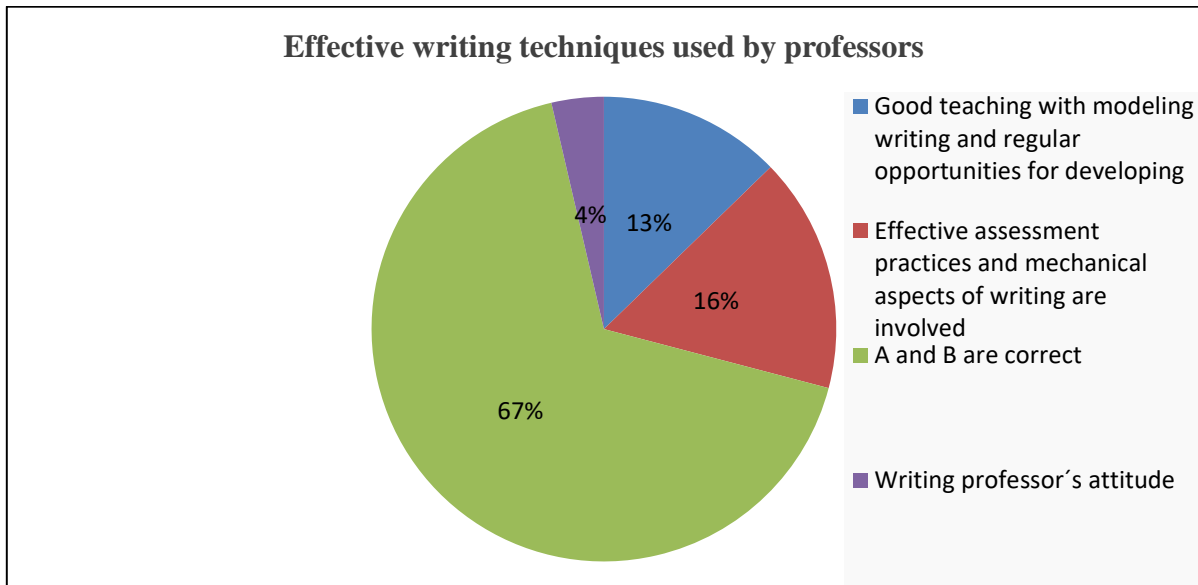
Population agreed that having a limited range of vocabulary can difficult the developing of the writing skill, in this survey they answer **Yes** with a 94%. So, a 6% say they disagree, because it is difficult for them to have a lot of vocabulary when they develop writing skill. Researchers, also added a literal with the answer **other** in the survey, but they do not commented, in this literal it was obtained 0%.

11. Which are some of the characteristics of effective writing practices that can be applied in the classroom?



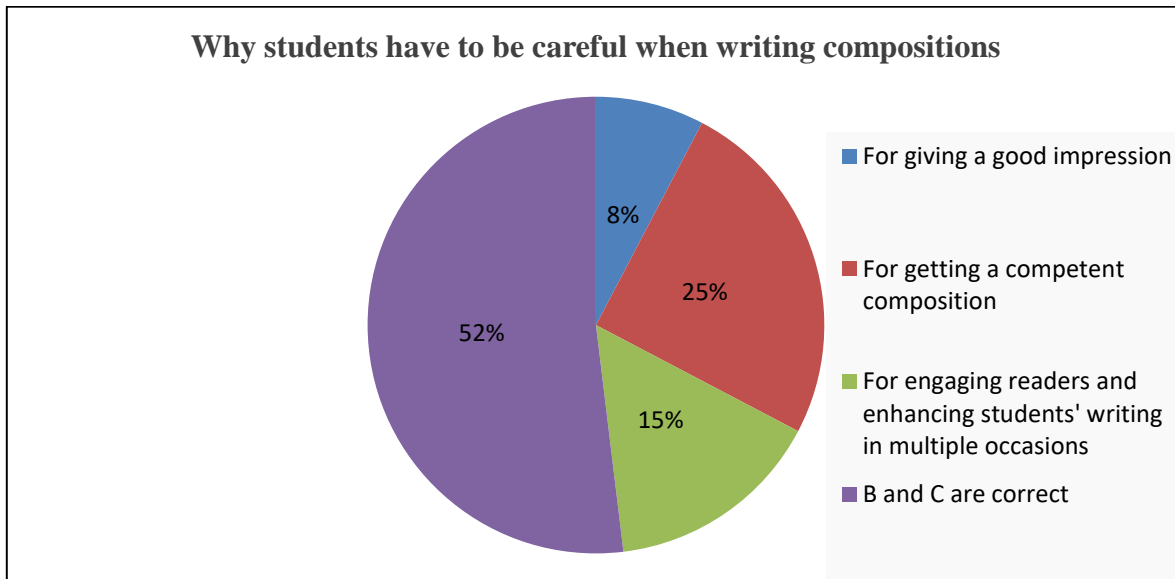
The answers provided by the population helped the researchers in a great way to obtain the expected results as the first point we have a 34% that expressed **a topic sentence and a thesis statement** can improve an essay's readability and organization. On the other hand, researchers have **proper vocabulary, a range of sentences structure, features of clarity and right tone and so on; thus, in** here the percentage was increased with a 59%, but it diminished a 6% with this answer **a two paragraph essay**, taking into account that, other percentage is 0% mentioning, **you know when you see it.**

12. What do you think of the efficiency of writing techniques used by professors when teaching English Composition II depend on?



In this opportunity researchers observed that population it is inclined a 13% with **Good teaching with modeling writing, and regular opportunities for developing**; this means a lot to them because they need to learn a lot from the teacher. 16% of the population think that Effective assessment practices and mechanical aspects of writing are involved, besides that another percentage think that **A and B are correct increasing to 67%, and finally we obtained the last 4% saying writing professor's attitude** it is necessary to maintain a good balance between professor and students.

13. In your opinion why students have to be careful in punctuation when writing compositions?



In this question it is important to maintain the interest in the population according to how careful they are when writing a composition.

In this range only 8% told us **for giving a good impression** about their composition, it was increasing as it reached 25%, their answered was **For getting a competent composition** they assure that with this second they more identified, the 15% **For engaging readers and enhancing students' writing in multiple occasions**, and the last participants answered that B and C are correct, here we have 52%, this turned out to be the highest percentage of course.

QUALITATIVE RESULTS

Some professors remarked at the same time that giving feedback to students it is very important and necessary because when professors revise the English Composition I syllabus they understand that with the previous teachers they have studied some topic that will be the support to or basic to teach Composition II.

Also, in the case of the skills that the students have to handle in order to reach the competence level in writing they mentioned grammatical competence, critical thinking skill, vocabulary skills, reading skills, summary writing skills.

Furthermore, related to the difficulties they have identified when students put into practice the different writing skills we have Grammar and vocabulary problems. Most of the times students do not read and reading is connected to writing. Then in an authentic text they can see grammatical structures in context as well as vocabulary terms.

Which writing strategies do professors think would be the most important to improve the level of writing of students and why?

“In the textbooks: Open Mind and Master Mind there are some exercises to promote writing and we can begin in that way.”

At the moment of mentioning the most effective teaching methods of writing for students in order to learn writing correctly professors said:

“Guide students from the basic, intermediate and advanced levels to develop the writing process.” “Yes, it is important to have a prior knowledge. First, they should understand what writing is because writing it is a process and sometimes they do not get it, they think that writing is like having a product and writing is not a product, writing is a process. So, it is important for them to have a previous knowledge about what writing is.”

When professors were asked about the role that composition II plays when preparing students to do their undergraduate projects, do research papers, and write essays professors said:

“That is a good question. But as you may know that depending on the teacher you know, perspectives would be as different as you think. In my opinion, I think they do help but not as much as they should do maybe one of the more important for reasons for that to happens is that maybe little practice takes place in the composition classes, you know, that would be mean maybe teachers should work harder you know teaching this class, evaluating, giving feedback, returning papers. Maybe is not a general talk or something that happens generally speaking, but how had I concluded that?”

VI. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is that any student is out of date information in the use of the strategies that are mentioned in this research. Further; It is important to mentioning that; this research will help the students of Composition II, semester I-2018, so that they can reduce the difficulties at the moment of writing their paragraphs, increasing the performance in their products; with responsibility, motivation, good grammar and without spelling or punctuation errors. “So any student from the Department of Foreign Languages of the University of El Salvador will be left without such important information. Most of the teachers are responsible about the learning process of the students.

Therefore, we have an approach related to the teaching of reading. Writing has been seen as less important. The current strategies of writing in the university higher education with greater focus towards the students of Composition II cycle I-2018 of the University of El Salvador need to be improved. Our responsibility as researchers is to guide students to love writing through the useful strategies reported here. That, "help ensure that students acquire the appropriate mastery in the diversity of skills and applying the strategies mentioned before, so that this entails" to be good writers.”

Thus, It is also important to mention that some of the strategies implemented were focused on twenty two students from each of the four groups of English Composition II courses; it was planned and executed in order to identify the impact of students and help them to improve their level of writing.

First of all, the results showed that most of them were not conscious of the importance of learning skill on writing strategies. So, they welcomed the researchers’ proposal of implementing reading strategies explicitly. Moreover, those students supported this research enthusiastically and willing to improve their writing skill. Therefore, they participated actively during the implementation of these writing strategies, showing in this way their learning process. Indeed, these students improved their performance in writing comprehension significantly.

In the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, it is shown that, those strategies had a positive impact on the Composition II students' course I-2018, at the end, the results obtained indicate that all of the students improved significantly obtaining high scores in their essays; Also, they mentioned that some of the strategies helped them to comprehend the text in a better way and to be more relaxed and concentrated in their own texts.

Moreover, we could confirm that having a limited range of vocabulary is one of the major difficulties that students from Composition II have to handle when developing their writings (94% of Students said agreed that having a limited range of vocabulary can difficult the developing of the writing skill); those groups expressed through the survey they were influenced by the lack of knowledge, stress, anxiety, confusion, nervousness, low self-confidence, poor reading habits, lack of linguistic knowledge. All those aspects were overcome, thanks to the implementation of this research in which were instructed regarding the importance and effectiveness of the application, focused in quantitative and qualitative using those writing strategies. According to Chamot (Celce & Murcia, 2001), "Strategies need to be controlled consciously if learners are to maintain awareness of different learning conditions and select the strategy most appropriate for specific tasks".

To add, before the implementation of strategies, students did not have knowledge about the positive impact that helps in the improvement on writing. Their unawareness happened, because most of them saying were not provided with any explicit instruction; in their previous English Composition course, they manifested had not received any feedback to give a good impression, neither reading comprehension during their last course to develop in a better way their paragraphs). Besides that, a 49% of students told through surveys that; if have a good planning will help to maintain a great sequence too. Most of the students became aware of the importance of applying those strategies in the future in order to reinforce what Composition II students already know and get better grades in their compositions and in their future research papers as well.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

After having revised the perspectives and opinions position of English Composition II students and professors during the semester I-2018, some recommendations about writing difficulties are given in order to improve the writing skills of students and at the same time improve the way professors explain or teach writing aspects.

To students:

- English Composition II students must apply the writing techniques emphasized from professors in every single class and put them into practice so that they will be able to write good, organized, logical, and coherent essays.
- English Composition II Students should attend English Composition workshops or personalized tutorials in order to enrich their vocabulary and knowledge to better organize their ideas at the moment of making a composition about a specific topic.
- English Composition II students must read their pieces of writing many times or make use of peer-assessment before delivering any composition or essay in order to clarify, change or edit their ideas about the message they want to transmit and in this way catch the attention of readers.
- English Composition II students should always work on their assignments about composition every day they are asked in order reinforced what they have learned in class or learned new things from their own that are not covered in class.
- Students sometimes must be auto-didactic and look for extra information as the one provided in scientific magazines, composition books, or surf the internet for tutorials on how to create good paragraphs and essays, understand some definitions or terms about writing that are not clear enough.

- English Composition II students should always bear in mind and be conscious that if they need any assistance in writing they must ask firstly to their classmates to encourage not only peer-assessment but also peer learning and second asking to the writing professor who is the more indicated to clarify doubts students might have in the Composition class.

To professors:

- English composition professors should arouse Composition II students' 'interest about writing good essays applying the best writing techniques, writing conventions, taught by professors.
- English Composition teachers must provide create a familiar environment in the classroom to encourage the teaching-learning process and students can learn in the easiest way as they interact with each other every they and compare different points of views while learning new concepts of writing of composing a text.
- Teachers must remark students what is the target to get at the end of the semester with such subject and the methodology, time, and the way the subject will be developed through the development of the semester.
- English Composition teachers must make the students to create at least a free composition based on whatever kind of literature or paper they want to read so that Composition II students can inspire themselves and do their best while writing an essay.

In order to write good and complete essays or compositions, students of Composition II must pay attention to the following academic principles:

10 **principles of Academic Writing**

1. Purposes

- **Clear Purpose:**

The goal of your paper is to answer the question you posed as your topic. Your question gives you a purpose. The most common purposes in academic writing are to persuade, analyze/synthesize, and inform.

- **Persuasive purpose:**

In persuasive academic writing, the purpose is to get your readers to adopt your answer to the question. So you will choose one answer to your question, support your answer using reason and evidence, and try to change the readers' point of view about the topic. Persuasive writing assignments include argumentative and position papers.

- **Analytical purpose:**

In analytical academic writing, the purpose is to explain and evaluate possible answers to your question, choosing the best answer(s) based on your own criteria. Analytical assignments often investigate causes, examine effects, evaluate effectiveness, assess ways to solve problems, find the relationships between various ideas, or analyze other people's arguments. The "synthesis" part of the purpose comes in when you put together all the parts and come up with your own answer to the question. Examples of these assignments include analysis papers and critical analyses.

- **Informative purpose:**

In informative academic writing, the purpose is to explain possible answers to your question, giving the readers new information about your topic. This differs from an analytical topic in that you do not push your viewpoint on the readers, but rather try to enlarge the readers' view.

Some assignments will have a pre-determined purpose (see the examples above); for other assignments, you will have to choose a purpose when you choose a topic (research paper, term paper). And some assignments may have two purposes. In all cases, the purpose will be clear at the beginning of your paper, and your paper must achieve its purpose in order to be successful.

2. **Audience Engagement:**

As with all writing, academic writing is directed to a specific audience in mind. Unless your instructor says otherwise, consider your audience to be fellow students with the same level of knowledge as yourself. As students in the field, they are interested in your topic, but perhaps not so interested in reading a paper. So you will have to engage them with your ideas and catch their interest with your writing style. Imagine that they are also skeptical, so that you must use the appropriate reasoning and evidence to convince them of your ideas.

3. **Clear Point of View:**

Academic writing, even that with an informative purpose, is not just a list of facts or summaries of sources. Although you will present other people's ideas and research, the goal of your paper is to show what you think about these things. Your paper will have and support your own original idea about the topic. This is called the thesis statement, and it is your answer to the question.

4. Single Focus:

Every paragraph (even every sentence) in your paper will support your thesis statement. There will be no unnecessary, irrelevant, unimportant, or contradictory information (Your paper will likely include contradictory or alternative points of view, but you will respond to and critique them to further strengthen your own point of view).

5. Logical Organization:

Academic writing follows a standard organizational pattern. For academic essays and papers, there is an introduction, body, and conclusion. Each paragraph logically leads to the next one.

- o The **introduction** catches the readers' attention, provides background information, and lets the reader know what to expect. It also has the thesis statement.
- o The **body paragraphs** support the thesis statement. Each body paragraph has one main point to support the thesis, which is named in a topic sentence. Each point is then supported in the paragraph with logical reasoning and evidence.

Each sentence connects to the one before and after it. The readers do not have to work to find the connection between ideas.

- o The **conclusion** summarizes the paper's thesis and main points and shows the reader the significance of the paper's findings.

6. Strong Support:

Each body paragraph will have sufficient and relevant support for the topic sentence and thesis statement. This support will consist of facts, examples, description, personal experience, and expert opinions and quotations.

7. Clear and Complete Explanations:

This is very important! As the writer, you need to do all the work for the reader. The reader should not have to think hard to understand your ideas, logic, or organization. English readers expect everything to be done for them; your thoughts and thought processes should be clearly and completely explained.

8. Effective Use of Research:

Your paper should refer to a variety of current, high-quality, professional and academic sources. You will use your research to support your own ideas; therefore, it must be integrated into your writing and not presented separately. That means that source material will be introduced, analyzed, explained, and then cited. *Research and APA Style Guide 2010* covers this topic in depth.

9. Correct APA Style:

All academic papers should follow the guidelines of the American Psychological Association as found in *Research and APA Style Guide 2010*, regarding in-text citations, the reference list, and format.

10. Writing Style:

Because this is your work, you should use your own words whenever possible. Do not try to write like a boring, overly formal scholarly article. Use the natural conversational style that you would use in the classroom. Your writing should be clear, concise, and easy to read. It is also very important that there are no grammar, spelling, punctuation, or vocabulary mistakes in academic writing. Errors convey to the reader that you do not care.

And finally, this rule will override all the principles:

ALWAYS FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS OF YOUR INSTRUCTOR:

Every instructor has a reason for giving you an assignment, and each instructor's requirements may differ. Follow your instructor's directions to get the most from an assignment.

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

British Council: *English for Academics*, 1st edition, Cambridge, n.d, United Kingdom.

Byrne, Donn “Teaching Writing Skills”, Longman, New Edition, 1988, United Kingdom.

Conference: Conference: February 2015 The European Conference on Language Learning ECLL 2015, At Dubai, UAE.

Council of Europe (2001). *The common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University.

Dorothy E Zamach (2005) Academy writing “From to essay “McMillan Publishers.

Fareed, Muhammad; Ashraf, Almas; Bilal, Muhammad: *ELS Learners’ Writing Skills: Problem, Factor, and Suggestions*. Journal of Education and Social Sciences Vol.4 (2): 1, 2016.

Harmer Jeremy. *How to teach writing*, Pearson Education Limited 2004, England.

Hensel, P. Common Student Writing Problems. From <http://www.paulhensel.org/teachprob.html>.

Kawulich, B. B. (2004). *Data Analysis Techniques in Qualitative Research*. In *Darla Twale (Ed.)*, *Journal of Research in Education*, 14(1) p. 96-113.

Kalikorha, Chimwemwe (2008): The perceptions of a group of first year undergraduate Malawian students of the essay writing process (Unpublished doctoral dissertation), Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand.

L. Schaefer, *Teaching Young Writers: Strategies that Work, Grades K-2* (New York: Scholastic, 2001).

M. Eugenia, *Engaging Student Teachers in Peer Learning Via a Blended Learning Environment*. *Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology* vol. 5, 2008.

Mays N, Pope C. Assessing quality in qualitative research. *BMJ*. 2000 Jan 1;320(7226):50-2.

Najar, Robin; Lesley, Robin: *Developing Academic Writing Skills*, 2nd edition, published by Macmillan, n.d, United Kingdom.

Peter Clark, Roy: *Writing Tools*, 1st edition, Hachette Book Group, n.d, United States.

Peha Steve. (1995-2002). What is Good Writing?, March 03, 2018, Teaching that Makes Sense,inc. Retrieved from:
<http://www.kathrynieplow.pwrfaculty.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/TB-wrtg-at-work.pdf>.

Pinker, Steven: *The Sense of Style*, 1st edition, Penguin Group, n.d, United States.

Roger Caswell and Brenda Mahler "Strategies for teaching writing" An Action Tool Virginia USA 2004.

Turabian, Kate L.: *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations*, 9th edition, The University of Chicago Press, n.d, United States.

Welsh Assembly Government Buildings Cathays Park Cardiff CF10 3NQ. (March 2010). Guidance on the teaching of writing skills INSET opportunities for teachers of all subjects across the curriculum at Key Stages 2 and 3. Curriculum and Assessment Division Department for Children, Education = sn Life 1 longn Learning and *Skills*. Retrieved from:
<http://learning.gov.wales/docs/learningwales/publications/100524writingen.pdf>.

Wilcox Peterson, Patricia: *Writing Skills Practice for EFL*, 2nd edition, Office of English Language Programs, n.d, United States.

IX. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT FOR COMPOSITION II STUDENTS, SEMESTER I-2018 (WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE):

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**



Objective: The purpose of this survey is to perform an assessment and analyze the data collected. The information provided by the students from the subject of English Composition II will bring an approach of the difficulties of reaching the expected level of competence in writing.

Instructions: Choose the answer that corresponds to your own experience on the subject. Mark the letter (a, b, c, or d) with a "circle" when applicable.

Example:

Can you write in English?

a) Yes b) No c) A little bit d) Not applicable

1. What difficulties do students have to face when writing a paragraph or an essay? (You can select more than one option).

a) Complexity to find a good topic b) Lack of resources
c) To have a specific plan for writing d) Fear of failure

2. Do you know how to effectively use the connectors in a paragraph?

- a) Yes b) No c) A little bit d) Not applicable

3. Which paragraph connectors do you know?

- a) Add another idea b) Restate, explain or emphasize an idea
c) Show a condition d) All of the above

4. Do you know the difference between a topic sentence and a supporting sentence?

- a) Yes b) No c) A little bit d) Not applicable

5. What are the main skills that help students to design stories and essays demonstrating an advanced writing process?

- a) Grammar and Punctuation b) Spelling
c) Organization d) All of the above

6. Which of the following forms of writing do you think allow students to have a good performance in the writing of paragraphs or essays?

- a) Feelings b) Ideas c) Organization d) All of the above

7. In your opinion what do you think teachers have to do in order to help the students to develop better writings skills?

- a) To teach proper strategies b) Make writing activities in the classroom
c) A and B are correct d) None

8. According to your own experience, what are the cognitive problems that students face in the classroom? (You can select more than one option).

- a) Punctuation problems b) Use of capital letters Capitalization
c) Spelling d) Content and organization

9. Which is the step to work on creating a polished piece of writing that will make the author proud of?

- a) Planning b) Editing c) Drafting d) Beginning

10. Do you think having a limited range of vocabulary is one of the major difficulties that students from Composition II have to handle when developing the writing skill?

- a) Yes b) No

Other: _____

11. Which are some of the characteristics of effective writing practices that can be applied in the classroom?

- a) A topic sentence and a thesis statement
- b) Proper vocabulary, a range of sentence structure, features of clarity and right tone
and so on
- c) A two-paragraph essay
- d) You know it when you see it

12. What do you think the efficiency of writing techniques used by professors when teaching English Composition II depends on?

- a) Good teaching with modeling writing and regular opportunities for developing
- b) Effective assessment practices and mechanical aspects of writing are involved
- c) A and B are correct
- d) Writing professors' attitude

13. In your opinion why students have to be careful in punctuation when writing compositions?

- a) For giving a good impression
- b) For getting a competent composition
- c) For engaging readers and enhancing students 'writing in multiple occasions.
- d) B and C are correct.

14. Evaluate with a check mark (✓) or an "X" according to your writing experience difficulty in the use of the following writing techniques.

Technique	Very Hard	Hard	So-So	Easy	Very Easy
Guided writing					
Controlled writing					
Independent writing					
Cooperative writing					

15. Evaluate according to your experience the effectiveness of the following writing techniques when creating compositions.

Technique	Hardly effective	Not effective	So-So	Effective	Very effective
Mapping					
Brainstorming					
Writing conferences					
Thinking aloud when writing					

ANNEX 2:

FACE TO FACE INTERVIEW FOR COMPOSITION II PROFESSORS, SEMESTER I-2018:

UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT



Objective: The purpose of this interview is to perform an assessment and analyze the data collected. The information provided by the writing professors from the subject of English Composition II will bring an approach of the difficulties of reaching the expected level of competence in writing.

Instructions: Answer each question in the way that corresponds to your own experience on the subject.

Questions for English Composition II professors (semi-structured interview)

- 1. How would you describe or define an effective composition?**
Proper vocabulary, a range of sentence structure, features of clarity and right tone, grammar and punctuation, spelling and organization.
- 2. According to your own experience in the field of teaching writing, what are the major writing problems that students face the most in creating a composition?**
Lack of a previous background? Students do not show interest in writing effectively? Learning just for approving the subject composition II?
- 3. What is the main result or consequences of not teaching the proper writing strategies before students create a paragraph or an essay?**
Poor writing, no clarity and right tone, a boring composition.

4. Could you tell what your reaction is when students say it is difficult or hard to create a paragraph or an essay?

Teach writing strategies, decide to teach basic concept of writing, motivate students to read more

5. Can you tell me how students perceive the relation of topic sentence-supporting sentences in a paragraph and a thesis statement and a concluding paragraph in an essay?

- General ideas to specific ideas?
- A more general idea and sub-ideas?

6. In your opinion which are the skills that the students have to master in order to reach the competence level in writing?

7. Which difficulties have you identified when students have to put into practice the different writing skills?

8. 3. In your opinion what is the best teaching methodology to teach the different writing skills? i.e. A combination of theory and practice.

9. In your opinion what difficulties do teachers have when teaching the subject of English Composition II? i.e. Resources (didactic material, lack of resources, students behavior, etc.)

10. Have you ever experienced a situation in which a student has several difficulties to implement writing skills? If not, please tell how would you approach this situation and help the student to reach the competence level in writing. And if you had experienced that situation, please tell how you solved the issue.

ANNEX 3:

GLOSSARY

- 1. Brainstorm (v.):** To think of ideas (usually quickly) about a topic (often noting these down). This is often done as preparation before writing or speaking activity.
Brainstorming (n), Generating lots of ideas from many individuals.
- 2. Cooperative learning:** Students from varied backgrounds and abilities work together in small groups.
- 3. Complexity:** The state or quality of being intricate or complicated "an issue of great complexity."
- 4. Effective writing:** Effective Writing is writing which has a logical flow of ideas and is cohesive. This means it holds together well because there are links between sentences and paragraphs.
- 5. EFL:** English as a foreign language. A program to teach English to speakers in a non-English speaking setting.
- 6. Enhance:** Intensify, increase, or further improve the quality, value or extend of.
- 7. Face to face interview:** (of two people) close together and facing each other. In other words, it is a person to person interview.
- 8. Fear of failure:** Is relatively normal and actually well documented persistent and irrational anxiety of failing to complete a certain task or meet a specific standard. An example is the Fear of Failing an examination.

- 9. Feedback:** Information about reaction to a product, a person's performance of a task, used as a basis for improvement.
- 10. Independent learning:** is a process involving learners who choose their own learning objectives and learning paths according to perceived personal needs, aspirations, and preferred modes of learning. Independent learning does not exclude the help of a teacher who may guide the process.
- 11. Independent study:** Studying without a teacher present or without the teacher monitoring and directing the learning very closely, e.g. learners could carry out research on a topic using reference resources. This could be done at home or with minimum involvement of the teacher in class.
- 12. Interview:** Interviews consist of collecting data by asking questions. Data can be collected by listening to individuals, recording, filming their responses, or a combination of methods.
- 13. Portable:** Able to be easily carried or moved, especially because of being a lighter and smaller version than usual.
- 14. Prior Knowledge:** The knowledge a learner already has about a topic or subject. It is the past knowledge a learner brings to a new learning situation
- 15. Research questionnaire:** A questionnaire is a data collection instrument set out of a series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from respondents. **Questions could be:**
- Open format questions that are without a predetermined set of responses.
 - Closed format questions that take the form of a multiple-choice question.
- The questionnaire was invented by Sir Francis Galton.**

16. Semi-structured Interview: More or less open-ended questions are brought to the interview situation in the form of an interview guide” (Flick, 1998 p. 94). From the beginning the focus is on gaining an understanding based on textual information obtained. *Type of question format/structure:*

- Open-ended, yet directed at obtaining particular information (content, topic, aspects of theory, etc.)
- In some cases, closed-ended styles of questions are used.

17. Structured Interview: Normally, structured interviews are done in a face-to-face format or via telephone using a standard set of questions to obtain data that can be aggregated because identical questions have been asked of each participant.

Type of question format/structure:

- Open-ended.
- Closed-ended with ordered response choices.
- Closed-ended with unordered response choices.
- Partially closed-ended.

18. Survey: Examine and record the area and features of (an area of land) so as to construct a map, plan, or description.

19. Tone: A musical or vocal sound with reference to its pitch, quality and strength.

20. Unstructured interview: Interview without any set format but in which the interviewer may have some key questions formulated in advance. Also called non-directive interview.

Type of question format/structure:

- Open-ended – descriptive
- Reactions to a given situation presented by the researcher.