Promoting Self-Directed Learning Strategies by Means of Creative Writing

Daniela Rojas Rivera

Johanna León Pinilla

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Proyecto Curricular Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés
Bogotá D.C, 2017
Promoting Self-Directed Learning Strategies by Means of Creative Writing

Daniela Rojas Rivera
Code 20111165022
darojasr@correo.udistrital.edu.co

Johanna León Pinilla
Code 20101165022
jaleonp@correo.udistrital.edu.co

Thesis Advisor
Yeraldine Aldana Gutierrez

A monograph submitted according to requirements of Acuerdo No. 31 (2014), article 6-

Monograph

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Facultad de Ciencias y Educación
Proyecto Curricular Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés
Bogotá D.C, 2017
Acuerdo 19 de 1988 del Consejo Superior Universitario

Artículo 1771: “La Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas no será responsable por las ideas expuestas en este trabajo”
Acknowledgements

We wish to express our sincere thanks to our tutor Yeraldine Aldana Gutiérrez for providing us all her help, experience, knowledge and valuable guidance during this research process. We also thank to teachers of the bachelor degree in English who taught us about the research process and supported us in conducting our project. Finally, we take this opportunity to express gratitude to God for the wellbeing and will necessary throughout this process and our parents and friends for the unceasing encouragement and attention we required to overcome obstacles and accomplish our goals.
Abstract

The present study comprises a twofold interest. Firstly, Self-Directed Learning (SDL) strategies emerged as a didactic possibility to foster autonomy in learners’ processes such as creative writing. This one in turn constituted an opportunity for participants to express ideas and apply language skills while becoming SD learners through the design of strategies. This research aimed at analyzing the effects of SDL strategies on ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions on this process, from a bachelor’s degree in English at a university in Bogotá. This project was implemented through a didactic sequence for creative writing via blog during 3 modules. Data collection instruments included students’ artifacts, questionnaires and their personal development plans. Results showed that the application of SDL strategies assisted students when planning and organizing their texts for creative writing. In addition, students perceived the application of SDL strategies as a contribution not only for their current training but also for their future Professional Development (PD) decisions where (self) reflection on own needs and motivation may group key factors in teachers’ education.

Key words: Self-Directed Learning (SDL), creative writing, language strategies, professional development.

Resumen

El presente estudio de investigación comprende un doble interés. En primer lugar, las estrategias de aprendizaje autodirigido (SDL, por sus siglas en inglés) surgieron como una posibilidad didáctica para fomentar la autonomía en los procesos de los alumnos, como lo es la escritura creativa. Ésta, a su vez, constituyó una oportunidad para que los participantes expresaran sus ideas y aplicaran las habilidades del lenguaje al convertirse en aprendices autodirigidos mediante el diseño de estrategias. Esta investigación tuvo como objetivo analizar los efectos de las
estrategias de SDL en los productos de escritura creativa de los estudiantes de pregrado de ELT y sus percepciones sobre este proceso, desde una licenciatura en inglés en una universidad de Bogotá. Este proyecto se implementó a través de una secuencia didáctica para la escritura creativa vía blog durante 3 módulos. Los instrumentos de recolección incluyeron los artefactos de los estudiantes, cuestionarios y sus planes de desarrollo personal. Los resultados mostraron que la aplicación de las estrategias SDL ayudó a los estudiantes a planificar y organizar sus textos para la escritura creativa. Además, los estudiantes perciben la aplicación de las estrategias SDL como una contribución no sólo para su formación actual, sino también para sus futuras decisiones de Desarrollo Profesional (DP) donde la reflexión sobre las propias necesidades y la motivación puede agrupar factores clave en la educación de los profesores.

**Palabras Claves:** Aprendizaje Autodirigido (SDL), escritura creativa, estrategias lingüísticas, desarrollo profesional.
Table of Contents

Chapter One ............................................................................................................................................. 1
Introduction ............................................................................................................................................ 1
Justification ............................................................................................................................................. 3
Statement of the Problem ....................................................................................................................... 7
  Research question ............................................................................................................................... 10
  Research Objectives ........................................................................................................................... 11

Chapter Two ......................................................................................................................................... 12
Literature Review ................................................................................................................................... 12
  Self-directed Learning: A turn to independence .............................................................................. 12
  Self-Directed Learning Strategies .................................................................................................... 15
  Literacy Process: Scaffolding Communication Skills. ....................................................................... 17

Chapter Three ....................................................................................................................................... 26
Research Design .................................................................................................................................... 26
  Research Paradigm ............................................................................................................................. 26
  Type of Study .................................................................................................................................... 27
  Context .............................................................................................................................................. 31
  Purposeful sampling and participants ............................................................................................... 32
  Data Collection Instruments and Procedures .................................................................................... 32
  Ethical issues ..................................................................................................................................... 34

Chapter Four ......................................................................................................................................... 35
Instructional Design: Creative Writing Blog for Self-directed Imagination and Expression.... 35
  Educational View: Humanism ........................................................................................................... 36
  Theory of Learning: Connectivism ................................................................................................... 37
  Theory of Language: Interactionism .................................................................................................. 39
  Didactic choice: Postmethod ............................................................................................................ 41
  Pedagogical innovation objectives .................................................................................................... 43
  Pedagogical Implementation ............................................................................................................. 43
  Assessment ...................................................................................................................................... 45
  Teacher’s Role ................................................................................................................................. 46
  Student’s Role ................................................................................................................................. 47
  Role of Materials ............................................................................................................................ 48
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blog (Wix)</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Plan and Schedule</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Five</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triangulation</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Management Strategy</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis Approach: Grounded Theory</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Six</strong></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Seven</strong></td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogical implications</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chapter Eight</strong></td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>References</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annexes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

During the last decades, Self-Directed Learning (SDL) has been a topic of discussion among authors in the field of adult education, considering the use of ICTs and the distance courses in all levels of education. Concerning language education -as this study-, SDL has been an element of interest, since it is a dimension of autonomous learning that supports the approach of perceiving students as centers of the class and producers of language (Bocanegra, 1999; Minagawa, 2017). Therefore, autonomy in this project takes a fundamental part of SDL, defined as the capability to take control and responsibility of the own learning (Benson, 2001). Thus, SDL is defined as a teaching-collaborative process in which educators support students to assume such responsibility and control to accomplish learning goals (Garrison, 1997). These aspects become important in language learning to the extent that individuality shaped in values, competencies and skills is the focus of the current education.

On the other hand, the development of writing is one of the challenges in language learning. This implies a long process where undergraduates need to practice it through assignments and activities. Thereby, activities to encourage students in the writing task remain important. As Byrne (1988) states, writing is a difficult activity because when we develop it, we do not have the possibility to interact with others and have feedback. Therefore, the organization of sentence structures and connection among them while the channel of communication is opened deserve attention. Learners need high motivation and interest to overcome obstacles in this continuous process of writing. Creativity is a key aspect to be discovered and practiced within classes for students to shape their ideas in the written language. Resulting processes and products display art and communication (Harper, 2010). Indeed, creativity is also an activity to evidence
autonomy tenets through the implementation of journals, diaries and reflections (Ganji & Khosravani, 2014).

Our interest in developing this research project focuses on the benefits and advantages in helping ELT undergraduates to become self-directed learners, bearing in mind the benefits of SDL in the educational process as future teachers. In addition, SDL strategies and the creation of new ones are a means students may develop autonomy through. Simultaneously, there is an interest in knowing about the influence these strategies have on creative writing products as well as the importance creativity has in the application of those strategies and the perceptions students have about them.

In our educational context, namely a university located in Bogotá, students from a bachelor’s degree in English did not display autonomous tenets when writing texts; therefore, we identified the lack of SDL strategies within their language learning. Furthermore, ELT undergraduates shared with us their interest in developing autonomous competencies, inasmuch as they were aware of the implications of this aspect in their academic context.

Based on the mentioned situation, we decided to conduct this action research that aimed at analyzing the effects of Self-directed learning strategies on ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions on this learning process mediated by a blog. For such an effect, the development of creative writing activities on a technological resource (Wix), which is favorable for autonomous learning environments (Son & Hill, 2007), were the resources we used to encourage students in SDL as a possible source of opportunities to practice their skills as autonomous learners and their language writing skills. In fact, we realize SDL strategies along with creative writing could blend and possibly support future teachers’ professional development decisions.
In this research report, the first chapter includes the background, the statement of the problem that allowed us to conduct this study together with the research question, sub-question and research objectives. The second chapter embraces the theoretical framework where the main constructs, namely SDL and Creative Writing are discussed in relation to the main theoretical foundations and research reports. In the third chapter, the research design is structured by explaining the research paradigm, the type of study, the context and participants along with the data collection instruments. The chapter four describes the pedagogical innovation platform we designed for the implementation of this project. Chapter five evidences all the process we carried out for the data analysis and the findings with the corresponding categories. Chapter six embraces our conclusions. Chapter seven presents the pedagogical implications. Chapter eight has to do with limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

**Justification**

Undergraduates need to develop and apply strategies for them to achieve learning goals. Cazan and Schiopca (2014) mentioned self-directed learners set goals and this can be connected to their studies success and achievement. After approaching some undergraduate students from a public university, we noticed an interest in improving their English proficiency but they seem to lack SDL strategies to achieve it. Self-Directed Learning (SDL) is relevant in the educational field (Hematian, Rezaei, Mohammadyfar. 2016), even more dealing with language learning. This SDL process might depend on both students’ and teachers’ performance, but specially the former’s as the center of learning. In this regard, our research explores a didactic possibility to help undergraduates become self-directed learners in EFL environments through the
implementation of *creative writing* activities, assisting thus these future teachers’ training, writing skill and equally relevant, their view around learning in a professional condition.

Self-directed learning has been studied from a myriad of fields and purposes, e.g. reading comprehension and CLIL (Content Language Integrated Learning). From an action research carried out with 36 low proficiency students in a public school, it was found that pre-reading activities helped students to use metacognitive strategies to develop reading activities (Rincon, 2013). In the other side, a study focused on CILI aimed at motivating students in the language learning and assist them to become self-directed learners. The result was that students got motivated with CILI activities enriched using technology, collaborative work and the process of setting learning goals. These resources helped participants to understand the importance of being an autonomous learner (Bernate & Salazar, 2015).

Apart from reading skills in relation to SDL, writing is also relevant, according to different studies present in the literature checked. Perez and Univio (2014) developed an investigation with 2 groups of undergraduates. The purpose was to determine the impact of ipsative assessment on students’ argumentative writing texts. As a result, they found that feedback from students and their peers helped them to write better and foster self-management. Writing is thus an important activity in our society, since it is a way of communication. In fact, it becomes more significant for language and undergraduates enrolled in a Language teaching/learning program, as it happens in our target population.

Writing as part of literacy seems to play an important role in our society since it is a way of social communication practice (Kucer, 2006), and we would add: a social and survival practice. Although writing is seen a very difficult skill to develop (Byrne, 2008), humans tend to use it for different purposes. For instance, our target population (undergraduate students) will
probably need to *write* their CVs properly, academic essays for a postgraduate program, or even an academic text when presenting an international exam (Jyi-yeon. 2009). Hence, students should work on this skill from the basis to gradually increase this complex and once again, literacy skill.

Creative writing emerges in this manner as an opportunity for our participants to stimulate their language and social writing skills. Expressing their ideas and feelings without the stressful reaction because of very formal aspects as seen in another textual type such as an academic essay. Morley (2007) states that creative writing students feel free to express ideas in different ways. Indeed, the act of writing could become something relaxing for writers and distract them from responsibilities in accordance with Morley (2007).

In relation to the act of becoming a self-directed learner or someone who analyzes his/her learning process and needs to make further decisions (Hiemstra, 1994), this study will provide tools and strategies for students and teachers to use them in the class. Consequently, we hypothesize that these participants would improve their writing skills as becoming aware of the importance of SDL for taking control over the own language skills development.

In the same sense, other universities which have an English teaching program can take advantage of this research project, since they are training future teachers who should be aware of their own performance as professionals in the later real scenario. In particular, we are talking about the relevance of getting updated in the teaching activity. SDL might play an overriding role in this process when being professional teachers. As an example, some teachers at school or even at universities may have traditional teaching techniques that could be observed, re-informed and changed by applying SDL strategies, e.g. journal writing and reflection based on updated sources of information.
Indeed, the English teaching program where our participants study includes a subject titled “Seminar 6” and this can justify another institutional reason to support our research project. Some professors have proposed devised courses with a professional development objective and SDL strategies come into light to assist future teachers in the process of reflecting upon their professional development needs and planning the steps to achieve their goals (Aldana, 2016). Within this seminar, undergraduates are considered as autonomous, but they are encouraged to understand and apply some SDL strategies for making these determining professional development decisions. Our study may complement this seminar theoretically and practically speaking through the SDL strategies explored and applied in our study.

Additionally, schools can get benefits from this research, because some of them will have English teachers that are interested in this monograph. As English teachers read many articles about learning a second language, they also read some monograph works. In doing so, these teachers can apply strategies proposed in this research with their students as the age average allows it. In doing so, if our proposed didactic SDL strategies are applied in secondary school, emerging autonomy will probably prepare students for higher education and the possibility for them to succeed and finish their degree as emancipated learners will increase, as expressed by Rancière (2007).

To sum up, students need to become autonomous learners, even more if they are studying to perform the English teaching task, as our participants are. Many EFL learners and teachers have trouble when learning by themselves, because they find some difficulty in applying contextually and individually proper strategies to achieve learning goals. For that reason, looking for methodologies to encourage students in this self-directed learning process seems convenient, and creative writing constitutes a possible vehicle or manner for us as teachers to assist
undergraduates in the process of finding out the strategies that meet their needs. This is to say creative writing stands for the means to reach an end, in our study, beyond English language learning, to multi-subject and lifelong learning goals.

Statement of the Problem

Throughout the application of questionnaires to 25 students from a bachelor’s degree in English, at a public university located in Bogotá (Colombia), some of them display autonomy tenets as EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners; nevertheless, they may lack enough SDL strategies for making creative written texts. In the next lines, we account for this problematic situation. In doing so, we will connect both empirical evidence and theoretical support to interpret and explain our research problem in detail.

Firstly, the questionnaires we applied with this public university, undergraduates showed their interest in improving their English proficiency through extra activities such as listening to music, reading articles and watching movies (See annex: Questionnaire 1). Moreover, these participants agreed on the significance attributed to the own accountability in the development of assignments, regardless of lacking time to accomplish their duties and the motivation towards the class (see annex: Questionnaire 1). For instance, Sara (Pseudonym) states: “I would like to be a little bit more involved in what I am studying…taking into account that I am studying something what I like. I have to improve my autonomous work” (annex 1, questionnaire 1, 2016).

In addition, most of these students agreed on the necessary aspects to be an autonomous learner such as being responsible and taking control of learning. At the same time, they underlie the importance of setting goals in relation to the own learning interests. To this respect, Jingman
(2011) considers that some key elements for developing language learning and autonomous learning skills are: independence, willingness, capability, responsibility as well as a capacity for reflection as our participants’ excerpts evidence.

Furthermore, ELT undergraduates are conscious about the implications of being autonomous in language learning; however, we evidenced the absence of SDL strategies through a line-base written task. In this task, ELT undergraduates had to write a short story founded on experiences they have lived, without any instruction by the English teacher (see annex 2: Line-base written task).

Figure 1: Example of Line-base Text

The results of this diagnosis test reveal that students might find difficulty in writing a proper composition in terms of form, including grammatical aspects such as verb conjugation, punctuation and misspelling. This fact could be related to the missing of a self-management and self-monitoring process which implies a suitable use of metacognitive strategies and resources in the educational context (Garrison, 1997).
Based on this diagnosis test, students may need reflecting about their process of learning. In this manner, they can acquire and apply some SDL strategies to incorporate in and even improve their writing skill. Proper creative written texts could be developed, but this task implies a greater effort so that becoming self-directed learners and learning how to learn (Ruiz, 1997). For instance, Patty (Pseudonym) states: “I want to improve my academic performance, I know that I need so much time to be better and sometimes is complicated” (annex 1, questionnaire 5, 2015) and Julia (Pseudonym) “I need more practice, sometimes I do not understand somethings” (annex 1, questionnaire 6, 2015).

Moreover, we triangulated findings above with non-participant observation notes coming from an English class with this population, and we perceived the continuous support undergraduates in this EFL teaching program may need from the teacher in the development of individual tasks. This can potentially be related to the absence of strategies such as metacognitive ones to enhance an autonomous environment in class (see annex 3: Field Notes). This is because learning strategies are considered as actions and behaviors students carry out to achieve language proficiency and play an important role in learner autonomy and the overall SLA process (Oxford, 1999; Castillo, 2014).

Additionally, SDL as connected to autonomy, can foster lifelong learning which entails an engagement in acquiring and applying knowledge and skills in multiple contexts (Collins, 2009). Also, the author states lifelong learning involves reflection, setting goals, assessing knowledge and skills, putting the plan into action, evaluating and reforming. In other terms, lifelong learning embraces SDL strategies for active learners, supported by teachers as facilitators. For instance, the proposal for the Seminar VI course (Aldana, 2016) embraces SDL strategies such as assessing disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge for future teachers’ decisions around their
professional development. Under those circumstances, ELT undergraduates address their learning to become skillful English teachers in real-life challenges as professionals (Texas Education Agency, 1997).

Considering the necessary degree of autonomy in learning to achieve a communicative proficiency in the target language (Little, 1990; Castillo, 2014) and the lack of SDL strategies in ELT undergraduates for writing creative texts, it seems relevant to pose questions for inquiry purposes.

**Research question**

What effects do self-directed learning strategies have on ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions on this learning process mediated by blog (Wix)?

A blog is understood as a web resource that allows for interaction, collaborative work, meaningful communication, the integration of skills and co-responsibility from students in terms of their learning process (Cruz, Buyse, González & Tukahara, 2012). Thus, the blog we propose and develop in this study through Wix emerges as a scenario for ELT undergraduates as autonomous learners, to apply Self-Directed Learning (SDL) strategies while developing creative writing activities. We hypothesize that population in this undergraduate ELT program are likely to reflect on their own learning needs to identify, apply and replicate consequent SDL strategies in different learning situations.

**Sub-questions**

- What Self-directed learning strategies do ELT undergraduates apply in the process of creative writing mediated by blog (Wix)?
● How do ELT undergraduates perceive the application of SDL strategies to their creative writing and other fields in their development as future language teachers?

● How do self-directed learning strategies influence ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products?

Research Objectives

General Objective

● To analyze the effects of self-directed learning strategies on undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions on this process mediated by blog (Wix).

Specific Objectives

● To identify self-directed learning strategies applied by ELT undergraduates to creative writing mediated by blog (Wix).

● To contrast ELT undergraduates’ line base texts to their creative written products after applying self-directed learning strategies.

● To describe ELT undergraduates’ perceptions about SDL strategies applied to their development as future English teachers.
**Literature Review**

Throughout this section, we develop the main constructs of our research project. For this purpose, we apply a deductive approach to discuss some relevant theoretical foundations for this research. Particularly, we present the construction or re-elaboration of theoretical concepts such as self-directed learning, creative writing and technology in education, founded on the dialogue and connections among authors’ contributions.

**Self-directed Learning: A turn to independence**

According to Thorton (2010), the concept of SDL emerged in adult education and it was associated with learner autonomy. Both terms have become important in education of young people, due to the use of technologies and the current approach of perceiving students as centers of the class and producers of language (Bocanegra, 1999). Therefore, SDL might help students to be autonomous and achieve an active role not only in education, but also, in the society as individuals with capabilities and responsibilities.

The theoretical assumptions about SDL and learner autonomy have demonstrated diverse perspectives. Benson (2001) defines the former as the way students direct the learning process by their own, and the latter as “both the broad field of inquiry and the global capacity to exercise control over’s one learning” (p.37). Benson (2001) thus considers autonomy as the learners’ quality to assume responsibility in learning, and SDL as a mode to achieve an effective learning, making important decisions about implicit aspects in this process such as content development and evaluation.

In the present project, we conceive learners’ autonomy as the capacity developed through the considerable control and management students take over the way how they learn as well as
the dimension learners need to reach a SDL. This one in turn relates to the collaborative teaching-learning process from our perspective where students strengthen their autonomous learning with the help and guide of teachers through the design of activities and strategies. This perspective is supported as follows.

Taking into consideration the learner autonomy as the implicit dimension, Garrison (1997) states SDL is an approach in which learners are motivated to assume responsibility and take control in a collaborative way, with the purpose of reaching a meaningful construction and learning outcomes. Similarly, Hiemstra (1994) argues SDL is a feature of learners that implies the ability or willingness to take control through an instructional process where the teaching-learning transaction is carried out.

Clearly, SDL is a collaborative process in which teachers transfer the responsibility and awareness of taking control about learning to accomplish goals, towards learners. It means SDL emerges as a way to foster autonomous learning where students acquire goal setting skills, processing skills, cognitive skills, decision making skills and self-awareness (Long, n.d).

Garrison (1997) proposes a comprehensive model of SDL that integrates the following dimensions:

a. **Self-management**: This dimension refers to the control of tasks and external activities in relation to the learning process. It concerns with the performance of learning goals and the management of learning resources where questions about the regulation of goals, learning methods and support are collaboratively assessed and negotiated. Self-management means increasing responsibilities and awareness to make learning more meaningful.

b. **Self-monitoring**. It involves the metacognitive and cognitive processes to monitor learning strategies plus an awareness of and an ability to think. Responsibility is the key
element in this dimension in order to have the commitment to construct personal meaning through reflection.

c. **Motivation**: According to Garrison (1997), motivation plays an important role in the achievement of cognitive goals. For understanding the influence of motivation, the author differentiates the process of deciding to participate (entering motivation) and the effort to keep on task and persist (task motivation). The first one deals with a commitment to a specific goal and the last one is connected to task control, self-management and volition which refers to the intentional effort, influencing persistence and task performance.

Through this model, Garrison (1997) evidences that SDL attempts to help students to improve their way of learning and accomplish their learning outcomes. In this process, integrating the cognitive and motivational dimensions of the educational context is a key element. In relation to our research proposal, we conceive creative writing as an additional and significant tool to motivate ELT undergraduates for the application of SDL strategies, and their replication in other areas.

**Figure 2: Dimensions of SDL (Garrison, 1997)**
Some research studies have indicated the benefits of SDL for improving learning. For instance, Cazan and Schiopca (2013) analyzed the connections between SDL, personality traits and academic achievement through Self-rating scale of SDL (SRSSIDL). To this respect, it was evident the correlation between these three variables and how SDL reveals academic achievement.

Moreover, Wichadee (2011) carried out a research study in which a SDL instructional model was employed with 120 students to enhance English reading ability, over twelve weeks. As a result, the scores in the post-test (Reading Comprehension test) concerning the reading proficiency of students were higher than those of the pre-test. Also, it was evidenced how a SDL environment enhance the reading skills of students and their SDL ability.

**Self-Directed Learning Strategies**

As for SDL strategies and taking into consideration the theoretical assumptions of authors and research studies in relation to this collaborative teaching-learning process, it is relevant to define what learning strategies refer to. According to Scarchella and Oxford (as cited in Oxford, 2003), learning strategies are “specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques such as giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task—used by students to enhance their own learning” (p.63). Equally, Sun (2013) defines learning strategies as the knowledge related to when and how to apply strategies to learn or solve a problem, which are keys in autonomous learning. Thus, learning strategies may allow students to support their learning through a series of suitable techniques and procedures.

Concerning our field of education, namely, EFL, Oxford (2003) defined L2 learning strategies as those specific behaviors, techniques or actions students carry out to enhance their
own L2 learning. In fact, if those strategies are adjusted to the student’s learning styles and are connected to other important strategies, learning becomes easier, more effective and more self-directed to new situations (as cited in Oxford & Scarcella 1996).

Similarly, Cohen (1996) states that second language learner strategies revolve around the actions taken by the learner to improve L2 learning; those strategies need to be associated with consciousness of the learner to be considered as real strategies and not only as processes. This author states that these strategies include retrieval, rehearsal, cover and communication ones, which are defined by the author as we discuss in the following lines.

The retrieval strategies are related to recover the grammar forms to choose the accurate one when the occasion arises in or out of class. The rehearsal strategies recapitulate the target language structures and the cover strategies are used to create the impression that they have control but they do not; students use them to create the appearance of language ability, e.g. memorizing something and not using their own words to express it or using simple structures or vocabulary. Finally, the communication strategies allow students to convey new and meaningful information which could have or not an impact on learning. For instance, students use a word seen for the first time in the lesson to communicate a thought but sometimes they could forget it or not (Cohen, 1996).

In addition, Oxford (2003) classifies the L2 learning strategies into six categories. These include cognitive ones (use language learning in direct ways through reasoning, analysis, summarizing reorganizing information etc.), metacognitive (identifying learning style preferences and needs, planning for tasks etc.) memory-related (learners connect L2 concept with another), compensatory (students construct missing knowledge), affective (talking about feelings, identifying mood and anxiety level) and social strategies (Learners understand the target culture).
Bearing in mind all the conceptualizations made by those authors, learning strategies play an important role in the learner autonomy (Oxford, 1999). Simultaneously, they are associated with the purposes of the SDL approach, namely, to support students in a collaborative process where learners take control and assume responsibility of their own learning in a conscious and reflective way. Thus, SDL strategies could be defined as those actions and behaviors students employ to accomplish learning goals and reach a meaningful learning in which diverse types of processes are implicit to become autonomous learners. In our educational context, namely, EFL learning, those strategies could be adapted to learners’ styles, needs and interests.

**Literacy Processes and practice: Scaffolding Communication Skills.**

Literacy is generally considered as the ability of writing and reading, but this concept goes farther that definition. There are many ways human beings communicate each other through; writing and reading are two of them. Kucer (2006) states that the language is a medium to share thoughts and ideas. This author thus broadens the notion around literacy as more than the use of writing and reading skills. Literacy appears as a practice involving multiple dimensions, including linguistic, social and even psychological (Kucer, 2006; Castillo, 2014) in which individuals interact with each other.

Being literate is more than the ability people have to write and read, it has certain requirements to take into account. Literacy has some dimensions such as pragmatics, text structure, semantics, syntax, morphology, among others (Kucer, 2006). All these levels of literacy seem very important when writing because they lead the reader to understand the work in general by the grammar used, the type of text or even the structure used during the text. As Byrne (1988) mentioned, we write for someone to read and it makes the writing process difficult.
There is a special effort for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students for being literate in the target language. Being proficient in the language means that the learner can handle all dimension of literacy (Kucer, 2006); in that way, vocabulary or grammar cannot be a barrier. As EFL students are learning to be proficient in the new language, scaffolding this literacy process for students to reach their language goals seems important.

**Writing.** Writing has been growing as a medium for many people to communicate with each other around the world (Yi, 2009). As mentioned in the study, writing is increasing because of international communication and some opportunities to study in an English spoken country. It is an ability teachers are paying more attention to, and its definition depends on the teacher’s experiences and thoughts (Yi, 2009).

According to Byrne (1988), we write using graphic symbols, those constitute words, and then if put together, they form sentences, but those are not unrelated, they must follow a coherent sequence to give a specific message. There are languages in the world and some of them have completely different graphic symbols as in Chinese language. Some children have trouble when facing writing because of the way they write. In a study carried out in 2010, Chen and Zhou concluded that students did not developed the writing skill; however, they could express their feelings and emotions through drawings and lines. Using this strategy Chen and Zhou (2010) helped children through the stimulus of creative thinking.

The writing ability involves the response to a stimulus (Nunan, 1999. Cited in Yi, 2010). As Reis (2008) mentioned, there are some pre-reading tasks teachers use to promote active thinking on students’ background knowledge. The teacher is a support for students’ writing process, because they guide all the steps they need to follow, provide feedback, and also they help learners to construct ideas (Reis, 2008). As shown in the study carried out in 2010, Chen and
Zhou demonstrated the importance of the teacher guidance in the students’ writing development process.

**Interaction between Writers and Readers.** The main purpose of language is communication, and the most common form is oral interaction, but we cannot leave the writing channel behind. We usually communicate to other people by speaking, but a few times we employ written texts despite their benefits. This is because writing seems a tedious work given that before writing we need to follow many steps as brainstorming, ideas organizing, drafting and some others (Reis, 2008). With writing, we could communicate many things, as thoughts, ideas, experiences, opinions, among others. At the same time, writing allows for the interaction between readers and the writer at any moment as the receptor can access to the work when he/she needs it.

Writing constitutes the communication between the writer and the reader (Morley, 2007). Thus, writers must be careful when putting their ideas because they need to write for a spectator they do not know. Sometimes, writing gets difficult when the writer cannot interact in the same moment with the reader; they are interacting in different moments (Byrne, 1988). Keeping in mind this condition when writing, it is important to develop the work as clear as possible. The writer needs to consider the task, situation organizer, setting, materials and the context (Yi, 2010). This is important to make the reading easier for the receptor.

The previous knowledge is also influential in this interaction; as Kucer (2006) states, the writer and reader background influences this communication. We perceive reading as a passive act, but it is a dynamic process where the reader needs to decode what the writer is trying to say with the knowledge they already have (Kucer, 2006). Considering Byrne’s (1988) conception of writing, it involves encoding of messages; in other words, the writing process puts ideas and thought in a language complex system for another person to figure out the message.
**The Writing Process.** From Reis (2008), there are seven steps in the writing process (as cited in Hedge, 2005, p.51). They are: being motivated to write; getting ideas together; planning and outlining; making notes; making a first draft; revising, re-planning, redrafting; editing and getting ready for publication.

According to Reis (2008), writers do not know what to write about before they begin to do it because when they start, ideas come up to their minds. Writers first need to be free in writing, and they subsequently move backwards to correct mistakes. As the first step, writers should feel motivated to write, and with a purpose. When students perceive writing as a communicative process, they feel relaxed and they can find the motivation to write (Reis 2008). In this case, the teacher ought to pay more attention to what the student writes, not just for a grammar purpose but for a message communication and the implied language learning process.

After the motivation, learners need ideas to work on during the writing process. Brainstorming is an appropriate method to come up with ideas. “The objective of brainstorming is to stimulate the imagination to produce ideas on a topic or problem” (Reis, 2008 p. 7). Thus, students who may not be creative can think of new perspectives on the topic they will write about. The intention of this step is to obtain many ideas to choose great ideas Castillo (2014). And finally, these students consolidate clearer ideas on the selected topic.

There is a method called free-writing that consists on writing without paying much attention to the form, but the content on the writing (Reis, 2008, p.10). This method provides students with more ideas on the topic selected. This is similar to Nunan (1989) top-down approach which focuses on the meaning of language, in this case: students’ thoughts. Castillo and Hillman (1995) stated that free-writing benefits students to gather ideas to use for writing. As
they write, they come up with more ideas to put on their work. In doing so, students can make an outline more consolidated and realistic.

Planning is one of the most important step because it leads the writer to the right way; if the bases are not well-structured, then, the whole work will probably fall out in any moment (Reis, 2008). When planning writers are doing the scheme of their work, and these bases will determine the quality of it. Castillo (2014) states that students needs to be conscious about planning as this will help them on the "drafting" and "revising" steps. If students pay more attention to this step and spend more time on it, they will get higher quality results.

In making notes, students put their ideas on the paper, in this step, students will extend the outline they created (Reis, 2008). Later, they begin to write the first draft with all the ideas they have written before. In the next step, students need to be careful because they will correct all the mistakes about structure and grammar of the text. Therefore, it might contribute to the language learning process as students become aware about their own writing. Finally, teachers have an important role in this task, because they provide students with feedback for them to evaluate their work.

For last steps, students need to modify what the teacher suggests having a proofread assignment. In editing, students will make the structure of the work more refined (Reis, 2008). The punctuation, grammar, style, among other ought to be revised for last time. Moreover, between students they can cooperate in this step, as an example; they can change their writing activities and make them stronger with peer feedback. At the end, students give the paper to the teacher and in the case of writers, they publish their work.

**Purposes of writing.** During the process of learning a foreign or a second language, the terms input and output are used. Krashen (1982) states that input is the understanding of a
message; however, it does not focus on the form, but on the meaning, while the output is what the learner expresses with the knowledge already acquired. Krashen (1982) argues that the perception of the meaning can be helped through visual aids, the context, the experiences of the speaker and some others. The output is important during the learning process as well, since “the more you talk, the more people will talk to you” (Krashen, 1982, p. 60). In other words, if learners express themselves by speaking (output), they will receive some answers (input). As students use the output, they will be receiving input to develop English skills.

As time has passed by, different ways of communications have been created. At the very beginning, people communicated with basic sounds and pictures, and afterwards the creation of languages took place in the oral and written form. It is a necessity for people to be in contact with others, to support each other in their requirements to survive. Thus, they should communicate to supply essential needs. Writing can therefore be one manner to meet this human communication need.

Continuing with the purpose of language, writing has its own objectives in the community. Some people write for business purposes, some others because their study requires it, others because they like or they enjoy writing a diary and others to communicate with family or friends who live far away from their current living places (Byrne, 1988). Writing, out of academic objectives, has a strong implication in the humanity, almost all people can speak, but how much can they write?

**Creative Writing.** Castillo & Hillman (1995) argues that a way to enhance reading and writing skills, vocabulary and confidence in the classroom is through creative writing. Additionally, it fosters self-esteem and builds an essential communication among teachers and learners. Moreover, Harper (2010) suggests that creative writing is another way to communicate
feelings, meanings, perceptions and memories and it has some cultural and social rules. It can be evidenced in a study carried out in 2013 by Nasir, Naqvi and Bhamani in which students showed an increase in writing skill at the end of the implementation of creative writing in the course. Then, creative writing helps students to have better ideas to put into practice on the paper.

Castillo and Hillman (1995) proposes the following ideas in order to help students to develop self-expression and creativity, also, enhance communication skills and improve their interest and confidence in learning to write and read in a second language.

- Using free-write allows learners to have their moment of inspiration in a determined short time in where the steps of revising and editing are necessary to produce an original work of writing. With this technique, they have the opportunity to advance on developing ideas on a theme
- Introducing a diary writing motivates students to write and provides them a secure place to express their ideas even in ten minutes every class
- Writing about impossible things, dreams and memories inspire them, expand their visionary capacity, imagine, and encourage them to be specific painting a vivid word picture and expressing their emotions.
- Poetry, Short stories and shaped poetry provide the possibility to apprentices to express feelings, use a descriptive and esthetic language and communicate a meaningful meaning as well.

We consider creative writing as the possibility to enhance writing skills in an interesting and motivating way. This is because communication and creativity come together in the written language, having the option to express ideas, emotions and point of views using writing
techniques, styles and literary genres such as poetry, short stories, novels etc. As Sefertzi (2000) states “Creativity is not an innate quality of only a few selected people. Creativity is present in everyone. It can be learned, practiced and developed by the use of proven techniques which, enhancing and stimulating the creative abilities and ideas.” (p. 3)

**Speech vs. Writing.** Taking into consideration Byrne (1988), there is a wide difference between the two ways of output, speaking and writing. While speaking takes place in an immediate context, writing must create the context and should be precise in this goal. When speaking, there is a face to face interaction between interlocutors, but in writing this interaction does not take place at the same moment. The speaker knows the audience, but the writer does not. During the speech, there is feedback right in the moment, but the writer does not have that possibility, he/she needs to think about what the reader will think about his/her work.

Consequently, the speech is transitory, it means the listener ought to understand in real time; if not, he/she could interact to solve the doubts. In contrast, writing is permanent, so the reader cannot ask for an explanation, but he/she can read it as many times as he/she wants. In writing, grammatical mistakes are not expected, while in speaking they may occur. And finally, speaking involves some language characteristics which help listeners’ comprehension as stress and intonation; the writer must use punctuation, capital letters, underlining, among other resources for communicating important issues (Byrne, 1988).

As suggested above, there may exist a big difference between speech and writing. For foreign language students, writing may be a difficult skill to develop taking into account the punctuation as it is quite different from the rules in Spanish. As mentioned in Byrne (1988) writing is a hard activity taking into consideration that it requires a mind effort when trying to
place the words and sentences in the right place. Consequently, writing is a long and hard process in which students should feel comfortable to express their ideas.

Why is Writing Important? Writing is an important ability in the language learning process, and it has some benefits for students. In 1988, Byrne wrote a book about writing in which he indicated some advantages of writing for EFL learners. First of all, he addresses the possibility that some students do not feel complacent when they have to practice orally; therefore, writing becomes a didactic means for those students to express what they think through a paper without getting confused or anxious. Writing helps students to be more retentive as it is a relaxed practice. Students can see their learning progress through writing activities and, writing provides an opportunity to practice the target language.

Headrick (2009) defines technology as tools created by human beings to make life more efficient. In education, technology first came with papers, markers, blackboards and some books, then TICs (Technology of information and communication) came to complement educational purposes. Students have access to social media, E-mail, blogs and among others; in which they feel the necessity of use their writing communication skills.
Research Design

In this chapter, we describe the overall research methodology followed to carry out this study. First, we account for the paradigm selected along with the research method or design. Secondly, we provide a concrete description regarding participants selected and the context in which the research was conducted. Thirdly, we define our data collection instruments and procedures of each one, considering the nature of data gathered.

Research Paradigm

Flick (2009) states that qualitative research is used when we are interested in analyzing the social production of practices, issues or events, through collection of non-standardized data. Thus, this type of research analyzes cases from people’s expression and activities in their local contexts where the quality arises from the application of techniques and methods, besides defining the goals of the project.

Bearing in mind what Creswell (2007) explained about qualitative research characteristics, this paradigm focuses on participants’ perceptions and researcher’s observations. In this work, the purpose is to analyze the effects of self-directed learning strategies on students’ creative writing process and products. To accomplish that, we needed to observe and analyze participants’ creative writing process and ultimate products along with their perceptions about the overall process and SDL experience. Creswell (2007) added another characteristic we acknowledged in our study; it deals with researchers as data collection instruments, i.e. they are observers and those observations can be triangulated as data with other instruments’ for subsequent analysis and discussion on findings.
For answering some questions of certain social phenomena, qualitative research is usually employed. Qualitative research should have essential features such as the appropriateness of methods and theories (Creswell, 2007). Moreover, this paradigm favors data analysis from diverse perspectives. Therefore, researchers’ flexibility is significant and necessary when interpreting data from an interdisciplinary viewpoint.

Other characteristics about this paradigm includes the natural setting and the multiple sources of data (Creswell 2007; Johnson & Christensen, 2012). First, the research setting is a significant part of the investigation, and this project needed the participants to be in their usual context to observe what they commonly did and the changes they displayed in their behaviors. Secondly, qualitative research makes the data bigger than what it is, i.e. an instrument could be analyzed from various perspectives for the project to be rich in data analysis.

Based on the above, the research paradigm for this project was qualitative. We observed students’ goals, SDL choices and students’ perceptions on certain strategies selected for the development of the didactic sequence suggested. Creswell (2007) states that this paradigm is used when the issue is more than numbers is about people qualities. This work needed the researcher to design and administer different instruments including interviews, the personal development plan and students' artifacts in the form of creative written texts. The data collected and analyzed from the theoretical lens (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) afforded through these study constructs allowed us to answer the how and why of our inquiry interest, namely the research question (Flick, 2009).

**Type of Study**
Our research project aimed at stimulating ELT undergraduates’ self-directed learning throughout the application of strategies to creative writing in EFL. For that reason, we went beyond the identification and analysis of the problematic situation to find a possible solution in the EFL context concerning the autonomy issue in learning. That is why, the type of study within the qualitative approach that best suits our purpose is action research.

Furthermore, as teacher-researchers seek students to apply autonomy to their lives, namely, in their lifelong learning, they acquire self-control and self-efficiency in daily activities, which is fundamental during the training process of students in our public university. We hope to contribute in the pedagogical field by means of SDL in English teaching where teachers as facilitators can work along with students in a collaborative way, improving their methods, constructing knowledge together and helping them to consolidate their capabilities as autonomous learners.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) state action research is a method used in “any setting where a problem involving people, tasks and procedures cries out for solution, or where some change of feature results in a more desirable outcome” (p. 297). Furthermore, Cohen et al (2007) argue this method can be implemented in areas such as learning strategies, evaluative procedures, continuing professional development of teachers, administration, management and control among others, where researchers achieve an improvement and change at the local level by means of two key stages. The first one is related to a diagnosis (identification, evaluation and formulation) of the problem. The second one refers to the test (redefinition or modification) of those hypotheses developed by directed intervention or experiment in situ.

According to Burns (2009), the main idea of action research is to intervene a problematic situation for achieving changes and improvements in practice. Action research implies a self-
reflective, systematic and critical approach for developing new ideas in the educational context, as well as a series of stages in a cycle of research gradually carried out by teacher-researchers. In accordance with Burns (2009), these stages in action research can be explained from our study development as follows:

**Planning.** In this stage, the researcher identifies a problematic situation and designs a plan of action to reach improvements in the research context. For these purposes, the researcher must consider the type of investigation and the possible improvements.

In relation to our research project, we evidenced the lack of self-directed learning strategies in EFL undergraduates’ learning experience when writing creative texts, throughout the application of questionnaires and line base tests. Considering this situation, we designed a plan, i.e. a pedagogical intervention with the purpose of approaching a possible solution founded on autonomy plus conscious learning in the EFL classroom that can potentially have an impact on these future teachers’ lifelong learning.

**Action.** Here, researchers usually intervene in their context keeping in mind the plan of action, in a determined period. Also, the researcher could question the assumptions made about the current problematic situation and think of new alternatives to propose interventions from a critical standpoint. Concerning our research study, we developed and used a blog in Wix (online program) along with creative written activities as our plan of action. At this point, ELT undergraduates applied SDL strategies, guided by us as teacher-researchers.

**Observation.** In this stage, the researcher is involved in observing the effects produced by the plan of action beforehand, documenting the research context and participants’ actions along with perceptions. In this case, we observed and analyzed the impact of the intervention through data related to students’ SDL process and their perceptions towards this learning
alternative. These data were in turn taken from students’ interactions on the blog and the final creative written products contrasted to the line base texts to identify effects of SDL strategies on students’ creative writing products.

**Reflection.** Based on the previous effects identified from the intervention observed, the researcher reflects upon, evaluates and describes possible effects and results. In this manner, the teacher-researcher understands the issue explored and makes sense about what is happening. Thus, data gathered and the reflection around them helped us in our study to understand both practices, processes and products by EFL undergraduates when applying SDL and creative writing. The reflection stage was theoretically informed by our constructs discussion. This might be an important step to improve our educational context in terms of learning autonomy and reflective attitude.

**Research Question**

What effects do self-directed learning strategies have on ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions on this learning process mediated by blog (Wix)?

**Sub-questions**

- What Self-directed learning strategies do ELT undergraduates apply in the process of creative writing mediated by blog (Wix)?
- How do ELT undergraduates perceive the application of SDL strategies to their creative writing and other fields in their development as future language teachers?
- How do self-directed learning strategies influence ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products?

**Context**

The context corresponds to a public university located in Bogotá D.C, in the bachelor’s program of basic education with an emphasis on English, in the Faculty of Science and education. In regard to the bachelor’s program, the mission and vision attempt to train English teacher-researchers in primary and secondary levels, with a sense of critical thinking to reach a social transformation and improvement within the Colombian education. This is thought to be achieved through the construction of their own knowledge and abilities strengthening to achieve a comprehensive and conscious professional development.

Indeed, the bachelor’s program aims at training students in their professional development dimension, throughout the academic space entitled seminar VI which is taken in tenth semester. In this course, the reflection upon the role as future teachers is usually the main objective to guide them in planning and rethinking about job, studies and research possibilities available after graduation. The underlying premise in this course proposal and even some strategies and models for professional development plans are directly related to SDL, insofar as the future teachers’ professional development projects are deemed as never ending (Aldana, 2016).

Along these lines, the degree program aims at preparing future teachers with a series of competences in the education of a Foreign Language (FL). These refer to the knowledge not only about the FL, but also pedagogical theories to lead its teaching. Learners are expected to reflect upon their teaching/learning practices to change them into alternative informed strategies, techniques and methods. In this sense, these ELT program students have a profile enriched with
comprehensive training and autonomous work in different areas. These ones involve communicative competences, pedagogic strategies, research skills, and critical thinking around the social context in the educational field.

**Purposeful sampling and participants**

Participants in our research corresponded to 25 ELT undergraduate students from a public university who were young women and men who lived in diverse zones of Bogotá. Their ages ranged from 20 and 23. Based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, their level of English was around intermediate level, i.e. B1 and B2. According to Creswell (2007), purposeful sampling is a technique in which the researcher selects the participants because they are information-rich cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2008) or provide data required to understand the research problem and the phenomenon under study. This is to say we applied the criterion-based selection technique to choose 25 ELT undergraduate students displaying certain characteristics. These ones in turn were: their ability of writing texts in English; their interest in fostering autonomous learning; their digital competence or knowledge on ICTs and particularly, their constant participation or interest in social networks. All these criteria are relevant for developing creative writing activities supported by SDL strategies and mediated by a blog (Wix).

**Data Collection Instruments and Procedures**

**Questionnaires.** According to Freeman (1998) questionnaires are defined as “sets of written questions focusing on a particular topic or area, seeking responses to closed or ranked questions/options and/or open-ended personal opinions, judgments or beliefs”. (p. 94). As second
order data, the execution of this technique after the termination of the pedagogical implementation provided us participants' perceptions, concerning the application of SDL strategies in their language learning and overall professional development as future English teachers and lifelong learners, through semi-structured questions (See annex 4).

**Personal Development Plan.** The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (2009) defines personal development plans as a structure to support students’ development which assist them to reflect upon their own learning. Through this instrument, we evidenced how ELT undergraduates applied self-directed learning strategies in the development of creative writing activities, mediated by a blog as an online learning environment. This instrument was completed by all participants during each section (See Annex 5). In sum, this instrument allowed ELT undergraduates to be aware of the strategy used to develop the activity and reflect on why they selected it. Our participants were thus able to think about what they did when they developed assignments.

**Students' Artifacts.** Artifacts are defined as students' products from the pedagogical intervention (Freeman, 1998). Along these lines, these didactic objects allowed us to analyze the effects of SDL strategies on undergraduates’ creative writing process and particularly, their products. Freeman (1998) confirmed that document collection is a data collection technique which comes from the intervention, and it can include students' writings or compositions. Those artifacts actually complemented our data analysis, since they were triangulated with our observations on the writing process assisted by SDL strategies through the blog.
Ethical issues

Bearing in mind the importance of research ethics and the responsibility we assume as researchers in the development of our project, we designed a consent form for the participants and the bachelor’s degree program coordinator. In this manner, we agreed on protecting both the institutional specific name and participants’ personal information when presenting our findings and the whole research report. We set pseudonyms to our participants to hide their identity. In addition, we asked for the necessary permissions for developing our research project (See annexes 6 & 7).

After a discussion in the literature around the topic of our study, we have here provided some methodological information regarding the development of the present research, e.g. paradigm, design, data collection instruments, sampling among other research issues. Based on it along with the problem identified and our research question, we planned the instructional design or pedagogical intervention described in the following chapter.
**Instructional Design: Creative Writing Blog for Self-directed Imagination and Expression**

This chapter describes the pedagogical implementation we carried out at a university located in Bogotá. It aimed at supporting ELT undergraduates to stimulate their creative writing processes and products through the development of a didactic sequence assisted by SDL strategies and mediated by a blog as a collaboration and learning ICT resource (Cacheiro González, 2011).

Firstly, the chapter specifies our curricular platform, which comprises the overall approach (theories of language and learning) as well as the educational view that support and consolidate our didactic choice. Secondly, we describe the innovation tenets of this instructional design along with the pedagogical objectives. Thirdly, the implementation is detailed with the activities proposed in our didactic sequence, which is complemented with the working plan and schedule. Finally, the criteria for evaluation, the roles of the teacher, the student and materials are defined.

**Figure 3: Pedagogical Innovation Platform**
Educational View: Humanism

Humanism focuses on people morality, values and now autonomy plays an important role in education from this perspective (Aloni, 2009). Morality has always been in personal relationships as it is a regulator in humans’ behaviors. Secondly, humanism strongly focuses on students’ autonomy as it is an important value for students to develop responsibility. Finally, in the professional side, the humanist perspective aims at building responsible individuals. Consequently, teachers are thought to partake in a community that needs to be responsible and autonomous about their daily lives activities.

According to Aloni (2009), there are models of humanism that have varied in their perspectives throughout history. Regarding the classical discourses, this ideal entails virtues of wisdom humanness as well as qualities of reflective thinking, benevolence and social responsibility. In relation to the modern humanist discourses, the author lists the personal autonomy, creative imagination, authenticity, respect for persons, critical thinking and other aspects as chief principles. Now, as a wide agreement, regardless differences, the paradigm of humanism is considered as a cosmopolitan worldview stipulating the enhancement of human development and dignity as the ultimate end (Aloni, 2009). It comprises a commitment to achieve a democratic and social order where everyone can enjoy an autonomous life, personal welfare, cultural richness and a broad education.

In the case of students, Aloni (2009) states that schools culture needs to be developed in all students. One of them was the development of autonomy with the objective of solving personal problems, social stress, among others. In other words, autonomy is linked to humanism, because it is the learner's responsibility in their own learning process.
Finally, teachers have a relevant role in the stimulation of students’ autonomy as models for students even more if they are teaching future educators. According to Veugelers (2011), teachers can address personal and professional values in three different ways. The first one is a transfer value in which the teacher needs to involve students in real practices to develop morality. Secondly, we have a reflective practitioner where the teacher always needs to reflect upon their own practices as a professional. And the third one known as moral sensitivity involves the teacher’s perception about values, and also, they need to check what students’ behaviors mean.

**Theory of Learning: Connectivism**

Considering Siemens (2005), the Connectivism emerges as a reflection upon dynamics of learning on a digital age where this process is subscribed in the possibilities of reading the world through internet. In this context, Connectivism conceives knowledge as an element that is present both inside and outside human beings who are seen as part of network learning. Particularly, Siemens (2005) proposes three principles within the Connectivism theory, namely, the chaos theory, self-organization and networks.

This author asserts the chaos theory has to do with the fundamental feature that knowledge has nowadays. This is related to the challenge implied for individuals who want to learn it. Following a pre-established order to achieve this learning goal does not seem enough; on the contrary, they need to find an order to make sense and understand the knowledge acquired, even based on individual learning styles and needs. Thus, knowledge acquisition and learning is not linear within this theory; on the opposite, this author states that it is a dynamic set of nodes in connection what allows an individualization regarding the way of acquiring knowledge.
Bearing in mind the description about the chaos theory, the creation of structures or patterns for knowledge is implied, and it is perceived as unique for each learner to a certain extent. This principle is called self-organization which plays an important role in structuring knowledge from the beginning where it is randomly organized (Rocha. As cited by Siemens, 2005). This individual organization is carried out through connections between one concept and another, i.e. networks.

Siemens (2005) explains networks are constituted by information sets connected by nodes. In this interconnection process, each learner creates a personalized space to obtain information. Links constructed by individualized learning nodes provoke new connections. In this sense, the networks set up by self-organization in a world of random information are the essence of Connectivism. In relation to our pedagogical implementation, self-organization and networks are represented in ELT undergraduates’ decisions concerning the choice of self-directed learning strategies and the construction of creative writing texts.

Additionally, their comments and feedback to one another’s creative texts are an example of emerging knowledge nodes in a learning network.

Furthermore, Siemens (2005) argues Connectivism proposes a model that provides students learning skills to achieve goals in this digital area, considering the way how individuals acquire new knowledge and apply it in certain settings and contexts, instead of focusing on internal mental processes such as other learning theories (Constructivism, Cognitivism, etc.). The following Connectivism principles are proposed by Siemens (2005):

- Nurturing and maintaining connections are needed to facilitate continue learning.
- Ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill.
In view of Connectivism foundations and perspectives, we decided to choose it as learning theory in our pedagogical implementation, mediated by a blog as a digital scenario or resource. Throughout the use of this web resource, both learners and the teacher participated in the construction of knowledge networks and language learning communities with strategic knowledge nodes. Learners had the opportunity to develop creative writing activities while applying SDL strategies, shared and commented by all the blog community members. Simultaneously, teachers provided feedback on students’ products and learners carried out this process among them as well.

Furthermore, the blog afforded the opportunity to interact among participants besides constructing knowledge from the development of each activity. This didactic sequence allowed participants to innovate and create from their writing, using grammar structures they already knew, SDL strategies and what they learnt through peer-feedback and social interaction. Therefore, the blog was a digital learning environment (Aldana, 2014) where learner-users nurtured and made their individual needs part of connected network knowledge in terms of creative writing.

**Theory of Language: Interactionism**

According to John-Steiner, Smith and Panofsky (1994), the interactionist theory focuses on how social interaction affects the learning process. During the development of a second language, communication is significantly important to acquire and internalize the information. Considering Richards and Rodgers’ contribution around interactionism (2014), language is considered as a tool for building relationships among people. This interaction is commonly seen
in the first stage of human beings, when babies and children feel the necessity to communicate with others, consequently they acquire the language.

Communication is seen as an important part of human beings as it allows for social relationships construction from this interactional view. Ellis (1994) considers that interactionism occurs in the learner’s mind between the knowledge received and learner’s abilities. However, he agrees that the term interactionist is used for other second language acquisition theories that focus on communication. Communication is present in our daily lives, and language is the medium used to achieve it. In all life situations, communication with others seems necessary through any channel and language. According to Estaire and Zanón (1990), social interactions are directly connected to the construction of knowledge tools.

Language comes into view as a human way to communicate messages, and this facilitates the construction of social ties among people. From Richards and Rodgers’ (2014) explanation about language from the interactionism, it appears as the device people use not only to set up relations with others, but also to maintain them. As Richards and Rogers (2014) state, language learning is a process that involve interaction and negotiation of meaning.

Additionally, social interactions take a significant position at the beginning of life, in babies and children. According to John-Steiner, Smith and Panofsky (1994), Vygotsky states that children naturally have the desire to communicate with other people, at the beginning the communication is mainly with signs. Also, Vygotsky refers to the relationship between teacher and student, where he emphasis on student’s role as it is very meaningful. Second language students are seen as children when learning a new language because they need to feel the necessity to communicate and use the target language.
Finally, language is used to communicate with others, and that is the main purpose of writing: to communicate through written words. Then interactionist view seems appropriate in language learning as this aims to communicate with other people in different ways. This theory thus supports the pedagogical implementation of this research for students’ social interaction and assistance while writing creative texts as a collaborative SDL experience.

**Didactic choice: Postmethod**

Considering the limitations of conventional methods and the model of teacher education to achieve an effective language teaching, Kumaravadivelu (2001) proposes a postmethod pedagogy based on a three-dimensional system, which is characterized by the pedagogic parameters of particularity, practicality, and possibility.

According to Kumaravadivelu (2001), the pedagogy of particularity is the set of context elements that defines the language pedagogy itself. As Kumaravadivelu (2001) states, “Context-sensitive pedagogic knowledge can emerge only from the practice of particularity” (p.540). In this sense, the pedagogy of particularity implies a situational understanding and is considered as a key element in the pedagogy of practicality as another philosophical assumption within the Postmethod.

In Kumaravadivelu’s words (2001), the pedagogy of practicality refers to “the relationship between practice and theory” (p.540). In this respect, the author distinguishes between theorist’s theories and teacher’s theories to call for the overcoming of this practice-theory dichotomy, and instead linking them. This perspective appears to broaden teachers’ role to the extent that they are seen as theory builders as well from their personal experience.
Based on the above, the pedagogy of practicality invites teachers to develop their intellectual and disciplinary autonomy through this reflective process and thus build their own pedagogy knowledge, namely, a theory of teaching practice based on their experiences contextually situated. For that reason, the pedagogy of practicality constitutes a pedagogy of possibility, which means a way of empowerment, by which those involved develop theories and social practices in order to transform the pedagogy and decide on what they learn and how. (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

In brief, Postmethod pedagogy concerning language education, tries to go beyond the boundaries of conventional methods, where either teachers or learners consolidate their autonomy as active producers of knowledge as well. Also, the Postmethod pedagogy invites participants through a reflective process to be aware of needs and implications of the local context plus the political, linguistic, cultural and social phenomena present in language and teaching processes.

In relation to our research project, the Postmethod means a didactic opportunity to encourage SDL in ELT undergraduates students, bearing in mind their needs as writers and future English teachers in the educational context. In this sense, we as creators of learning opportunities assisted students to be self-directed learners through the application of strategies for creative writing activities, considering what autonomy implies in EFL contexts and in their professional development. Specifically, we refer to traits such as responsibility, reflection processes and skills to both set and achieve learning and professional goals in a suitable and satisfactory manner.

Considering our curricular platform in conjunction with our problem statement, our pedagogical innovation deals with the design and application of self-directed learning strategies through the creative writing, mediated by a blog as a digital scenario. This can support ELT
undergraduates to become autonomous learners and writers, motivated by their imagination and interest to improve their skills as students and future English teachers.

**Pedagogical innovation objectives**

**General Objective**
- To foster ELT undergraduates’ creative writing through the application of SDL strategies

**Specific Objectives**
- To develop creative writing activities by means of a blog didactic sequence.

**Pedagogical Implementation**

The implementation comprised three sessions from which students followed some instructions to develop certain activities about creative writing while they applied SDL strategies that are given to them as a list (Annex 8). Each session was carried out on a blog, and each module had two or three activities related to a determined topic. In this sense, students developed them autonomously in six weeks, through the application of SDL strategies, according to their criteria based on our pedagogical suggestions. Also, they gave feedback to other participants’ creative writing process in the blog. Furthermore, activities such as the writing of biographies shows Restany (1997) perceptions about the five layers, in which this author emphasis on the importance of the people’s interior and also the context that surrounds them. The activities proposed were:

**First topic:** Start your imagination:
1. Creation of a character: In this activity students set up their imagination to create a character along with a list of features they wanted for this creation.

2. Free writing about that character: Imagining characters are themselves, students wrote down the biography of that character, it means theirs. In this activity students wrote their own biography but as if they were describing another individual which made the activity different from others.

**Second topic:** Inside your own head.

1. Original glossary: Students had to create 5 words giving them a meaning.

2. Dream-catcher: Students had to create a mind map about a recent dream they had had.

3. Rewrite your dream: For this activity students had to mix previous activities, therefore they had to write the dream they had but using the words they invented.

**Third topic:** Your present, your future

1. For this point student could choose between activity A and B.

   A) Inspiration and poems: Based on the video posted on the blog (Wix). (See: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Cp6mKbRTQY&feature=youtu.be), students wrote a poem to one of their family members they admired the most.

   B) Scary story: Students were encouraged to write a story which took place at bogotá D.C. or at the university, they could use fictional or real character to develop it.

2. Time machine: Students imagined they were time travelers and could visit the time they were at first semester to leave a letter to them at that time, they wrote it with the intention to avoid specific events at university.

3. Visualization: Students imagined they were 60 years old, then they wrote their autobiography keeping in mind what they supposedly did until that age as well as their current
dreams and all the things they wanted to do and have. If they wanted, they could listen to the song “Everybody’s Free” by Laz Buhrmann See: 
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MQIJ3vOp6nI to find inspiration

Assessment

Contributing students with feedback is a relevant part of the learning process since it helps them to understand mistakes and what they are doing well (Harmer, 2007). According to Brown and Glasner (1999), there are some objectives for assessment as the following: students need to learn from their errors, build a solid language learning, keep students to feel motivated about their progress, among others. There are some ways in which teachers can assess their students as formative assessment and peer-assessment.

Formative assessment focuses on checking the learning process and evaluates it from the beginning to the end. Bearing in mind Brown and Glasner (1999) perception about formative assessment, they state that some words are used to qualify the students’ work such us “likely”, “achievement reached”, “needs improvement”, and so forth. This type of assessment helps students to be aware of their own learning process and also they will notice what they have to improve and work on.

The second assessment needed for this project is peer-assessment which consists on another students’ evaluation. From Brown and Glasner (1999) proposal, peer-assessment focuses on the evaluation made by students to another student’s work, also the student that is assessed will evaluate another one. This method will help students to be aware about some mistakes during the learning process from both perspectives, the evaluator and the evaluated. Additionally,
when students evaluate others they feel the necessity of having more knowledge about the topic; therefore, it is also a learning catalyst.

**Teacher’s Role**

In our pedagogical implementation, the teacher guides the learning process, and plays important role in the development of each activity proposed. Harmer (2007) defines this approach as the “learner-centred” teaching, where teachers are facilitators to develop students’ awareness of language and learning. For clarifying this concept of facilitator, in relation to our research project, we specify the following roles defined by Harmer (2007).

- **Controller:** In this role, teachers assume responsibility about the classroom and the activities take place. This role is described when teacher make announcements, read aloud, organize drills, lead questions and answers or exemplify qualities of a teacher-fronted classroom.

- **Organizer:** This is one of the most important roles teachers have to perform inside the classroom. It implies actions such as give student information and instructions to develop certain activities or organize them into groups. The author summarizes this role in these four steps: Engage, instruct, initiate and organize feedback.

- **Assessor:** Playing this role, teachers indicate students if they are getting their language learning process right. In other words, to give feedback, correct and assess them. For this purpose, teachers must tell their students what they expect from the class and what they need to achieve success in the development of each activity.
Observer: In this role, teachers must be alert concerning the possible effects their actions are having in class. They not only observe the possible weaknesses or mistakes students have as language learners, also, they watch so as to analyze the success of their materials and activities proposed in order to make changes in the future. Nevertheless, teachers do not intrude too much in the student’s learning process in order to encourage their autonomy.

Thereby, the teacher encourages students to develop writing skills through the development of creative writing activities and she guides students in the autonomy dimension, inasmuch as they apply their SDL strategies suggested by the teacher and take responsibility of their duties as autonomous learners. Also, the teacher considers students’ needs and attitudes in this SDL process and demonstrates a certain degree of autonomy as a model for students, which characterize a posthmethod teacher educator (Kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Student’s Role

Within this context, students play an active role, assuming responsibility to achieve their learning goals concerning the creative writing activities proposed by the teacher. It means students can be described as postmethod learners, i.e. active and autonomous participants in the learning process who reflect and accordingly apply a series of techniques such as metacognitive and cognitive ones for successful learning (kumaravadivelu, 2001).

Said the above, ELT undergraduates choose self-directed learning strategies (suggested by the teacher) they consider suitable to fulfill each activity. This was planned to be conducted in an autonomous way through the blog web resource. It urged students to reflect upon their ongoing
learning process, taking advantage of learning opportunities given in interaction with participants and the application of SDL strategies to creative writing activities.

**Role of Materials**

According to Tomlison (2012), materials can be considered as those elements teachers use for facilitating the learning of a language. These tools can be applied for informing the learner about the target language, guiding the learner in practicing the language, providing experience of the language in use, promoting the use of language and helping the student to discover about the language.

Taking into consideration what materials for language learning and teaching imply, we designed creative writing activities through a blog as a bridge to approach students in ways that allowed them to practice the written language and improve their writing competence, according to their learning needs. These activities (in which we employed videos, stories and pictures as additional materials) were sequenced by employing some postmethod pedagogy macro-strategies.

**Blog (Wix)**

Blogs as web 2.0 instruments are based on a set of knowledge creation taking into account the execution and management of information. Additionally, teachers tend to approach blogs with a didactic purpose in the teaching practice. The main objective of blogs is to allow for the presentation of specific contents in different ways such as textual, hypertextual and multimodal (Cruz, Buyse, González & Tukahara, 2012).

Additionally, Cruz et. al (2012) assert blogs are easy to implement in the class and these tools seem to facilitate interaction among students and teacher with collaborative atmosphere. In
this way, blogs facilitate meaningful communication through interaction, skills integration and co-responsibility in the teaching and learning process.

**Working Plan and Schedule**

The implementation was carried out in 6 weeks in which topic-based syllabus was developed. From Harmer (2007), language can be organized by topics and those topics have some subtopics. Topics in general have the advantage for students to be motivated depending on their interest. Furthermore, those topics give students a context related to the use of language. Also, students’ needs and context will be taken into account when developing the activities.

The table below is divided in the number of sessions, the topic and activities proposed in addition to the goals to be accomplished by learners.

**Table 1: Creative Writing Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Start your Imagination</td>
<td>Creation of a character</td>
<td>• To create a character and write creatively their own biography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Free writing about that character</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Inside your own head</td>
<td>1. Original glossary</td>
<td>• To create 5 words and give their meaning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Dream-catcher</td>
<td>• To create a mind map about a dream they have had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rewrite your dream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activities implemented in the process of this research project portray a pedagogical sensibility towards learning needs that allow us to help them in both writing and autonomous aspect. Resources such as videos, stories and pictures in connection with creativity of each individual help us as teachers to motivate learners to write in their second language. This motivation also is a key to help them to become skillful and responsible students, which is a dimension that takes part in self-directed learning and plays an important role in the achievement of cognitive goals (Garrison, 1997).

| 3 | Your present, your future | Choose between activity A or B  
|   |                           | A. Scary Story  
|   |                           | B. Poem  
|   |                           | 2. Time Machine  
|   |                           | 3. Visualization | • To rewrite the dream but using the words they invented.  
|   |                           |               | • To write a scary story, including places in Bogotá you are interested in.  
|   |                           |               | • To write a poem to someone the student admires based on the video.  
|   |                           |               | • To write a letter as future traveler to avoid possible events during the college time.  
|   |                           |               | • To write an autobiography if they were 60 years old. |
Data Analysis

This chapter aims at describing the process we implemented to analyze the data collected in our research project. In this sense, the types of triangulation and the strategy for the data management as well as the approach we applied for the corresponding analysis are detailed step by step in this chapter. Subsequently, the findings with the categories that emerged from this analysis and the relations between them are explained, which are represented by means of a graphic.

Triangulation

According to Freeman (1998), triangulation makes the findings powerful and trustworthy. To strengthen the research project we used three kinds of triangulation; methodological, data and theoretical triangulation. There were important to consider the theory that we based on, the data we collected with the instruments and the perceptions students had. Triangulation is necessary as long as it helps to develop a consolidated idea from different views (Flick, Kardoff, Steinke, 2004).

Methodological triangulation. This type of triangulation had implications on the data analysis as it takes three different instruments to answer the research question. Questionnaires, personal development plan and students’ artifact were used to reach this purpose. We started to analyze each instrument to validate each category.

Data triangulation. It gathers first and second-order data from the instruments and put it together to make an objective description about the question. We conducted questionnaires as well as we gather data with students’ artifacts and personal development plan in which there are second-order data that helped the project. Perceptions played an important role by cause of helping the analysis to be more solid based on evidence.
Theoretical triangulation. We applied this sort of triangulation inasmuch as we took into consideration the main constructs and theoretical propositions to code/name the data to make the hypothesis stronger. Theory is essential to develop the analysis as this project has it basis on it. In that sense we conducted this analysis to go beyond what is already written.

Data Management Strategy

Color-coding was the strategy we used for handling the data we gathered. This strategy helped us to develop initial categories and sub-categories using a visual way based on colors (Stottok, Bergaus and Gorra, 2011). For such purpose, we underlined paragraphs and lines we found in the several data collection instruments as relevant ones to answer the research question. For those patterns identified, we defined a specific color and we named them subsequently in order to make the data organization easier and thus, group them to create the final categories and sub-categories.

Data Analysis Approach: Grounded Theory

The approach we applied for analyzing the data that emerged from the several instruments was the grounded theory. This approach provides a procedure for developing categories and finding relationships between them in order to build a discursive set of theoretical prepositions (Creswell, 2007). To apply a grounded analysis, we carried out the following steps proposed by Freeman (1998).

Naming. As first step, it involves taking the data apart and labeling through codes. To create those codes, we wrote keywords underlying parts of the data, taking into consideration the
research question, the main theoretical constructs and especially the patterns we started to see in the data we collected.

**Grouping.** After giving the names to the parts of the data and as these steps points out, we clustered the codes grounded from the data into categories and sub-categories. To carry out this procedure, we colored the codes in accordance with the aspect or topic they represented and also, we designed a chart that was divided into instruments (PDP, Questionnaire, Student’s artifacts) and constructs (Creative Writing, SDL strategies, Student’s perceptions) we work on this research project.

**Finding Relationships.** In this stage, when the groups of rising codes are already set up, this structure of categories is strengthened through the identification of relations or patterns between them. Based on what we had in the chart, we started to find relationships always keeping in mind the research question. Furthermore, we identified the outliers as those pieces of data that did not fit into any group but contribute to answer the research question in certain way.

**Displaying.** In this final stage, all the analysis made of the data collected and what is found when applying the last steps are laid out, so as to display the interpretation as a whole and makes it concrete and visible. For this purpose, we designed a graphic to evidence the main three categories with their sub-categories (each one in one circle) as well as the relationships between them using arrows to make it understandable.
Findings

This section presents the definite three categories along with their sub-categories emerging from the data analysis. The first category deals with the SDL strategies students applied for certain writing activities and how these strategies may assist them to display their creativity. The second category refers to undergraduates’ perceptions on the role and effects of SDL strategies on autonomous learning and professional development. The third category shed light on the importance of external and internal motivation in future teachers. We unfold the construction of these three categories and their connection among them (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Correlation of Categories

Portrayal of creativity through the application of SDL strategies in writing activities

A key element in this research project was the use of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) strategies to develop creative writing activities. To answer the research question about the
influence of these strategies on creative writing products, we will discuss the different strategies students used. Students were free to choose any of those strategies and used it as they needed. The following are the strategies that seemed to influence students’ products.

**Content organization.** Once students or writers have ideas in mind, they have to organize them in order to have a well-structured work. Sometimes, writers have difficulties with ideas organization; therefore, it is necessary to create an image of the content’s plan to overcome those difficulties (Reis, 2008). Planning is one of the most important steps being considered the base of the production. These planning steps were grouped in this category as they helped students to construct the paragraph as we could notice in their personal development plans.

For activities in which they had to write a complete text, we noticed the use of planning. Also, it was the strategy they used the most as it may allow them to achieve the results the wanted as seen in the next examples:

Patricia (pseudonym) asserted: “For me, planning is essential when I have to write about something because it helps me control my time and organize the ideas I want to show through my writing as well as clarify the main message I want to convey to readers. Again, the use of imagery was very useful because it helped me figure out my character’s life based on real facts taken out of my life. (Annex 5, personal development plan 2, 2017)

In the Scary story (third module), Esperanza (pseudonym) expressed: “I chose planning as the main strategy for writing the scary story which was the first/second option regarding the first activity for the 3rd module. At first, I started this story using this strategy following some steps where I established the place of the story, then the characters, the relationship among them, the plot and the development of story’s sequence. Secondly, I started to join all these elements and at the end, the story was completed.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 22, 2017). Similarly,
Patricia (pseudonym) adds that she chose planning for the third activity because it helped her to organize her ideas and the message she wanted to transmit through the story (Annex 5, personal development plan 3, 2017).

In addition to planning, mapping was another strategy some participants used to structure texts and think about their future activities as professionals. Castillo (2014) suggests that in order to write, mind maps are used as previous activities to get and organize ideas. For example, in the third activity from module three, participants showed that the use of the mapping strategy facilitated the process of organizing the ideas they had. Simultaneously, Esperanza (pseudonym) expressed mapping as a SDL strategy allowed her to wonder about what she wanted to accomplish professionally in a short and long term. She added that she established a hierarchy among her goals, starting with those that were closer to her present as academic mobility to continue thus with those interests possibly set for a coming future as some expectations after finishing her bachelor (Annex 5, personal development plan 22).

For the second module, participants had to create a mind map about a nightmare in the second activity with the purpose of rewriting it in the third activity. Some students expressed they used mapping because of that, but some others stated that even the activity required a mind map, it was useful to fulfil with the activity goal. For instance, Sandra (pseudonym) mentions that “I chose mapping strategy. And it is not only because the activity required the mind map; it is also because before writing the story (third activity), I used to write key words or in this case to make a mind map to have as a draft.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 5, 2017). From this perspective, mapping constitutes a process to plan and organize what writers want to express.

Once students have a plan for the writing activity, they need to come up with ideas to complete it. It is important to make notes as a result of expanding the previous draft (Reis 2008).
Furthermore, participants used this strategy to come up with the ideas they wanted and also to enrich their activities. For instance, Shannon (pseudonym) told us around note taking that she had written different thoughts in order to “write finally the definition of new words” (Annex 5, personal development plan 24, 2017). She used this strategy to invent new words. Besides, another participant used it to write more ideas and construct the mind maps. Esperanza (pseudonym) asserts: “I used note-taking as a strategy to develop this activity because I had to remember a nightmare. In this sense I wrote down some main ideas to keep on the sequence of the story. After that, I chose the most relevant words that I had in each part of that dream for making the mind map” (Annex 5, personal development plan 21, 2017).

Bearing in mind that the first module was about a biography, and the second one was about inventing words to write a dream, some students pointed to the use of brainstorming to fulfill the activity goal. When reflecting about life or biographical experiences, students drew on this strategy as “The principle of brainstorming is that you need lots of ideas to get good ideas” (Castillo 2014, p 85). Some samples of participants discussing the brainstorming strategy are presented as follows.

Danna (pseudonym) argues that “The brainstorm is always a key stage of my writing process, I paint a scenario or a crazy idea and then, I try to connect each piece pushing them to make sense. My original idea often changes in my final version.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 12, 2017). In this sample, brainstorming as a SDL strategy functions as a blank canvas on which undergraduates seemed to face initially their creative thinking to have texts as artistic products (Beth, Cohen & Pat 2016).

Patricia (pseudonym): Key words were essential for developing the first activity because I had to choose different words in English for making up new ones. They were also useful
for activity 2 and 3 due to the story needed of a relation among them (Annex 5, personal development plan 3, 2017).

Keila (pseudonym): Key words were the clue on these activities and what I did was to organize the words in order to have clear my general concept of the story. (Annex 5, personal development plan 16, 2017).

The importance of brainstorming was underlined in activities where students had to invent words or stories such as module one and two. In contrast to biographies, creating stories required high degree of imagination from students, because they had to design new ideas and relate them to conduct an appropriately developed result.

For all the activities, students had to apply creativity skill, mainly in the first two modules. First, imagery benefits students in having an illustration about what they want to do (Oxford, 2003; Castillo, 2014). For instance, Patricia (pseudonym) said “Imagery was the best strategy I could choose because it helped me to develop all the activities due to the connection I had to make among the vocabulary, story and key words, as well as the comparison with the real context (Annex 5, Personal development plan 3, 2017). According to Morley (2007), all people has the ability to develop creativity as the brain is always interacting with itself. We could perceive that students used imagery as a mental exercise to develop certain activities. For instance, a participant used it when writing a poem. Danna (pseudonym) describes the imagery application when watching the video. She tried to think on a person who inspired her to go on, she could remember many moments she had spent with her and she imagined all the things she was willing to do for her (Annex 5, personal development plan 14).

Through this implementation, organizing ideas as part of SDL strategies played an important role on students’ artifacts as we could evidence in personal development plans. This
strategy facilitated students’ process to create their written products. Activities proposed in this intervention allowed students to realize about the importance of planning strategy as part of an initial step for conducting creative writing activities.

**Goal setting.** This strategy used by some participants facilitated their process of thinking about the purpose of the activity and what they wanted to learn about it. At the time of writing, decisions about what we are going to deliver to the reader are relevant (Centro de escritura javeriano, 2015). In this manner, students can set writing or learning goals. For learning goals, students aim to identify what they want to learn and they develop a plan for it. According to Hematian, Mohammadyfar and Rezaei (2016), students can set goals when they are self-directed and motivated, considering previous information. As an instance, the second module asked participants to create new words and a mind map about a nightmare. Afterwards, they had to mix that to rewrite the dream which motivated them somehow. This strategy was interesting because they thought about the goal of this activity and the possible combination of the other ones. Keila (pseudonym) comments: “For these activities first thing I did was reading each one in order to connect them and obtain the best result taking into account what was the expected.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 16, 2017). Indeed, setting goals appeared relevant for this participant as it assisted her to what was expected (activity learning goals) and what she expected about her work. See the next figures.
Additionally, students developed a plan to reach the activity goal, which represented metacognitive strategies. These ones in turn refer to the identification of learning style and planning for task (Oxford, 2000; 2003; Castillo, 2014). Within the first assignment in the initial module, a participant showed interest in using this strategy as she thought about what she wanted
to express. Phenelope (pseudonym) seemed to get aware of the relevance underlying metacognitive strategies as she stated that “assessing learning needs was important”, since she felt the act of thinking and selecting appropriate words to the reader and the message was imperative. She added that the implicit message could be found in her piece of writing (Annex 5, personal development plan 19). The message in this activity was significant to the writer and the strategy helped the participant to develop it while allowing for her metacognitive reflection.

In addition, for these writing activities participants had to think about the perception of reader as well. Having in mind Byrne (1998), the reader-writer interaction does not occur at the same time. In fact, for the third module students had to write about the past (second activity), future (third activity) and a scary story or a poem (first activity) depending on their interests. In this sense, there were two students appealed to apply this strategy for the first activity. One student chose the poem and the overall task seemed to have an impact on this participant. Keila (pseudonym) expressed “This activity was prepared by me with the purpose of transmitting my feelings or thoughts about somebody and I think I succeeded in doing it” (Annex 9, personal development plan 17, 2017).

Similarly, for the same activity a student chose to write a scary story and this strategy was used as well. This participant was Sandra (pseudonym) and she argued “I used Identifying and setting learning goals strategy: This strategy was the most appropriate for me because it helped me to focus on my main purpose that was to create a scary story and add real elements to the story that involved the reader” (Annex 5, personal development plan 6, 2017). “Writing ability is defined as the ability to perform writing tasks for a given purpose, satisfy a given discourse community regarding the structure and content of the discourse, and communicate functionally”
(Yi, 2010, P 61). To sum up, the brain activity of thinking about the reader perceptions makes this strategy useful when developing writing assignments.

There is relation between the activity and the strategy as the purpose of it was to write a letter to them about a specific moment in the past. Thus that letter had the purpose of warming themselves about something they shouldn’t have done. Esperanza (pseudonym) “Identifying and setting learning goals: I used this one because I realized that this activity needed to add real elements to create the letter proposed. In this way, when I had a clear idea regarding what I wanted to warn in the letter regarding my first day at the university I began to join these elements. Finally, I could get an easy way to announce all the possible troubles that I will get that day.” (Annex 5 personal development plan 22, 2017).

Additionally, activity three had the purpose of writing their own biography but in the future thinking they were 60 years old, thus they had to think about the future and what are their objectives for the future. Danna (pseudonym) “I thought of the goals and the relevance of my actions so far, I took into consideration all the things I have faced and all the things I can achieve, so I dispose myself to set free my imagination and to imagine a wonderful future.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 14, 2017).

According to the results, thinking of the aim of the writing activity is related to the outcome they had. Further, setting goals is part of the planning steps and it guide writer on the pertinent way. Byrne (1998) mentioned that writers do not know exactly who the reader is, then it is highly important to contextualize and have the idea clear for writing. Finally, as students set goals they had to revise the text in order to accomplish with the activity goal.

**Contextualizing of ideas.** Contextualization was a strategy some students used to give coherence to their texts. To contextualize, participants needed previous knowledge about what
they wanted to write about. Following this idea, students had to use another strategy to search for the information they needed. Consequently, they had to connect those ideas and give them a context since it was critical for writer-reader interaction. Conform to Kucer (2006) previous information impact the reciprocal action in writing and reading.

In module number one, participants used this strategy to relate the ideas as they stated. For instance, Keila (pseudonym) expressed “I chose these strategies because is useful for me to organize the ideas and also related between them, to structure the ideas that comes to my mind to obtain good results.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 15, 2017). Additionally, they had to relate a fictional character they created with their own biography. Patricia (pseudonym) stated that the use of contextualization was important for the activity because the creation of her character had to be connected with her personal experiences the she mixed information of both activities (Annex 5 personal development plan 2).

For module two, writers had to contextualize the invented words with the nightmare they had, moreover, this strategy helped them to focus on having a well-structured purpose. Sandra (pseudonym) argued that contextualizing strategy was the most appropriate for her because it helped her to relate the words she had already invented with my dream, also contextualizing strategy was useful in the way she could establish a scenario and a specific time to the story (Annex 5, personal development plan 6, 2017). According to the findings, it was necessary the use of contextualization because the activity required it. For instance:

Patricia (pseudonym) “In the second and third activity, contextualizing was a key component for creating the story because it addressed the main idea based on the vocabulary that I had chosen to sum up my dream. (Annex 5, personal development plan 3, 2017)
Esperanza (pseudonym) “Contextualization: I used this strategy in order to set the principal features within my dream such as the place, the main personages and the sequence of it. This activity was very useful because I could establish the order of my nightmare but I had some difficulties when I had to include the invented words because they do not have any relationship with the dream. In this sense, the dream was different to the original version.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 21, 2017)

Danna (pseudonym) “Contextualizing: I took a relative’s death as the situation and tried to feel what she felt before dying to have a clear idea of what I would express through the story.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 13, 2017)

For the third module, the application of this strategy is related to the type of activities proposed as the context is specific. For instance, the last two activities had to be written to themselves. As Shannon (pseudonym) mentioned to write the autobiography time and place was crucial (Annex 5, personal development plan 25). Moreover, Danna (pseudonym) acknowledged that the exercise remind her of the first day at university, and when she started to write she had to contextualize so she can believe when she get the letter (Annex 5, personal development plan 14). Sandra (pseudonym) expressed that it was easier to write the autobiography thinking about the specific time and place at university (Annex 5, personal development plan 6).

**Resourcing.** Resourcing had a big impact on students for the first two modules as they had to come up with new ideas. Reis (2008) states that the use of pre-reading tasks by teachers help to promote active thinking on students’ background knowledge. Since participants did not have those pre-reading activities from the teacher, they had to search information they needed to use this strategy. According to Esperanza (pseudonym) she used this strategy as the activity required many words for describing the character, thus she searched on the internet about some
words and also some images that help her in the description of this character (Annex 5, personal development plan 20). Furthermore we can notice that not only searching for words is useful but images. An image was the resource Patricia (pseudonym) used to get ideas in order to describe her character physically and the strengths it had.

In the following examples we can notice how two participants related this strategy with the creation a character.

Shannon (pseudonym) “Although here I took mental pictures to create my character, I tried to connect some words that I’m not used to using. For instance, in order to express that my character’s tattoos do not have sense for everybody but really they have, I used the word ‘Nonsensical’” (Annex 5, personal development plan 23, 2017)

Danna (pseudonym) “Resourcing: As the model paragraph counted on a lot of adjectives I looked for non-common adjectives to make my work less simple and also to challenge myself to do a different composition from the other I’ve done before.” (Annex 5, personal development plan 12, 2017)

For the second module, since participants had to create words, resourcing took a really important role. “The prior choice of a discourse pattern might have also influenced the choice of vocabulary items, as particular words have tendency to occur with particular text-patterns” (Reis 2008, p 10). Taking into account this perspective in which vocabulary has relation with the type of text, activity one aims to provide students with vocabulary they can use later in the next activity. From the data, Shannon (pseudonym) used this resourcing in order to come up with new vocabulary that make sense depending on its roots, suffixes and prefixes (Annex 5 personal development plan 24). Danna (pseudonym) mentioned that she watched a character from a series
and then changing the names of the characters and give them a grammatical meaning (Annex 5, personal development 13).

**Cooperating.** Cooperating strategy aims to share with classmates the objective of the activity, or if they have question about the activity itself they can share their opinions. According to Richards and Rogers (2014) Language learning is a mechanism in which interaction and negotiation of meaning is involved. Likewise, Estaire and Zanón (1990) states that social interactions are straight related to the knowledge building. From the findings, two students stated that this strategy helped them in the development of the first activity of the second module as it was difficult for them to create new words. For instance:

Abigail (pseudonym) “In the first activity I choose this strategy because I did not know how create new words, I didn’t have idea, so I share my ideas with some classmates and they did the same, they told me some ideas and in this way I could create new words. (Annex 5, personal development plan 8, 2017).

Shannon (pseudonym) “Cooperating: I did not ask to any of my partners but I asked for help to one of my closest friends because I am not very good at inventing things” (Annex 5, personal development plan 24, 2017)

We could notice that the only activity students used this strategy, was this one, in which participants had to come up with new words (invented words) and they found it difficult in some way. This strategy is related to the difficulty of the activity as students usually try to do their assignments by their own. But once they face obstacles in which they feel they cannot continue, they try to get help from someone, in this case, from a partner.

**Students’ perceptions: Use of SDL strategies to develop writing skills.** Students’ perceptions were important in the analysis as they emerged from the different instruments and
answered our research question. When participants used a specific strategy, they had to give the reason why they selected it. We analyze the SLD strategies that they frequently used such as planning, mapping, imagery, brainstorming, keywords and resourcing. The most concurrent strategy students used was planning as it helped them to organize ideas. As Constanza (pseudonym) supports, mapping was the strategy she liked the most because it permitted her to plan what she wanted to write before finally write the text (Annex 4, Questionnaire 2,).

Furthermore, Castillo (2014) proposes that students need to be aware of this step since it helps them in the last steps “drafting” and “revising”. From the results Abigail (pseudonym) expressed that she chose this strategy because with the mind map of her dream, it was much easier to invent the story, she decided not to give names in the story, she gave an order to the facts, because she didn’t remember well her dream, thus with the mental map she was able to organize the facts and give meaning to the future story (Annex 5, personal development plan 9). From this data we could notice that the development of creative writing activities were painless if they used planning as they suggested. To demonstrate see the following examples:

Patricia (pseudonym) “I consider strategies were useful because they helped me to organize my ideas and follow an appropriate procedure at the moment of writing. One that I used the most was mapping because it allowed me to take control and monitoring about what I wanted to transmit” (Annex 4, questionnaire 3, 2017)

Complementing, Reis (2008) shows in her research that some students struggle with the structure because there was a lack of drafting. Supported by Abigail (pseudonym), she related two strategies for the planning step; “Key words and imagery: I chose these strategies because these helped me to give order and meaning to my poem, I thought about my dad, his strengths and his weaknesses, I heard a song that I dedicated to him and I was able to write the poem”
Another key point for planning is the metacognitive strategies that are behind it. Metacognitive attributes to the awareness of the own progress and results (Flavell, as cited in Sum, 2013). SDL strategies aimed to enhance autonomy in students, we use them for writing purpose, but they can be also used for educational purpose in general terms. As an illustration Sum (2013) states that planning is a meta-cognitive strategy that guides students to self-regulation. Some students suggested that they usually use those strategies, for instance; Shannon (Pseudonym) stated “More that useful they were a medium to recognize what I usually do when writing because I usually plan, look for synonyms and do brainstorming (Annex 4, questionnaire 1, 2017). Additionally, another participant indicated that planning was the most suitable as it goes with her way of studying. (Sandra, pseudonym, annex 5, personal development plan 4)

According to Reis (2008) the type of writing will affect the quantity of planning and revising. From the results we notice that the type of activity influenced significantly the use of SDL strategies in the development of them. For instance, Esperanza (pseudonym) said “Planning: I used this strategy because this activity was more complex that the last one. So, I needed to be more careful with each detail. In this way, I designed a completed plan for describing each aspect in my story. I think the result was an amazing story, with great tones of a movie which takes place in a laboratory” (Annex 5, personal development plan 20, 2017). This participant showed this interest in planning for the activity in which she had to create her biography using the character’s features she previously constructed as it was challenging for her. In contrast, another participant stated that she only used one strategy (planning) because she found the activity a bit
effortless which was the letter to her in the past (Keyla, pseudonym, annex 5, personal
development plan 18).

As far as planning is concern, there are some other strategies that support this one. As
Esperanza (pseudonym) noticed “Planning; revising step: I had to make some modifications
within the reading because I needed to include the invented words but at the end I think the tale is
really cool because is a bit strange and different from others” (Annex 9, personal development
plan 21, 2017). Consequently, the planning step get involved with other strategies such as
resourcing. The same participant stated that resourcing was necessary to search for weird words
for the previous activity and she showed the successfulness about the product. Together with
Castillo (2014) having different means to gather material for writing benefits writes with
movement of ideas.

In like manner, the same participant used resourcing since the activity (creation of new
words) appear to be difficult but appealing at the end. As follows: Esperanza (pseudonym)
expressed that she used resourcing because the assignment wasn’t an easy work, then she
searched some strange words that exist in English. From that point, she decided to mix some
words that she knew, given to them a bit sense. At the end, she could realize that this activity was
really entertaining for her (Annex 5, personal development plan 21). As a matter of fact, these
kinds of activities make the writers to put a major effort in doing so. As well as the products in
general displays that:
Equally important, brainstorming was a key element on the planning step since it provides writers with ideas in order to develop the activities. For this reason brainstorming is an essential step some participants used to gather many ideas about a topic. As Reis (2008) commented, the aim of this step is to stimulate the creation of new ideas. Some participants showed the use of this strategy, for instance: Abigail (pseudonym) argued “I chose note-taking because it is easier for me to write if I am based on a brainstorming” (Annex 5, personal development plan 7, 2017). This participant used this strategy in the first module where she had to write character’s features and mix it with her biography. In that order of ideas, we could relate the type of activity to the strategy since the activity was not an easy activity.

To sum up, participants used some strategies according to their needs, and the activities proposed gave them different needs. For instance, the activities in which they had to create new words the use of brainstorming and keywords increased to get ideas but there was no use of goal setting as a strategy. Not less important, planning and mapping were the strategies that students used the most, firstly because those benefited students with the order of ideas, and secondly since it is a strategy they usually use and they are already accustomed to.
SDL strategies: a contribution for future teachers’ professional development.

This category refers to perceptions students had in regard to the idea of applying and creating SDL strategies for their professional development as future language teachers. To this respect, students perceived the application of these strategies, beyond the writing products and process, as an opportunity to become autonomous learners and in this sense, to achieve self-control on the learning process and subsequently accomplish goals set related to their professional field.

Control and responsibility on the learning process. This sub-category evidences how some participants of our research project perceived the application of SDL strategies as a way to demonstrate autonomy tenets. Their perceptions based on their experience as creative writers on a virtual environment (Wix) strengthen the connection between the autonomous learning and SDL inasmuch as they had the opportunity to be active learners and producers of language through their creative products (Bocanegra, 1999).

On one hand, autonomy within the educational environment is considered as the way students direct their own learning process, what is achieved through the capacity they have to assume responsibility and control. On the other hand, SDL as a dimension of the autonomous learning field is a mode to achieve this effective learning through a collaborative process in which students are motivated to assume such responsibility and control to accomplish learning goals (Benson, 2001; Garrison, 1997; Bharathi, 2014). The above is connected with the empirical evidence due to some participants agreed with the idea of feeling more responsible and having a better control with the application of SDL strategies in developing writing texts. To this respect, some of them expressed as follows:
Patricia (pseudonym): “Most of strategies I used allowed me to be a little be more responsible in the learning process through organizational mechanisms” (Annex 4, questionnaire 3, 2017)

Abigail (pseudonym): “I felt I had a better control in regard to the development of creative writing activities. Definitely, the application of SDL strategies was the main reason I could have better results with my creative texts” (annex 4, questionnaire 7, 2017).

Patricia (pseudonym): “One of the SDL strategies I always applied was mapping because it allowed me to have a control and carry out a follow-up to what I wanted to transmit in this creative writing process” (Annex 4, questionnaire 3, 2017).

Furthermore, this empirical evidence contributes for understanding the important relationship between SDL and the online learning context. The development of creative writing activities through a virtual learning context had a significant impact on the application of SDL strategies to the extent that this kind of environments are more beneficial so that students take greater control over the process of planning, monitoring and evaluating the learning experience (Song & Hill, 2007).

Moreover, most of students think SDL is a way to become autonomous learners. Through questionnaires they expressed that the application of SDL strategies is a key in learning because students can be aware of their own learning process as well as of their skills, weaknesses and strengths. Also, they considered autonomy is an important factor that allows learners to comply with academic duties, solve doubts, and enhance knowledge to make it more meaningful (See annex 4). This is supported with the idea that SDL is a teaching-collaborative process whereby teachers transfers awareness and responsibility to students for taking control of the learning process (self-management), through the acquisition of metacognitive and cognitive skills,
decision-making skills (self-monitoring) and goal setting skills (Hiemstra, 1994; Garrison 1997; Long n.d). Through this process, teachers can facilitate the development of SDL skills to contribute learner’s success and engage them in lifelong learning as was demonstrated by Cazan and Stan (2015), through the analysis of relationships between academic adjustment, SDL and learning engagement.

The notion of SDL as a process guided by the teacher is also related with some participants’ opinions about the importance of having support to achieve an autonomous learning by means of SDL. For instance, Antonio (pseudonym) states: “Keeping in mind my experience in this creative writing project, I consider SDL strategies were an opportunity to engage my autonomous learning in certain way. Although, to strengthen this kind of learning it is needed the support of teachers until you can internalize these processes and make things by your own” (Annex 4, questionnaire 8, 2017). Collaborative learning is a key aspect in SDL to enhance individual learning and serve the collective goals of an institution regardless most of professional development can occur through an own personal initiative (Richards & Farrel, 2005). This is the reason why maybe other students were not totally immersed with the application of SDL strategies for writing their creative products; they needed more support or a guide by tutors in the sense of how to apply these strategies to achieve or keep autonomy in this learning process, what is related to motivation, the aspect discussed in the third category.

Application of SDL strategies and creation of new ones in their learning process as future language teachers. For participants of our pedagogical implementation, the application of SDL strategies transcended the development of creative writing activities inasmuch as they considered as a positive aspect the possibility of applying them for their both personal construction and professional training as future teachers of the bachelor program in English. This
is supported with the idea that SDL in connection with autonomy can foster lifelong learning that entails an engagement in acquiring and applying knowledge in multiple contexts, through self-reflection, setting goals, assessing skills, putting the plan into action and reforming (Collins, 2009).

Through the application of questionnaires, we could evidence about those benefits some students perceived in the application of SDL strategies for their personal and professional development. For instance, Keila (pseudonym) says “SDL strategies are a benefit because they facilitate my writing process. Furthermore, their application gave me something to teach to my future students, who will use them for their benefit too… It’s really important to have these strategies” (annex 4, questionnaire 4, 2017). In the same way, Phenelope (pseudonym) states “SDL strategies definitely is going to help me not only in terms of writing, also for my academic process because through these ones I can plan better what I need to do in relation to tasks, projects and other things related to my career and my aspirations” (annex 4, questionnaire 6, 2017). The foregoing is identified with the idea that learning strategies, as actions and behaviors students carry out to achieve language proficiency, play an important role in learner autonomy and the overall second language acquisition process (Oxford, 1999; Castillo, 2014). These perceptions also reflects the personal construction each student has as a central process in SDL for their professional development (Richards & Farrel, 2005).

Such benefits participants perceived in regards to SDL are supported with theoretical propositions and research studies that point out how the application of SDL means an advantage for individuals in terms of professional development and learning. For instance, Bhatta (2011) in his article argues that a self-directed professional development provides to teachers an opportunity to determine learning goals, identify activities and resources required, encourage
commitment and responsibility and enhance self-reflection whereby “teachers have control over the professional experiences and are motivated by tasks or problems they find meaningful” (para. 6). Furthermore, in a study conducted by Khodabandehlou, Jahandar, Seyedi and Abadi (2012), it was evidence the impact of self-directed learning strategies on reading comprehension proficiency, where their application helped to 92 upper-intermediate students to construct meaning from what they read as well as monitor their progress toward their goals and gain practice and confidence what made them have positive attitudes toward SDL. In essence, in SDL teachers assume responsibility for self-development and for managing and controlling their learning (Richards & Farrel, 2005).

We also evidence positive attitudes of students toward SDL, even, some students argued that they use SDL strategies in other courses, for instance in writing academic texts and essays inasmuch as their application represents a mechanism to know what they usually do, identify what they already have and what is missing to accomplish goals and to achieve an acquisition of knowledge more meaningful (see annex 4). In essence, learning strategies contribute to the main goal, are problem-oriented, involve many aspects of the learner (not only the cognitive aspect) and allow learners to become more self-directed (Oxford, 1999).

Moreover, in connection with autonomy, students stated that beyond the benefits of SDL strategies, they are needed for facing challenges of the current professional world such as the new technologies in education. As Texas Education Agency (1997) argues, ELT undergraduates address their learning to become skillful English teachers in real-life challenges as professionals. For instance:
Abigail (pseudonym): “In my opinion and based on my experience, self-directed learning strategies represent a benefit for L2 learners and in general for all students of different areas of knowledge. In fact, SDL is mandatory due to challenges English teachers must face. For example, virtual learning environments request self-control and autonomy for using tools in the best possible way and for such purpose we need a set of strategies” (see annex 4, questionnaire 7, 2017).

Esperanza (pseudonym): “It is useful to apply this type of SDL strategies and learn how to handle them appropriately and, in this way, to create new ones …it will be helpful and needed for my professional development and for my future students” (annex 4, questionnaire 5, 2017)

Based on the above, participants of our research project considered the application and creation of SDL strategies as an aspect that cannot be absence both in L2 acquisition and their professional career as future language teachers. Self-directed learning is a critical competency that needs to be fostered to address professional development toward excellence over a career to solve well-structured problems through the acceptance and internalization of responsibility (Hamilton, 2013). Indeed, in the curriculum of the bachelor in English they study embraces SDL strategies for future teacher’s decisions around their professional development (Aldana, 2016). Additionally, current pedagogical sciences and didactics are addressed to a higher autonomous learning in training programs; therefore, it is needed to sensitize learners in autonomous learning models, which are more effective than the traditional ones, so that they can be in charge of their own learning, be aware of their process and be safer and more confident at the moment of facing learning goals (Ruiz, 1997).
Creativity and motivation: A dichotomy for applying SDL strategies in both writing process and products.

Creativity and motivation play an important role in this data analysis inasmuch as they relate to each other. This category deals with the perceptions students had about motivation and creativity as participants of this pedagogical implementation. On one hand, the role both internal and external motivation plays to become an autonomous learner through the application of SDL strategies in both writing process and products. On the other hand, how creativity in connection with motivation helps them in this process.

Internal and external motivation coordinated for encouraging autonomy tenets.
According to Hummel (2014), attitudes or predispositions students have toward the L2 speakers, community, context and toward language and language learning affect motivation they have, which at the same time affects their acquisition process of thereof. This affirmation is reflected in participants’ perceptions when they stated through questionnaires and the Personal Development Plan that motivation is a key factor to reach autonomy tenets, not only in the application of SDL strategies through creative writing activities, also, in their learning process in general. For instance, to answer the questions about possible benefits of applying SDL strategies in creative writing activities to become autonomous learners and for their professional development as future English teachers, some participants expressed the following:

“Shannon (pseudonym): Maybe to be more autonomous, although, the benefit will depend on how much interest and awareness the individual has about his/her process” (annex 4, questionnaire 1, 2017)
“Constanza (pseudonym): “...sometimes is tedious to apply an autonomous learning when topics do not satisfy us, but, if we see they can be constructed from something that interests us, the desire to learn will prevail” (annex 4, questionnaire 2, 2017)

“Patricia (pseudonym): To achieve autonomous learning, a strong desire and willingness is needed. On the contrary, the application of strategies and activities do not work if the student is not really interested” (annex 4, questionnaire 3, 2017).

Based on these perceptions, we could observe how internal motivation is needed for applying SDL strategies in both writing process and products and for their learning process. To this respect, Hummel (2014) defines motivation as the “effort invested to learn” (p. 202), which differentiates between extrinsic and intrinsic. In relation to the intrinsic motivation, the author defines it such as the internal motivated behavior that leads to internally rewarding consequences. In this sense, students needed a personal desire to apply SDL strategies in a proper way when developing the proposed creative writing activities. For this specific situation, the personal desire may be related to the goal to become autonomous learners or to improve their writing skills.

The above is supported with the SDL model that Garrison (1997) proposes, which is comprised of three dimensions: self-monitoring, self-management and motivation. In regard to motivation, Garrison (1997) states this dimension plays an important role in the achievement of cognitive goals. To understand motivation, it is disaggregated into entering motivation and task motivation; the first one is defined as the entering commitment learners have to reach a particular goal and the second one with the effort required to persist on task.

The internal motivation students must have is connected with these phases proposed by Garrison (1997). The entering motivational phase refers to the process of selecting goals,
deciding to participate and intentions, which is determined by the attraction students have to learning goals and the belief that an outcome can be achieved. In the words of the author, this entering motivational state greatly influences the effort and persistence (task motivation) of learners to keep on task, which is related to the task control and self-management; although motivation is influenced by external conditions, what is related to Hummel (2014) statement in regards to attitudes toward language learning.

Based on the foregoing, that is the reason why some participants did not apply SDL strategies in all the creative writing activities proposed, no matter the possible external motivation they had in developing creative texts. Maybe, participants did not feel attracted to the idea to display autonomy tenets or did not perceive the application of SDL strategies, as an aim that met their learning needs. As Garrison (1997) states, “intrinsic motivation leads to responsible and continuous learning” (p.29) and for such purpose students must find an interest in connection to their learning needs so as to internalize external goals. This may be defined as a self-regulated motivation to the extent that students must have an enough motivation level to control their learning process and in this sense display autonomy tenets to have the capacity and skills to face learning challenges and accomplish goals set.

As proposed by Hummel (2014) extrinsic motivation differs from intrinsic as the reward comes from the outside of the person. For instance, students usually accomplish their assignments to obtain a good result. Complementing this perception, Noels (2001) affirms that EM attributes to be involved in an activity not because internal factors but external ones. This perception is highly supported throughout the implementation in which participants were involved in these activities not because they wanted to but because they have to, as it was part of an important score in a class they took. Results showed that some students developed the
activities in order to acquire the score to pass the subject and there was no use of the personal development plan, which shows the strategies they used.

In contrast, intrinsic motivation indicates the inside willing to do something, in other words, the desire one has to develop an activity. According to Noels (2001) Intrinsic motivation is influenced by the pleasant feeling of learning or doing something in specific. An internal or an external agent may encourage this amusing feeling. From the results, Abigail (pseudonym) mentioned that it was good to write based on dreams (Annex 5, personal development plan 9). Based on this thought we can notice that there were some activities that writers did not choose by themselves but reinforced the intrinsic motivation as they had something that caught their attention. Likewise, another participant showed interest in this activity about the dream and stated she made a better effort as we can see in the following excerpt:

Keila (pseudonym) “I made these activities more aware of what I was doing, actually I like a lot the exercise of re-writing a dream of mine for that reason I made my best to write a good story that is why I evaluate myself with a 5. (Annex 9, self-assessment 16, 2017)

With this in mind, we could determine that if the activity is appealing for the student, the effort will be higher. According to Vatankhah, M., Tanbakooei, N. (2014) from the result of their research they sum up that students felt extrinsically motivated as result of parent and teacher’s assistance. Important to realize, teacher assistance and presence evoke extrinsic motivation on students. To exemplify, the previous quote from this participant showed relation between the interest of the activity and the effort she put on it, as result of this, the participant was aware of the good job that emerged. Another participant revealed this relation between the type of the
activity and the result of it mainly in the second activity from the second module; and the first and second from module three. For instance:

   Esperanza (pseudonym) “This activity was really interesting and I would say that I made a good job.” (Annex 9, self-assessment 21, 2017)

   Esperanza (pseudonym) “The result of this activity was really amazing because I could include a cultural place in Bogotá base on a dream that I had. So, joining those aspects the writing was out to the common things that I usually read. For that reason, I would say that this story is very completed.” (Annex 9, self-assessment 22, 2017)

   Esperanza (pseudonym) “I could say that this activity was really great and I learned many things through it. Also, I consider that my writing is well done because I wrote it as a literature autobiography, similar to Sartre did.” (Annex 9, self-assessment 22, 2017)

On the condition that appealing activities had a big influence on the results of their development, talking about the perceptions students had become more essential. Participants showed enthusiasm about creative writing activities as they are different from activities that they usually do in class. They confirm this information throughout questionnaires and personal development plans. Above we will find participants perspectives about creative writing:

   Esperanza (pseudonym) “At first, this activity was great I was an activity that made me remind some things regarding past events, so in this way, I could say that writing a letter was a good exercise not only for the activity but also we are involved in a movie which is really famous and everybody can remind.” (Annex 9-22)
Keila (pseudonym) “I had never worked creative writing and I think it influenced a lot on students’ motivation because there was no limit at the moment of writing.” (Annex 4)

Patricia (pseudonym) “Creative writing influenced motivation as they foment creativity and freedom to express what one feels.”

Esperanza (pseudonym) “Creative writing motivates students to get out from monotony and helps to reinforce their writing skills together with one’s imagination”

Writers expressed positive descriptions about creative writing activities as a way of motivation. According to Reis (2008) the first step in the writing is feeling motivated to do it. In that order of ideas, creativity and different activities took an important role in participants’ motivation. First of all, one student expressed that talking about the past was a good exercise since it reminds her about some things in the past as well as the involvement of a well-known movie that made her feel attached to the activity. Secondly, they liked creative writing activities because they felt there were no limits at the time of writing; it means that they could express their ideas in the way they wanted. In relation to another opinion, those activities encourage creativity and freedom to write; likewise, they were useful for motivating students to write. Finally, they stated that those activities strengthen writing skills and they enjoyed them since it prevents monotony.

To sum up, internal and external motivations were key elements in the application of SDL strategies on writing products and processes. We come up with the term of coordinated motivation, which refers to the balance of both internal and external motivation students need for assignments development and to become self-directed learners. The presence of internal motivation is fundamental since it leads students to the accomplishment of learning goals to the
extent they keep an effort, interest and commitment in tasks and projects proposed. However, they need a teacher’s support and external motivation to keep on it. External motivation encourages students to work with enthusiasm and help them to internalize activities goals, as we could evidence with the creative activities proposed in our pedagogical implementation; therefore, creative writing has a big impact on encouraging students to become self-directed learners.

Conclusions

Throughout this research project, we discussed two main theoretical constructs, namely, creative writing and self-directed learning to interpret and give a possible solution to the problematic situation we identified concerning the lack of enough SDL strategies some students demonstrated for making creative written texts, from a bachelor’s degree in English. For such purpose, the main goal we established was to analyze the effects of SDL strategies on ELT undergraduates’ creative writing products and their perceptions of this process mediated by blog (Wix). With this in mind and after an exhaustive analysis of empirical evidence in connection with theoretical support, we describe the conclusions of this research project below:

To respond our research question, we analyzed questionnaires, personal development plans and students’ artifacts to interpret the effects the application of SDL strategies had on both creative writing products and processes and on participant’s perceptions in our pedagogical implementation. In doing so, we identified the type of strategies ELT undergraduates applied when developing creative writing activities and how they used them, we contrasted their creative
products to observe their progress and described their perceptions based on the experience they had about all this process.

In regards to the sub question about the SDL strategies participants applied in creative writing texts, planning was the most concurrent strategy that helped them to organize ideas as well as mapping. Writing in general requires a plan that some students struggle with, that is why it is one the most important strategies and the one they used the most. Also to come up with new ideas participants resorted to brainstorming, resourcing and note-taking, which are strategies they sometimes use as shown in the evidence. Furthermore, goal setting helped students to accomplish with the activities goals and also personal goals; with personal goals, we mean the message they wanted to transmit. Correspondingly, we observed that the type of activity influenced the number and kind of strategy they used, according to the activity goal and difficulty.

Additionally, these strategies influenced students’ products as we observed well-planned texts. In contrast to the line based text and the last activity of the third module, we could evidence participants obtained better results in writing their creative texts to the extent that they applied SDL strategies, specially planning as the activity required it. Also in other activities, we detected the use of resourcing and brainstorming which made the work different and contributes with various content. Finally, the strategies had a positive impact on students’ products.

In relation to the sub-question that deals with participant’s perceptions about the application of SDL strategies to their creative writing and other fields in their development as future language teachers, through questionnaires, most of ELT undergraduates demonstrated positive attitudes towards the application of these strategies; they considered them as an opportunity to become autonomous learners and as benefit for their professional development. Based on their experience, they considered that SDL strategies help learners for being more
responsible and getting a better control over own learning, being aware of their weaknesses and strengths as well as setting and fulfilling goals. For instance, students that applied SDL strategies throughout this process could plan better their creative texts and in this sense accomplish learning goals. These perceptions go beyond creative writing products and processes, considering the application and creation of SDL strategies as an important aspect in L2 acquisition and professional career as future language teachers that simultaneously contributes to their personal construction.

Finally, participant’s perceptions in regard to the application of SDL strategies pointed out motivation as a key aspect to reach autonomy tenets. On one hand, internal motivation is required so that students have a commitment and effort to persist and in this sense to fulfil learning goals, which must be self-regulated to control their learning process. On the other hand, external motivation is needed for students to keep themselves motivated internally on a task. Thus, personal goals must be connected with external learning goals in somehow to reach a coordinated motivation (correlation between internal and external motivation) to become SDL learners through the application of strategies for this case. Furthermore, we found creativity as an external factor that motivated students to continue with the pedagogical project.

**Pedagogical implications**

From researchers and teachers’ view, autonomous learning is needed both in the educational and professional field, especially at the undergraduate level. For instance, individuals that want to become future teachers, autonomy is an important aspect for their learning process to face challenges of a high-quality education. The pedagogical implications that emerged from this
process are related to the application of SDL strategies in virtual environments and the creative writing as a way to motivate students to enhance autonomy.

To start with, SDL strategies are important in the autonomous learning process as they give students the starting point to develop activities by their own and follow their learning process. Autonomy in general terms is necessary in all fields for students to control their own learning. For the bachelor degree in English education, this research project gives strategies that students may apply for being autonomous learners and follow their learning process setting goals and setting a plan to reach them. In creative writing, these strategies had an impact of students’ products as the organization showed improvement. This process may be guide by a teacher as students would require assistance at the beginning of the process.

SDL strategies are necessary when talking about autonomy in virtual environments as students have to develop series of activities for a specific learning objective. This project illustrated students with some helpful strategies that they could use to accomplish with writing activities. Nowadays, virtual education has become a requirement teacher must apply to support their classes. Furthermore, language learning is using technology as an educational tool, thus student’s autonomy and strategies become essential. Moreover, students can create strategies depending on their needs.

Another important conclusion from this implementation is the motivation students have to develop and apply SDL strategies. Participants evidenced that they need to feel motivated to use SDL strategies for the development of activities. In that way if they do not feel motivated, the use of strategies is not significant. Thereby this implementation also contributes the way teachers address classes because students always need extrinsic motivation to keep themselves with enthusiasm in the development of activities.
Finally, from the educational view, humanism, autonomy is an important concept in the educational field since it is related to responsibility. Being responsible is the capacity for the accomplishment of obligations and it deals with professional acts. Professional responsibility is always needed and it is one the major pedagogical implication this project leaves.

**Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Further Research**

During the research process, we faced some limitations. Such obstacles were the class schedule of participants and the time we had to manage for collecting data, which did not allow us to analyze in depth the effect of SDL strategies in their creative writing texts and processes, neither to have a better contact with them to solve more doubts regarding the use of the blog (Wix) and the application of SDL strategies when developing creative writing activities, regardless they could contact us via e-mail. These limitations are also related with the fact we had to adapt our pedagogical implementation to the head teacher’s content proposed for the class. Also, the power relationship between the head teacher and participants affected in somehow the development of creative writing activities because some of them considered this initiative as something external and distant to the content of the class.

Taking into consideration limitations we faced in our research project, we suggest for further research studies on this field, to analyze the effect of SDL strategies in an academic context that allows a total freedom for implementing pedagogical proposals and resources needed for such purpose, within a considerable period. This is because self-directed learning needs a favorable context that allows a continuous collaborative process; teachers as guide and facilitators that support students in their role of active learners to reach autonomy tenets.
progressively, through the creation and application of learning strategies, considering their learning needs and interests and breaking any educational traditional paradigm within the class.
References


Ganji, S., and Khosravani, M. (2014). Introducing Email Portfolio As a mean of Developing EFL Learner’s Autonomy. *Iran. Procedia social and behavioral sciences* 98 (2014) 504-512. taken from: http://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042814025373/1-s2.0-S1877042814025373-ain.pdf?_tid=d2c7dda0-4016-11e4-8c08-00000aab0f02&acdnat=1411142929_a67d3d82d9d80a35a145c9f0834a7436


Annexes

Annex 1

Questionnaire

Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Research Project I

Research Project: Promoting Self-Directed Learning by means of Creative Writing

Have you been responsible in the development of assignments and projects carried out in the subjects that you take in each semester? Yes or not? Why?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

What kind of activities do you do when you learn by yourself?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

For you, what aspects are important for being an autonomous learner?: Cross out.
- Set goals about what you want to learn
- Be responsible and take control concerning your duties as learner
- Do what you want to learn in an independent way

What do you think about the lack of commitment of students in the development of tasks, activities and projects?
- Lack of motivation and interest
- Students are not responsible in the development of tasks
- Both of them

Do you learn new things because you want to or because you have to? Why?
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

____
Do you make a special effort if you need to improve your academic performance? Yes or no? If the answer is yes, what do you do?

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________

How much time do you dedicate to learn English at home or by your own?. Cross out

- 30 min per day
- 1 hour per day
- 2 hours per day
- 3 hours a week.
Annex 2

Activity
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Research Project I

Research Project: Promoting Self-Directed Learning by means of Creative Writing

Write a short story based on experiences you have lived.
Annex 3

Field Note #1
Date:
Place of Observation: Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Class: Intermediate English I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a homework, students had to complete a workshop related to story tales. Most of them did the homework but there were mistakes. Teacher started to answer questions about the workshop and she developed all the items of it along with students. In relation to the mistakes committed by students, I could evidence that there are doubts about how to use the transitional words as well as the conjugations of verbs. After, teacher gave them another activity in which students were supposed to modify the end of a tale and create a new one. During the development of this activity, most of students requested the help of the teacher. Also, most of them used the dictionary all the time. At the end of the class, teacher asked for the activity, but most of students did not finish it.</td>
<td>Throughout the observation of the class, I evidenced the lack of strategies in students in order to develop the activity related to story tales. For instance, most of them did not know how to start the story and how to structure it. Moreover, they wasted their time talking and thinking a lot about some terms and grammar aspects. Also, I could see how students decrease their academic performance when the teacher goes out the classroom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 4

Cuestionario
Universidad Distrital Francisco José de Caldas
Proyecto de Investigación:
Fomento del Aprendizaje Autodirigido por medio de la Escritura Creativa

Nombre: ________________________________ Fecha: __________________________

1. ¿Cree usted que la autonomía es un factor clave para el desempeño académico? Sí/No ¿Por qué?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

2. ¿Cree usted que el desarrollo de actividades de escritura creativa es un plus para la motivación dentro del aula de clases? Sí/No ¿Por qué?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

3. ¿Le pareció útil las estrategias de aprendizaje autodirigido propuestas en el blog de escritura creativa para mejorar su competencia escritora? Sí es así, ¿Qué estrategias fue las que más utilizó y por qué?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

4. ¿Cree usted que la aplicación de estrategias de aprendizaje autodirigido en la escritura de textos creativos le ayuda a ser un estudiante más autónomo y es un beneficio para su desarrollo profesional como futuro docente de inglés?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
5. ¿Cree usted que la autoevaluación ayuda a mejorar su proceso de aprendizaje?
Sí_ No_

6. ¿Cree usted que la aplicación de estrategias de aprendizaje autodirigido desempeña un rol importante en los ambientes virtuales de aprendizaje? Sí/No ¿Por qué?

7. ¿Teniendo en cuenta el contexto en el cual se encuentra y su experiencia como estudiante de la licenciatura en inglés, usted cree que el aprendizaje autónomo se fortalece en el aula de clase? Sí/no ¿Por qué?

Nota: Sus datos personales no serán revelados en los resultados de la investigación.
¡Muchas gracias por compartirnos su opinión!
Annex 5

**Personal Development Plan**

In the chart below, explain why you chose certain SDL strategies to develop the activity

Name: _______________________ Module: _________ Activity: _________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDL Strategy</th>
<th>Why did you choose it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex 6

CONSENT FORM

Apreciado Estudiante:

Usted ha sido invitado a participar en nuestro proyecto de investigación titulado “Promoting Self-Directed Learning by means of Creative Writing” el cual, se está llevando a cabo como modalidad de grado en nuestra carrera de Licenciatura en educación básica con énfasis en Inglés. El objetivo de la investigación es analizar cómo las estrategias de aprendizaje auto dirigido influyen tanto en el proceso y producto de la escritura creativa de los estudiantes de nuestro programa académico. Además, analizaremos las percepciones de los estudiantes con respecto a la aplicación de estas estrategias.

Con el fin de realizar dicho proceso de investigación es necesario su previa autorización para recolectar datos a través de entrevistas, cuestionarios, plan de desarrollo personal y trabajos que se desarrollarán dentro de un espacio extracurricular, por medio del recurso web Wix.

Cabe resaltar que el estudio de investigación no conlleva a ningún riesgo y a ninguna compensación económica por participar. El proceso será estrictamente confidencial, no revelando la identidad de su usted en ningún informe o presentación del proyecto. El docente titular está al tanto del proceso investigativo.

La participación de usted, es estrictamente voluntaria. Asimismo, el participante tendrá el derecho a retirarse en cualquier momento del proceso de investigación.

Teniendo en cuenta lo anterior, si desea participar, colaborándonos en nuestro proyecto, por favor llene y firme la carta de autorización. Cualquier duda e inquietud, será resuelta.

He leído el procedimiento descrito arriba. Yo__________________identificado con la CC

Nombre del Estudiante ___________________________ Firma del Estudiante
Annex 7

CONSENT FORM

Estimado Profesor Carlos Riaño,

Mediante la presente nos dirigimos respetuosamente a usted como estudiantes de la Licenciatura en Educación Básica con Énfasis en Inglés de la Universidad Distrital, con el fin de solicitar su consentimiento para llevar a cabo la intervención pedagógica y así mismo la recolección de datos mediante la implementación de entrevistas, observaciones, plan de desarrollo personal y trabajos que se desarrollarán dentro de un espacio tanto virtual como extracurricular para los estudiantes pertenecientes a su asignatura, con el propósito de realizar el debido proceso de investigación de nuestro proyecto titulado “Promoting Self-Directed Learning by Means of Creative Writing”. El objetivo de la investigación es analizar cómo las estrategias de aprendizaje auto dirigido influyen tanto en el proceso y producto de la escritura creativa de los estudiantes de nuestro programa académico. Además, analizaremos las percepciones de los estudiantes con respecto a la aplicación de estas estrategias.

Vale la pena resaltar que el estudio en desarrollo no conlleva a ningún riesgo ni compensación económica por participar. El proceso será estrictamente confidencial, no revelando la identidad de los estudiantes que participarán, en ningún informe o presentación del proyecto. Del mismo modo, la participación es voluntaria. Asimismo, el participante tendrá el derecho a retirarse en cualquier momento del proceso de investigación, por lo cual se respetará cualquier decisión tomada.

Agradecemos su atención y colaboración Atentamente,

Johanna León
Estudiante Investigador

Daniela Rojas
Estudiante Investigador

Yeraldine Aldana
Firma Docente
Annex 8

Self-directed Learning Strategies

Choose self-directed learning strategies that help you to develop creative writing activities through Blogger, in the best possible way. You can select any number of strategies for each activity.

1. Identifying and setting learning goals: What do we want to learn from this activity? What is the purpose of the activity?
2. Planning: Set steps in a logical way to develop activity.
3. Key words: What kind of words can help me to understand the main ideas?
4. Resourcing: Defining a concept or idea, using extra materials or sources in the target language.
5. Mapping: Organizing ideas (main and secondary ones) in a chart, scheme or map before writing.
6. Contextualizing: Relating concepts, ideas, sentences within a specific time and place.
7. Imagery: Connecting images with concepts as well as creating them to understand vocabulary.
8. Time-management: Set time and date to develop the activity within the deadline estimated.
9. Note-taking: Writing down ideas, points or summary certain information provided.
10. Cooperating: Interact with others in order to share, understand and develop ideas for each activity.
11. Identifying strengthens and weaknesses: Identify what aspects you need to improve after developing the activities along with those skills to keep on reinforcing in further assignments.
12. Self-assessment: Evaluate your own learning process in a scale from one to five and support your choice. Within this scale, 1 stands for the lowest value, while 5 represents the highest assessment.
Annex 9

Self-Assessment

Name: _________________________ Module: _____ Activity:_____________________

Imagine you are the teacher and evaluate your own learning process in a scale from one to five and support your choice. Within this scale, 1 stands for the lowest value, while 5 represents the highest assessment (e.g. 1 could be Insufficient and 5 excellent, bearing in mind what you did for developing the activity). As an autonomous teacher, define your own categories for each value.

1. ________________
2. ________________
3. ________________
4. ________________
5. ________________

Why? __________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
Do not forget to justify your answer