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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL
OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES
MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN
TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

TITLE

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature
circle among 8th grade students of Unidad Educativa
BilingüeTorremar**

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MsC. De Angelis S Luigi

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this research project was presented by **Lcdo. Tapia Álvarez César Vicente** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language.**

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to all the wonderful people who were always there with their encouragement, support, and advice.

César.



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ABSTRACT

The issue detected at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar was analyzed through action research. The first part of the project covered two surveys for students in order to analyze their current reading habits and the attitudes towards them. An interview was also applied to two teachers which explained the importance and advantages of the implementation of the presented project. The literature review projects information about reading habits, reading attitudes and how they can be improved in order to affect positively students' critical thinking and their EFL skills. It was detected that students' reading skills needed to be improved and strengthened. Therefore, a proposal was design to fulfil that aim. The proposal consisted in the implementation of literature circles during English classes with 8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar. Class observations were also applied in order to diagnose and analyze how literature circles affect students' reading skills and their performance evolution along the sessions.

Palabras clave: Reading habits, critical thinking, literature circles, reading attitudes, reading and comprehension, Reading Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

When it comes to acquiring a second language, students always struggle with reading assignments. During lessons they are not properly engaged, and in some cases they only read in order to pass examinations.

The following study will be applied at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar, where students manage a B2 level in English which allow them to read and understand music news, jokes, lyrics and even memes in English. However, when it comes to reading texts that will meaningfully help them improve their language, students simply lose interest.

Teachers are aware of this situation. Thus it is expected that the implementation of literature circles will positively affect students' reading habits and attitudes towards reading skills.

During the class observations, charts, class discussions, group and individual work will be implemented in order to analyze and realize how students' reading habits can be improved towards reading and its benefits.

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Through different studies, it has been stated, that the reading skill is not only being underestimated, but also its lack of practice is leading to an extinguishing habit. The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NCES, 2012, p. 85) revealed “that 24% of eighth and 33% of fourth graders tested below basic in reading skills in 2011.” Also, The International Assessment of Adult Competencies USDE (2012) stated that “adults in the United States achieved an average literacy proficiency score of 270 on a scale of 0 to 500—3 points below the international average score of 273.” These results confirm the existing idea that people are not currently developing their reading skills in an adequate manner.

Nowadays, Ecuadorian teachers have to struggle with many issues that rely on the lack of practice and interest among students for reading. In fact, students (from a variety of backgrounds and ages) don't like reading, not even in their mother language, and if so, the reading is merely mandatory to not failing a course (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos – Ecuador (2012). According Bolaños (2015) (the use of social media is getting popular with the passing of time and for that reason people should be aware of the amount of time students spend using them, since its negative effect sways their academic performance. Students from 8th grade at “Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar” show a lack of interest for reading, this lack of skills can be evidenced in their examinations and assignments. On the other hand, they manage a B2 English level, which indicates that they can communicate properly in this language. In consequence, they read avidly in contexts such as media, social networks, and cellphone apps, among others. Consequently, while they seem unable to read a book critically or a relevant article, they tend to understand pretty well the information displayed through memes, short videos and jokes. Due to the lack of interest detected among students, there are some disadvantages like lack of vocabulary, syntax problems and English production that students face, which could be targeted through intensive reading of literary material.

During their school period, students at Torremar study English not only as a subject (grammatically speaking) but are taught English as well subjects like

Science, Social Studies, and American Literature. Therefore, it is obvious that in order to be benefited from the knowledge of these subjects and reaching an acceptable EFL level, they should be familiar with some necessary reading skills. On the other hand, when the word “knowledge” is mentioned it has to be interpreted in a global form. This means that students with proper reading habits are self-motivated and more autonomous, are able to find solutions on their own, show an excellent English performance with the aim on learning on their own as well as easing their way to a successful academic development. In a modern world where students are surrounded by information and sources, teachers face a tough problem which is how to help students improve their reading habits. The lack of this habit has a serious impact not only in their studies but also in many different academic areas limiting their EFL development and performance. Zheng (2007) states that one of the difficulties found on the road are how technology and the new digital area has had a significant role in students’ life. Since many of these new gadgets have replaced meaningful recreational reading, parting from this point teachers are able to see that the issue does not rely on the fact of lack of resources, *but in students not using these tools for reading purposes.*

Nowadays, the majority of students tend to read “for academic purposes only” which is seen thus most students do not feel motivated on reading if they do not have to get scores for their academic purposes Nadelson, Villagómez, Konkol, Haskell, McCulley, and Campbell. (2013). Throughout the previous citation it is truly obvious that the reading habits among English students is significantly decreasing in a way that it is only seen as a mandatory activity that is applied for not failing academic courses, and not for enriching their skills and English performance.

According to Lipka, and Linda (2011) for the involvement of English students into meaningful reading requires early stimulation. It is argued that children are more likely to acquire reading habits if kindled at a very early age; unfortunately, a lot of students have not grown up surrounded by engaging reading habits, which is also another barrier that teachers have to deal with. Since if a habit has not been properly induced in English students’ life, it is highly challenging trying to fit and improve it.

Concerning reading circles, many names have been given to this practice, such as Literature Circles. According to Daniels (1994) it can be called group discussion or Instructional conversations. However, for the purpose of this study, the term Reading Circles will be employed.

A study carried by Shen (2013) states that the importance of having literature circles applied in our classrooms is to help students go to the next level, from literal understanding to a high level comprehension. This also happens to be a benefit for students since they will be able to acquire a new EFL level making their academic goals better and an efficient discussion skill as well.

Also Literature circles (called for reading circles) tend to work properly forasmuch as young reader are likely to read things they can share with other young ones. Actually, Daniels (2002 p. 11) states that some ingredients for meaningful literature circles involve: Content that is important or engaging, people we can care about, a narrative structure or chronological line places we can visualize, danger, conflicts, risks, or choices, value, moral, ethical, or political dimensions, some ideas that reasonable people can debate, dispute, or disagree about.

In Addition, the connection between reading circles and reading habits takes in consideration from the attitude that students show towards reading skills to their personal views regarding reading themes. In other words, if a proper reading circle is applied, a meaningful reading habit can be created, since an engaged student is more likely to focus on meaningful reading topics that will be useful for academic and cultural purposes Loan (2012).

The importance of the present study relies on the fact that reading is an everyday practice and skill that students must acquire. Reading is everywhere, from social media topics to academic ones, students must take into consideration that a proper reading habit will help them improve their English skills and performance. Unfortunately, the reading topics that students are in contact with do not help them when it comes to studying, researching, or enriching their English skills, or other academic areas; and it is of main importance to notice that nowadays the world is in constant progress where only well-prepared and literate people have success. For that reason, it is essential to start engaging, developing, and activating reading habits for

students to take advantage of the existing tools for improving their knowledge, wisdom and culture.

1.2. General Objective

A. To Evaluate the implementation and impact of a literature circle among 8th grade students of Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार

1.3. Specific Objectives

- a. To describe students' current reading habits.
- b. To examine the feasibility of the implementation of a literature circle at Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार.
- c. To identify the outcome of engaging students in literature circles at Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार.
- d. To analyze the reactions of the students involved in a literature circle in Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार.

1.4. Research Questions

- a. What is the impact of implementing a literature circle at Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार?
- b. What are the current reading habits of students at Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार?
- c. What are the advantages and challenges of implementing a literature circle at Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreमार?
- d. How can the implementation of literature reading circles improve students' reading skills?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2. 1. Reading comprehension

Comprehension is the result of reading and the construction of meaning from text (Durkin, 1993). On the other hand, Van de Broek and Espin (2012) state that reading and comprehension is a mixture of automatic and strategic cognitive processes that allow readers to reproduce mental representation of texts. Through the following lines, a definition and an explanation of the importance of reading comprehension will be given.

Definition

According to Schudt (2008), comprehension encircles an active process of comprehending; the skill, knowledge base, and the motivation of the comprehender; and the difficulty and characteristics of the text that is read. In other words, on the other hand Kalmane (2012) explains that reading encompasses linguistic knowledge to decipher a text, and schematic knowledge to understand its meaning, and the proper skill to comprehend its message. It is also stated that it is important for the reader to master not only reading skills but also reading strategies for reading and comprehension be achieved. It is evident that reading comprehension can be achieved through mastering proper skills, so in the future readers can autonomously deal with any text by themselves.

Mokhtari (2016) states that reading and comprehension is metacognitive skill, which means that readers can control their thinking while reading, and by doing so they are able to monitor, understand, and take decisions in support of skilled reading. In other words, a reader is able not only to freely interpret any text by his own but also through a scheme of a well-structured reading skill.

In a flat position, Kusiak (2013) defines reading as a combination of mental operations during which the reader produces his/her own illustration of a text, along with the same perspective Santi, Reed, and Deborah (2015) explain reading a process where readers build up meanings, mental representations from texts –based representation; which can be interpreted that a reader who suitably understand a text, and accurately manages its message, is able to reproduce mental descriptions from that text making the reading and comprehension skill more enriching and meaningful; since according to Parris, Headley, Caccamise, Friend, Littrell – Baez, Kintsch, (2015) “reading and

comprehension is a dynamic and constructive process “, in other words learners, or readers must be engaged in order to reach a proper reading through reading skills, reading comprehension techniques and proper reading texts.

Importance

In accordance to Oakhill, Cain and Elbro (2015), the importance for reading and comprehension does not only rely for simply understanding texts but also for broader education, success in education, even employment, and in social lives as well; this can be interpreted in this way since it depends in reading and comprehension that a person can develop his / her linguistic skills which are essential for many social situations (Kalmane 2012).

Cartwright (2015) also explains that in real life there is a “the step –by – step reasoning system that is required for typical planning tasks, that also includes appropriate life – goals” and it is perfectly linked to the system of reading comprehension, so in other words a well-trained reader is able to set step by step plans with appropriate goals in his or her life which will not only bring academic benefits but also personal ones too.

Cornoldi, and Oakhill, (2013) on the contrary state that the importance of reading comprehension does not necessarily need to be focused on school evaluations, but also on students who have certain type of learning disabilities, it means that reading and comprehension needs to encircle students from all types of background from engaging reading topics (as said before) and also students who have born learning difficulties which of course will make reading and comprehension even more difficult.

Empathizing the importance of reading and comprehension Kibui (2012) states that many people struggle essential information such as job applications and even insurance policies, which only worsen the fact that many of them never master the skill, it is also stated that for improving these situations, prompt actions need to be taken from motivation, reading strategies, text content and text organization. It is essential to point that cultured readers can over take these reading scenarios helping others in similar situations.

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said, that reading comprehension encompasses many aspects, from reading topics to even learning disabilities it is obvious that readers must be conscious of the importance of this skill and the benefits it contains for academic and personal life aspects and of course the process it takes to master it, thus On the other hand teachers must be aware that problem solving does not only relies on applying techniques for improving reading comprehension skills, but also paying attention to learning problems that training readers may have, with a view to helping them overcome these problems and thus making reading comprehension skill accessible to all in the most possible way.

2.2. Reading Attitudes

According to Fox and Wilkinson (1997), in a world where standardized based instructions are predominant, teachers are involved in constant research to engage students into active and deep reading. The purpose for developing these attitudes is to stimulate comprehension and discussion among students. Additionally, Schaer and Peters (1996) state that cultural consciousness is motivated through a proper reading attitude. Nowadays students are surrounded by reading; however, teachers must be aware about the quality this type of reading contains in terms of cultural awareness.

Definition

Roe, Kolodziej, Stoodt – Hill, & Burns (2012) define reading attitudes as a set of interests, purposes, prior knowledge, and skills. They also state reading attitudes as the background of readers. It also includes their social and cultural background, which means that, depending on the reader's background, their interests considerably will vary which will make the teachers' work challenging. In Contrast, Machado (2015) explains that a reading attitude is a spontaneous and unconscious response to books, or read-aloud activities, it also includes thoughts of agreement and disagreement or any unexpected response (from children). This can be interpreted that when readers are little, they can develop reading attitudes depending on how they are being inducted during early readings, and this can become a reading habit in future times.

According to Ministerrad (2012) reading attitudes are those which students feel more engaged with, since they will be the ones to be developed more

frequently. And for this reason the following study was presented, where Ministerrad states:

“The PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) 2009 student questionnaire posed several questions about reading habits and reading attitudes, the overall impression is that Nordic 15 – year – olds spent less time reading for enjoyment in 2009 than in 2000. Gender differences favoring girls were great in 2000, both in terms of reading achievement and reading engagement; the picture has not changed in 2009. In all the Nordic countries and for both genders, reading engagement shows a higher correlation with reading scores than social background.

Importance

Willingham (2015) expresses that in reading attitudes teachers play an essential role. The way teachers apply the program will affect the reaction of the students toward reading comprehension and reading attitudes. Thus, some students feel more comfortable working with certain teachers who they learn meaningful things from.

Egelund (2012) states that it is important to pay attention to students' reading attitudes since it determines the time they spend on reading, either reading for pleasure or reading for academic purposes. The time spent on reading is a powerful indicator of their reading attitudes, in addition it can be stated that if teachers properly guide students to enriching reading topics, their attitudes toward reading will affect them positively in academic and personal areas.

Fisher, Frey, and Hattie, (2017) express on the other hand that students' reading attitudes are important in a way that if they are not nurtured, students will simply not feel interest in their exposure to texts and “thereby limit time spent practicing the strategies needed to comprehend text” and this will result in the decline not only in the reading acquisition skill but in English language as well. Also, Machado (2015) explains that reading attitudes need to be handled with importance, since taken with care at early stages of students' life, “they create positive attitudes towards literature and can help motivate the child to learn to read”.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that reading attitudes are related mainly with what readers feel likely to read or exposed, and of course depending on the background where the reader performs because this situation will define future behavior towards unexpected reading texts. On the other hand, it is stated that at early age, readers can develop certain reading attitudes that will be part of their lives for a long time, of course proper reading attitudes must be cultivated or nurtured to get benefits from this practice. Finally, once again teachers play fundamental roles in reading attitudes, inasmuch as with proper guidance readers will spend time on accurate types of text in order to take advantage of what it is read.

2.3. Reading Habits

In the academic life reading habits help students to develop their personality, and academic skills as well, nevertheless the popularity of social networks is playing a negative function of students' reading habits since the reading culture they are expected to obtain is declining (Shelu and Shelu, 2014).

Definition

Miller, and Kelly, (2013) indicate that reading habits are mainly an internal custom related to reading skills and strategies that must be identified, modeled and taught.

On the contrary, Bambrick – Santoyo, Settles, and Worrell (2013) define the term more than a skill as a situation where the habit is built from mistakes, it means using mistakes as boost and in that moment to start constructing the habits that will help them get it right. It can be interpreted as students trying different reading styles until they finally feel more comfortable with one of them in order to use it as part of their reading lives.

Jennings (2012), on the other hand, states that reading habits are reflections of the society where readers live. In other words, it is because of social influence or social pressure that young or adult readers end up building reading habits that will be part of their lives the rest of them. Along with the same conception, Breen (2010) defines reading habits as a mean of transferring information from one generation to another.

Additionally, Wagner (2002) states that “In measurable terms reading habits are often considered in terms of the amount of materials being read, the

frequency of reading as well as the average time spent on reading.” This means that, depending on what readers read, the time spent on it, and the type of reading they are exposed will define what reading habits are for them.

Importance

Bailey (2014) states the importance of reading habits by means of literacy: “expressive and receptive language, expanded vocabulary, narrative skills, the ability to understand written language, awareness of story structure, alphabetic knowledge are benefited through a proper reading habit”; along with the previously mentioned the enthusiasm for lifetime reading habits is also developed. It can be interpreted that linguistic skills as well as literacy ones are created and developed through proper reading habits, and this brings not only learning advantages but cultural ones as well.

Miller, and Kelly (2013) mention that proper reading habits embrace readers in different ways, it is stated that “We all benefit when more people read”, since people must have at least “the minimal literacy skills to function in society”. On the other hand, Sullivan (2014) emphasizes that it is important to point *what* the reading habit the reader has is, since there are poor reading habits that lead to poor reading techniques and thus end up in poor reading learning.

Zadina, Smilkstein, Daiek, and Anter, (2013) also contribute with the above mentioned by saying that for a proper reading habit to be developed it is essential for readers to understand the context of what is read. Therefore, readers must enrich their vocabulary to improve their reading habits. Cortsen, La Cour, and Magnussen, (2015), express that reading habits can be implemented by paying attention to comics. Since communities of comics are getting bigger day by day and teenagers are engaged with them due to their huge influence, they can be part of the process of incentive of reading habits.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that reading habits are instilled in readers when they are young, for that reason it is hugely important to be aware of the types of reading habits that will be taught since they will form part of readers’ lives even when they are adults, along with the social background which also plays a fundamental role on the trending reading topics that the reader will performed, though it can be modified it will be challenging. On the other hand, engaging reading topics can be easily introduced into readers’ lives with a view to

establishing them as a reading habit. However, it is essential to be aware of the type of reading topics, reading strategies and reading techniques that will be applied since they will bring advantages or disadvantages for the readers that teachers are trying to help.

2.4. Critical Thinking

According to Paul and Elder (2008) “is the process of analyzing and evaluating thinking with a view to improving to”. It is also stated that a critical thinker is able to collect and assess essential information, employing complex ideas to interpret them efficiently; which is a required skill when it comes to master the reading comprehension skill

Facione (2015) states that critical thinking is the art of bringing the skills of interpretation, analysis and evaluation together in order to establish logical inferences.

Definition

According to Pherson and Pherson, (2012), critical thinking is the ability learners develop to use their logic and argumentation skills to make their points. It means that critical thinkers are able to build their own meanings from the texts they are reading. Butterworth and Thwaites (2013) explain that critical thinking is not knowledge to be acquired but “broad skills”. It means that critical thinking does not need to be repeated until learned but practiced until mastered since a critical thinker is able to deal with the “unexpected as well as the expected”, for example in class discussions students who deal properly with critical thinking, are able to express their opinion accurately based on the readings or texts they are working on. In other words, a critical thinker is someone who can deal with situations where a personal point of view, personal opinion or criteria is needed.

Roche (2014) states that unfortunately critical thinking is not evidenced in classrooms very often, since it is thinking for themselves, it is taking information, evidence, and active engagement and then adopting a particular point of view. For this reason, it is highly important in classroom to start encouraging students to give their own opinions, perspectives, and points of view in order to make critical thinking another tool of the learning process during reading lessons, and reading comprehension exercises.

Jane, Reynolds, Judge, McCreery and Jones, (2013) also define critical thinking as the action of questioning but this questioning needs to be taken as an approach in order to obtain answers from situations, class discussions or reading comprehension exercises which were considered as facts. Rainbolt and Dwyer, (2012) state that it is the ability of taking arguments, or points of view made by others and building others by their own; it is also stated that for this to be correctly developed, it must be instilled in every college school. In other words, Critical Thinking is a skill that must be instilled, practiced and developed.

Importance

Jane, Reynolds, Judge, McCreery and Jones (2013) indicate that the importance of critical thinking relies on the fact that it is a skill which allows people not only in applying critical analysis and problem solving skills but also it is an ability that is mainly required in good management and leadership as essential for study and professional practice. For example, when students are working or reading analysis, and they need to stand by their arguments. In addition, Stobaugh (2013) states that critical thinking skills are important for individuals since inaccurate Critical Thinking skills may lead people to take wrong decisions which will affect their lives negatively in personal and professional areas.

According to Ruggiero (2014), critical thinking is also important because with this skill student develop proper habits of “investigation, evaluation, and judgement”, skills that “contribute to human knowledge”. For instance, it can be said that when it concerns reading analysis, students need enough arguments to provide valid points of view based on meaningful critical thinking, Butterworth, & Thwaites, (2013) state that the importance of critical thinking is not evaluating the problem situation, its solution, or the decision to be taken but in all the rational process that go into those actions.

Finally, Halpern (2013) declares the importance of critical thinking as a skill that must be mastered in a way that when required, it can recall what learned and solve any situation that may suddenly appear. In other words, the importance of Critical Thinking is evident when it comes to unexpected problem solving situation appears.

Conclusion

As previously stated, critical thinking is a skill that must be practiced instead of being automatically repeated, since in many of the situations where the skill (Critical Thinking) is required are unexpected, on the other hand individuals with proper Critical Thinking skills are able to construct their own meanings, and concepts, they do not only deal with the fact of accepting previous knowledge or facts, on the contrary in a well based criterion they form their own. for being able to do so, it is important to master the Critical Thinking skill in early stages of life, for example at school stages, since reading comprehension requires emphatically students who are able to understand but also analyze, in the most critical way and, through this set, their own opinion. On the other hand, improper Critical Thinking skills can lead to wrong decision-making which will negatively affect individuals' lives in personal and professional aspects.

2.5. Literature Circles

Lori (2009) states that basically what Literature circles are, relies on the focus on how teachers guide students during pre – explained tasks regarding a reading or task that covers students' interest, so later, they will change roles explaining what they have understood about it in order to present it in front of the class.

Cuevas, Russell and Irving (2012) state that when “Control groups” (mentioned for Literature Circles) are applied in classrooms and properly guided by teachers regarding global reading comprehension, text-specific reading assessments, and reading motivation, they helped increase students' EFL acquisition and interest for reading as well.

Definition

Moeller and Moeller (2013) define literature circles as “follow up Socratic discussions where “independent and reflective thinking is strived and developed”. They also state that their goal is not only understanding what it is read but also enjoying the activity itself.

Parr and Campell, (2012) state that literature circles are small groups of readers where responsibility for book selection, and self-selected reading is shared, and whose main goal is open discussion, natural conversation, and

notetaking. According to the authors, the more confident readers get, the less needed notetaking is.

Wyse, Jones, Bradford and Wolpert (2013) describe in the case of children that literature circles are group discussions too, but the difference is that these groups are looking forward to paying attention to see how children feel about the reading or texts they were exposed to. It can be used to detect children's reading likes with a view to implementing future reading texts as well.

According to Popp (2012), literature circles are small groups of students who discuss their opinions about their own interpretations, personal responses of what they have read, in other words their reactions over the book they all have been reading.

Vasquez, Hansen and Smith (2013) finally state that literature circles consist of group discussions based on book choice. However, the groups are heterogeneous which in terms of EFL mean that it will be formed by students with high and low level of EFL and that provides excellent opportunities for practicing EFL skills.

Importance

Brunner (2013) states that literature circles are important since they allow readers to make personal connections to the reading material, and provide the opportunity of reading for deeper meaning. All along with group discussions it is an excellent opportunity to express from critical thinking to even create a reading habit through the group discussion.

Stratman (2015) also states that for a literature circle to work properly, it is important to set, monitor and fulfill rules such as respect in order to carry through respectful, independent discussions. In addition, these rules do not only need to be applied during a literature circle session but through the whole school year.

Beach and Webb (2012) express that it is recommendable not to set any expectation during the literature circles for not altering the nature of them; it means that for literature circles to be as useful as possible, they must flow as naturally as possible. Along with the same conception, Tomlinson (2014) state that it is important literature circles are flexible, teachers must rotate roles, switch reading topics according to students' interests and strengths, in order to make the use of them in the most meaningful possible way.

Rog (2014) remarks not only the importance but also the possible disadvantages of literature circles, for example; literature circles are important because they create “opportunity for authentic response on reading and discussion” however they do not “offer specific strategic reading support”, in other words while literature circles encourage meaningful discussions, they do not necessarily provide proper help if a group discussion is not having an accurate book analysis.

Conclusion

it has been stated that literature circles are mainly group discussions where readers are given self-selected reading texts with a view to sharing from their reactions to their own interpretations of what it has been read, on the other hand one of the goals of literature circles is to encourage students not only to improve their reading skills but also to master their speaking skill (open discussion skill). However, for this to happen teachers must take into consideration aspects such as rules (respect), flexibility (roles or reading topics) and even expectations (readers' performance) considering that literature circles must be applied to encourage readers to express freely their points of view, feelings, and thoughts towards a written text.

3. METHODOLOGY

The present research project follows a methodological path that includes the corresponding philosophical framework, research approach, and research methods. Through the following lines an explanation of each one will be provided.

The philosophical framework that responds to the characteristics of this research project is constructivism. According to this framework, reality is constructed and perceived as subjective.

According to Denicolo, Long, and Bradley-Cole, (2016) all research that is related with constructivism is underpinned by particular beliefs about the phenomena it is sought to investigate, and that any investigation should be based on those beliefs. In the current study, the implementation of literature circles can be studied within a constructivist framework since it intends to analyze current reading habits, the implementation of literature circles, the outcome of these types of activities, and the reaction of students involved in them. In summary the central interest of this study is related to people, the way they interrelate and the way which they construct their own realities.

Regarding the approach, it is important to provide a brief explanation of quantitative and qualitative approaches. According to Punch (2013), quantitative approach is related to the research that mainly focuses on data in the form of numbers; while qualitative approach is an empirical research which involves a collection or clutter of methods, as well as non-numerical data. The reason the following study embraces both approaches rely on the fact that on one hand numerical data will be obtained through surveys, interviews and tests results while on the other hand qualitative data will be obtained based on students' reactions in terms of motivation and cooperation towards the implementation of literature circles. However, the qualitative approach will be predominant because the central interest relies on evaluating the implementation and impact of literature circles, considering mainly the reactions of students.

Case study will be the research method applied. Yin (2013) defines the case study as a “**Contemporary Phenomena**” known as the case which will be investigated within real world context, mainly when the case and the elements around them are not clearly evident. In other words, a case study focuses on

a real world situation and its conditions with a view to providing a solution that best fits that situation. The case for this study is the group of 8th grade of students from Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorremar. The characteristics of this group include the managing of English language pretty well; they are in constant contact with it because of their academic participations abroad, competition trips, through news, and trendy topics. Likewise, in this group has been identified a lack of interest regarding reading topics, since when it comes to more meaningful reading its practice is mainly used for “not failing” the course – practice which makes the reading activity tedious and not enjoyable. Concerning Evaluation Research, according to Thomas (2009) it is essential the way professional researchers test how effective a proposal or project has been, it is stated that normally the evaluation will take place after, during and after the project where examination needs to take place too in all the three steps mentioned before. It also stated that once all the mentioned data is obtained, the researcher can be able to figure out and measure the impact of the proposed project.

According to (Gredler 1997, 269) Vygotsky’s Social Cognitivism Theory, individuals learn in a more meaningful way when they are exposed to social situations, between the individual and society and how “social interaction and language come into play in affecting learning or the development of cognition”. This means that the more social interactions and group activities students are exposed to, the more meaningful their learning will be.

Another example of the mentioned above is what Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1993) state when pointing that cooperative learning is mainly essential since through this process students improve not their learning but their classmates’ since by working in groups learning can be achieved.

4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

4.1. Literature Circles

According to the observations carried out on June 5th, 9th, 12th and 14th, the following analysis can be done. During the literature circles session, a strategy was implemented. It started by reading with all the students in class, the teacher in every session supported the explanation with pictures which were useful to be linked with the text. Besides this, the teacher monitored and encouraged every student to participate in class through reading comprehension questions. These questions were applied to check students' reaction and performance in the literature circles sessions. Once the teacher saw the progress of the students, he continued with the next step, which consisted on sending students to read at home. Then, the time in class was employed for the activities carried out during the literature circles.

According to Cuevas, Russell and Irving (2012), in literature circles sessions teachers must guide students' reading activities in order to help them work properly their reading assignments and improve their EFL acquisition. During the four observations that covered the literature circles sessions, the teacher applied questions which were focused for students to give their answers using their own words with evidence from the text. Also, new discussion topics were introduced, such as character traits and the roles characters had in the story. In the last two sessions students were requested to perform class discussions using new reading terms. For instance, they were asked to express with their own words the message the story gives and how they could apply it in real life. In every session the teacher employed pictures to be linked with the sequence of the story, a printed activity to assess the class discussion, and charts on the board which were useful to encourage students to give their opinion and count them as valid no matter if these ideas or opinions were right or needed guidance to be precise.

At the beginning of the literature circles some issues were found, such as shy students who did not share their opinions easily. Some of them did not read the assignments at home and some did not show interest during the session. However, at the end of the literature circles, students showed a lot more

engaging attitude. Some of them became active participants which helped guide students who were still reluctant to participate. These students were more engaged when their opinions were considered as valid for the development of the sessions, and when they saw the importance of reading for participating they showed some progress in the individual reading assignments. During session number two, some students described a character's trait through sentences instead of providing a trait, however teacher started asking questions about how people would call a character with those personality characteristics; by doing so traits started to be mentioned and also every student's opinion was considered valid and useful.

Brunner (2013) explains that the importance of literature circles has a connection with students and the opportunity of reading for a profound meaning in order to create a reading habit. Coincidentally, during the interview done on June 23rd to Wilson Cardoza – English Department Director of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar, the interviewee said that students put off their reading habits because of technology; therefore, the importance of literature circles relies on the fact that their implementation would inspire students to develop a love for reading and inspiration for reading more. He also emphasized that the success of the implementation of literature circles may help students from different ELF levels, and which assessment can be evidenced during their sessions, by seeing the response students produce in class which must be related with the way they support their argumentation.

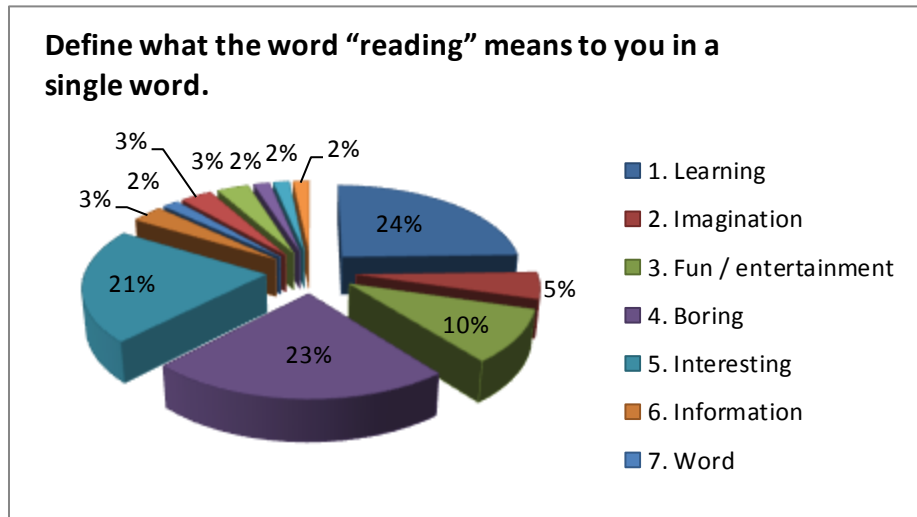
During the interview to Antonio Miguez, English teacher from Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar, conducted on June 24th, he explains that the implementation of literature circles will benefit students in conversational levels, he also considers that it would be useful for engaging students in the literature circles sessions to group them according to the different skills students have, so their contribution will be enriching for the sessions and the students as well because they will be based on what students love doing the most. He concludes stating that literature circles will enhance students in their conversation competence since in order to participate and convey their ideas they need information from what they are reading which will encourage them to read more.

In conclusion, using as a reference, the observations and interviews conducted for this research study, it seems that the application of literature circles is meaningful and necessary for students to feel engaged in the reading practice. Though there a lot of distractors for this to happen, it is the teacher who must guide students with accurate reading techniques, reading topics and assessment. Students must feel guided and supported through the literature circles session and also feel that they are a fundamental part in the development of the session.

4.2. Reading Habits

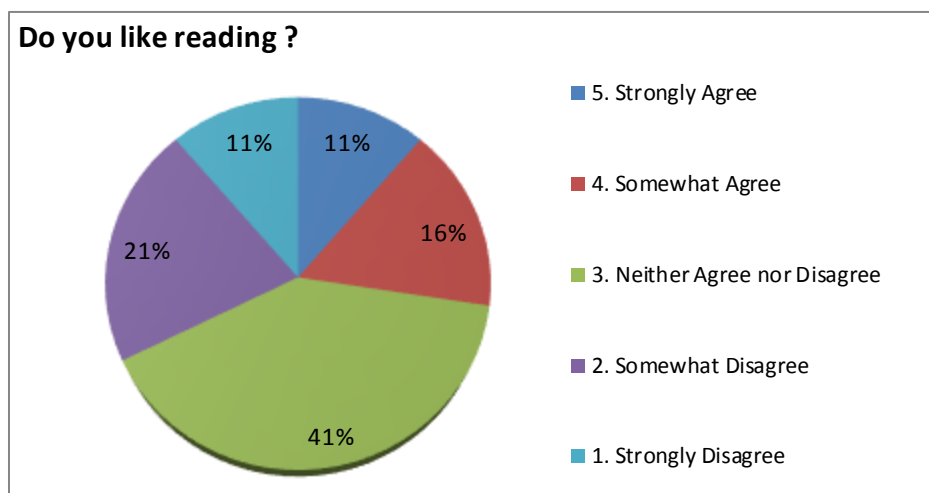
According to Jennings (2012 – p. 4), reading habits are “different products of the pressures of society and the world in which we live”, it means people will read more often reading topics which they are surrounded by. On the other hand, Miller and Kelly (2013) establish that with proper reading habits readers benefit themselves in terms of literacy skills in order to function in society, for that reason, in order to establish students’ reading habits, and point out how they are influenced by their realities and also how they can improve those habits, two surveys were carried out. The universe for these surveys was comprised by students from 8th grade at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar. The whole group encompassed 62 students. The surveys were useful not only for pointing out their reading habits, but also as a starting point which will lead the research to find out the best way to help students create meaningful reading habits.

Graph 1, was introduced in the survey in order to know the personal opinion of students regarding reading, there was a close advantage of 24% stating that reading means learning, against 23% who stated that it is a boring activity. Other percentages appear in the question being 21% who rated reading as interesting with fun and entreating with 10%, which can be described as positive just along with learning. This clearly states that during the implementation of literature some students will cooperate with their process while others need to be engaged since as Machado (2015) states the attitude of a reader is a spontaneous and unconscious response.



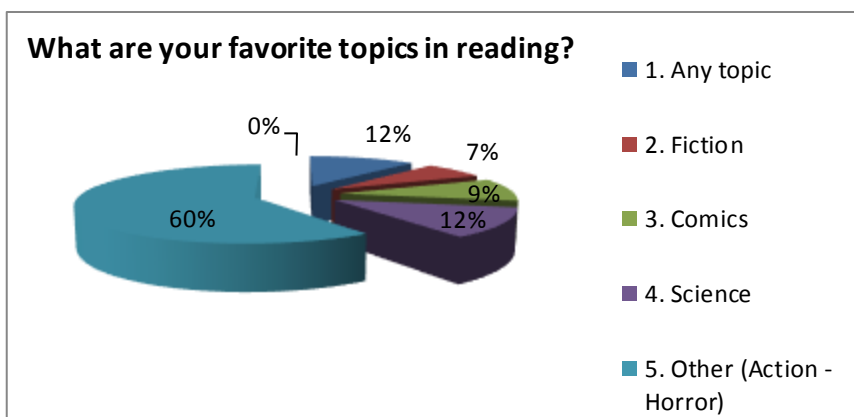
Graph1. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

In the second graph it is stated that 41% of students feel related with reading while the second dominant percentage declines to 21%. The purpose of the study emphasizes on the fact that for students to improve their reading habits it is necessary to engage them with reading first.



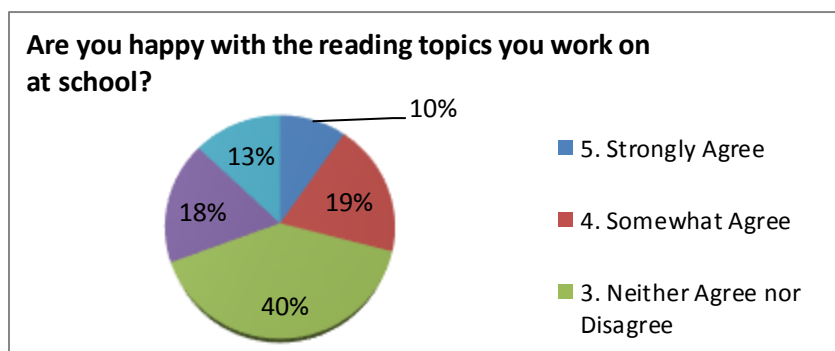
Graph 2. Survey 1. Done by the creator

The graph below explains in a very clear way that some reading topics students are related to, are not of their interest. For example, science represents only 12%, while horror stories represent 60% of the whole universe. This results show that some of the engaging reading topics are not frequent in their classes which is a topic which deserves plenty of attention. Egelund (2012) states that the more interest students feel on reading, they more they will read, which obviously emphasizes on why teachers must focus on students’ reading topics.



Graph 3. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

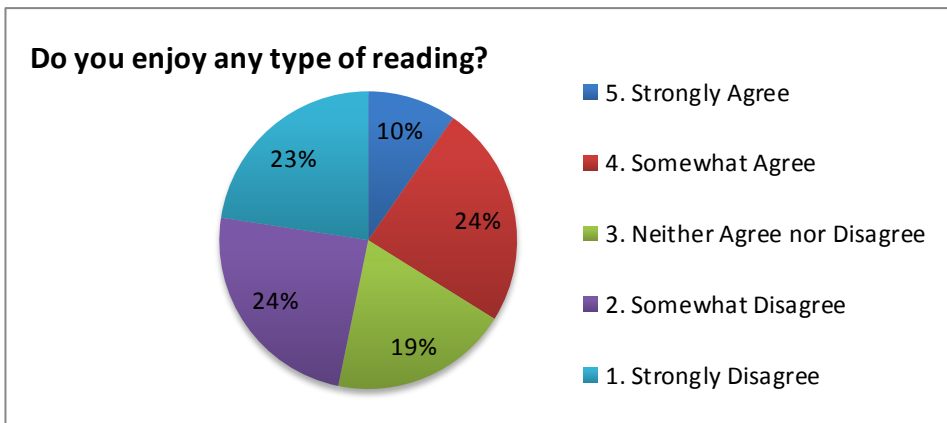
In the next question, students reflected their opinions which are strongly related with Graph 3. Since 40% of them do not agree that much with the topics they work at school, while only 10% feel comfortable with this. It can be stated that the implementation of literature circles will not only provide students a love for reading but also the capacity to enjoy other reading topics. Of course academic topics need to be covered for critical thinking development since as Ruggiero (2014) suggests it contributes to “investigation, evaluation, and judgement”, skills that “contribute to human knowledge”.



Graph 4. Survey 1. Done by the creator

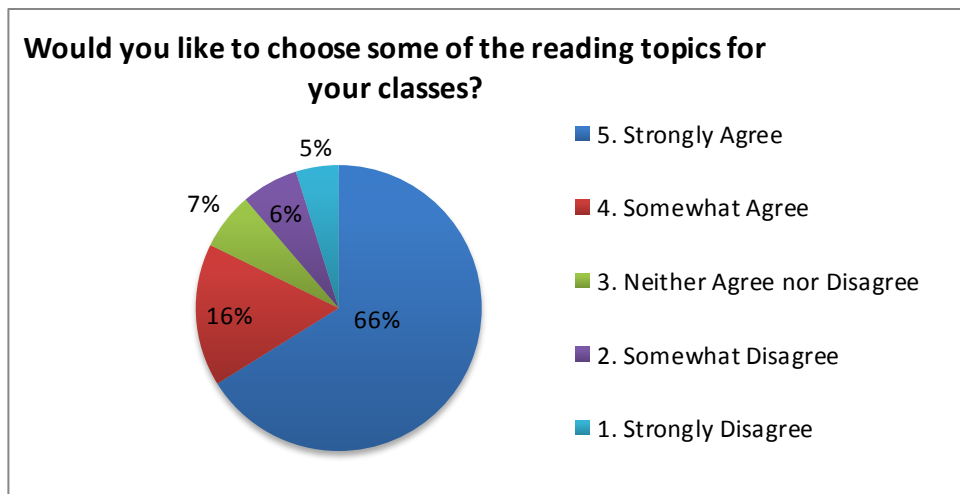
The following question intends to link graphs 3 and 4. According to the answers provided by the students, it can be stated that only 10% of students are happy with any reading topic they work on, while 23% and 24% stated that they are not. This explains their lack of interest on reading. However, it is necessary to develop a proper reading attitude for any type of reading topic, since as Kibui

(2012) points that individuals improve their social skills due to the exposure to any type of reading texts.



Graph 5. Survey 1. Done by the creator

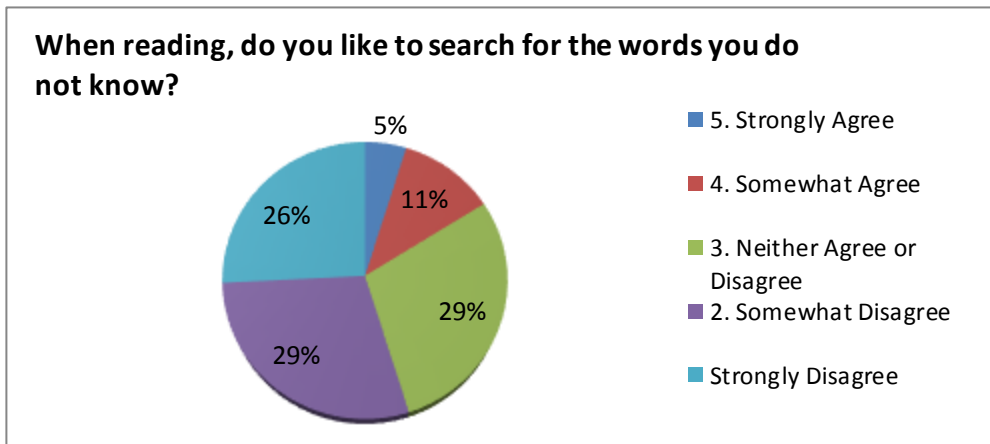
The answers to the next question reflect that 66% of the students would support the idea of choosing their own reading topics, since at school they normally read what it is planned according to their textbooks. Just 5% stated they are fine with the topics they work on. Which it is also related with Graph 3 and the need of giving students the opportunity to choose the texts they want to read, for that reason Tomlinson (2014) states that it is important to be flexible in reading roles and reading topics, since this will make the reading work meaningful for both students and teachers.



Graph 6. Survey 1. Done by the creator

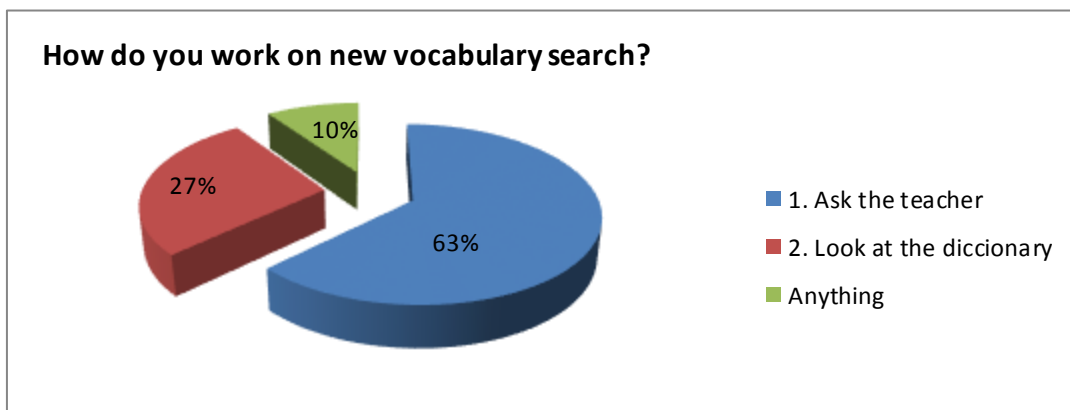
In the next question, students reflected the way they work on new words during their reading activities, it can be evidenced that 29% of them are in a low

percentage of vocabulary research, just 5% of them search the words they do not know, what makes connection with their lack of reading interest, since if a student does not understand what he is reading, it is highly probable he will just simple stop doing it (Egelund 2012).



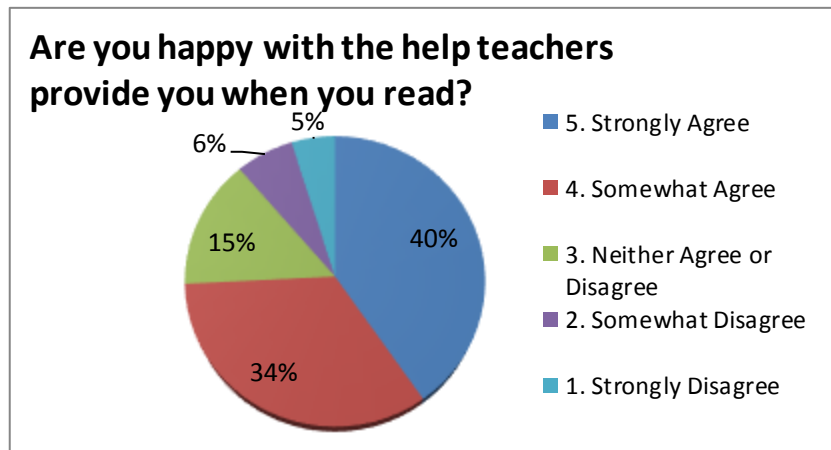
Graph 7. Survey 1. Done by the creator

On the other hand, when it comes to know some necessary vocabulary to keep on reading some text, 63% of the students stated that they looked for teacher's assistance, while 27% looks at the dictionary, leaving only 3% which stated they do not do anything. This can be considered an advantage, since if it is the teacher who provides the answer, he can encourage students to find out the meaning by themselves through examples. Fisher, Frey, and Hattie, (2017) explain that it is of high importance to nurture their reading attitudes in order to improve their reading and studying strategies.



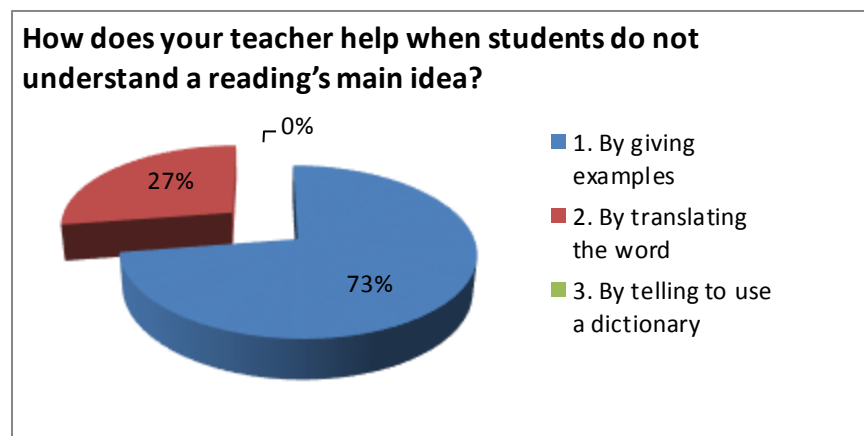
Graph 8. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

Graph 9 shows encouraging results in terms of teachers' help, since 40% and 34% of students agree with the way teachers help them during their reading assignments. This can be taken as advantage during the literature circles session, since with proper guide during these sessions, students will feel more engaged and committed with this practice. Machado (2015) states that a proper intervention done by teachers creates positive attitudes among students.



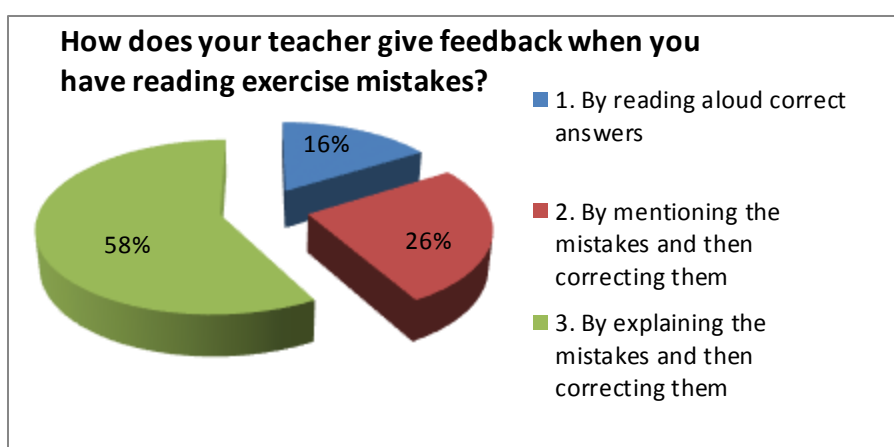
Graph 9. Survey 1. Done by the creator

The following question states that in 73% of the lessons the teacher provides examples for helping students who have problems with their reading assignments, however it is worrying that 27% translates the words students do not understand, however Roche (2014) emphasizes that students must develop critical thinking and doing so requires students to participate autonomously where a proper language management is strongly needed.



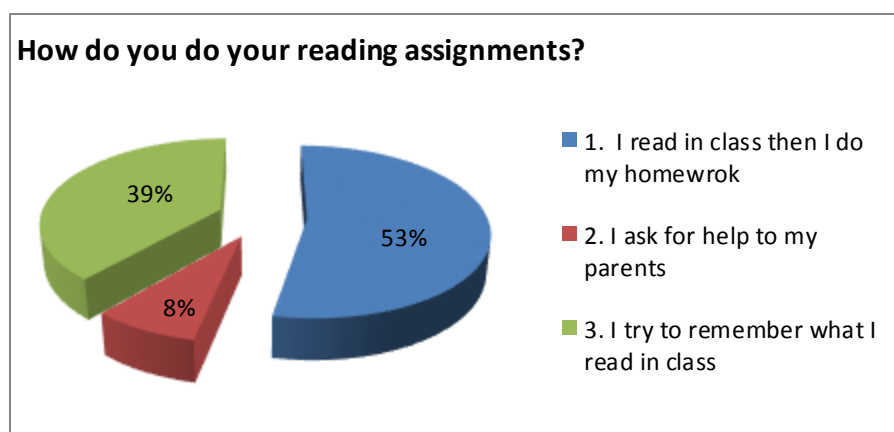
Graph 10. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

The question below, states that in 58% of the lessons the teacher explains the mistakes before correcting them while in 26% of the situations he just mentions the mistakes, in 16% of the situations he just correct answers aloud. It means that most of the times students receive a proper explanation of their answers which leads them to participate in class with more confidence. Cuevas, Russell and Irving (2012) point that Literature Circles need to be guided by teachers in terms of specific reading assessments. These practices will help not only for feedback purposes but for EFL acquisition too.



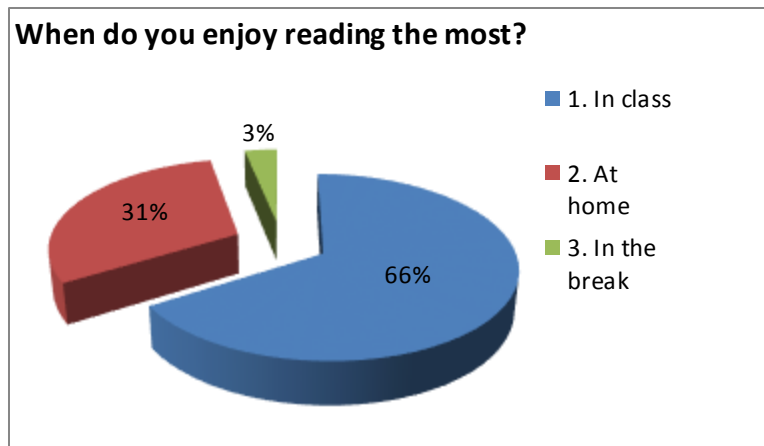
Graph 11. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

The twelfth graph shows that 53% of students read in class for doing homework at home, 8% of them ask their parents for help, while 39% tries to remember what was read in class in order to work on their reading assignments. For that reason, Zadina, Smilkstein, Daiek, and Anter, (2013) point that the most important thing is to understand the context of the text. Since it enriches vocabulary and reading habits too.



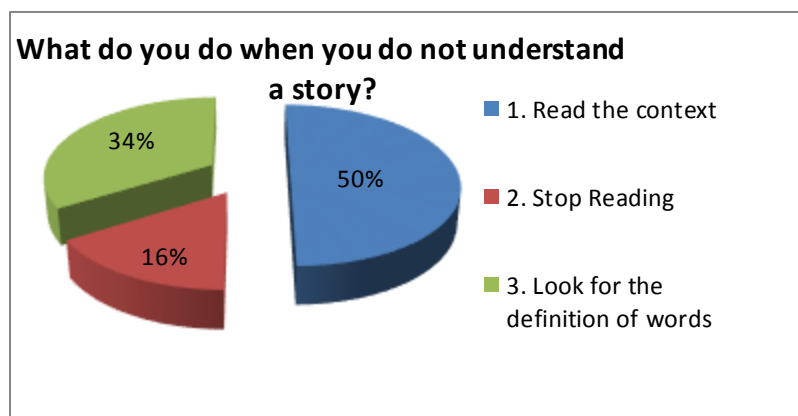
Graph 12. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

Through the next question it was evident to see that students read in class, while reading at home reflected 31%, this means that though the percentages are not far from each other, it is convenient to take advantage of the time in class for working meaningfully on reading skills. In this aspect Startman (2015) recommends that rules need to be implemented and carried out through the school year, and through this respectful, independent discussions can be held in class.



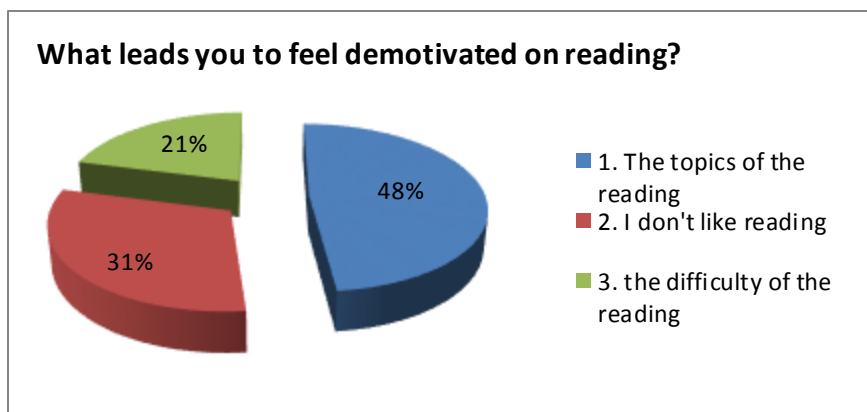
Graph 13. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

The next question shows that though students do not understand a story, 50% of them will read the context to gather the meaning. This is an advantage in terms of reading comprehension and reading analysis- It was evidenced that 34% look for the definition of the words; however, it is important to work on the 16% of the students to improve their commitment in reading activities.



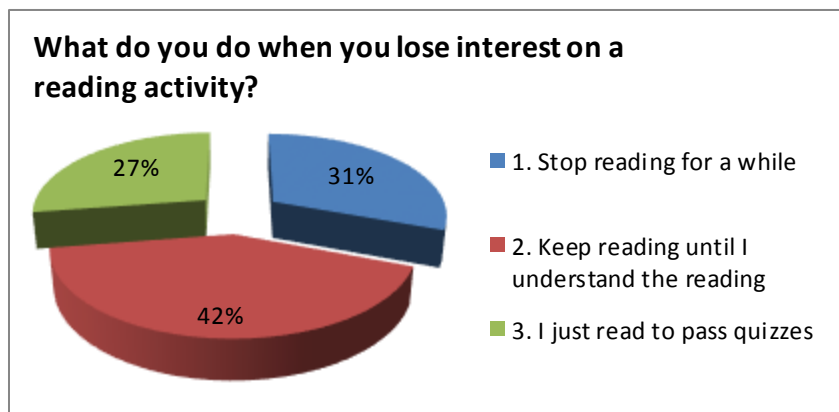
Graph 14. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

The question below shows the situations where students stop feeling engaged with reading, 48% of them established that uninteresting reading topics leads them to stop reading, which is strongly linked with the 31% of students which stated they don't like reading, this clearly stated that if a student doesn't like what he is reading he will lose interest on it. Just 21% established that the difficulty of reading leads them to stop doing it. According to Parris, Headley, Caccamise, Friend, Littrell – Baez, Kintsch, (2015) dynamic and constructive processes must be applied to keep the students engaged in reading and reading skills.



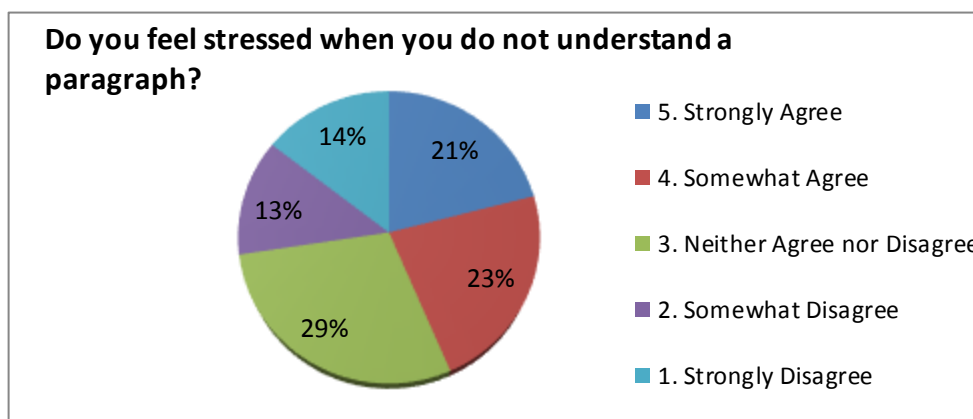
Graph 15. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

Graph 16, was used to analyze in depth the students' reactions when a text is not clear. It is seen that 42% of the students keep on reading using their own skills in order to understand the text, which can be used to strengthen their comprehension skills, 31% of the students expressed they quit reading for a moment while 27% reflected that they only read for not failing on examinations.



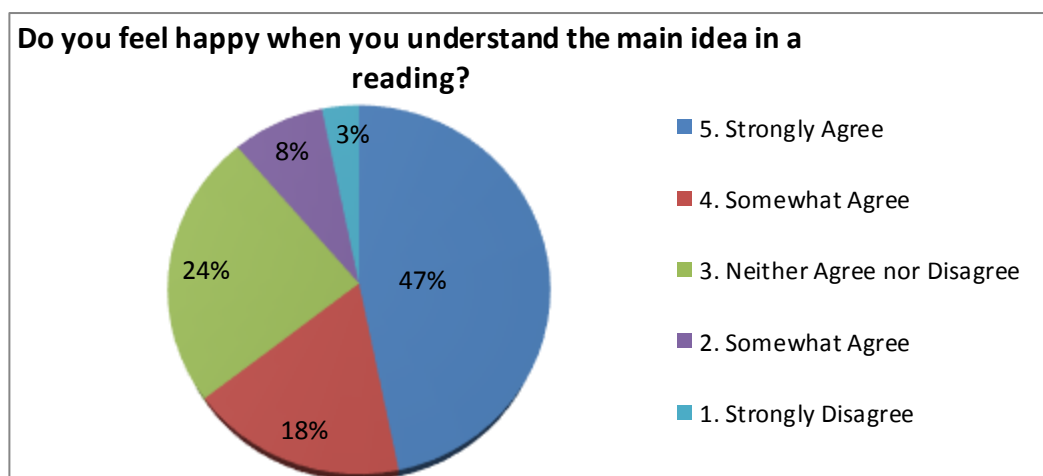
Graph16. Questionnaire 1. Done by the creator

In the next question it is clear that students react in considerable ways when a reading is not understood. For example, 29% of the students feel stressed when not understanding a reading while the next high percentage reflect 23%, this lead to essentially provide students with reading techniques to deal with this situation where literature circles work perfectly. For example, Kalmane (2012) states that effective reading comprehension can be achieved through mastering proper skills in terms of reading strategies and reading skills.



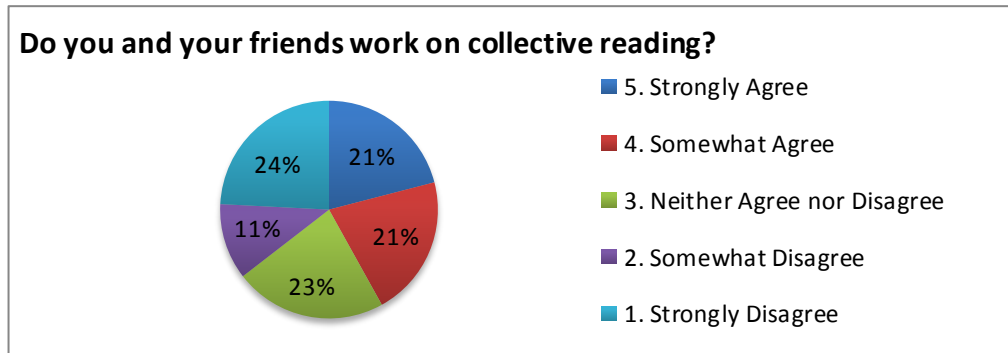
Graph 17. Survey 1. Done by the creator

In graph 18, it is evident that a feeling of happiness is felt by students when understanding the main idea in a reading, since 47% of the student strongly agreed with it compared with 3% that defined this reaction is not of their relevance. For this reason, it is highly recommended that Literature Circles are applied through proper guidance, since it brings reading motivation which is required for EFL acquisitions according to Cuevas, Russel and Irving (2012).



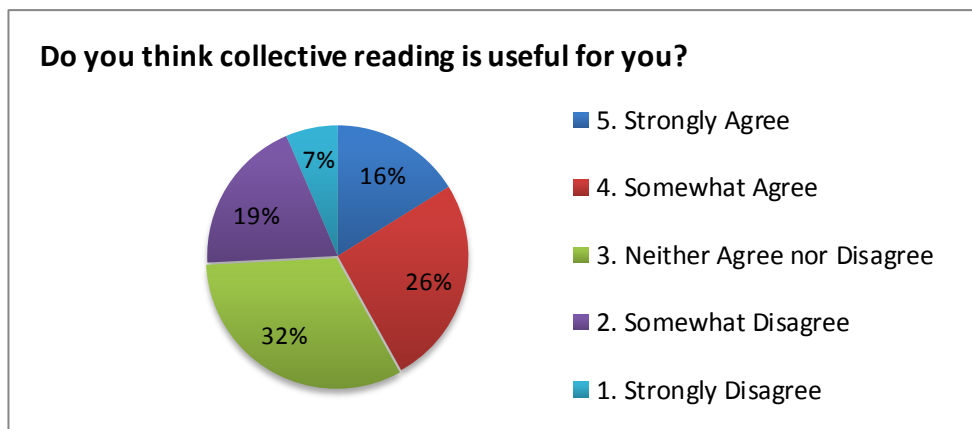
Graph 18. Survey 1. Done by the creator

The next question shows that only 21% of students read in groups, compared with 24% who do not do so. Since literature circles focus on class discussions, it is mainly important to encourage students to read and support themselves for discussion in groups. For instance, Parr and Campell (2012) state that for getting a proper implementation of Literature circles shared responsibility is required from the moment of choosing a text to self-reflected reading.



Graph 19. Survey 1. Done by the creator

The last question shows that 32% of the students reflect an indifferent attitude towards collective reading, while 26% of them manifested that they found this practice useful. Taken in consideration graph, it can be stated that the continuous practice of collective reading can lead to a better appreciation of it. However, Beach and Webb (2012) point that the success of Literature circles relies on how natural group conversations are, since this process can make their implementation meaningful.



Graph 20. Survey 1. Done by the creator

Bambrick – Santoyo, Settles, and Worrell (2013) state that reading habits can be introduced from mistakes students have in reading skills and reading practices, they also state that parting from this point reading habits can be built among students. During these surveys some weaknesses could be evidenced, but also some strengths, which can be efficiently used for the implementation of literature circles.

In conclusion, thought students are not entirely happy with the reading topics they work on, they certainly do their best to keep up their reading assignments and understand what they are reading. On the other hand, it is also evidenced that teachers are still the source of help when it comes to reading assistance, and just a few of them quit or simply lose interest on reading activities. Finally, the feeling of understanding a text is evidenced, which leads the purpose of this investigation in strengthening these situations in order to embrace students in a beneficial reading habit.

4.3. The Outcome of the Literature Circles.

According to Sullivan (2014), poor reading techniques lead to poor reading habits (strategies and practice). This could be evidenced in the first session of literature circles since at the first stage of their implementation it could be observed that students were poorly related with meaningful reading comprehension activities, students were used to answer questions in a literal way with literal evidence from their texts, for example in session number one students were participating in the session by using literal information from their texts, that practice was also done to answer questions. Teacher assistance was needed to guide students in sharing the same information but by using their own words. It was also seen that many of them felt reluctant when sharing their thoughts, as well as the fact that before some literature sessions teacher sent students to read at home in order to continue with the class discussion the next class. However, during session two it was evident some students did not read at home and for that reason their contribution was limited, which made the introduction of literature circles challenging.

During the first session and the next ones, students were encouraged to share their ideas by telling them that every opinion is valid and that their own words

are also accepted for answering questions, but it was really necessary for them to read at home first. This made students felt encouraged to speak, it was also useful the option of employing charts on the board where all the students' opinions were written by themselves, of course in every activity the teacher was monitoring and guiding students, who sometimes had problems in joining the sessions and class discussions since they did not find the right words or they felt shy in doing so. One example of the chart used in class is provided below.

Character	Trait
Students write the name of the character	Students write the trait the character represents

Main Conflict of the story	Students write what is the story about
----------------------------	----------------------------------------

Major Events from the story	Students write the story's main events
-----------------------------	----------------------------------------

In addition, at the end of each session, students who were divided mainly in small groups were given a printed activity in order to reinforce the literature circles session. This would provide the opportunity for shy students to feel more confident to share their thoughts by writing what they want to contribute in the sessions and also by being supported by their friends.

Ruggiero (2014) states that critical thinking is an important skill to be developed and nurtured, since students with accurate critical thinking skills develop proper habits in areas such as judgement. It can be stated that the implementation of literature circles fits this criteria, since at the end of the implementation of literature circles students feel more confident when sharing their ideas, supporting them with evidence from the text, analyzing of characters by describing their traits, describing with their own words the plot of a story, deciphering the message and how it could be useful in real life as well. Students who felt shy or reluctant to participate could understand the

importance of reading and the benefits it brings when someone is able to support its ideas in a meaningful way. For example, in session number three, students needed to work on a cause and consequence chart, in this case all the chart was meant to be filled with students' own opinions which needed to be supported with evidence from the text, this case was important to make students see the importance of being able to use their own words for making their point clear. (an example of the chart is provided below)

Character	Wanted	But	So
<i>Orpheus</i>	<i>He wanted to marry Eurydice</i>	<i>She died the same of her wedding</i>	<i>Orpheus goes to the underworld to rescue her</i>

On the other hand, the survey conducted on October 20th to Mr. Cardoza and Mr. Miguez about the results of the implementation of Literature Circles, they stated that though Literature Circles improved students' interest and commitment on reading, it is also important to continue nurturing this practice since once students are not being tracked or monitored, they may simple lose interest. Mr. Miguez states though students were confused at the beginning of the application of the Literature Circles, they were always motivated and participating. He also indicates that instructions need to be specific and clear, and also it is important to apply other methodologies with the purpose of not making students feel bored. However, with proper time and technique students really enjoy the Literature Circles sessions since they understood clearly what they were doing. He finally concludes that it is necessary to have students read more selections or type of texts so they can easily get involved into the application of Literature Circles and grasped other procedures as well.

Likewise, Mr. Cardoza explains that due to the implementation of Literature Circles students became more interested in reading the selection and texts since Literature Circles allowed them to be more prepared to get their ideas across. He finally states "I guess that we, as teachers, play a very important role since many times, students are not properly encouraged to read and

share. More and more teachers should apply this strategy during their classes so better results could be enhanced”.

On the other hand, the information provided by the teachers showed that once the students were working with the implementation of Literature Circles, they expected the rest of the English teachers to do the same. This can be stated as Literature Circles must be applied not only on reading classes but in other English subjects as well.

In the following pages, clear explanations and conclusions will be provided based on the implementation of Literature Circles. The mentioned information took place during the application of the proposal. For this application, the observation instrument based on Weiss, and Iris, (1997) has been employed.

Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among 8th grade students of

Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorreomar

Sample Observation Instrument

i Developed from Weiss, Iris, 1997 Local Systemic Change Observation Protocol.

Faculty Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer _____César Tapia_____

Date of Observation____June 5 2017_____

Duration of Observation:

__*__ 1 hour

__ half day

__ 2 hours

__ whole day

Other, please

specify _____

Total Number of

Attendees _____20_____

Name of Presenter(s)

César Tapia

Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project's sequence of faculty development for those in attendance.

The purpose of the first literature circle session was to introduce students to a class discussion activity which was based on checking reading understanding, and identifying the basic elements of reading, for doing so literature circles session was mainly useful since the intention of it was to encourage students to share the information with their own words, help students enhance their reading skills through meaningful participation, sharing their thoughts based on evidence from the text but using their own criteria. Some situations could be seen, such as some students having certain type of difficulty giving their opinions, identifying the elements from the reading during the talking session; however, after being encouraged (through monitoring, accepting their answers and guiding them to the correct ones) they felt comfortable in contributing in the session with their ideas and opinions.

II. Session Focus

Indicate the *major intended purpose(s)* of this session based on the information provided by the project staff.

The intention of this session was to encourage students to use their own words to describe the text they read, and also to explain the elements and plot from the reading, the characters and their role in the story but by all means with their own words, their answers must be based with evidence with the text, however they must be expressed with the students' own words. Since this was the first

time students were working in a literature circle session, teacher monitored them in every activity by providing them examples and any other type of help.

III. Faculty Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this faculty development session.

* *Print materials*

* *Hands-on materials*

Outdoor resources

* *Technology/audio-visual resources*

Other instructional resources (Please specify)

B. Indicate the major way(s) in which participant activities were structured.

* *As a whole group*

As small groups

As pairs

As individuals

C. Indicate the major activities of presenters and participants in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)

Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (describe focus)

The teacher requested students to read along with him the story, also there was a power point presentation with pictures only, in order to enhance students, follow the sequence of the story and ease their reading comprehension. Some questions were also asked during the activity.

___ **Formal presentations by participants: (describe focus)**

After reading and at the end of the power point presentation, some questions were projected in order to elicit student's opinions which must be supported through evidence on the text, this opportunity worked to introduce some questions about the main characters, their role in the story and how their roles would define each character. Students must answer using their words and evidence from the text.

___ **Problem-solving activities: (describe)**

After noticing that some students felt shy when sharing their ideas, a chart was drawn on the board in order to write everybody's opinions, the intention of this strategy was to make validate each student answer in order to make everybody a fundamental part of the class discussion. After this practice, students felt more encouraged to share their answer and opinions.

___ **Proof and evidence: (describe)**

At the end of this first session, students were handed in a printed activity which contained the following elements: characters, main conflict, major events, setting and theme from the story. Students had to fill in this chart with their own words based with evidence from the story. They were monitored by the teacher in order to be helped when needed.

___ **Reading/reflection/written communication: (describe)**

After finishing the chart on the board students where encouraged to support their answers, they could be helped by their classmates but they also had to express their personal opinion (critical thinking) through evidence from the text (story).

___ **Explored technology use: (describe focus)**

Teacher used a power point presentation and only pictures to describe the sequence of the story in order to ease the plot of the text students were reading in order to make a review of it before the questions and class discussion.

___ **Explored assessment strategies: (describe focus)**

Teacher used pictures to establish the sequence of the story and also to describe the characters' role and actions in the story as well as the story's theme. Some pictures were projected in order to review the main parts of the text, and a plot was also used to divide the reading in a proper sequence in order to help students give their ideas.

___ **Assessed participants' knowledge and/or skills: (describe approach)**

Critical thinking, plot description, character's roles descriptions and analysis (Indirect-guided approach)

___ **Other activities: (Please specify)**

The teacher erased the answer from the chart on the board, so this time who did not participate that much could do it this time, so since the answers were already given, they could easily contribute with more security and by using their own ideas too.

D. Comments.

Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this faculty development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.

At the beginning of the session the following situations were observed.

The story was about an African American family who were suffering an unfair situation from white men trying to steal their trees in order to sell them in the market, the white men threatened the family easily since the father was working far away from the forest.

Since students come from school and they used to work only in reading – comprehension activities, it was encouraging to help them give their opinions in meaningful way such as answers related with characters' roles and traits, plot analysis, and how they can identify a character's role through his or her actions. For instance, students had trouble when they had to describe the white

man from the story, they started giving information about how the story began, the setting of the story even how they were dressed up, and why they were in the forest but they had to help in order to describe the actions of the white and people with these traits are called, so they were asked to say if these actions were good or bad, then they were promoted to find the correct trait for that character and the rest ones.

Another issue that was found is that students felt shy when sharing their ideas due to the fear of providing wrong answers. Probably, because they are not used to have their answers accepted when they are not according to some teachers' opinion. Some of them stated that when they were wrong on their answers they were inaccurately corrected.

Finally, students showed problems in order to identify the roles in characters that appeared on the text, since as said before they were used to read and provide answer from the reading but nothing related with the analysis of the reading or expressing their critical thinking either supporting their answers with their own words and with literal information from the text. A few of them said that if their answer were not exactly from their books, they were voided

E. Conclusion

In order to conclude the present observation, the following comments can be stated.

At the beginning of the session students felt curious when they were put in small groups, since they are used to work in groups but the group work focused on finishing activities and not in providing ideas analytically and critically stated.

Some of them were a bit noisy at the beginning but they could be monitored easily since they were told that every answer must be supported in a personal and individual way.

The application of literature circles was satisfactory due to the fact that when students notice that being literal in answers was not a required, which can be defined that once students are correctly encouraged and instructed they will

feel free to contribute with their answers. It is also concluded that when students saw that their answers were valid and taken in consideration, they were self-encouraged and environment of global discussion was visible during the session.

Protocol of Observation 1.

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

Sample Observation Instrument ⁱ

ⁱDeveloped from Weiss, Iris, 1997 Local Systemic Change Observation Protocol.

Faculty Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer _____ César Tapia _____ Date of Observation _____ June 9th 2017 _____

Duration of Observation:

__*__ 1 hour _____ half day

__ 2 hours _____ whole day

Other, _____ please
specify _____

Total _____ Number _____ of
Attendees _____ 21 _____

Name of Presentor(s)

César Tapia

Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project's sequence of faculty development for those in attendance.

This second session was applied during the American Literature class. For this session students were sent to home to read a text so in class they would work on in a group discussion in class. This time, students would focus on describing the characters' role in the story through their actions which was defined as character trait – analysis. On the other hand, students could identify the main situations from the story and the traits they represented.

II. Session Focus

Indicate the *major intended purpose(s)* of this session based on the information provided by the project staff.

The intention of this session consisted that students should identify characters and situations from the text and then, identify the traits they represent. For that purpose, they were asked to read the text previously at home. Also for example teacher would mention a specific character from the story and students had to describe if the character represented sadness, happiness, anger or any other trait. For this purpose, some examples were given, taken from the same reading.

III. Faculty Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this faculty development session.

 * *Print materials*

* *Hands-on materials*

Outdoor resources

* *Technology/audio-visual resources*

Other instructional resources (Please specify)

B. Indicate the *major way(s)* in which participant activities were structured.

* *As a whole group*

As small groups

As pairs

As individuals

C. Indicate the *major activities* of presenters and participants in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)

Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (describe focus)

Students were sent to read the text at home, so in class the time was used to discuss and analyze the characters and situation traits from the story as much as possible. The discussion was held in class. The teacher monitored students helping them find the proper word for trait description.

Formal presentations by participants: (describe focus)

After reading, students were projected pictures from the characters of the story, students had to describe them through the traits they showed in the story and support their answers with evidence from the story. It could be seen that students who had problems finding the right word for trait description used small phrases which was evidence of progress.

Problem-solving activities: (describe)

The problem found in this session was that some students did not read the text at home, so just the students who did could participate in the discussion, so

the teacher had to project some pictures from the story in order to make a review of the plot and sequence of it. Students were encouraged by the teacher who provided examples from the same reading or real situation from life.

___ Proof and evidence: (describe)

At the end of the discussion students were handed in a printed chart that focused on the main situations from the story and the traits they represented, so students share their opinions in small groups for the whole class.

___ Reading/reflection/written communication: (describe)

After finishing the class discussions, students were asked to fill in the same chart but this time individually and also by using their own opinions.

___ Explored technology use: (describe focus)

In this session the teacher used a projector in order to present pictures and the characters from the story and encourage students to follow the sequence of the story in an organized way.

___ Explored assessment strategies: (describe focus)

After the class discussion, students had to fill in a chart that consisted in explaining the main situations from the story and the traits they represented; they had to do it by using their own words that not necessarily had to be the ones from their classmates or books.

___ Assessed participants' knowledge and/or skills: (describe approach)

Main events' and the traits they represented (learner centered and collaborative approach)

___ Other activities: (Please specify)

In this second session students were projected the pictures so they could identify them with a scene from the story and the role of the character in it, when doing so students had to use their criteria supported through evidence from the text (story).

D. Comments

Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this faculty development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.

At the beginning of the session the following situations were observed.

The story was called "An Unforgettable journey" it was about a family who had to escape from Laos due to a Communist regime. The Family experienced a lot of struggles during the journey, even the death of a baby girl; finally, they arrived to the USA thanks to relative's help.

This time student had an idea about giving their opinions based on what they read. The challenge this time was to connect all the students with the session since some of them did not read the text at home, also it was encouraging to help students give their opinions in meaningful way such as answers related with characters' traits, plot analysis, and how they can identify a character's role through his or her actions. For this reason, reading the story at home was mainly important, so during the literature circles session students shared their opinions about the character and main situation and the traits they represented.

Another issue that was found was that just students who liked reading read the story at home, some others did not do it, so they did not participate at the beginning of the story, so it would be interesting to tell the whole class in advance that the next activity there would be extra credit for students who participate, so this could motivate them to read and share their ideas during the session since in this session a review with projected pictures had to be done to catch up students with the story.

Finally, students who were caught up with the story and the ones who read could contribute with their ideas about the characters and the main situations from the story and the traits they represented, however there was a considerable amount of time employed to review the story which lead to the application of literature circles work as effective as planned.

E. Conclusion

At the end of this session, it could be observed that students who read the story in advance could contribute more in the class discussion; also they felt more encouraged when they saw they were contributing to the analysis of the reading in terms of traits. On the other side students who did not read at home found hard to contribute with their ideas at a point that they simply lost interest in the activity. When they were caught up with the reading they contributed with their ideas in a shy way but just like the other students, when they saw they were being a contributing part of the class they felt encourage of keeping it up in an enthusiastic way, however catching some students up took meaningful time which could be used to work on the session with even more emphasis, for that reason giving extra credit to students who read previously at home can work well.

Protocol of Observation 2.

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

Sample Observation Instrument ⁱ

ⁱDeveloped from Weiss, Iris, 1997 Local Systemic Change Observation Protocol.

Faculty Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer _____ César Tapia _____ Date of Observation _____ June 12th 2017 _____

Duration of Observation:

* 1 hour

half day

2 hours

whole day

Other, _____ please
specify _____

Total _____ Number _____ of
Attendees _____ 21 _____

Name of Presentor(s)

César Tapia

Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project's sequence of faculty development for those in attendance.

The application of Literature circles covered one period of class during the American Literature class. In this third session students felt more encouraged to participate actively, the literature circles were covered totally and participation was more evident. Students' answers also were more accurate when describing the reading elements and characters' traits.

II. Session Focus

Indicate the *major intended purpose(s)* of this session based on the information provided by the project staff.

The purpose of this session was that students could identify by themselves the characters' traits and also connect them with the story with a view to associate and compare them with events in real life. Also this time, students had to give an alternative ending for the story.

III. Faculty Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this faculty development session.

* Print materials

* Hands-on materials

Outdoor resources

* Technology/audio-visual resources

___ Other instructional resources (Please specify)

B. Indicate the *major way(s)* in which participant activities were structured.

___ As a whole group

___*___ As small groups

___ As pairs

___ As individuals

C. Indicate the *major activities* of presenters and participants in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)

___ **Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (*describe focus*)**

After students read the text at home, they were invited to describe the story using their own words, so a plot and characters' actions map was being drawn on the board with all the students' contributions.

___ **Formal presentations by participants: (*describe focus*)**

This time, students had to focus on the two main characters of the story. Students had to compare them through their similarities and differences. At the end of the session students had to support their answers by providing examples from real life.

___ **Problem-solving activities: (*describe*)**

The challenge that was found in this session was to help and encourage students to find proper examples to relate the characters' traits with real life situations. However, students could work well after being given several examples.

___ **Proof and evidence: (*describe*)**

Students were given in small groups a printed activity to be worked which consisted in filling it in by comparing both main characters from the story in their similarities and differences.

___ **Reading/reflection/written communication: (describe)**

After finishing the chart, students had write in groups to give an alternative ending for the story.

___ **Explored technology use: (describe focus)**

Teacher used projected pictures from the characters' and their role in the story in order to emphasize their actions to be discussed in class.

___ **Explored assessment strategies: (describe focus)**

In small groups students had to fill in an exercises comparing the main characters of the story about their similarities and differences.

___ **Assessed participants' knowledge and/or skills: (describe approach)**

Critical Thinking (interactive approach)

___ **Other activities: (Please specify)**

In groups, students had to complete a short paragraph giving examples that connects the main characters' actions and traits with events from real life.

D. Comments.

Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this faculty development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.

This session was more fluid than the two previous ones; the story focused on two kids from seventh grade who are starting their teenage life and feel attracted to girl for the first time, one of the main characters is more extroverted while the other one is a little bit shy. At the end of the story the shy character can approach to the girl he likes after pretending he was in French, also his teacher gives him a hand pretending not to notice that the student was lying.

This reading topic was well accepted by the students since it covers situations that 8th grade students are living, in this session encouraging students was

really easy and most of the students read the story had home which made the session fluid and comfortable. The challenge this time was telling students to participate by raising their hands first and also by focusing on the story instead of giving opinions that were not related with the story.

Finally, there was a lot of interaction when students were told to give an alternative ending to the story in the written part of the session. The literature circles in this session were held successfully.

E. Conclusion

Due to the fact that this story was popular with the students, there was more integration and participation with the students; it was also rewarding to see that students felt familiar with words like “traits, analysis, and plot”. It can also be concluded that when a topic can get students encouraged to participate, students feel free to share their opinions and support their ideas too.

Protocol of Observation 3.

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

Sample Observation Instrument ⁱ

ⁱDeveloped from Weiss, Iris, 1997 Local Systemic Change Observation Protocol.

Faculty Development Observation Protocol

Background Information

Observer _____ César Tapia _____ Date of Observation _____ June 14th 2017 _____

Duration of Observation:

* 1 hour

half day

2 hours

whole day

Other, _____ please
specify _____

Total _____ Number _____ of
Attendees _____ 21 _____

Name of Presentor(s)

César Tapia

Context Background and Activities

This section provides a brief overview of the session being observed.

I. Session Context

In a few sentences, describe the session you observed. Include: (a) whether the observation covered a partial or complete session, (b) whether there were multiple break-out sessions, and (c) where this session fits in the project's sequence of faculty development for those in attendance.

In this fourth session, the application of the literature circles focused on one session, this session complemented the literature circles sequence since this time, students had to share their supported opinions in a "cause - consequence" chart, and by doing so they were able to think and respond critically, basing their answers and actual evidence from the text.

II. Session Focus

Indicate the *major intended purpose(s)* of this session based on the information provided by the project staff.

The purpose of this session was that students could describe the role that each characters had in the story, then how they dealt with unexpected situations that happened to them in the story, and finally how this brings a consequence to them.

III. Faculty Development Activities (Check all activities observed and describe, as relevant)

A. Indicate the major instructional resource(s) used in this faculty development session.

* Print materials

* Hands-on materials

Outdoor resources

* Technology/audio-visual resources

___ Other instructional resources (Please specify)

B. Indicate the *major way(s)* in which participant activities were structured.

___ As a whole group

___* As small groups

___ As pairs

___ As individuals

C. Indicate the *major activities* of presenters and participants in this session. (Check circle to indicate applicability.)

___ **Formal presentations by presenter/facilitator: (describe focus)**

After students read the text at home, teacher reviewed the story with the students through a power point presentation, in order to check understanding, also through some questions teacher encouraged students to share their inferences about the text, their opinions about the major events, the climax, the resolution and the message the text gives.

___ **Formal presentations by participants: (describe focus)**

In this fourth session, after reviewing the story in class, students had to describe the characters from the story, the way they dealt with unexpected situations, how they could be described with these actions and the consequence or result this brings to them, and also how the story and even the characters' role got affected by this.

_ **Problem-solving activities: (describe)**

In this case it could be observed that a lot of students felt engaged with the story however some of them felt a bit reluctant in sharing their opinions, for that reason they were put strategically in groups with active participants so they can be encouraged by their group, and doing so they could feel motivated and supported.

___ **Proof and evidence: (describe)**

Each group received a printed activity where they had to fill in with the name of the main characters, their role in the story, the way they dealt with unexpected situations in the story, and the consequence or result this brings to them, and also how the story and even the characters' role got affected by this.

___ **Reading/reflection/written communication: (describe)**

After finishing the chart, each group was told to choose one speaker to express the group's opinion about the way story ended, how the characters' trait influences them to face the unexpected situations that happen in the story. It was allowed to the other groups to share their thought about if they agreed with the other groups or not in a respectful way.

___ **Explored technology use: (describe focus)**

Teacher used a power point presentation with pictures only to review the story and specify the version of the story that was being worked.

___ **Explored assessment strategies: (describe focus)**

In small groups students had to had to describe the characters from the story, the way the dealt with unexpected situations, how they could be described with these actions and the consequence or result this brings to them, and also how the story and even the characters' role got affected by this

___ **Assessed participants' knowledge and/or skills: (describe approach)**

Students responded and discussed in this session using their own opinions supported through evidence from the story. (Metacognitive approach)

D. Comments.

Please provide any additional information you consider necessary to capture the activities or context of this faculty development session. Include comments on any feature of the session that is so salient that you need to get it "on the table" right away to help explain your ratings.

The fourth session consisted on the famous myth "Orpheus the great musician". The myth explains how Orpheus who was a wonderful musician and whom even gods loved his music, loses his fiancée Eurydice the same day they were going to get married. In his sadness Orpheus goes to the underworld playing his lyre in such a way that everybody lets him in with no obstacle. The same Hades shocked by his music gives the opportunity to Orpheus to get his fiancée back with the condition of not looking back on his way to the world; unfortunately, Orpheus failed in accomplishing their deal which made him lose Eurydice forever.

This reading was really popular for the students, first because students like reading fiction stories and also because they love myths. For this reason, many of them knew the story and many versions of it, however using the power point presentation to review the story, students connected with the version that was being worked in class. A few students felt reluctant in sharing their ideas, but when they were put in groups of active participants they contributed with the class discussion. Also they received a printed activity where they had to describe the role that each characters had in the story, then how they dealt with unexpected situations that happened to them in the story, and finally how this brings a consequence to them, affecting the story too.

Finally, each group had to express their opinions about the way the characters' performed in the story, and the way the story ended, also there was a time for each group to express their agreement and disagreement on what the other groups discussed.

E. Conclusion

It is concluded that in this fourth session, the literature circles session was successful, due to the fact that students liked the story, felt motivated in sharing

valid information, which leads to the conclusion that when a student feels an essential part of the teaching – learning process, they will be meaningfully motivated to participate.

Protocol of Observation 4.

4.4. Reaction of the students towards literature circles

In order to analyze the impact of literature circles among students from 8th grade at Unidad Bilingüe Torremar, a third interview was conducted. This interview contained open ended questions where students wrote their thoughts about literature circles before, during and after their implementation.

According to Mokhtari (2016), reading comprehension means taking readers to manage their thinking while reading and then use their skills to support their criteria on what they read. Since students came from a reading practice where their critical thinking was not applied often, some of their attitudes before the implementation of literature circles were divided. Some of them had the conception that it was a practice that made reading even more boring since they did not feel motivated to read, while others felt anxious and excited to be part of a project they have never worked on before.

At the beginning of the sessions many of them had trouble in order to participate, they did not take the literature circle sessions seriously or they showed attitudes of boredom. However, these attitudes were improved when students saw the teachers' guidance, and the way the literature circle sessions were carried out. For example, during the third interview performed on June 20th student A stated "(I though) it was going to be boring but I think it is not so bad and that now it (reading) is better." This comment provides a clear example about how the student's expectation improved thorough the literature circles, it can be said that with proper guidance its love for reading can increase too. During the sessions every student's opinion was accepted or guided to be as accurate as possible, also graphic organizers and maps were used to make stories clearer which made students felt more motivated to participate.

Regarding the process of the implementation of literature circles, students stated that they found beneficial the use of maps or graphic organizers, since these materials were produced by students. Student B, for example, during the same interview stated "It (maps and graphic organizers) were very good because he (the teacher) made all the people participate, and all the story was easy to understand." Also, students referred to literature circles as useful since due to their application they felt more engaged with reading. They felt as an

active and productive factor of class, a few of them declared that though it required attention, it is interesting to participate since teacher provides the necessary guidance to work on a story properly. For instance, student C states “(the teacher helped) showing slides with the literature circles, that helped me study easier (...)”.

According to Ministerrad (2012), a reading attitude is built when a reader is engaged because this attitude is the one he/she will continue developing, as a result of this during the observation it could be evidenced too that students were friendlier to reading since they could already work in a proper way to understand a story, extract its elements such as plot, character traits and the message it gives. In this sense, students finally concluded that thanks to the implementation of literature circles they found reading and the American literature classes more interesting, though it must be kept on that work to turn every reading assignment into an interesting one.

According to Jane, Reynolds, Judge, McCreery, and Jones, (2013) critical thinking improves students’ problem solving skills as well as their leadership. Coincidentally at the end of the implementation of literature circles students defined them as useful since now they understood a lot better a story, state their own opinions using their own critical thinking and analyzing characters through their traits and roles in the story, their motivation for reading was higher and some of them stated that it would interest to make summaries of the reading they work on, since it would avoid the fact of reading at home which can lead them to an independent reading habit, and higher critical thinking and analytic skills, student D states during the third interview “literature circles helped me study in an easier way. (...) we can read and participate having a better idea of the book (readings). It is good for people to understand the reading texts properly and improve English Language in communication and reading (areas)”.

One area of future study is that according to some students working with literature circles was now more useful and interesting, however their opinions reflected this behavior towards the American Literature classes, some of them stated that reading other texts were considered uninteresting or unnecessary,

however literature circles can be put into practice in other reading areas at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar such as Social Studies or Science. With proper guidance and support literature circles can be applied in many other areas to help students improve all their areas of reading.

5. PROPOSAL

5.1 Proposal Title

The Design and Implementation of a lesson plan model for 8th grade students at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar to work, monitor and assess the implementation literature circles during English lessons.

5.2 Justification

According to the instruments of evaluation taken to 8th grade students, their opinions about reading were divided, however the message given was that reading was not of their interest and the topics were not covering their interests. Some even stated that they read in order to pass tests. On the other hand, the intention of reading circles as Moeller, V., & Moeller, M. (2013) states, is to lead students to a discussion where they develop independent and reflective thinking. And as result they will become active readers. And on the other hand their EFL level will improve. The implementation of Literature Circles will be of vital importance since the students manage EFL skills at B2 level however according to the questionnaires that were taken, their reading habits, attitudes are not being well developed which makes their skills lost out. On the other hand, due to the fact that many of the students continue their studies abroad, the application of Literature Circles intends to improve their reading habits, their reading habits and their critical thinking as well.

5.3 Importance

According to Parr, M., & Campell, T. (2012) literature circles focus on independent reading, where students share ideas about the reading text they have been assigned., which means that discussions do not follow a monotonous pattern but a free speaking session. For that reason, students must be able to freely and critically speak in a proper and accurate way. On the other hand, Jane, J., Reynolds, E., Judge, B., McCreery, E., & Jones, P. (2013) state that critical thinking is important not only for critical analysis and problem solving but also it improves learner's management and leadership. These traits that students must develop through their studying career set literature circles an essential tool to be implemented.

5.4 Physical Location

Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar

Country: Ecuador

Province: Guayas

City: Daule

Address: Km 14.5 Via Perimetral



Satellite Location of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar.

5.5. Description of the proposal

The Design and Implementation of a lesson plan model for 8th grade students at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar to work, monitor and assess the implementation literature circles during English lessons. The main goal of the following proposal is through the implementation of literature circles and group discussions make students active readers and critical thinkers with a view to improving their EFL skills.

In order to make literature circles work, students may read in groups assigned texts or send them read at home. The next step is to introduce the discussion by making a review of the text based on its basic plot (setting, beginning, main conflict, major events, climax, resolution and message). In order to do so, students will participate using their own words, while the teacher creates concept maps and key words with the shared information. Then the questions in order to generate discussion will be based on traits and roles each character presents, this information is also described with students' own words. Then students using their own criteria will support their opinions with evidence from the text they have read. At the end of the literature circle session, students

receive printed sheets of paper with exercises in order to assess the provided information.

A lesson plan model is presented in the next page, in order to plan a Literature Circle session. The purpose of the following plan is to divide the session in some parts with a view to organizing students' stages of participation. At the end of the session, students will receive a printed sheet of paper to work the text previously discussed in class. On the other hand, in order to anticipate any inconvenience during the session, an extra box called "Possible Inconveniences" has been included. This part of the plan will be useful to work on with unexpected situations that can may the Literature Circles session not achieve its goal.

LESSON PLAN MODEL – IMPLEMENTATION OF LITERATURE CIRCLES

Topic: Reading Topic
Date : _____ Duration 45 min.

Time	Activities	Resources
10 min.	Whole Class Activity Teacher and students will review the content based on Setting, Beginning, Main conflict, major events, climax, resolution and message that was previously read through concept maps and key words	Power point presentation, markers, board, eraser.
15 min.	Whole Class Activity In order to generate discussion, questions will be based on traits and roles each character presents, this information is also described with students' own words	Power point presentation Markers, board, eraser.
10 min.	Whole Class Activity Then students using their own criteria will support their opinions with evidence from the text they have read.	Power point presentation, markers, board, eraser.
10 min.	Assessment students receive printed sheets of paper with exercises in order to assess the provided.	Worksheet, markers, board, eraser.

Objectives:

At the end of the class students will be able to share opinions, express their thought, provide information with their own words and through critical thinking.

Possible inconveniences:

Reading in class or at home may not be done by students in a proper way, so teacher may have to reinforce the text in class, which may take longer to complete each step of the literature circle session.

5.6. Conclusions

Before the implementation of literature circles, students had divided expectations. According to the interview taken on June 20th, some of them were expecting something new to work on, while others thought it was going to be another reading class with boring practices. However, according to the class observations and after the implementation of literature circles, students were not only engaged into the reading practice but they also became active participants in class.

According to the surveys aimed to students, it is concluded that only 40% of the students like reading. Additionally, 60% of the students stated that the topics they like reading the most are action and horror. Likewise, 40% of them stated that the reading topics provided in class are not of their preference. These results from the surveys administered among the pupils mean that teachers must work hard in order to increase the interest of the students in reading.

Another conclusion is that after the four sessions observed and the analysis of the data collected through a survey conducted among the students, felt more connected with reading and its practice after the implementation of literature circles. For instance, during the sessions 1 and 2 of the literature circles, students engaged actively in class participation; while in sessions 3 and 4, it was evidenced, especially through observation, how students shared their ideas in a meaningful way.

For the literature sessions 3 and 4, students were sent home to read some texts that the next day would be used for the literature circles sessions. During these sessions students showed active participation, proper answers supported with valid evidence, and by using their own words, students did not feel uncomfortable when sharing their opinions; on the contrary, they showed determination and commitment with the literature circles sessions and the reading practices.

5.7. Recommendations

It is recommended that once literature circles are applied, teachers from other English classes can continue with the same practices in their lessons, since this will be an indicator on how well students will improve their reading habits and preference for reading. Just like Wilson Cardoza stated in the interview conducted on June 23rd, one of the benefits of the implementation of literature circles is how “students can broaden their knowledge and thinking ability.”

On the other hand, with the aforementioned results, it is recommended that teachers must create a careful link between the topics seen in class and the topics students are more related with, which can build a positive reading habit among students and also once the habit is created, students can become independent readers too. For example, letting students choose the texts they are going to read from a list elaborated considering the topics that must be covered and also the interests of the students.

It is also appropriate to state that teachers must guide and provide students proper assistance because once they feel that the activity is meaningful and they are an active part of the class, they can engage in reading assignments at home to work independently, and then, in class, most of the time can be used for the literature circles sessions. A suggested procedure can be the following: the teacher can include in a chart or concept map students' ideas, opinions and answers, then with all this information a final chart can be created, summarizing all the reading text. With this practice, students not only will participate actively in class but also they will feel they are an active and meaningful part of it.

In flat position, in order to get more benefits during the literature circle sessions, they focus mainly in a conversational level since communication skills are the main goal for an EFL learner. Two suggested activities are: 1) Assign students the task of completing a chart identifying the parts of the text (setting, beginning, main conflict, climax, resolution), providing later the opportunity to share the content of the chart orally. 2) Organize the class in groups and assign each group a character from the text they read. Then, each group must describe the traits of the character with evidence from the story.

Finally, the teacher must give them the opportunity to communicate in front of their classmates to express their impressions about the given character.

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ANNEXES

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorremar**

Students Survey

*The information to be provided is considered as confidential and will be used with investigation purposes only.

Using a scale of **1 = Strongly Disagree** to **5 = Strongly agree**, please answer the following questions about how you feel toward your English classes during reading activities. Please try to be as honest as you can.

Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Do you like Reading?					
When Reading, do you like to search for the words you do not know?					
Are you happy with the help teachers help you when you read?					
Do you feel stressed when you do not understand a paragraph?					
Do you feel happy when you understand the main idea in a reading?					
Are you happy with the reading topics you work on at school?					
Do you and your friends work on collective reading?					
Do you think collective reading is useful for you?					
Do you enjoy any type of reading?					
Would you like to choose some of the reading topics for your classes?					

Survey 1.

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

Multiple choice questionnaire for students

*The information to be provided is considered as confidential and will be used with investigation purposes only.

Choose a suitable option for your answer in the following questions

a. What are your favorite topics in reading?

1. Any topic
2. Fiction
3. Comics
4. Science
5. Other. Explain

b. When do you enjoy reading the most?

1. In Class
2. At Home
3. In the break

c. What do you do when you do not understand a story?

1. Read the context
2. Stop reading
3. Look for the definition of words

d. How do you work on new vocabulary search?

1. Ask the teacher
2. Look at the dictionary
3. Anything

e. What leads you to feel demotivated on reading?

1. The topics of the reading
2. I don't like reading
3. The difficulty of the reading

f. How does your teacher help when students do not understand a reading's main idea?

1. By giving examples
2. By translating the word

3. By telling to use a dictionary

g. What do you do when you lose interest on a reading activity?

1. Stop reading for a while
2. Keep reading until I understand the reading
3. I just read to pass quizzes.

h. How do you do your reading assignments?

1. I read in class then I do my homework
2. I ask for help to my parents
3. I try to remember what I read in class

i. How does your teacher give feedback when you have reading exercise mistakes?

1. By reading aloud correct answers
2. By mentioning the mistakes and then correcting them
3. By explaining the mistakes and then correcting them

j. Define what the word “reading” means to you in a single word.

.....

Questionnaire 1.

Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar

Teachers' Survey

*The information to be provided is considered as confidential and will
be used with investigation purposes only.

Name

.....

Charge in the institution

.....

a. How would the application of Literature Circles in Torreomar benefit
students?

.....

b. Which evidence exists that literature circles engage students into a
meaningful reading habit?

.....

c. How can students be benefited with the application of literature
circles?

.....

d. How would you assess if the application of literature circles was
beneficial?

.....

Survey for teachers

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

Students Survey

*The information to be provided is considered as confidential and will be used with investigation purposes only.

Answer the following questions using your opinion. Please be as precise as possible.

a. What were your expectations about the implementation of literature circles?

.....

b. Which were your thoughts about reading before the implementation of literature circles?

.....

c. Did you find difficult to participate during the literature circle sessions? Explain

.....

d. Which were your feelings during the literature circles sessions? Explain

.....

e. Did your feeling change during the process of the literature circles sessions? Explain

.....

f. How did your teacher provide help for you to work and participate actively in the literature circle sessions?

.....

g. Which materials (power point presentations, pictures, printed activities) did your teacher use for the literature circle sessions?

.....

**h. Do you think they were useful? How useful they were for you?
Explain**

.....

i. Do you think literature circles are useful? Explain

.....

j. What's your opinion about reading now?

.....

k. Do you have personal plans for reading after the implementation of literature circles? Explain

.....

Survey for students (after the implementation of Literature circles)

**Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torreomar**

a. What is your general opinion at the end of the application of Literature circles?

.....

b. How did students' reactions differ before and after the application of Literature Circles?

.....

c. During the application of Literature Circles, did you notice any activity or practice that can be improved? (Explain)

.....

d. What do you think it can be done to encourage students actively into the Literature Circles practices?

.....

e. What are your overall recommendations about the application of Literature Circles?

.....

Survey for teachers (after the implementation of Literature circles)

Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among
8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar

PHOTOGRAPHS











DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN

Yo, **Tapia Álvarez César Vicente**, con C.C: # **0918331430** autor del trabajo de titulación: **Evaluating the implementation and impact of a literature circle among 8th grade students of Unidad Educativa BilingüeTorremar** previo a la obtención del título de **Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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RESUMEN/ABSTRACT:			
<p>The issue detected at Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar was analyzed through action research. The first part of the project covered two surveys for students in order to analyze their current reading habits and the attitudes towards them. An interview was also applied to two teachers which explained the importance and advantages of the implementation of the presented project. The literature review projects information about reading habits, reading attitudes and how they can be improved in order to affect positively students' critical thinking and their EFL skills. It was detected that students' reading skills needed to be improved and strengthened. Therefore, a proposal was design to fulfil that aim. The proposal consisted in the implementation of literature circles during English classes with 8th grade students of Unidad Educativa Bilingüe Torremar. Class observations were also applied in order to diagnose and analyze how literature circles affect students' reading skills and their performance evolution along the sessions.</p>			
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