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OF SANTIAGO DE GUAYAQUIL**

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

TITLE:

**Design, Implementation and Testing of a Set of Task-based
Strategies to Improve EFL Reading Comprehension Skills
Targeted to A2.2 Level Students Attending
a Public Urban High School**

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CERTIFICATION

We certify that this Research Project was presented by **Salvador Pacheco, Bertha Paola** as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Degree.**

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I, Salvador Pacheco, Bertha Paola

HEREBY DECLARE THAT:

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DEDICATION

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This final product is for you!



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ABSTRACT

This study presents the testing of a set of task-based strategies in teaching reading in a four-month period. Each month three strategies were taught and used by the students in the study: one at the pre-reading stage, one at the while-reading stage, and one at the post-reading stage. It was applied to a group of 21 students attending first year of *bachillerato* in a public school in Cuenca, Ecuador. Their ages were between 15 and 17 and their level of English was A2.2. The main purpose of this study was to determine if after working with pre-, while- and post-reading task-based strategies, the students could improve their reading comprehension skills. Moreover, scaffolding accompanied the selected strategies to verify if it could be another important factor that could contribute to reading comprehension ability. The methodology included the qualitative method through observational field notes; the researcher collected information in order to determine whether scaffolding benefited students who were developing comprehension skills and to check if it was possible to remove it progressively in order for these students to gain autonomy. The methodology also included the quantitative method: two surveys were applied; one before the testing period and one after it to know to what extent students knew about task-based reading strategies and to learn their perceptions in relation to the strategies they worked with. Furthermore, quizzes were given to students to assess reading comprehension. The results based on the qualitative data revealed scaffolding is an important component to develop reading comprehension. The analysis of the quantitative data showed that all the students, at different levels, improved their reading comprehension ability after the four-month term. Consequently, reading is an activity that needs strategies to be mastered, and the support of the teacher is important for students to achieve improvement and to gain autonomy.

Keywords

Reading comprehension, reading strategies, scaffolding, and autonomy

Introduction

Reading is an activity that allows people to acquire knowledge, but, unfortunately, it is not simple to become an autonomous reader. At primary school, learners should acquire tools that allow them to become proficient readers. Gutterud (2015) stated that The National Reading Panel (NRP) in the United States identified five indispensable components of reading in primary grades: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, the report of the reading assessment conducted by the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) in 2003 showed that adults scored at or below the basic reading proficiency (Murphy, 2013). Hence, even the adult population still struggle with reading material.

After teaching English in the same class at *Tres de Noviembre* high school in Cuenca for three terms in a row, I realized that my students lacked English reading comprehension abilities because when they had to answer comprehension questions after reading a text, they did not know how to tackle it.

Many times they just did not know what the answer was, and when they attempted to answer a question, it was often wrong. Therefore, as a teacher and researcher, I would like to provide my students important strategies so that they can use them to increase their reading comprehension effectiveness.

It is important to work with young students so that they can acquire some strategies to help them improve their skills. Thus, this work was based on action research in order to determine the weaknesses and strengths of students when dealing with reading comprehension since it is a key component to succeed in school (Kilpatrick, 2015).

This study considered the use of tasks that according to Breen (1987) have the purpose of facilitating language learning. For instance, after students did an opinion gap activity, they interacted and exchanged real information about different issues that are important in real life. They had the opportunity to practice their language abilities in a natural way. The study has also determined that the use of authentic reading material as in Paran, Révész, and

Domingo (2017) pointed out, facilitates language acquisition. The readings are interesting because the texts he recommends are about events based on real life. Furthermore, teacher scaffolding during the process was considered beneficial; for that reason, Blachowicz and Ogle (2008) emphasize that scaffolding can be thought of as the support structured to enable certain activities and skills to develop.

This study focused on the design, implementation, and testing of task-based strategies for improving the reading comprehension ability considering its three phases (pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading) and it integrated other skills while learners developed and performed such tasks.

It is necessary to remark that if young learners carry out these pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading task-based strategies while being scaffolded, they will become autonomous readers at some point. Consequently, they might be well prepared for the coming academic periods and foremost to succeed at university.

Chapter I

The Problem

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Reading comprehension is a necessary skill for students, but it could be challenging for them to master. Because of its importance, this activity has been evaluated in different countries around the world. A study developed by Reading Literacy of U. S. evaluated reading proficiency of students attending fourth-grade in an international context, and 45 countries participated in this study. It was called Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS). The reports showed that in countries such as Canada, Sweden, Hong Kong and Italy the average of reading literacy was higher than the U.S average. On the other hand, the average in France, Poland Spain, Belgium among other countries was lower than U.S. average (Baer, Baldi, Ayotte, Green, 2007). The conclusion of this study was that there is still room for improvement in this skill.

In this context, it is important to mention Gomez (2017) study, who proposed a model to develop intermediate English reading comprehension level due to the problems observed by professors and administrators in Colombia. This study revealed that the 57% of students at the tertiary level have problems understanding text in English related to their study field. It can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1. Reading Comprehension Results

Exam Results 2015		
Undergraduates who took the exam	Passed	Failed
2,062	898	1,164
Graduate students who took the exam	Passed	Failed
1,468	923	545

Engineering Department, Undergraduates		
	2014-2	2015-2
Took the exam	398	526
Passed	264	227
Failed	134	299

Note: A Model for the Strategic Use of Metacognitive Reading Comprehension Strategies (2016). Reprinted from. Scielo journal. Retrieved from http://www.scielo.org.co/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S1657-07902017000200013&lang=pt#app1

Besides, another interesting found was the reading comprehension problems that are facing Chilean high school students. According to the report of Education First (EF) (2016), the English Proficiency Index (EPI) test showed Chile positioned was number 42 out of 72 countries around the world. For this reason, the first reading week was developed in Chile by the sponsorship of the British online bookstore, book depository. The intention was to motivate students to read in English during this week, having a thousand of books to choose from (Gajardo 2017).

An additional element that makes this situation more complicated in the Ecuadorian context is that in the year 2000, English was established as an optional subject in primary school, meaning that the Ecuadorian government was not obliged to provide English teachers (Galeano, 2014). For this reason, most of the participants in this study had not taken English in primary school; they started to take regular English classes when they were in eighth grade. As an English teacher of the first year of *Bachillerato*, I have carried out different types of evaluations of the students' learning strategies. Upon revision of the results, they indicate that one of the skills the students struggle with most

of the time is reading comprehension: around 71% of the students have difficulties to understand readings dealing with simple topics, such as sports, music, common issues, entertainment, among others.

Table 2

Results of the Reading Tests at Tres de Noviembre. School Period 2015-2016

YEAR:	2016								
Students	Fifty Good Friends	I Run for Everybody	International Treats	Becoming a Fat Nation	Cell Phones Banned	Tomorrow's World	Total out of 10	Percentage of Comprehension	
1	5	4	4.5	6	5.5	6	5.17	51.70%	
2	8	6	5	5.5	7	7	6.42	64.20%	
3	7.5	5	6	7	8	7	6.75	67.50%	
4	4.5	4	3	3.5	4	5	4	40.00%	
5	6	7	6	6.5	7	5.5	6.33	63.30%	
6	4.5	5	5	4.5	6	5	5	50.00%	
7	6.5	7	6.5	5	6	7	6.33	63.30%	
8	8	7.5	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	7	70.00%	
9	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	8	7	6.92	69.20%	
10	5	6	6.5	7	8	7.5	6.67	66.70%	
11	5.5	6	5.5	6	5	5.5	5.58	55.80%	
12	5	5.5	6	6	5.5	6	5.67	56.70%	
13	6	5.5	6	7	6	6	6.08	60.80%	
14	6.5	7	6	7	6.5	7	6.67	66.70%	
15	8	7.5	8	8.5	9	8.5	8.25	82.50%	
16	6.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	6.5	6.67	66.70%	
17	5.5	6	6	6.5	5	5.5	5.75	57.50%	
18	7	8	8.5	7.5	7	6	7.33	73.30%	
19	8.5	8	8.5	9	8.5	9	8.58	85.80%	
20	7.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	7.08	70.80%	
21	6	6.5	7	6.5	6.5	6	6.42	64.20%	
						AVERAGE		64.13%	
	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHOSE SCORES ARE 6.9 OR BELOW								71.43%

Note: Based upon the teacher's reports, academic period 2015-2016.

This study was prepared having the strong commitment that a group of students of first year of *bachillerato* improves the reading comprehension skills in a specific. The intervention was planned using a set of task-based reading strategies that were stated as important in the achievement of reading comprehension progress.

The teacher's evaluation was an important indication that there is a prevailing need to tackle this problem. Learning some task-based reading strategies will be advantageous in learning English. Becoming skillful in the

use of some task-based strategies will help students to obtain English proficiency and acquire information autonomously.

1.2 Problem description

Considering reading comprehension as an issue that affects high school students' English performance, this study proposed to devote time to develop reading skills of students who were attending the first year of *bachillerato* at "Tres de Noviembre" school. The students of this urban school, needed to be guided to reach reading strategies that they were lacking.

The few readings that the book includes are not enough. Therefore, articles were selected in order to provide more reading encounters and give students the possibility to work on reading comprehension abilities.

1.3 Justification

The lack of reading comprehension abilities observed in students attending first year of *bachillerato* has been considered as an obstacle, due to the fact that this ability is important to study the English language.

The teacher-researcher was in a position to implement an intervention considering students' level, age and interests.

The results of this piece of research will have implications in the educational field because they can be used by other teacher-researchers in their classes to improve the reading skills and at the same time to continue assimilating English learning through the reading activity.

This intervention was supported by action research. Johnson (2002) indicates this kind of research method expects that educators can be engaged in their own search. Along these lines, both the educator and the students can take an interest in the exploration procedure. Action research allows teachers' reflection in relation to their own practices in order to make changes that benefit students.

The reading comprehension ability is necessary for Ecuadorian students attending first year of *bachillerato*. Therefore, an action plan was developed as the answer to this issue.

1.4 Research questions

1. What impact do task-based reading strategies have on EFL students in a public school in Ecuador?
2. How effective are the task-based strategies in increasing English reading comprehension skills?
3. What kind of scaffolding do EFL intermediate high students need to increase their English reading comprehension?

1.5 Objectives

1.5.1 General objective

To identify task-based reading strategies that allow effective reading comprehension; through mix method and action research, in order to improve reading comprehension abilities.

1.5.2 Specific objectives

1. To implement selected task-based reading activities for the EFL high school target group.
2. To determine the appropriateness of the selected task-based reading activities (through action research).
3. To identify to what extent the assistance from the teacher which is scaffolding leads to perform better performance in reading when applied to high school EFL learners.

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Reading

Reading is a paramount skill for everybody in the modern world. It conveys different features of language which are to be acquired. For instance, it is important to understand information that is been announced in writing form, reading is a crucial skill to qualify for a job or it can be used to educate ourselves on any topic. According to Shankar (2008), reading is an activity that gives the opportunity to communicate with the writer due to the fact that the reader is able to understand the writers' ideas. Reading comprises word and phrase recognition. In this context, it is important to mention a concept of reading by Kalmane (2012), who defines the reading acts as the linguistic ability to decode and comprehend a text from printed source. Grabe, Stoller (2002) and Nuttall (2005) add that reading implies having the faculty to create a proper interpretation of a text's message.

Reading is considered an active skill for the following reasons: it permits the activation and the construction of knowledge through the application of linguistic skills and prior knowledge, therefore; to develop this activity two components are required a text and the reader's interaction with it (Chastain, 1988 and Alderson, 2000).

According to Hashemi, Mobini and Karimkhanlooie (2016), reading is the most important language skill for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This skill is crucial to develop language proficiency. Through it, learners are exposed to the target language (TL). The reading skill is complex to acquire especially if the intention is to understand reading material that is in the foreign language. However, there is a prevalent advantage since once it is acquired, reading opens a gate to discover new information.

The Program for International Student Assessment PISA defined reading literacy as the ability to assimilate, understand, and use written texts to develop one's potential in order to cooperate with others in society (PISA, 2015).

According to Paran, Révész, and Domingo (2017), reading is the action by which we translate messages in composed or printed frame. These messages can be imprinted on paper or they can be anticipated on a screen. For each situation, we translate these images and give each of them a significance, and after that we join these implications to make a portrayal of the content that we have read.

The reader must have the capacity to arrange the codes and disentangle them. But many times, they cannot comprehend them when they are composed because they cannot decode them. So, these components are totally pivotal for reading effectively. You must have the capacity to unravel the words and you must have the capacity to comprehend them and to comprehend the relations between them.

2.2 Reading comprehension

As mentioned by Grabe and Stoller (2002), reading comprehension is the capacity to comprehend data in a content and assimilate it properly. Nuttall (2005) pointed out that comprehension of the content fluctuates as one's interest does. Additionally, it shifts as one's inspiration, intrigue, knowledge of dialect, of content, etc. Comprehension varies according to the individual reader.

Paran et al. (2017) state that the reading process is composed by two factors: word decoding and the language comprehension. This implies that the level of comprehension will depend on the decoding process. The ability to recognize most of the words will permit to understand more material that has been read.

The Center on Teaching and Learning from University of Oregon indicated that comprehension is based on two basic components: the essence of reading and the active and deliberate intuition in which the significance is built through communications between the content and the reader. Some factors were taken into account as important in reading comprehension as Figure 1 shows.

Reader Based Factors	Text Based Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonemic Awareness • Alphabetic Understanding • Fluency with the Code • Vocabulary knowledge • Prior knowledge • Engagement and interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative v. Expository • Genre considerations • Quality of text • Density and difficulty of concepts

*

Figure 1. Factors that Impact Reading Comprehension. Reprinted from *Big Ideas in Beginning Reading* by the Center on Teaching and Learning.

Source: University of Oregon (n.d.). Retrieved from http://reading.uoregon.edu/big_ideas/comp/comp_what.php

Likewise, Paran et al (2017), also made the suggestion that those who were the best decoders also had the best reading comprehension. Therefore, teachers should assign lots of in-class reading, lots of outside of class reading and inspire free reading in order to urge youngsters to read more and to read comprehensively with the aim to develop dynamism for reading.

As indicated by Robb (1996), the absence of appreciation prompts students' dissatisfaction, and when they confront a confusing text they quit the activity. These students have not secured supportive reading strategies that great readers utilize. Consequently, this author recommends to focus on the accompanying list of strategies and behaviors to set up the goals for reading classes.

STRATEGIES AND BEHAVIORS OF GOOD READERS

BEHAVIOR	READING STRATEGY
Uses imagery to understand and enjoy reading.	Visualization
Chooses a book appropriate to reading level.	Book selection
Knows the purpose of the text and can set own purposes for reading.	Skimming; Questioning; Predicting
Predicts, then reads to confirm or adjust predictions.	Making Predictions
Recalls details of what she's read.	Pausing/Summarizing; Retelling; Note-taking
Adjusts reading rate for task and text.	Monitoring Reading Rate; Skimming
Clears up confusing parts.	Rereading; Thinking-aloud; Using Context Clues
Asks questions and reads to answer these questions.	Questioning; Setting Purposes; Rereading; Skimming
Selects and uses new and interesting vocabulary from texts.	Using Context Clues; Skipping, Going on, and Rereading; Expanding Word Knowledge
Uses information to think and make connections.	Finding explicit or inferred data in text to support ideas; Note-taking
Inquires to further understand information in text.	Reflecting; Questioning; Rereading
Uses text to discover unstated meanings.	Inferring; Concluding; Noting Cause/Effect; Comparing/Contrasting
Seeks help when needed.	Self-monitoring
Accesses what she already knows about different text structures.	Using Prior Knowledge

Figure 2. Strategies and Behaviors of Good Readers. Reprinted from *Reading Strategies that Work*.

Source: *Teaching your students to become better readers* by L. Robb (1996), Scholastic Inc., p. 9.

The characteristics of a good reader determined by Wright Group LEAD21 (2010) based on studies of good readers are as follows:

- They are active readers (Guthrie, et al. 1996; Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala & Cox, 2004).
- They monitor as they read to make sure it makes sense (Baker & Beal 2008).
- They use strategies flexibly and adaptively based on their purpose(s) for reading and the nature of the text (Snow, 2002). For example, good readers identify the important information in the text, connect information within the text in meaningful ways, link information from the text to their own experiences, engage in questioning as they read and make inferences to fill in gaps in information explicitly stated.
- According to Blachowicz and Ogle (2008), good readers pursue the reading comprehension activity in unexpected ways. Hence, it is essential to train them with different strategies. Thus, students have the possibility to select from an extensive variety of strategies which ones suit their style. They likewise suggest contemplating upon some features: The material selected and the preferences in style and strategies. It is vital to provide a variety of topics or genres since learners have different interests. Teachers need to perceive this at the moment they select materials for the class.

2.3 Reading strategies

Reading strategies has been considered as a necessary tools to acquire information. Strategies are defined by Paris, Wasik and Turner (1991) as actions selected deliberately to achieve particular goals. Thus, readers should select some of them, according to their interest.

Certainly, one of the essential focuses that researchers teach us regarding reading and procedures used is that great readers do not utilize techniques in disconnection; they have a plan and an approach to follow (Marzban 2010). They utilize various systems in an adaptable way, browsing their collection of techniques to understand the content as indicated by the reason for their reading.

Paris et al (1991) perceive challenges and they endeavor to determine them. Thus, demonstrating reading strategies is not just about teaching isolated strategies. It is tied in with working with the students on engagement with the content, and on techniques they can use with an assortment of strategies to comprehend what really matters to the content.

Pani (2004) defined reading strategies as mental operations included when readers approach a content successfully to understand what they read. (McNamara, 2006) pointed out that a reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral activity that is endorsed under specific relevant conditions, with the objective of enhancing comprehension.

Diverse researchers have explored the adequacy of reading strategies. Taraban, Rynearson and Kerr (2000) measured effective students' strategy use, and they established that successful students are more enthusiastic about using reading strategies in contrast with less successful students.

Temizkan (2007), developed particular methodology in order to explore the impacts of cognitive reading strategies on the ability to assimilate texts in Turkish lessons. The author observed a tendency to grow applied to reading understanding accomplishment of an experimental group (as cited in Bölükbaş, 2013, p. 2153). Anastasiou and Griva (2009), examined the utilization of reading strategies of good and poor readers; researchers have concluded that good readers have a tendency to apply intellectual and metacognitive skills which has a positive impact on reading comprehension achievement. Bimmel and van Schooten (2004) and Poole (2008) have additionally researched the relationship between the reading strategies and reading comprehension achievement, and they reached the conclusion that there is a noteworthy connection between the strategy use and reading comprehension achievement.

According to Robb (1996), the strategies that teachers should use during the reading process are the following:

STRATEGIES TO USE BEFORE READING	STRATEGIES TO USE WHILE READING	STRATEGIES TO USE AFTER READING
<i>[These activate past knowledge and experiences.]</i>	<i>[These use past knowledge to recall and understand.]</i>	<i>[These expand past knowledge and help create new understandings.]</i>
Brainstorm	Reading Rate	Confirm, Adjust Predictions
Predict	Predict	Skim
Browse	Questions	Visualize
Skim	Reread	Question
Question	Summarize	Reread
Vocabulary Predictions	Self-Correct	Think-Aloud
Vocabulary Web	Visualize	Retell
Fast Write	Identify Confusing Parts	K-W-H-L
K-W-H-L	K-W-H-L	Note-Taking
	Monitor Vocabulary	

Figure 3. Reading Strategies. Reprinted from *Reading Strategies that Work. Teaching your students to become better readers* by L. Robb (1996), Scholastic Inc., p. 14.

2.4 Task-based approach to developing reading skills

The task-based approach has reached significant importance during the last most recent three decades. Paran et al (2017) think tasks are not quite the same as customary traditional language learning activities; by using tasks students establish connections with real life events and get preparation needed to interact. Therefore tasks are important to consider when the main objective is to reach better reading comprehension.

Nunan (1989) defines task as ‘as a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing, or interacting in the target language’ (p. 10).

Hence, tasks are of great importance to implement in teaching reading due to the fact that tasks are similar to daily activities. In real life people should predict information, give opinions, elaborate summaries, or construct information based on the information read.

Ellis (2003) affirmed that tasks facilitate language learning and by using them language skills can be integrated. He additionally proposes that working with tasks requires from students to demonstrate a process to obtain a product.

Process refers to the cognitive work students develop through task-based activities. Product, on the other hand, refers to the outcome. Robinson (2011) says it is important to test some tasks to obtain written and oral production of the language to demonstrate that reading can lead to use the language in different ways.

A specific case of the application of the task-based approach addressed to the reading activity was found in the English department of the *New College English* (Zhejiang University Press) in its intensive reading course. In the textbook the reading lessons included pre-reading tasks, during-reading tasks and post-reading tasks (as cited in Shehadeh & Coombe 2012, p.144). Another study that used task-based activities in order to make reading active rather than a passive process was conducted by Khand and Memon (2010). As result students said that they had more opportunities to participate, they interacted more among peers and with the material they also manifested that they invested they devoted own efforts in the learning process.

Paran et al (2017) expressed that utilizing the task-based teaching approach is beneficial to enhance reading comprehension. They have pointed out that it is a misconception that tasks only refer to oral activities or activities that rely on the skill of speaking.

As well, (ibid) demonstrated that tasks implemented in the reading class can be more interesting because the texts they recommended are authentic material, articles from the real world. Additionally, they specified that it is indispensable to choose the most appropriate texts, based on the interests of students in order to engage them during the process of working with the reading tasks.

Also, the cited author, discussed the way that when using tasks students should confront an issue that ought to be explained and that is helpful because students could be better reflexive individuals. For instance, when utilizing an information gap, or an opinion gap activity, they solve or add to explain a troublesome circumstance through the correspondence among partners.

By the use of tasks, the essential focus, in any case, is likely to remain on language because learners are requested to produce dialogues or to prepare a summary of their findings; the summary can be in a form of a graph to generate opportunities for meaningful language use.

As indicated by Dewey (1975), learning is better by doing and educators are the facilitators amid the learning procedure. Creating tasks gives understudies practice to their scholarly and social purposes.

Tasks make a close connection between readers and the real world and tasks help to associate reflections between the reading and the reality. And learners have more capacity to engage in incidental learning of grammar and vocabulary through completing tasks.

Reading in the classroom can be more open when it is coordinated with different abilities, so students can see its value. At that point, inquiry develops and the question begs to be asked, is reading, in this manner, a non-communicative action? Certainly not since the reader is interacting with the writer, though in a less immediate way than speaker and audience. Reading is, similarly as informative as some other types of language use and as educators our job is to draw out that communicative component. For instance, by setting up coordinate correspondence amongst reader and author by exploiting students' written work for reading practice. Another component of genuine reading is that while we may read alone we impart what we read to others constantly. Discussing what we have read is a rich wellspring of potential communicative outcomes.

2.5 Reading stages

The reading stages have been recognized as the parts of the reading activity; before, during and after reading. In each stage certain activities can be applied with the purpose of developing reading skills. (Aebersold & Field 1997). The teacher is in charge to monitor and guide the process during each stage.

Classroom reading aims at helping students develop the skills they need to read more effectively in a variety of ways. To enable this we plan 'pre-

reading', 'while-reading', and 'post-reading' stages. These stages can help us make reading more communicative.

There are different pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading tasks, but in the following section the relevant tasks for this work are being described.

2.5.1 Pre-reading stage.

Hedgcock and Ferris (2009) stated that pre-reading is a phase in which students receive training on reading skills; it's the proper instance to encourage their reading motivation and self-confidence, so comprehension can be achieved. Jacobs (1999) pointed out that this stage permits to activate prior knowledge in order to comprehend a text better. Knowing something about the topic, prior knowledge is a very important aspect to be taken into account because it leads to better understanding. Paran, Révész & Domingo (2017), said that the pre-reading stage is also the stage where the learner's interest in the topic is aroused and at the same time in this stage learners get engage with the topic.

2.5.2 Pre-reading tasks applied in this study.

Paran, Révész & Domingo (2017) showed that pre-reading tasks are used to raise awareness of the topic of the text and serve to provide foundational data about some aspects of this topic. Along these lines, teachers endeavor to guarantee that the learners understand the context in which the content was composed and do not misconstrue vital points.

2.5.2.1 Predictions based on the title, subheadings or illustrations.

Alemi and Ebadi (2010) stated that predictions are effective in facilitating EFL comprehension. They also suggested that illustrations may be exploited as a kind of eliciting of information. Visual stimuli support the perceptual processing that students develop in the pre-reading stage.

Example: Predicting based on the title.

Dish Soap for Dinner

Read the title of the story.

- What do you think this story is about?
- Can you guess what happens?

Note: Reprinted from *True Stories in the News. A Beginning Reader* by Sandra Heyer (1996). Longman Publishing Company, p. 2.

Example: Predicting based on the illustration.



PRE-READING

Look at the picture.

- What is the man eating?
- What is he putting on his salad?

Note: Reprinted from *True Stories in the News. A Beginning Reader* by S. Heyer (1996). Longman Publishing Company, p. 2.

2.5.2.2 Pre-quiz. As Howarth (2007) pointed out, it is a quiz done in pairs in which the teacher hands out a set of questions about the topic to be read to find out how much students know about it.

2.5.2.3 Skimming a text. As indicated by Pearson (2018), skimming is rapidly moving the eyes over the content with the goal of getting the main ideas and a general overview of the content. She likewise argues that skimming is useful in pre-reading because later the reader has the opportunity to go deeper into the text through the following stages. To master the skimming strategy requires consistent and constant practice. When it is acquired, it can benefit students immensely because during tests they can find information rapidly.

Example: Skimming:

Skim the article for 60 seconds, paying close attention to the heading and the first sentence of each paragraph, to find the theme or the main idea.

The Love Letters

Ming-fu and Lee met at a party. For Ming-fu, it was love at first sight. "Hello," he said to Lee. "I'm Ming-fu." Lee looked at him and smiled. "Hi," she said. "I'm Lee." Ming-fu and Lee laughed and talked all evening. When they left the party, it was 2 A.M.

For the next year, Ming-fu and Lee were together every weekend. They went everywhere together—to movies, to parks, to museums, and to restaurants.

One night, at a romantic restaurant, Ming-fu asked Lee, "Will you marry me?" "No," Lee answered. "I'm not ready to get married."

"I can't believe it!" Ming-fu thought. "Lee doesn't want to marry me! But I love her! What can I do?"

Ming-fu began writing love letters to Lee. Every day he wrote a letter and mailed it to her. "I love you," he said in his letters. "Marry me."

Every day the same mailman delivered Ming-fu's letter to Lee. The mailman always smiled when he gave Lee a letter. "Another letter from your boyfriend," he said.

Ming-fu sent Lee a love letter every day for two years—700 letters all together. Finally Lee said, "I'm ready to get married now."

Did Lee marry Ming-fu? No, she didn't. She married the mailman who delivered Ming-fu's letters.

Note: Reprinted from *True Stories in the News. A Beginning Reader* by S. Heyer (1996). Longman Publishing Company, p. 19.

2.5.3 While-reading stage.

Paran et al (2017) state that the while-reading stage is important because of the communication between the student and the content. The purpose is to comprehend the text and the exercises need to enable the

learner to achieve comprehension. In the while-reading stage students are regularly required to transfer information, exchanging data from a content to a table or to a chart, take notes, etcetera.

It is also called during-stage. Bölükbaş (2013) stated that during this stage it is important that readers connect ideas that guide them to get the main idea of the passage. This stage empowers readers to use verbal signs from print and picture prompts from memory to develop meaning.

According to Vaezi (2001), while-reading is the most complex phase, due to the fact that interrupting the usual routine (students reading silently), and encouraging students to establish a conversation, to answer questions to make comments or reflections could be a difficult task.

2.5.4 While-reading tasks applied in this study.

2.5.4.1 Slashed / Cut up texts. This is a collaborative and in group reading strategy. It consists of a reading which is cut into four pieces, each student receives a piece of the text and the purpose is to answer some questions collaboratively because they do not know the order of the reading pieces. Howarth (2007).

Example: Slashed/ Cut up texts



Some people blame the food industry and advertisers for the nation's weight problem. They say food makers want people to eat when they're not hungry and keep eating when they're full.



But food manufacturers say it's not their fault that many Americans are overweight. People can choose what they want to eat. They point out that supermarkets in the United States offer a lot of choices, including low-calorie, fat-free, and sugar-free foods. Advertisers say it's not their fault either. More money is spent on marketing low-calorie and fat-free foods than any other foods.

No matter who's right, it is true: People in the United States are getting fatter. They simply eat too much. As a result, health departments in the United States are taking action. For example, New York's health department has asked restaurants to use healthful ingredients in foods. Many schools in the United States no longer have soda or candy vending machines, and school cafeterias are offering more healthful menus.



Health experts agree that being a healthy nation is everybody's responsibility, that the best way to solve the problem is through education. A public education campaign on food and health would help educate people about what they eat, forcing food manufacturers to offer more wholesome and healthful food choices.

Work collaboratively to answer.

1. What health problem do people in the U.S. have?

2. Why is the U.S. government worried about it?

3. Who do some people blame for America's weight problem?

4. What are some schools in U.S. doing to help the country's weight problem?

Note: Reprinted from *Postcards 2A, Student's Book Level 3* by Abbs, Barker, Freebairn & Wilson (2013). Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador and Pearson Education, p. 20.

Prabhu (1987) proposed three tasks: information-gap, opinion-gap and reasoning-gap tasks.

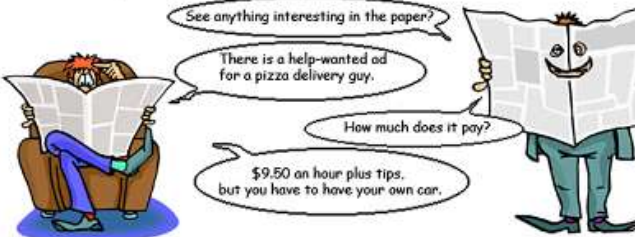
2.5.4.2 Information-gap activity. It promotes the exchange of information among learners keeping in mind the goal they seek to achieve. In pairs, students will ask each other for missing data in order to get the task finished; students can use a drawing a table or a chart.

Example: Information-gap

• **A Sheet**

Look at the newspaper classifieds then share information about the help-wanted ads with your partner.

See Anything Interesting in the Paper?



See anything interesting in the paper?

There is a help-wanted ad for a pizza delivery guy.

How much does it pay?

\$9.50 an hour plus tips, but you have to have your own car.

Help Wanted
Pizza Delivery Guy.
Pays \$9.50 an hour plus tips.
Have to have your own car.

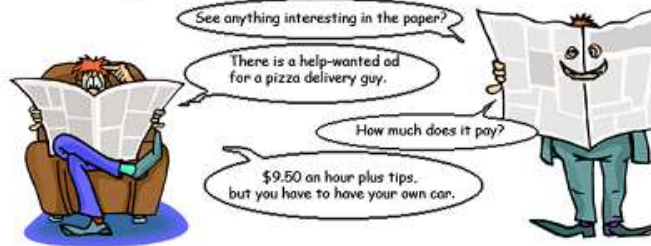
Help Wanted
Waitress
Pays \$8.25 an hour plus tips.
Have to be friendly and outgoing.

Help Wanted

• **B Sheet**

See Anything Interesting in the Paper?

Look at the newspaper classifieds then share information about the help-wanted ads with your partner.



Note: Reprinted from *Lanternfish ESL* (2007).

Source: Retrieved from https://bogglesworldesl.com/information_gap.htm

2.5.4.3 Opinion-gap activity. To develop this task students involve their personal preferences, feelings, or attitudes. It could include genuine information or arguments to justify one's opinion, the results are not right or wrong; thus, assessment is subjective rather than objective. Students may be given a social issue, for example, the absence of drinking water and they write a list of possible solutions. You might ask your students to make a decision between speed and cost or cost and quality, giving a certain situation and various constraints, Prabhu (1987).

Example: Opinion-gap

Justin Bieber's New Tattoo is Fierce & Fits Perfectly With the Crown On His Chest

There is no end in sight to Justin Bieber's tattoo obsession!

Last week, he introduced the world to his new bear and eagle tattoos. Today, he added another fierce creature from the animal kingdom... a lion.

Justin Instagrammed a selfie today from his bed. The new ink is definitely stealing the show. He now has a large lion head on his left pec, directly below his crown tattoo (so the lion is now balancing the crown on its head).

The tattoo was done by tattoo artist Bang Bang, a celebrity favorite, who also Instagrammed the new ink with the caption: "Lion heart."

Justin now has a lion, an eagle and a bear tattoo. We're thinking he is getting in touch with his inner spirit animals!

Note: Reprinted from *Just Jared on-line magazine*.
Source: Retrieved from <http://www.justjared.com/2017/03/29/justin-biebers-new-tattoo-is-fierce-fits-perfectly-with-the-crown-on-his-chest/>

Task: Imagine that you are a parent and your son or daughter wants to have a tattoo. Make a list of reasons you will give to your son or daughter to have / not to have a tattoo done.

Answer

Why do you think people have a tattoo done?

Would you hire as teacher someone who has a tattoo? Why? Why not?

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

2.5.4.4 Reasoning-gap activity. Students determine new information by inferring, deducing or by stating their perception from given information.

Based on real information students are requested to construct new information.

Example: Reasoning-gap

Zoo problem: Are you good at organizing?

Task 1

Study the plan for a few minutes and look up the names of the animals in your dictionaries.

Task 2

Read the information and find the problems the zoo is faced with.

Task 3

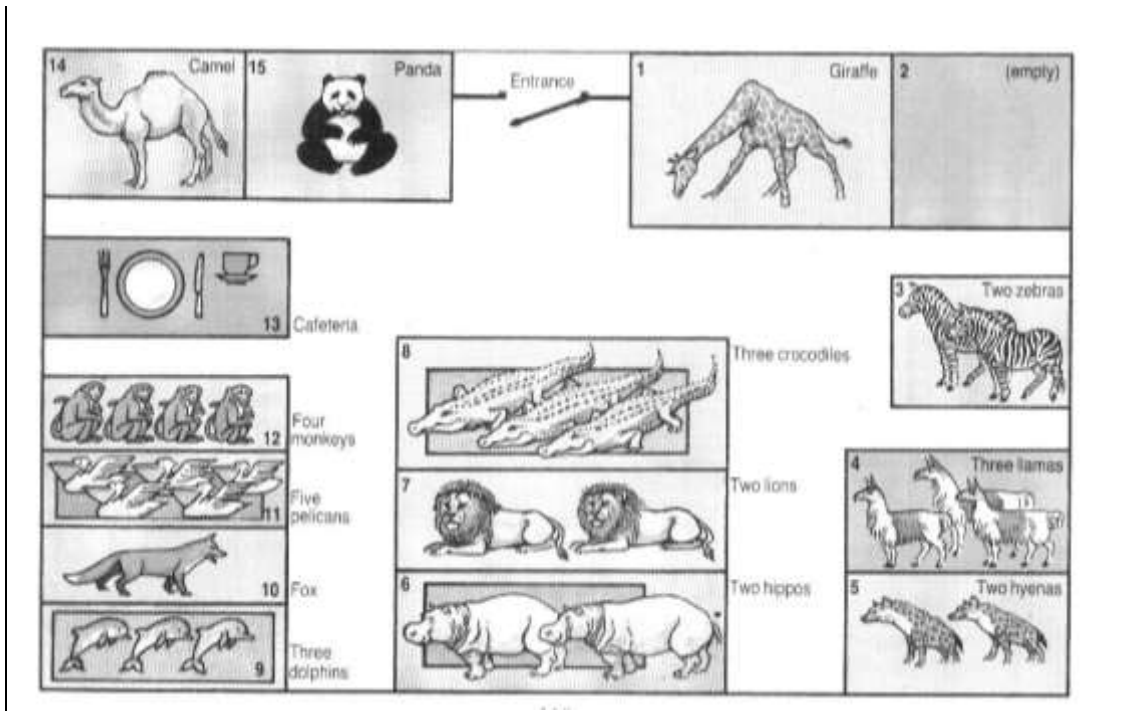
Work in groups of three or four. Each group is a committee responsible for reorganizing the zoo so as to solve as many of the problems as possible. Find your solution in 20 minutes.

Task 4

Compare your notes with other groups.

INFORMATION

1. The giraffe is going to have a baby soon, so it must be put somewhere quiet.
2. One of the lions has died; the other should move to a smaller enclosure.
3. Small children are frightened by seeing the crocodile as they come in.
4. The zoo has been given a new panda.
5. The monkeys are very noisy.
6. The camel is rather smelly.
7. All the enclosures should be filled.
8. Harmless animals should not be put next to predators (animals which are their natural enemies and might frighten them).
9. The zoo has enough money to buy two wolves or four flamingoes or a pair of small deer.



Note: Adapted from *The Cambridge English Course, Book 2* by Swan and Walter. (1985). Cambridge University Press. p. 119.

2.5.5 Post-reading stage.

Paran et al (2017) affirmed the post-reading phase aims to consolidate or reflect upon what has been read; and it aims to relate the content to the student's own insight, interests, or perspectives. So the teacher may put the students into groups in which they talk about themes connected with the text. The post stage phase is for the most part observed as a reasonable stage to engage learners in language focused tasks prompting realities about the target language.

According to Vaezi (2006), at the post-reading stage readers can have diverse purposes according to the objective of the reading activity. The tasks during this stage focus on the type of information intended to be extracted from the text. The purpose of using post-reading strategies is to make an insightful examination of the content in order to measure students' understanding. (Bolukbas, 2013 and Seedhouse, 2017). According to Fitzgerald and Graves (2004), during this stage it is important that teachers ask questions. They can ask verbally or in written form.

2.5.6 Post-reading tasks applied in this study.

Paran et al (2017) say in this stage tasks provide lots of opportunities for students to really work using language communicatively. Students will be able to exchange these language skills to the reality.

2.5.6.1 Role Play task. According to Ellis (2003), role-play might involve writing about a topic and then taking a role to perform. Students have the opportunity to work collaboratively, to share ideas and to show previous knowledge. By performing, students have the opportunity to produce the target language (Ladousse 2004).

Example: Role play

Conversation in a Travel Agent's

A customer from United States would like to go to Venice for ten days. He is looking for a package that includes round trip, plus hotel with breakfast and dinner.

Pre-reading

Task 1

In pairs discuss how you can plan holidays, what means are available in the country, what methods the members of the class (or their parents) use, where they would like to go for a short holiday.

While-reading

Task 2

Read the conversation sheet between a travel agent and a customer, which is jumbled. In pairs put the dialogue in the right order. Look for links between the 'speech bubbles'.

Task 3

Read their restored conversation to each other.

Task 4

In pairs practice the conversation.

Post-reading

Task 5

In pairs role play the conversation. One student is the travel agent and the other is the customer.

Key

TA = Travel Agent

C = Customer

British Council | BBC

Conversation in a Travel Agent's

1. Is it a nice hotel?

2. Oh, a package would be fine. What do you suggest?

3. They've got a special offer for individuals: 10 days in Venice for \$699.

4. Well, I'd like to book a holiday in Venice.

5. It's just what I'm looking for! All right. I'll take it.

6. Oh yes, very nice. On the Grand Canal, with a restaurant and pool.

7. Travel Agent: Good morning.

8. If you're travelling alone, I recommend "Going Places".

9. That sounds reasonable. What does the price include?

10. Certainly. When would you like to go?

11. And for how many people?

12. Good morning.

13. From 1 to 10 August.

14. I see. Are you interested in a package from one of the tour operators?

15. What does "Going Places" have?

16. Oh, just one. For me.

17. Yes, that's right. For ten days.

18. What can I do for you?

19. It includes return airfare, plus hotel with breakfast and dinner.

20.

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

Note: Adapted from *A Reading Task and Role Play* by Broderick, A. (2015) Teach English. British Council | BBC.

Source: Retrieved from https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Conversation_in_a_Travel_Agent%27s.pdf

2.5.6.2 Graphic organizers. According to Jiang and Grabe (2007) graphic organizers have a big advantage in teaching reading and these can be used as pre-reading, while-reading or as post-reading tasks. A study conducted by Halvorson (2010) demonstrated that after using graphic organizers, students improved retention and they could recall information

better. Graphic organizers improved, student's participation in class (Ellis, 2003).

Example: Graphic Organizer

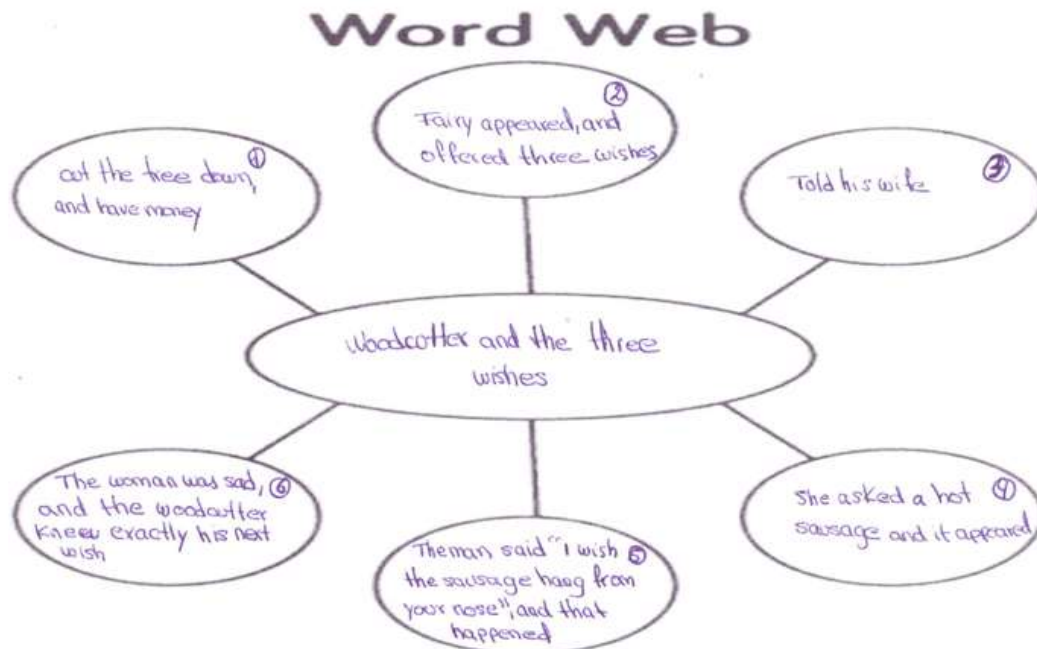
The Three Wishes

Once in a kingdom far, far away, there was a woodcutter and his wife. One day the man saw a (a) **magical tree** and he thought "If I cut down this tree, I'll make some good money. If I make good money, I'll get my wife a new dress." But the man noticed that the tree was very thick so he doubted if he could cut it down. However, he kept thinking about the money "If I could chop it down, I wouldn't have to work for a long time." Suddenly, a beautiful and tiny (b) **fairy** appeared and said "I wouldn't cut down that tree if I were you! It's a magical tree. I will grant you and your wife three (c) **wishes** if you don't cut it down." Happily, the man accepted, went to his house and told his wife about the fairy.

"If a fairy granted me a wish, I'd ask for a hot (d) **sausage**, I'm so hungry," said the wife jokingly. Immediately, at the table, a big juicy sausage appeared. "Oh, come on, you wished for a simple sausage and now we just have two wishes left! I wish the sausage would hang from your nose," said the (e) **woodcutter** angrily without thinking.

As soon as he spoke the words, the sausage hung from the woman's nose. "What did you do? Look at me," said the wife, who now had a sausage hanging from her nose. When the woodcutter saw his wife looking so sad, he knew what his next wish would be.

Note: Reprinted from *Viewpoints, Level A2.2* by Murcia, M. (2016). Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador and Norma. pp. 38.



Source: Prepared by the author, 2016.

2.5.6.3 Summarizing. According to Langan (1993), a summary is the lessening of a lot of data to its most significant focuses. More particularly, Friend (2001), characterizes a summary as the way toward figuring out what content in a section is most essential and changing words in one's particular words. Also, Hidi and Anderson (1986) express that a summary is a concise and brief statement that mirrors the significance of the original information. As indicated by those definitions, the capacity to distinguish and select essential data, such as the main ideas in the text is vital in producing a successful summary. In addition, the author should ensure that any fundamental thoughts ought not to be lost and that the substance of the first content ought not to be changed (Kim 2001).

Example: Summary

Read the story of Perseus and Medusa

A long time ago Perseus, a mortal son of Zeus, lived on the Greek island of Seriphos. One day he was challenged by Polydectes, King of Seriphos, to kill Medusa, a monster who had serpents as hair, and return with her head.

Medusa had been a beautiful lady and was turned into a Gorgon because she had offended the goddess Athena by being excessively proud of her beauty. So, she had to live with other Gorgons on a faraway island. If someone looked at her in the eye, she would turn them into stone and die.

Perseus went on this mission. He didn't know that he had been fooled by Polydectes, with the intention of getting married to Perseus' mother, Danae. Perseus traveled to a remote land but he got lost. However, he received help from the gods Hermes and Athena who gave him three magical objects, (1) winged sandals, a (2) shield and a (3) helmet.

Stop and think. Look at the picture and number the magical objects Perseus received.



"Look for the Graeae, who are the only ones who know where to find Medusa," said Hermes. "Who are they?" asked Perseus. "The Graeae are Phorcys' daughters. They are three ladies who have only one glass eye. They can tell you where to find Medusa." Saying this, the gods took Perseus to a mysterious land where the Graeae lived. Taking them by surprise, Perseus took their precious eye and did not return it until they had told him how to find Medusa.

When Perseus arrived at the island where Medusa lived, he found all the Gorgons asleep. Silently, he drew his sword, hid and stood still. Suddenly, Medusa woke up as if she had smelled his presence and began to look for him.

Stop and think. If you were Perseus, how would you use the magical objects to kill Medusa? Choose.

a.  Fly above her and use the sword to hit her in the head.

b.  Hide and use the reflection of the shield to locate and kill her without looking at her.

Answers may vary!

c. Use the helmet to be invisible and get near to her.

d. Use the reflection of the shield to turn the Gorgon into stone.

Perseus remembered that if he looked into Medusa's eyes, he would turn into stone. So, he used the Medusa's reflection on the bronze shield to behead her before she had time to look at him. Medusa died at once. Immediately, her sisters awoke and saw Perseus, who quickly ran away with Medusa's head. Thanks to the invisibility helmet, Perseus escaped and with his winged sandals flew back to the island of Seriphos.

When he arrived he found out that Polydectes had turned his mother into a servant. Desperately, he entered the room where the evil king and his close friends were gathered. All of them turned to look at Perseus, not believing he had fulfilled his task.

"You fool, you think I believed your story?" said Polydectes as he turned around to look at Perseus.

When all the people in the room were looking, Perseus took out Medusa's head petrifying anyone who was looking at it. And this is how the brave Perseus saved his mother Danae and became one of the greatest heroes in Greek mythology.

Read again and complete the chart. (This is graphic organizer)

Setting
Characters
Conflict
Resolution

Summarize the story of Perseus and Medusa by using the map of the story

Note: Reprinted from *Viewpoints, Level A2.2* by Murcia, M. (2016). Source: Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador and Norma. pp. 40-41.

2.5.6.4 Express opinions about the topic. According to Willis (1996), in this stage students have an opportunity to give their perspective regarding the topic. It is a good opportunity for students to connect information from the text and their own thoughts.

Example: Express opinion about the topic

HOLLYWOOD KIDS

Growing up in Los Angeles ain't easy

In Hollywood, everybody wants to be rich, famous and beautiful. Nobody wants to be old, unknown, and poor. For Hollywood kids, life can be difficult because they grow up in such an unreal atmosphere. Their parents are ambitious, and the children are part of the parent's ambitions.

Parents pay for extravagant parties, expensive cars, and designer clothes. When every dream can come true, kids learn the value of nothing because they have everything. A 13-year-old, Trent Maguire, has a driver, credit cards, and unlimited cash to do what he wants when he wants. 'One day, I'll earn more than my Dad,' he boasts.

Parents buy care and attention for their children because they have no time to give it themselves. Amanda's mother employs a personal trainer, a nutritionist, a bodyguard/chauffer, a singing coach, and a counsellor to look after all her 15-year old daughter's needs.

Often there is no parent at home most days, so children decide whether to make their own meals or go out to restaurants, when to watch television or do homework. They organize their own social lives. They play no childhood games. They become adults before they're ready.

Hollywood has always been the city of dreams. The kids in L.A. live unreal lives where money, beauty, and pleasure are the only gods. Will children around the world soon start to think the same? Or do they already?

"Looks are very important in Hollywood. If you're good-looking, you'll go far. I want to be a beautician. You grow up really fast in L.A. Everyone is in a rush to be an adult, to be going to clubs. It's not cool to be a kid"

Mijanou, aged 18

I live in a hotel and when I come home from school, there are maybe 80 people who say 'Good day' to me. It's their job to say that. In the bathroom there are mirrors everywhere. I love looking at myself. I can spend five hours doing my hair and posing. I'm going to be a model."

Emily, aged 10

"I've wanted to get my nose done since I was 12. My friends started having plastic surgery and liposuction during my freshman year of high school. My nose cost \$10,000. But it was worth it. It changed my life. I'm gonna get into the movies."

Lindsey, aged 18

Everyone thinks Hollywood is so glamorous, but I have news for you. It's really dangerous growing up in L.A. People have guns. Sometimes I think I'm going crazy. I'm going to get out of here or just as soon as I can."

Zavier, aged 18

What do you think?

- Do you feel sorry for children in Hollywood? Is there anything about their lives that you would like?
- What is your opinion of their parents?
- Do teenagers around the world think the same as Hollywood kids?
- Do you think it is dangerous to have everything you want?

Source: Reprinted from *New Headway Pre-intermediate* by John and Liz Soars (2000),

Oxford University Press. pp. 42-43.

2.5.6.5 Questioning. According to Pressley, Wharton-McDonald, Mistretta and Echevarria (1998) questioning is important during the different stages of reading, but they consider questioning as a post-reading strategy. There are different questions such as information questions or yes/no questions. These authors state that questioning is an active process in which the readers collaborate actively to answer. As students practice questioning they become autonomous.

Example: Questioning

Read de text

<p><i>Saint Joseph School joins the Anti-bullying Campaign!</i></p> <p>Saint Joseph school has joined the anti-bullying campaign that aims to eradicate bullying from schools across the nation. "The central idea of the campaign is to help students find ways to resolve conflict in healthy ways", said Miriam Tellez, an educational specialist who is behind the campaign.</p> <p><u>According to</u> Mrs. Tellez, when attacking this problem, we have to pay attention to all the people involved. The consequences of this aggressive behavior affect both the victims and the aggressors.</p> <p><u>On one hand</u> (a), the victims suffer from social isolation, suicidal tendencies, school absenteeism, poor school performance, depression, anxiety and lack of self-esteem. <u>On the other hand</u> (b), the aggressors are very likely to behave in a hostile way in most situations in their lives. Consequently, the whole community is affected in the long run.</p> <p>The evidence suggests that an alarming number of school shootings, suicides and teen crimes are caused by the despair and feelings of isolation that bullying produces.</p> <p><u>Although</u> (c) bullying is not a new problem, it has definitely turned into a big issue. A recent national survey of schools showed that almost 35% of students are bullied or have been bullied.</p>	<p>Bullying is the hostile behavior toward peers and it can take the form of verbal, physical or relational abuse, like when students are the center of pranks, called names, or excluded from activities in a way that hurts their feelings.</p> <p>The good news is that now there are strict school policies that demand parents, teachers, and school officials to take a stand against bullying. "We're glad to say that, now, bullying is not seen as a personal problem. <u>Instead</u>, (d) it is a social problem that must be stopped," said Claire Rodriguez, a 10th grade student at South Lake High School who has been victimized by bullies in her school.</p> 
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Go back to the text and answer the questions

a. What is bullying?

b. What are the effects of bullying in schools?

c. What is the purpose of the Campaign at Saint Joseph School?

Source: Reprinted from *Viewpoints, Workbook Level A2.2* by Murcia, M. (2016).
Ministerio de Educación del Ecuador and Norma. pp. 44-45.

2.6 Scaffolding

Benjamin (2007) defined scaffolding as the support provided to help students accomplish a task that they would not be able to do independently. The purpose of scaffolding is to provide students with clues that allow them to take relevant information from the text. Scaffolding is useful when students need more exposure to a text before fully understanding it. Nunan (2004) claims that the support from the teacher will lead to learning and argues that it is very important to know when to remove scaffolding in order for the student to gain autonomy. Shintani (2016) stated that by working with tasks, students need assistance in order to accomplish the task objectives. According to Scharlach (2008), teachers scaffold students' learning by assisting them and helping them to build new knowledge based on their prior thoughts.

Various researchers consider scaffolding useful when teaching reading (Hammond, 2002, Chi, 2007, Snow, Burns & Griffin, 1998, Bradley & Bradley, 2004, Fitzgerald & Graves, 2004, Lantolf, 2006, McKenzie, 2011, Enyew & Yigzaw, 2015). For instance, the study done by McKenzie (2011) investigated whether the application of scaffolding in a group of students who demonstrated to be struggling in reading leads to improve the reading performance or not. As a result, after a three-month period, the author stated that there were statistically significant gains in 13 out of 15 performance indicators. The study conducted by Enyew and Yigzaw (2015) showed that scaffolding is one of the most appropriate strategies to improve students' reading comprehension. Therefore, it is highly recommended to include scaffolding to increase reading comprehension effectiveness.

Chapter III

Methodology

For the purpose of this study, the author applied a mixed-method approach. A set of surveys and reading quizzes were applied and information registered in field notes was analyzed as well.

The research method employed for the present study was action research broadly defined as classroom research conducted by a teacher to improve instruction and renew curriculum accordingly, as it is explained by Reeves.

...as teachers, we are asked to be mindful of our students' needs and responses to instruction. We are asked to reconsider materials, approaches, and learning arrangements to create a community of writers [or readers] each time the course is taught, based on the findings of action research done in that classroom over time. (Reeves, 2011, online)

This research study was developed in Cuenca, Ecuador because of the lack of reading comprehension strategies within a group of students attending the first year of *bachillerato*. To do this research, data related to the topic were explored, tasks were performed by students while the teacher/researcher provided scaffolding, and quizzes were given to students after accomplishing the tasks in the three phases of reading.

The researcher worked with students for a period of four months. Each reading session lasted 90 minutes and consisted of a pre-reading task, a while-reading task, and a post-reading task. After becoming familiar with the information, the students took a quiz.

For the qualitative paradigm the current study relied on action research. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) this kind of research is when the teacher conducts a study in his or her own classroom for the purpose of provoking a change. In this study, a problem affecting students' reading performance was detected and then it was decided to address this issue. Therefore, the teacher and the students were part of the study.

The qualitative method was used to determine the usefulness of scaffolding when reading comprehension was taught. Field notes template proposed by Creswell (2002) was used. It was important to know if removing teacher's support progressively resulted in the improvement of the students' reading comprehension skills.

For the quantitative paradigm, the researcher applied two surveys. The surveys were designed by the author. The first survey was conducted before the beginning of the intervention with the intention of determining how students approached the reading activity and to discover if they had ideas about the reading strategies. The second survey was conducted after the students worked with task-based reading strategies during the three phases of reading with the intention of determining whether, according to students' perspective, the most relevant task-based strategies had been employed. Furthermore, a quiz was given by the teacher at the end of each reading session. The questions of quizzes were prepared by the researcher following the structure of a standardized test that evaluates reading comprehension (Benjamin, 2007). They included multiple choice, true/false and short constructed responses. Furthermore, different tasks were part of the treatment. The author adapted them according to the content of the reading.

The analysis was presented based on the information obtained from both quantitative and qualitative data. On one hand, the numbered data was inserted on a grid and statistical charts were presented to compare data; on the other hand, data registered on the field notes were analyzed.

The use of this methodology tackled the problem of reading comprehension and led the researcher to determine if the application of the task-based reading strategies actually increased the reading comprehension ability. Additionally, this study intended to determine if scaffolding was an important component when teaching reading and finally through this research the most helpful strategies for improving reading comprehension considered in this group of students were shown.

3.1 Validation of instruments

The instruments used were two surveys. These contributed to determine the results. The surveys' questions were designed by the researcher based on surveys from other studies. In these studies the researchers aimed to determine the results of different reading strategies. Some of the studies conducted that used surveys with the same intention as the author of this study were (Cassata 2016, Wutthisingchai 2011, Atallah 2013).

The survey applied prior to the intervention focused on students' knowledge regarding reading comprehension. The researcher used a similar survey to the survey administrated by Mokhtari and Sheory (2002). The questions on the survey taken after the intervention, focused on its effectiveness. The author designed the questionnaire based on other surveys such as the one exposed on Ballou 2012, where questions identified the most relevant strategies. Another study that used a post-questionnaire was Tong (2008). In this study, the questions were to find the influence of the task-based language teaching on students reading motivation.

The scales used in both surveys were Likert scales, and on the first survey, frequency Likert scale was used. And on the post-reading survey, the scale used was the agreement Likert scale, as it is classified by Brown (2010). The questions were close-ended questions that evaluated prior knowledge of reading strategies and then were used to determine the most important strategies.

The tutor's revision also supported the validation of the questionnaires. Modifications were made to better suit the requirements of this study. The tutor of this thesis, reviewed the instruments prior to its utilization, asking the researcher for some modifications to the questions to have a parallel structure for better understanding.

On the survey administrated prior to the intervention, the items' options to choose from were reorganized to facilitate answering them. At first, the options were presented in vertical direction and then they were written in horizontal

direction. They were rearranged to present them in a simpler way and for a faster selection.

On the post-reading survey, the researcher asked and the tutor advised restructuring the questions, she found out that it would be better if questions 1 to 12 asked directly about the usefulness of the strategies applied. This recommendation was accepted and the author rewrote the questions. This questionnaire focused on the task-based strategies applied during the intervention.

It can be concluded that these instruments have enough foundation to guarantee the reliability to evaluate reading comprehension of students on the first year of *bachillerato*.

3.1 Population

This study was carried out at *Unidad Educativa Tres de Noviembre*, a public high school with a population of 300 students, located in Cuenca, Ecuador. These students are in their eighth, ninth, tenth grades and first year of *bachillerato*. They take mandatory English classes (five periods a week) according to the National Curriculum Guidelines (Ministerio de Educación, 2012), which indicates that eighth-grade students have to reach an A1.1 level, and first year of *bachillerato*, an A.2.2 level, in agreement with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Some of the most important characteristics of this group of students are, first of all, the majority are putting a lot of effort due to the fact that many of them did not study English at primary school as it was stated in the problem. The most relevant learning styles that have been observed during the time the teacher has worked with them are visual, auditory, intrapersonal and interpersonal.

Moreover, since eighth grade they have been using the books given by the Ecuadorian government. Through this material, they have had the opportunity to work on different grammatical structures, with some reading encounters, some listening and some speaking opportunities. Their reading and writing skills have been developed using supplementary materials, too. In the case of reading, a reading project is developed, during each academic year. In order to select appropriate material, students' interest, age and level

were taken into account, and in the case of writing the teacher taught them how to construct paragraphs and some time during the week was dedicated to his activity. Students have been requested to compose a paragraph about different topics.

3.2 Sample

The sample selected was a group of 21 students from first year of *bachillerato*. The level of English to be reached by the students was A.2.2.

Table 3

Students Attending First Year of Bachillerato

Sample	Number	Percentage	Average age
Male	4	19%	16.5
Female	17	81%	15.5

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

3.3 Data collection

For this study, the following instruments were implemented:

- **Diagnostic quiz.** It was administered one week before the beginning of the intervention (see Appendix 1). It features a 250-word reading. The title is “Internet slowly comes to Cuba” and it was followed by three evaluation sections:
 1. A set of three multiple-choice questions regarding vocabulary in context;
 2. A set of four true/false statements; and
 3. A set of three questions information and yes/no questions.

This quiz was scored out of ten points. The purpose of this quiz was to determine the level of reading comprehension skills before the application of the selected task-based reading strategies.

- **Reading comprehension quizzes.** A set of 15 quizzes of about 250-300 words was administered during the four-month intervention process (see

Appendices 2-16). The students took these quizzes once a week (after a reading session and the application of task-based reading strategies). These evaluation instruments feature the same elements as the diagnostic pre-test. These readings are taken from the website English-Online (<http://www.english-online.at/index.htm>), developed by Klaus Rosmanitz. They are based on news reports worldwide adapted to be more accessible to English language learners ELLs. The articles were selected according to the students' interests. Some of the topics selected were sports, music, tourism, social networks, social problems in the world, and technological applications.

These quizzes were intended to assess the progress of the students' reading comprehension skills after developing the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading strategies, as well as to determine which of those strategies were the most beneficial for EFL learners.

- **Surveys.** One survey was applied at the beginning and another at the end of the intervention (see Appendices 17-18). The first one was a ten-question survey about how much students knew about reading strategies, while the second one was a fifteen-question survey about what the reading strategies used during the intervention the students liked the most.
- **Observation field notes.** Observation was conducted in each session. A field-notes template taken from the book *Educational Research* by Creswell (2002) was used to record information (see Appendix 19). These field notes attempt to analyze the efficacy of the application of scaffolding during the intervention.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

For the analysis of data, this study used categorization. Quantitative and qualitative information was classified and codified. As shown on Table 4. Then, each category was analyzed and examined. Triangulation was carried out with the results collected from the observation, the data obtained from the surveys and the scores obtained from the quizzes. All this information was processed in order to determine if scaffolding was beneficial during this process. The answers of the surveys were tabulated and statistical charts were made to show what students knew about reading strategies before applying the task-based strategies and to show which strategies were the most useful according to students' own experience. The scores obtained from the after-reading quizzes in relation to the pre-quiz were shown in charts to illustrate the performance of the students during the intervention.

Table 4
Codification

SURVEY #1		CODE S - 001
DIAGNOSTIC -QUIZ READING #1	INTERNET SLOWLY COMES TO CUBA	CODE DR1 - 001
READING AND QUIZ #2	BANANAS ARE TURNING INTO THE "GREEN GOLD" OF ANGOLA	CODE R2- 002
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -002
READING AND QUIZ #3	CHINA WANTS TO BECOME A SOCCER SUPERPOWER	CODE R2- 003
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -003
READING AND QUIZ #4	CHINA FACES PROBLEMS WITH DRINKING WATER	CODE R2- 004
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -004
READING AND QUIZ #5	PANAMA PAPERS-BIGGEST DOCUMENT LEAK IN HISTORY	CODE R2- 005
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -005
READING AND QUIZ #6	OBESITY AROUND THE WORLD CONTINUES TO RISE	CODE R2- 006
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -006
READING AND QUIZ #7	MEXICO'S TAX ON SUGARY DRINKS	CODE R2- 007
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -007
READING AND QUIZ #8	MORE AMERICANS USE ONLINE DATING WEBSITES	CODE R2- 008
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -008
READING AND QUIZ #9	SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS ARE CHANGING OUR WAY OF HAVING RELATIONSHIPS	CODE R2- 009
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -009
READING AND QUIZ #10	WHY HUMANS NEED LESS SLEEP THAN OTHER ANIMALS	CODE R2- 010
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -010
READING AND QUIZ #11	WHO IS A REFUGEE?	CODE R2- 011
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -011
READING AND QUIZ #12	CHINA ANNOUNCES END OF ONE CHILD POLICY	CODE R2- 012
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -012
READING AND QUIZ #13	VOLUNTOURISM – A NEW TREND IN TRAVEL	CODE R2- 013
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -013
READING AND QUIZ #14	BEYONCE KNOWLES – AN AMERICAN ENTERTAINER	CODE R2- 014
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -014
READING AND QUIZ #15	TOURISM	CODE R2- 015
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -015
READING AND QUIZ #16	THE OASIS OF THE SEAS – THE BIGGEST CRUISE SHIP IN THE WORLD	CODE R2- 016
OBSERVATIONAL FIELD NOTES		CODE O -016
SURVEY #2		CODE R2- 017

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

4.1 Qualitative analysis

4.1.1 Observation.

Data collected through the observation field notes were classified and organized once a month during four months:

First month. During the first month, the pre-reading strategy used was *predicting based on the title*, the while-reading strategy was *Slashed/Cut up texts* and the post-reading strategy was *role-play task*. Three reading tasks were applied. According to the information registered in the field notes, the author noticed that the students needed support during the first two weeks since they seemed to be insecure to enact classroom tasks. Actually, they were a bit reluctant to participate at the moment of predicting information; for that reason, some examples and explanations were provided. At the same time, it was told that predictions are not right or wrong. Furthermore, support with vocabulary was needed; the teacher provided examples in which the target word was used, by simple definitions, accompanied by gestures and movements. In the first session of the post-reading stage, the teacher helped the students to do a short role-play on sports. This activity motivated the students to write their own dialogues.

By working with these task-based strategies students showed more confidence. In the third reading session the majority of students provided information during the pre-reading task without any problem; in the while-reading stage students demonstrated interest and worked collaboratively in order to answer the questions. In the post-reading stage students still needed some support from the teacher.

Second month. During the second month, students applied *prediction based on a picture*, *information gap activity* and *summarizing* in each of the stages mentioned above. According to the field notes, the author determined that in the first session of that month, some students were willing to make predictions. Then, in order to motivate the participation of more students, the teacher scaffolded them by asking questions related to the picture. During the rest of the sessions many more students made predictions. At the beginning of the while-reading phase, the students were confused about the task; they

did not understand how to develop it, so the teacher's support was necessary, and she modeled the task in order to clarify the instructions. They were explained that the purpose was to find missing information by asking questions about the reading. It was a challenging activity during all the sessions for many students. In the post-reading stage it was necessary to remind them that before this study, they had already worked on summarizing; the teacher told them again that to write a summary, it was important to identify and then extract the most important ideas. She also told them about the importance of recognizing key words. Moreover, she recommended them to ask themselves questions about the reading and the possibility of dividing the reading into three parts: beginning, middle, and end to extract the most important information of each one. Then, it was time for them to work independently using the knowledge they had acquired in regard to summarizing. After checking the notes made, it was determined that a few of the students needed support on how to organize the information and how to prioritize it during the first and second sessions.

Third month. During the third month, students worked with a *short pre-quiz* to predict information, as well as with *opinion gap activities* and *graphic organizers*.

According to the field notes, doing the diagnostic quiz during the first stage of reading was not too complicated for the students. Most of them provided appropriate answers, but they still needed some help to write their ideas in well-structured sentences. After supporting them in the first session, they were able to be more confident to write sentences and express their thoughts. For the *opinion gap activity*, during the first and the second sessions, students needed the same kind of scaffolding as for writing organization. Once they felt more confident they started to write by themselves. During the post reading stage, students needed some clarification about how to organize the information depending on the graphic that was provided to them. During the first session the teacher made a graphic organizer on the board asking them some questions and explaining how the information should be organized. The students were also told that all their graphic organizers were different because everybody had different ways to perceive information. The students improved

making their graphic organizers, but some of them still lacked confidence to develop this task well enough. Hence, scaffolding was still necessary.

Fourth month. In the fourth month, the students worked with *skimming*, *reasoning gap activity* and *expressing their opinions* about the topic.

According to the information registered in the field notes, first of all, it was necessary to teach the students what *skimming* was, so the teacher explained the objective of skimming is to obtain a general idea of a text by quickly reading the first paragraph. Most students understood the purpose of it and they could carry out the task successfully. In the while-reading stage, the students developed some information based on the data provided; they related their previous knowledge to information from the text. In this stage, many students needed some help with the vocabulary; they wanted to express their ideas and understand new words from the text. In the post-reading stage, the students were better prepared to express their ideas; most of them worked most of the time independently.

In consequence, it can be said that according to the notes made, scaffolding was needed during this period of time. In some tasks such as *role-play* and *information gap activity*, it was more necessary than in others. Through this study it was likewise determined that scaffolding helped to the acquisition of reading comprehension skills. In addition, it was observed that removing the support from the teacher was a positive aspect since students were able to develop most of the tasks by themselves after being provided guidance. Therefore, it can be said that during this intervention, scaffolding was an imperative component due to the fact that the majority of students gained certain level of autonomy.

4.2 Quantitative analysis

To provide a clear understanding of the quantitative data, tables, figures and description are provided. Table 5 shows the titles of the readings extracted from English-Online.

Table 5

List of Readings

Readings	Titles
No. 1	Internet slowly comes to Cuba
No. 2	Bananas are turning into the 'green gold' of Angola
No. 3	China Wants to Become A Soccer Superpower
No. 4	China Faces Problems with Drinking Water
No. 5	Panama Papers - Biggest Document Leak in History
No. 6	Obesity Around the World Continues to Rise
No. 7	Mexico's Tax on Sugary Drinks
No. 8	More Americans Use Online Dating Websites
No. 9	Social media networks are changing our way of having relationships
No. 10	Why Humans Need Less Sleep than Other Animals
No. 11	Refugees
No. 12	China Announces End of One Child Policy
No. 13	Voluntourism - A New Trend in Travel
No. 14	Beyonce Knowles - An American Entertainer
No. 15	Tourism
No. 16	The Oasis of the Seas - The Biggest Cruise Ship in the World

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

4.2.1 Comparison of the results of the diagnostic reading quiz and the reading quizzes.

Table 6 shows the scores students obtained in the diagnostic reading quiz and their corresponding average; the scores obtained in each reading during the intervention and their average too.

Table 6

Scores Obtained by each of the 21 Students in the Diagnostic Quiz and the 15 Reading Comprehension Quizzes

NUMBER	DIAGNOSTIC - QUIZ READING # 1	READING # 2	READING # 3	READING # 4	READING # 5	READING # 6	READING # 7	READING # 8	READING # 9	READING # 10	READING # 11	READING # 12	READING # 13	READING # 14	READING # 15	READING # 16	AVERAGE OBTAINED FROM THE SECOND TO THE SIXTEENTH READING QUIZ
STUDENT 1	6	9	8	7	8	7	6	8	9	9	10	6	9	8	9	5	7.87
STUDENT 2	7	7	9	7	7	7	9	5	9	9	10	8	8	8	5	8	7.73
STUDENT 3	7	7	9	7	7	9	6	6	9	9	10	9	9	8	9	8	8.13
STUDENT 4	4	5	5	6	5	6	5	9	7	8	9	4	6	9	8	8	6.67
STUDENT 5	6	9	6	8	9	9	9	7	9	8	9	6	9	8	9	8	8.2
STUDENT 6	4	6	4	5	6	6	8	6	7	6	3	7	6	6	8	5	5.93
STUDENT 7	6	10	6	8	9	9	6	7	10	8	9	7	7	8	8	9	8.07
STUDENT 8	7	9	7	7	8	9	8	8	8	9	8	7	7	10	9	7	8.07
STUDENT 9	6	9	8	8	6	7	6	3	5	6	8	7	10	9	7	7	7.07
STUDENT 10	6	10	7	6	7	9	6	8	8	7	8	6	5	8	5	6	7.07
STUDENT 11	5	9	6	6	7	7	6	8	6	6	9	3	4	9	8	6	6.67
STUDENT 12	5	9	6	7	6	7	8	7	4	9	9	6	5	9	10	8	7.33
STUDENT 13	5	10	5	8	6	10	8	7	8	7	7	7	5	9	5	9	7.4
STUDENT 14	6	9	7	7	7	10	9	8	10	9	7	6	10	10	10	10	8.6
STUDENT 15	8	9	9	8	9	10	9	9	9	8	10	9	10	10	10	10	9.27
STUDENT 16	6	9	7	9	10	9	9	9	8	7	9	7	9	9	9	9	8.6
STUDENT 17	5	8	5	5	6	6	5	8	6	9	10	6	6	9	9	8	7.07
STUDENT 18	7	9	9	8	8	10	7	6	9	8	10	7	10	9	10	10	8.67
STUDENT 19	8	9	9	8	9	10	8	10	10	9	10	9	9	9	9	10	9.2
STUDENT 20	7	8	9	9	8	7	8	9	10	10	10	5	8	10	9	6	8.4
STUDENT 21	6	8	9	9	7	9	8	8	6	9	8	7	5	10	10	7	8
AVERAGE PER READING	6.05	8.48	7.14	7.29	7.38	8.24	7.33	7.43	7.95	8.1	8.71	6.62	7.48	8.81	8.38	7.81	7.81

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

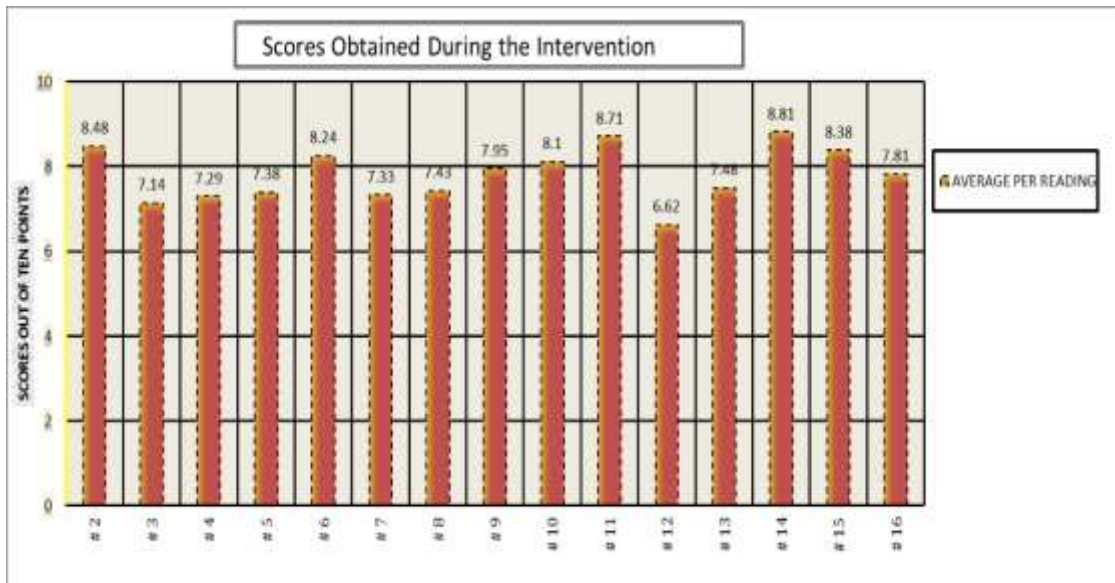


Figure 4. Average scores students obtained during the intervention.

Prepared by the author, 2017.

This bar chart provides information about the performance of students in each reading session during the four-month period of intervention. It can be seen from the chart that the highest scores obtained were found on readings quizzes numbers 2, 11, and 14, and the lowest scores were obtained on readings quizzes numbers 12, 3. However, the figure shows that on the majority of readings students got scores above 7, which indicates a good level of comprehension.

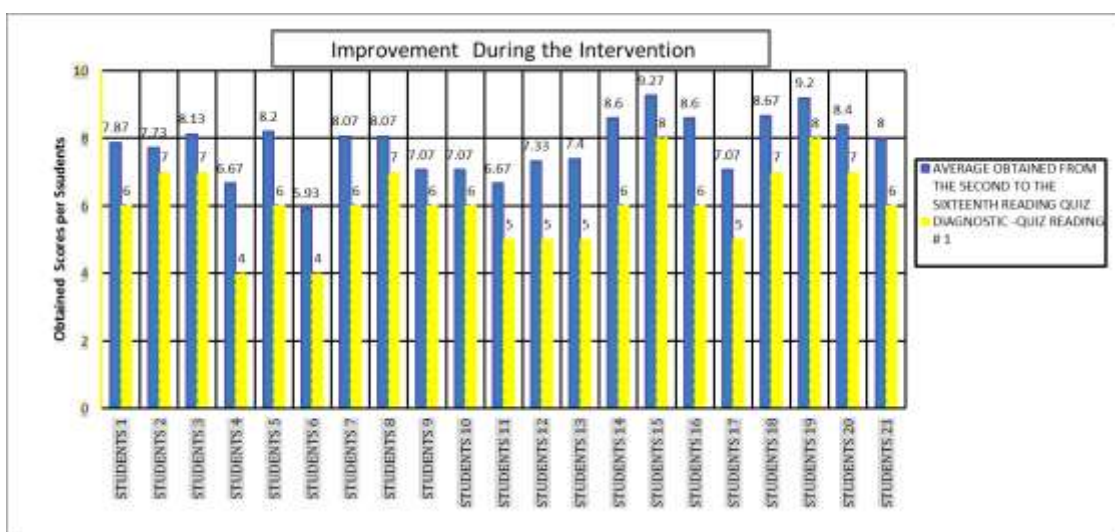


Figure 5. Improvement of the students' reading abilities during the development of the intervention. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This bar graph demonstrates the performance students have reached in their reading abilities in relation to the pre-reading diagnostic quiz during the four-month period. The figure shows that students improved their scores on reading comprehension during the intervention. The highest improvement can be seen on the following students: Student 4, who improved 2.67 points, similarly student 14, improved 2.60 points and student 16 improved 2.60 points, too. On the other hand, the lowest improvement can be observed on students 2, 9, and 10. In the first case, the improvement was 0.73 of a point, and in the other cases it was 1.07 points. In general, it is seen that the blue bars are higher than the yellow bars which implies that all the students improved their reading skills.

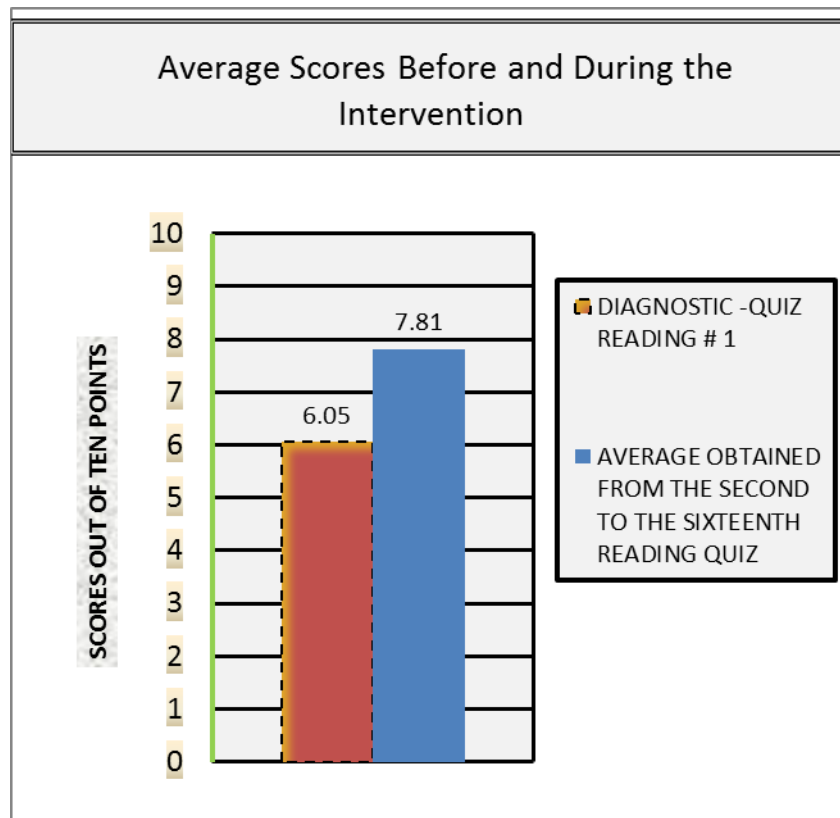


Figure 6. Comparison of the average scores obtained before and during the intervention. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This bar chart shows information about the changes in students' reading comprehension performance before the treatment and after it. Overall, the students have increased their reading comprehension abilities. We can see from the chart that students have improved in 1.76 points on the reading

comprehension quizzes scores. Therefore, it is clear that students have gained knowledge regarding reading strategies.

4.2.2 Analysis of the Pre-reading survey given to the students.

This was a ten-question survey conducted to explore how much students knew about reading strategies. The first survey was to discover prior thoughts about reading strategies. To facilitate understanding of the charts, questions were grouped according to their structure. First, questions 1 to 7, then question 8, after that, question 9, and finally, question 10 (see Appendix 17).

4.2.2.1 Pre-reading survey: questions 1 to 7.

Questions 1 to 7 are intended to determine whether students use strategies to find out information that they did not know when they read.

Table 7

Pre-reading Survey: Questions 1 to 7

1. When you read a story or other information you understand it. <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
2. When you read you use illustrations or titles to help you figure out what a story is about. <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
3. When you don't understand a word, you use the information you have already read to guess the meaning. <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
4. When you find a story or written information difficult to understand, do you give up? <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
5. When you read you use a dictionary when you can't understand words. <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
6. When you read, do you try to see the pictures in your head? <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never
7. When you read, do you guess what will happen before you read? <input type="checkbox"/> always <input type="checkbox"/> usually <input type="checkbox"/> sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> never

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

Table 8

Answers and Percentages of Questions 1 to 7 of the Pre-reading Survey

QUESTION	ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1	1	4.76	9	42.86	8	38.10	3	14.29		0.00	21
2	3	14.29	5	23.81	10	47.62	3	14.29		0.00	21
3	2	9.52	7	33.33	11	52.38	1	4.76		0.00	21
4	1	4.76	4	19.05	9	42.86	2	9.52	5	23.81	21
5	2	9.52	8	38.10	7	33.33	4	19.05		0.00	21
6	2	9.52	6	28.57	7	33.33	5	23.81	1	4.76	21
7		0.00	1	4.76	12	57.14	7	33.33	1	4.76	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

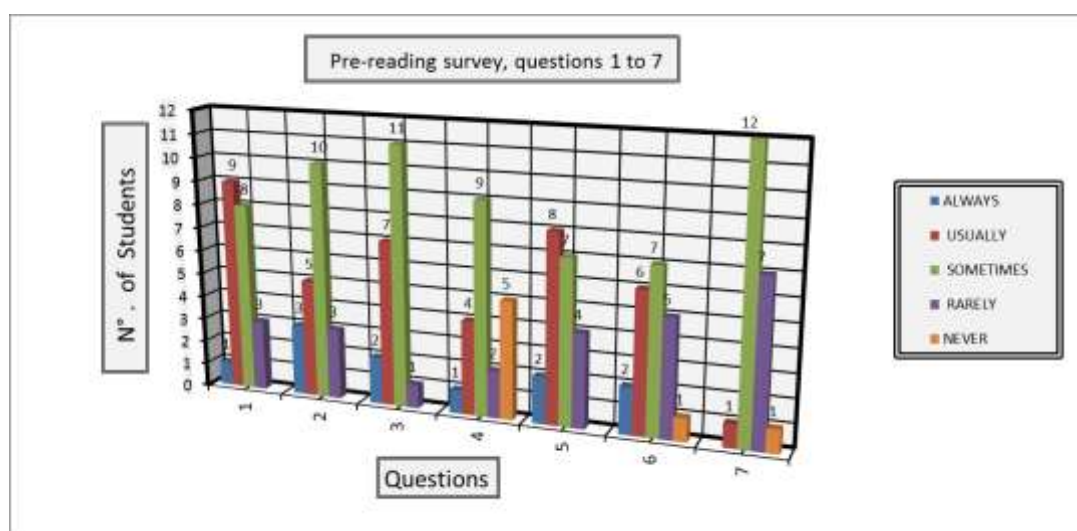


Figure 7. Pre-reading survey: questions 1 to 7. Prepared by the author, 2017

This table and bar chart show the reading strategies and how often students used them prior to the intervention. The strategies that the highest percentage of students *sometimes* used were: (7) guessing what will happen before reading, 57.14% (12 students), (3) use of the information they have already read when they do not understand a word, 52.38% (11 students) and (2) using illustrations or titles to help them figure out what a story is about, 47.62% (10 students). Other strategies that were *usually* used were: (1) understanding a story when they read it, 42.87% (9 students) and (5) using a dictionary when they cannot understand words, 38.10% (8 students). Accordingly, the vast

majority of students have not always used the reading strategies mentioned in the survey.

4.2.2.2 Pre-reading survey: question 8.

Question 8 intended to determine if students asked pre-reading questions and what was the frequency they asked themselves these questions about the reading.

Table 9

Pre-reading Survey: Question 8

Do you ask yourself questions ...											
	ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
Before reading	1	4.76	1	4.76	8	38.10	6	28.57	5	23.81	21
While reading	1	4.76	2	9.52	6	28.57	6	28.57	6	28.57	21
After reading	2	9.52	3	14.29	10	47.62	1	4.76	5	23.81	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

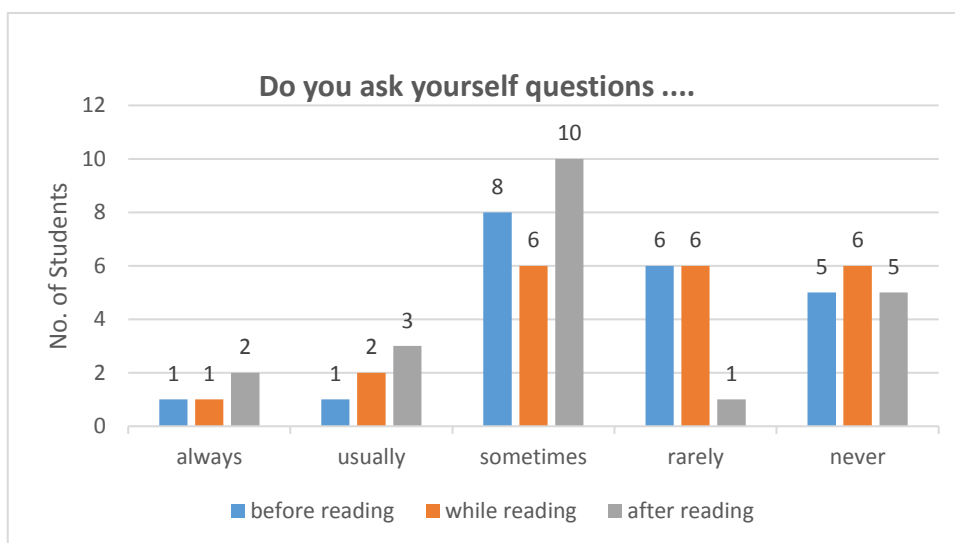


Figure 8. Pre-reading survey: question 8. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This table and bar graph show how often students asked themselves questions before, during and after the reading. The highest number of students who *sometimes* do it before reading is eight (38.10%). Six (28.57%) is the number of students who *sometimes*, *rarely* and *never* ask questions while reading and ten students (47.62%) *sometimes* do it after reading. One (4.76%)

is the lowest number of students who *always* and *usually* asks themselves questions before reading and one who *rarely* does it after reading.

4.2.2.3 Pre-reading survey: question 9.

Question number 9 sought to determine if students related information from the reading with their own lives or if they made a link with something similar for a better understanding.

Table 10

Pre-reading Survey: Question 9

When you read, do you ...											
	ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
a) Relate the story to your own life?			6	28.57	8	38.10	4	19.05	3	14.25	21
b) Make a link to something similar you have read?			5	23.81	6	28.57	4	19.05	6	28.57	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

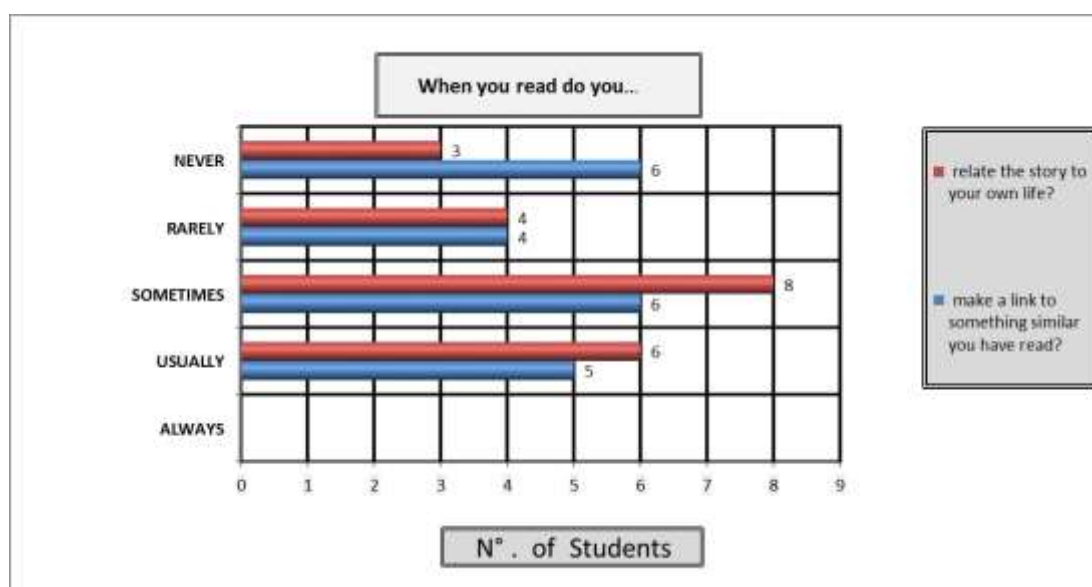


Figure 9. Pre-reading survey: question 9. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This table and chart show whether students related information with their life or made a link with something similar when they read. Regarding the question of relating a reading with their life, eight students (38.10%) said they

sometimes did it, while three students (14.25) never did it. Concerning making a link, six students (28.57%) said they *never* and *sometimes* related the story with something similar they have read, while four (19.05%) said they never did it.

4.2.2.4 Pre-reading survey: question 10

Question 10 tried to determine if students have used the following strategies: Predictions, working collaboratively, summarizing, pre-reading quiz, information gap activity, graphic organizers, skimming, opinion gap, expressing opinions or reasoning gap activity.

Table 11

Pre-reading Survey: Question 10

Have you used the following strategies?											
	ALWAYS		USUALLY		SOMETIMES		RARELY		NEVER		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
a) Predictions based on the title					2	9.52	9	42.86	10	47.62	21
b) Predictions based on illustration					5	23.81	8	38.10	8	38.10	21
c) Slashed/Cut up Texts					1	4.76	3	14.29	17	80.95	21
d) Summarizing			3	14.29	18	85.71		0.00		0.00	21
e) Pre-reading Quiz									21	100.00	21
f) Information-gap activity									21	100.00	21
g) Graphic organizers									21	100.00	21
h) Skimming									21	100.00	21
i) Opinion-gap activity									21	100.00	21
j) Expressing opinions about the topic									21	100.00	21
k) Reasoning-gap activity									21	100.00	21
l) Role play									21	100.00	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

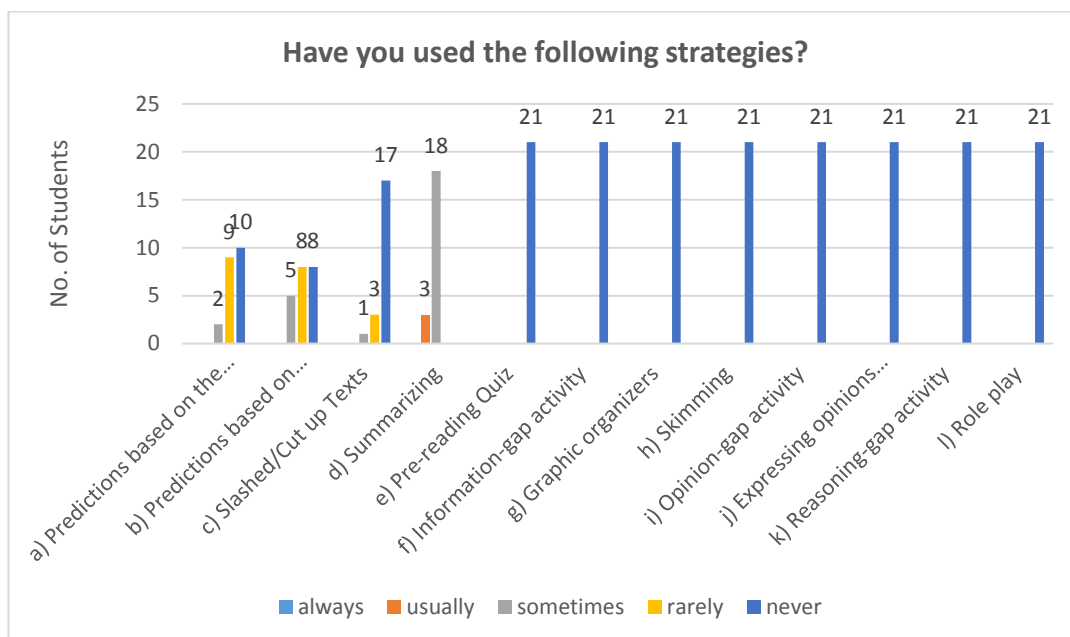


Figure 10. Pre-reading survey: question 10. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This table and bar chart show that the students did not use many strategies for reading prior to this study. Summarizing is the only strategy they used: three participants, which is 14.29%, usually used it and 18, which is 85.71%, sometimes used it. Prediction based on illustration is another strategy that eight students, which is 23.81%, sometimes used. It can be clearly seen that a high number of participants have never used any strategies, except summarizing and it is remarkable to observe that 21 students, which is 100%, have not used pre-reading quiz, information gap activity, graphic organizers, skimming, opinion gap activity, expressing opinions after reading, reasoning gap activity and role play before this intervention.

4.2.3. Analysis of the post-reading survey given to students.

This was a fifteen-question survey about the reading strategies taught amid the intervention the students liked the most (see Appendix 18).

4.2.3.1 Post-reading Survey: Questions 1 to 12.

These questions were designed to determine whether students found useful the strategies used during the intervention.

Table 12

Post-reading Survey: Questions 1 to 12

1. HOW USEFUL WAS THE PRE-READING STRATEGY, PREDICTING BY READING THE TITLE?
2. HOW USEFUL WAS THE PRE-READING STRATEGY, PREDICTING BY LOOKING AT THE PICTURE?
3. HOW USEFUL WAS THE PRE-READING STRATEGY, PREDICTING BY ANSWERING THE PRE-QUIZ?
4. HOW USEFUL WAS THE PRE-READING STRATEGY, SKIMMING (READ THE FIRST PARAGRAPH FAST AND TRY TO OBTAIN THE MOST IMPORTANT IDEA?)
5. HOW USEFUL WAS THE WHILE-READING STRATEGY, SLASHED/CUT UP TEXTS (COLLABORATIVE READING)?
6. HOW USEFUL WAS THE WHILE-READING STRATEGY, INFORMATION-GAP ACTIVITY?
7. HOW USEFUL WAS THE WHILE-READING STRATEGY, OPINION-GAP ACTIVITY?
8. HOW USEFUL WAS THE WHILE-READING STRATEGY, REASONING-GAP ACTIVITY?
9. HOW USEFUL WAS THE POST-READING STRATEGY, ROLE PLAY TASK?
10. HOW USEFUL WAS THE POST-READING STRATEGY, SUMMARIZING?
11. HOW USEFUL WAS THE POST-READING STRATEGY, GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS?
12. HOW USEFUL WAS THE POST-READING STRATEGY, EXPRESSING OPINIONS ABOUT THE TOPIC?

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

Table 13

Answers and Percentages of Questions 1 to 12 of the Post-reading Survey

Question	Extremely helpful		Very helpful		Somewhat helpful		Slightly helpful		Not at all helpful		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
1	8	38.10	9	42.86	3	14.29	1	4.76		0.00	21
2	5	23.81	11	52.38	4	19.05		0.00	1	4.76	21
3	7	33.33	11	52.38	2	9.52	1	4.76		0.00	21
4	7	33.33	5	23.81	7	33.33	2	9.52		0.00	21
5	4	19.05	3	14.29	12	57.14	2	9.52		0.00	21
6	2	9.52	9	42.86	8	38.10		0.00	2	9.52	21
7	6	28.57	10	47.62	2	9.52	3	14.29		0.00	21
8	7	33.33	8	38.10	5	23.81	1	4.76		0.00	21
9	9	42.86	3	14.29	7	33.33	2	9.52		0.00	21
10	7	33.33	12	57.14		0.00	1	4.76	1	4.76	21
11	10	47.62	3	14.29	5	23.81	2	9.52	1	4.76	21
12	14	66.67	5	23.81	1	4.76		0.00	1	4.76	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

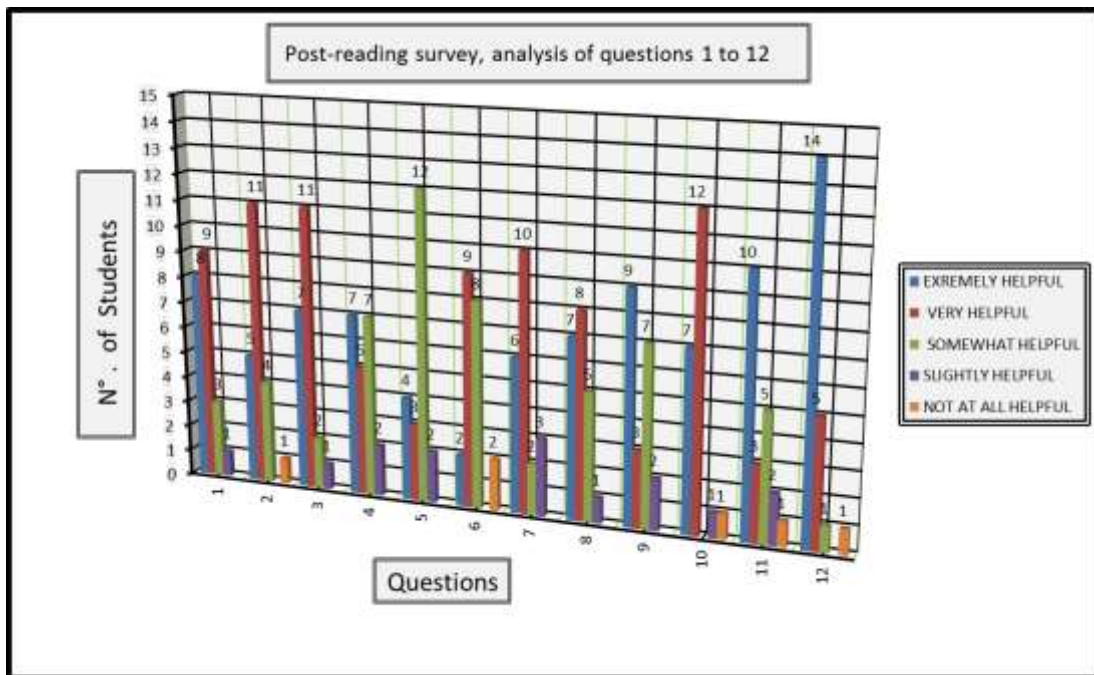


Figure 11. Post-reading survey: analysis of questions 1 to 12. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This table and bar graph show how helpful were the strategies used during the intervention. It can be seen that 14 students thought that the strategy expressing opinions about the topic was extremely helpful; similarly 12 students considered summarizing very helpful. A somewhat helpful strategy was slashed/cut up text, mentioned by 12 students. The least helpful strategy was opinion gap activity selected by three students, and finally, the strategy they thought was not helpful at all was the information gap activity as it was marked by only two students. Hence, the great majority of students found the strategies useful during this study.

Table 14

Students' Opinions Regarding the Helpfulness of the Reading Strategies Used

Task-based Reading Strategies	Extremely helpful		Very helpful		Somewhat helpful		Slightly helpful		Not at all helpful	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Expressing opinions about the topic	14	66.67								
Summarizing			12	57.14						
Slashed/Cut up texts (Collaborative reading)					12	57.14				
Opinion-gap activity							3	14.29		
Information-gap activity									2	9.52

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

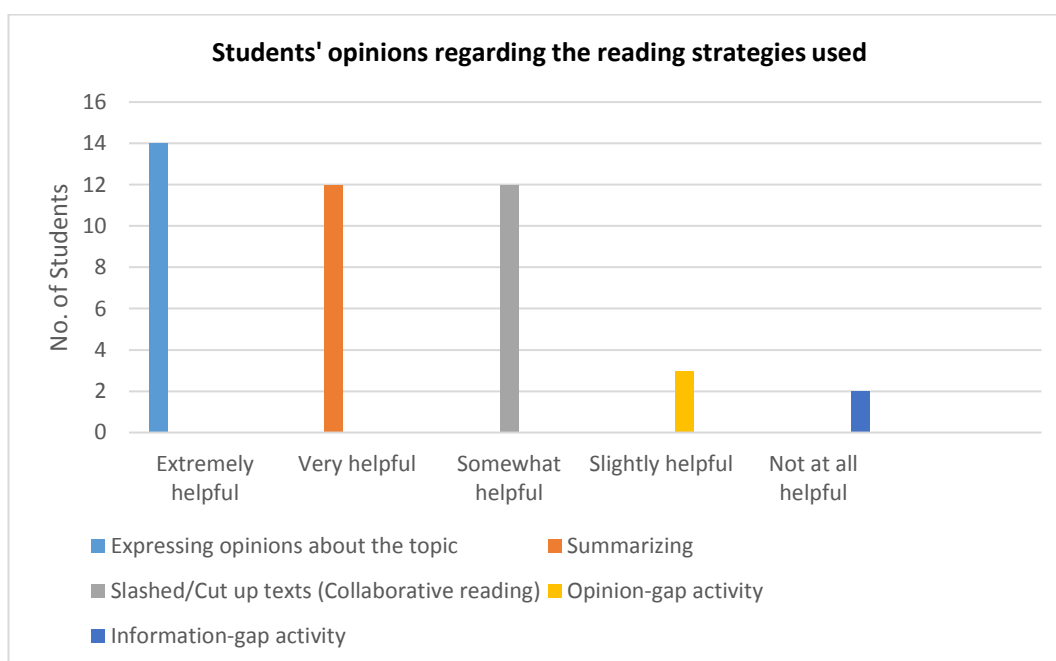


Figure 12. Students' opinions regarding the helpfulness of the reading strategies used. Prepared by the author, 2017

This table and bar graph show students' opinions regarding the strategies applied during the intervention. Thus, it can be seen that expressing opinions about the topic was the strategy 66.67% of students considered extremely helpful, while 9.52% thought information-gap activity was not at all helpful. Summarizing and slashed/cut up texts were very helpful for 57.14% of participants and opinion-gap activity was slightly helpful for 14.29% of students.

4.2.3.2 Post-reading Survey: Questions 13 to 15.

These questions intend to determine if the intervention contributed to better understanding, and to know if the readings selected were interesting to students.

Table 15

Post-reading Survey: Questions 13 to 15

13. THE PRE-READING, WHILE-READING AND POST-READING STRATEGIES YOU HAVE WORKED WITH, DURING THE LAST FOUR MONTHS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO FACILITATE COMPREHENSION.
14. SCAFFOLDING (SUPPORT) FROM THE TEACHER HAS LED YOU TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE READING.
15. THE READINGS SELECTED WERE INTERESTING FOR YOU.

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

Table 16

Answers and Percentages of Questions 13 to 15 of the Post-reading Survey

QUESTION	STRONGLY		AGREE		NEUTRAL		DISAGREE		STRONGLY DISAGREE		TOTAL
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	
13	11	52.38	9	42.85	1	4.76		0.00		0.00	21
14	11	52.38	6	28.57	4	19.05		0.00		0.00	21
15	14	66.67	5	23.81	2	9.52		0.00		0.00	21

Note: Prepared by the author, 2017.

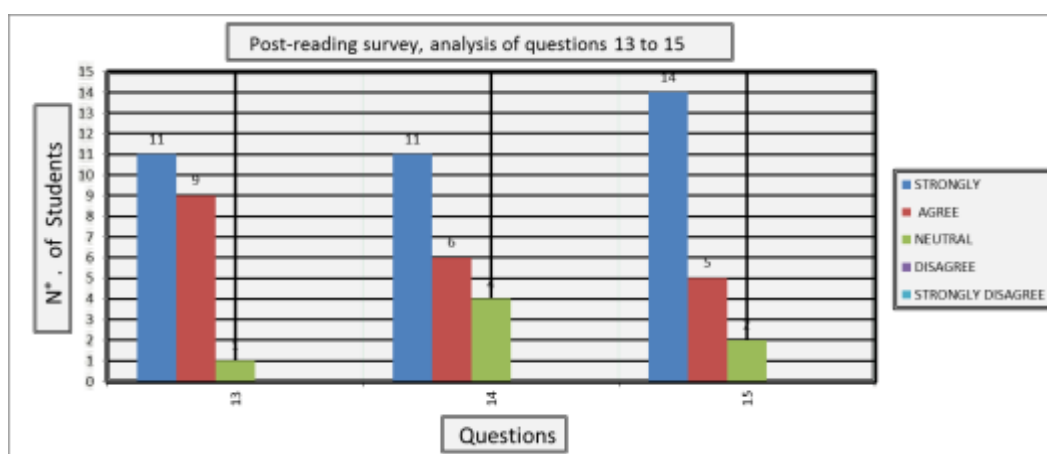


Figure 13. Post-reading survey: analysis of questions 13 to 15. Prepared by the author, 2017.

This table and bar chart shows the students' opinion regarding the task-based strategies, scaffolding and the type of material used. It is apparent that the majority of students strongly agree with the three elements to develop reading comprehension abilities.

4.3 Results

After reviewing of the data collected it was possible to focus on answering the research questions stated at the beginning of this study. The first question was about the positive impact that task-based reading strategies could have on the EFL high school target group. The second question concerned the improvement that the application of task-based activities could have in the reading comprehension skills and the third question intended to know if the development of reading comprehension skills could be improved by scaffolding.

With regard to the first research question, it can be said that the task-based strategies applied during the intervention of this study were important and had a positive impact on the target group. The students improved their reading comprehension skills after working on the pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading task-based strategies as can be seen in Figure 3. According to the students' opinions, the most useful task-based strategies were expressing opinions about the topic, predicting by looking at the picture, answering a pre-quiz, summarizing, and slashed/cut up texts.

The information from the literature review corroborates the effectiveness of these strategies in developing reading comprehension. For instance, regarding expressing opinions (Willis, 1996), students have the chance to give their viewpoint on the subject. It is an opportunity for them to link data from the content and their own particular thoughts.

Concerning predicting using pictures, Alemi and Ebadi (2010) proposed that visual representations might be used as a sort of inspiring data. These researchers think that visual information prepares students to form predictions that are effective in reading. In regard to answering a short pre-quiz, Howarth (2007) expressed that it is a useful strategy which is based on inquiries regarding the point to be read to discover how much students know about the

topic. Relating to summarizing, Pressley (2002) state that summarizing is important due to the fact that good readers should be able to retell the story after reading it. Finally, concerning slashed/cut up texts, Howarth (2007) recommends it because this is a collaborative reading strategy.

In regard to the second question it can be said that the application of these tasks-based reading strategies lead to the improvement of the reading comprehension skills due to some components that apparently contribute to achieving this improvement, such as the period assigned for this study, the instructions given during the application of the tasks, the frequency of the reading sessions, the topics selected, the frequency with which quizzes were applied, the kinds of questions included in the quizzes. Therefore, the intervention planned was effective due to the fact that the majority of students worked enthusiastically, constantly and actively. This study has demonstrated, as authors mentioned in the literature review, that tasks are important to improve reading comprehension, for instance, Robinson (2011) assured that tasks lead to obtain outcomes in the language learning or Ellis (2003) who argued that tasks are efficient to improve reading skills.

In regard to the third question concerning scaffolding, it is necessary to mention the information recorded in the field notes. In the first sessions of the intervention process, it was observed that most students often needed the assistance of the teacher, but then as they were more familiar with the reading strategies learnt, scaffolding was removed gradually, and in some sessions, particularly the last ones, the students were able to work on their own efficiently. As Benjamin (2007) stated, scaffolding supports students to develop tasks that they could not do on their own before. However, it was also observed that in other cases, scaffolding was carried out all the time, especially during the first reading sessions and also when the topic of the reading was somewhat challenging. Shintani (2016) pointed out that students working with tasks need assistance in order to accomplish the objectives.

Through this study it was shown that reading is an activity that develops a process. This process needs to be well structured and it is important to take the level and the interest of students into consideration as well as the material used. In this study authentic material was used, which most of the students

found interesting. Another aspect that was confirmed as important was scaffolding, which is very important to avoid student's from distraction by quitting the reading activity. In order to have a positive result in reading comprehension, it was also necessary to devote some time to the activity due to the fact that students need to assimilate and reflect on the tasks developed to become autonomous. Once they are skilled, they can apply the task-based reading strategies independently.

Consequently, these research results show that, in general, the students gained autonomy to some extent because of the gradual reduction of scaffolding as well as the effectiveness of the reading comprehension tasks.

Chapter V

Discussion

It is interesting to guide students to change their attitude towards issues that they encounter while learning English. Thus, it has been decided to change the reading approach used to facilitate English language learning acquisition. It was focused on reading due to the fact that this is an activity that has overwhelmed a large number of students.

A plan started at the beginning of the intervention and it was developed based on important components that were found during the research period. Task-based strategies that develop reading as it was found by the English Department of New College English (Zhejiang University Press) (as cited in Shehadeh & Coombe 2012, p. 144) were chosen. Arrangements were made in the schedule, it was told to students that on Tuesdays they would be working on reading and they acknowledged it. Then 16 readings for the intervention were selected, these were authentic materials, such as real news articles. They were carefully selected from a website due to the fact that this offered different categories of readings and not all of them could have been interesting to students. Worksheets were created, including the tasks. The worksheet were divided into three sections: the pre-reading, while-reading and the post-reading. Information or instructions according to each task were added. A diagnostic reading quiz and fifteen after reading quizzes were designed. These quizzes included the same type of questions, multiple-choice questions, true/false statements, three information questions and yes/no questions. Then, it was the moment to apply the chosen intervention strategies, and it started with a giving pre-quiz because it was the point of reference to determine the baseline for the improvement of students' reading skills.

It was essential to consider the three reading stages, each of them was worked independently, and each one required a certain amount of time. At the end of the intervention all three were important and contributed to better students' reading comprehension.

For the pre-reading stage four tasks were carefully selected. Each task

was applied for four consecutive reading sessions. It was considered the students' level and their interests. During the intervention it was seen that these tasks benefited students as Ellis (2003) affirmed that tasks facilitate language learning. Students used the target language, they recognized important information from prior readings and they valued this stage as it was the starting point to obtain information that would help them later when they perform reading comprehension tasks.

At the beginning of this study, at the pre-reading stage, predicting was applied. First, with prediction based on the title, some students could make predictions effortlessly from the first reading session, yet other students had some difficulties. For that reason, some questions were elicited in order to engage students to collaborate in the class. From that point and on, this strategy worked with the majority of students. In the following reading sessions, more students provided predictions having a more community-oriented class condition.

Then, prediction based on pictures was applied, this strategy worked due to the fact that students had experienced this kind of prediction before this study. Numerous students provided information that was useful for the following stages. This strategy was useful, and by predicting students had ideas regarding the article before reading it.

After that, a short diagnostic reading quiz was handed out to students and it was answered in pairs. To perform this strategy, students needed some clarification, so the purpose of this task was told again; it was to read each question before addressing themselves to the task, and that it was important to share ideas with their partners. Once they felt more comfortable with this task, the great majority of students could provide answers to either information or yes/no questions. It can be said that these questions were appropriate for their level and this is the main reason why they did well.

Next, skimming was applied. It was a new strategy for students. Considerable amount of time to teach and exemplify this strategy was applied. To prepare students for this strategy, it was requested to move eyes quickly from one side to the other. Then, students were asked to try to read a piece of

text in the same way moving their eyes fast. From that point forward, students understood they had to read quickly extracting the most essential idea. Many students assimilated this strategy well demonstrating that they are able to recognize important information.

During the while-reading stage again four tasks were chosen, students exchanged information, analyzed, organized, compared and created new information based on information given. When students worked on this stage they were obtaining a product that was an important aspect mentioned in the literature review. As Robinson (2011) says it is important to obtain written and oral production of the language to demonstrate that reading can lead to use the language in different ways. In addition, students were constructing concrete knowledge that facilitated their comprehension.

The first strategy applied in the while-reading stage was Slashed / Cut up texts. This was a new strategy that worked pretty well. It was done in groups and it was interesting for students due to the fact they needed to read at the beginning independently and then they assembled to answer a questionnaire. Students were interested in obtaining the most correct answer, even though the objective of this strategy was not to compete among groups, different groups showed the intention to make this a competitive activity.

The second while-reading strategy applied was information-gap activity. This task-based strategy demanded a great deal of explanation and modeling. The purpose was explained to students, this activity was to obtain missing information by asking their partners questions. Then, each student could write the information on the blank spot using the table provided. This strategy was a limitation in the study, it did not work for most of the students. They could not formulate correct questions to obtain the missing information. Or after asking questions and not obtaining answers they got tired. Apparently students could not understand information they were exchanging among each other. Therefore, students had great difficulty with this task. Many of them looked for the way to cheat asking their partners to just exchange the written information provided in the table and they just wrote in the corresponding blank space. It demanded more and better preparation according to the level of students or

the substitution by another task-based strategy well aligned for the target group of students.

For the opinion-gap activity it was necessary to provide more information especially in the first and the second sessions because it was a completely new task for them. Students were hesitant to include personal preferences, feelings, or attitudes to develop the task. It seemed they wanted to be objective when stating their opinions but later in the following sessions students were able to provide a list of possible solutions according to their own perspective. This strategy worked when students were more confident because then they began considering their own experiences.

When students were asked to apply reasoning-gap activity, they had many problems because they were asked to create new information based on the content of the article. This strategy did not work well because it demanded other strategies such as inferring and deducing which were new to them and required previous practice. It was another important limitation on this study, this task should be conveniently rethought or changed by another one that is more suitable for high school students.

At the post-reading stage, students were asked to take the information from the reading to a different level. At this point students were asked to use the information in order to produce something in an oral and written way as Ladousse (2004) suggests, as by performing, students have the opportunity to produce the target language. They were asked to produce a short role play, arrange data in a way that each of them could comprehend, and they were also asked to express opinions using the information they had learned as a result of working on the same topic during the three stages.

When students were asked to work on a role play based on the information obtained from the article they had some problems organizing information. It was a problem to reach an agreement on their ideas. Thus, support was provided to motivate them, it was possible to create a dialog in pairs. Students were advised to write their ideas and to select some of them from both parties in order to develop the task. Then, students were able to work in pairs on this task demonstrating respect for each other in the class.

When students worked with summaries, many of them succeeded because they were familiar with this strategy. This strategy was practiced a long time prior this study. Even though summarizing is considered a complex activity, the majority of students understood that the main purpose of a summary is to extract the most important ideas from a text. Guidance and explanation were delivered to students, besides; some tools that they could use to summarize information easily. Some of them were: dividing the article into three parts and taking the most relevant information from each section or by asking themselves information questions.

For some students, the use of graphic organizer was difficult. Some extra instruction on how to organize information was needed at the beginning. On the other hand, many students enjoyed the use of graphic organizers a lot, they were happy to have freedom to organize the information they recalled. By applying this strategy, it was confirmed that graphic organizers contribute to develop the reading activity satisfactorily and at the same time the implementation of graphic organizers can be an enjoyable activity.

The last task-based strategy used was expressing opinions about the topic. This strategy worked because students had already ideas about the text. They had already done tasks related to the text in the previous stages. These activities led them to connect ideas to know more about the reading. Therefore, students were ready to comment their opinions about the article.

In spite of the fact that not all the task-based strategies applied worked satisfactorily, it was important to have dedicated time to work on each reading stage because if the while-reading stage did not help much students, they had the opportunity to work with other strategies in the pre- and while-reading stage. These strategies were remarkable to demonstrate better reading comprehension and foremost to improve their scores in reading comprehension quizzes as seen in Table 3.

After they had worked on different tasks, they were asked to take a reading comprehension quiz. During the process of checking those tests it was found a noteworthy change in the vast majority of them. And, it was concluded that students were better prepared to take reading comprehension quizzes.

Something that is additionally important to add is that during the development of tasks students were scaffolded. Guidance was provided during the development of tasks. Examples were shown when students did not understand. For example, when students were asked to organize information on graphic organizers, it was necessary to do a first sample, then students had a clearer idea about this task and they did it by themselves. Scaffolding was considered a critical component since it was perceived that students were feeling nervous, anxious and sometimes they were afraid to develop the tasks. Therefore, this time it was decided to change the lesson plan arrangements. Alertness was observed when students were not demonstrating confidence to develop a task. It could be recognized that by their movements, by the way they looked around, and by their silence or noise. There were specific situations where students needed scaffolding, such as clarification of instructions was provided, motivation to share ideas or to start expressing their opinions, and help with new vocabulary and support with grammar patterns. as (Scharlach, 2008) said. Fortunately, it worked, and the majority of student performed the tasks well. Many of them demonstrated greater self-confidence in themselves during the intervention. This situation led the to think that if they kept reading and applying some of the task-based strategies used during this study, they could be independent readers who could enjoy and gain knowledge through this activity.

This study has proved that the support of the teacher is important when teaching reading as different authors such as McKenzie (2011), stated that after applying scaffolding in his study, students showed significant growths in reading or Enyew and Yigzaw (2015) who showed that scaffolding is one of the most suitable strategies to enhance student's reading comprehension.

It is also essential to mention that most of the time during the intervention period, students were eager to work. They kept asking before submitting the readings and the worksheets for the session, "what is the title of today's reading?" - which meant that they were interested in the reading material provided and that this issue was handled suitably.

As time passed by, students achieved a noteworthy change in the reading skills. During the procedure they had some difficulties performing

some tasks. For instance, the information gap activity was difficult for the greater part of students and despite the fact that clarifications of instructions were offered constantly, many students were not ready to perform this task well. Fortunately, most of the time the support provided was effective and students demonstrated that by accomplishing the tasks.

On the other hand, it was understandable that among students there were a few contrasts in their learning styles and that was the reason why some tasks were simple for some students and troublesome for others. Additionally, the pace of students differed from one another. Thus, some students worked quickly and others did not.

It can be said that this intervention has succeeded with this specific target group. It has contributed to better understanding as it could be seen in Figure 2 where it is possible to see how much each student has improved.

The reflection on this intervention has led to recognize the importance of taking action as soon the problem was noticed inside the classroom. It was necessary to plan well before applying a specific intervention in order to benefit students. Issues in the classroom can differ from one another in terms of the length of time, they can also be different in terms of the strategies that could be effective to apply because of different learning styles.

In this specific case where the problem was reading comprehension, a period of four months was devoted. This suggests that students can improve considerably if they keep applying assignments in a consistent way. In this study, it has been shown that the exposure to different tasks related to the same topic can facilitate the understanding of a text, meaning that if students are trained, they perform the reading activities better.

The most important finding in this study was that students attending high school could enhance their reading comprehension. It demanded, to strive to keep students focused upon the needed changes. Additionally, it required authentic materials adapted to the students' level, and arranged tasks with enough time to complete them in a class period.

If there was the opportunity to go back in time, it would have been advisable to change the tasks that were complicated for students such as the information gap activity and reasoning gap activity. More fitting tasks would have been selected to suit better student's age and interests. Besides, the schedule would have been rearranged as working with some readings required students to devote more time because some students could not finish the task due to their pace was a little behind others. If there would have had more time, the opportunity to provide more individual support could have been observed.

Through this study the opportunity to experiment with solutions for the problem of reading comprehension and the chance to apply distinctive task-based strategies that were important to build their reading comprehension abilities were exposed. Consequently, reading comprehension is an activity that requires a considerable period of time and reading can be acquired even though students are in high school and they did not learn how to do it at primary school.

Chapter VI

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

After applying task-based strategies such as predicting based on the title, predicting based on pictures, short pre-quiz and skimming during the pre-reading stage, slashed / cut up texts, information gap activity, reasoning gap activity, opinion gap activity during the while-reading stage and role play task, summarizing, graphic organizers and express opinions about the topic during the post-reading stage and after analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data, it can be concluded that the EFL high school target group could develop reading comprehension skills through a well-structured plan of intervention.

The set of task-based reading strategies selected had a positive impact on the high school students. For instance, it was beneficial for them to work on the predicting strategy because it simplifies the understanding of the text. The use of graphic organizers was also beneficial for the students. They could register and use the information in order to tell what the article was about. According to the data analyzed, these students considered some of those strategies as *extremely helpful* and *very helpful*.

After the period of four months that students worked with task-based strategies, it was confirmed, through the quantitative analysis in figures and through qualitative analysis that explained the observation process, that these kinds of strategies improved their reading comprehension skills.

During the intervention, many students could follow instructions for the tasks, they were capable of developing different tasks. However, there were two challenging task-based strategies that most of the students struggle with: information gap activity and reasoning gap activity. Despite the effort to explain them, most were not ready to perform these tasks. They were unprepared for tasks that required other skills such as inferring, deducing or sustaining a conversation for some minutes in order to discover some missing information.

Task-based reading strategies that are difficult for students can cause frustration. The performance of complicated tasks, such as the information gap activity in this study, can cause students to complain. Therefore, task-based reading strategies must align students' level and interest.

This study focuses on the development of reading skills in a group of students. Strategies such as students' opinions, students' predictions, students' expressions and students' performance confirmed that students and the instructor worked together to ensure success.

On the other hand, scaffolding was confirmed as an important component to develop the reading activity. In this study it was used with more frequency at the beginning and it was totally removed in some cases.

Students' success could have not been achieved without scaffolding. All the students resulted benefited from this intervention (see figure 2). Students' performance in the diagnostic reading quiz at the beginning compared with students' performance during the intervention improved.

The most relevant task-based strategies in the students' opinion were: predicting by looking at the picture, answering a pre-quiz, slashed/cut up texts, summarizing and expressing opinions about the topic. Hence these task-based strategies should be replicated in different contexts in order to determine if these could be extrapolated into other contexts.

The improvement of reading performance in this specific group of students cannot be generalized, it would be necessary to try these strategies in a different context in order to confirm the efficacy in a different group of students.

The authentic reading material was appropriate for this group of students, they demonstrated interest and excitement when reading about sports, tourism, entertainment, and issues around the world. Certainly students' interests fluctuate, some readings were more engaging than others.

In conclusion, the problem detected, the intervention plan prepared, and the application using the specific task-based strategies mentioned above were appropriate to improve the reading comprehension skills of the students

attending first year of *bachillerato*. Students learning English in the Ecuadorian public system demand effective instructions and a good environment to perform better and to achieve success in reading skill.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research project, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is important to devote time to guide students on how to develop the reading comprehension ability instead of assuming that students know how to perform this activity.
2. Make students aware of the fact that this activity needs to be developed from a guided process. It should be well organized by the teacher in order to obtain positive results.
3. Reading is necessary to succeed academically, therefore, it is crucial that students develop good reading comprehension skills.
4. Teachers should plan the process of learning reading comprehension taking into account the interests and the level of students. The teacher must be responsible for providing students different authentic material(s) to choose from.
5. The intervention of reading should contemplate different task-based activities to be worked in the different stages, due to the fact that each stage is important to connect ideas and to obtain new knowledge related to the text.
6. The teacher is the person who knows his or her students best. Therefore, it is important that if some students have difficulties with reading comprehension, the teacher must start developing an intervention that will facilitate their success in school.
7. The following task-based strategies should be used as they proved to be effective to develop reading comprehension skills by this study: Predicting by looking at the picture, answering a pre-quiz (pre-reading tasks), slashed/cut up texts (while-reading task), summarizing and expressing opinions about the topic (post-reading tasks).

8. Scaffolding is also useful to build autonomy. Support is necessary when students are starting to work with new strategies, but once they understand how to perform or how to develop tasks by themselves the support can be removed.
9. During interventions that pretend to improve the reading ability, teachers should provide students clarification of instructions when they could not perform the tasks, and guidance with grammar when it is necessary. Supporting students will help them to address reading comprehension more efficiently.
10. Scaffolding should be used as part of the reading comprehension instruction, because it was shown that it is an important factor to make students feel confident at the moment of performing a task.
11. Teachers should be good observers in order to select the right moment to provide scaffolding and the right moment to remove it. Accompanying students and being part of the intervention will permit to recognize when they are struggling and will lead to provide appropriate guidance and at the same time will indicate when it is time to step back and leave students perform by themselves autonomously.
12. It is also convenient to apply a similar intervention in a different context in order to determine the feasibility of improvement of the reading comprehension skills with a different target group of students.
13. Once reading comprehension skills have been acquired, learners should adopt them and use regularly to keep reading comprehension level high.
14. Lastly, continuing with the application of task-based strategies in the three reading stages will lead to keep gaining autonomy and maintain success in the school.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Diagnostic Quiz

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 1

Name: _____

Internet slowly comes to Cuba



Figure 14. Voanews (2015). FILE – People surf the Internet at a Wi-Fi hotspot in Havana, Cuba, [Online image]. Retrieved from https://gdb.voanews.com/C46C904C-CE0D-4E8E-A868-FD43B7BA7860_cx0_cy7_cw0_w1023_r1_s.jpg

The Internet is spreading across Cuba, but at a slow pace. Up to now Internet access and other modern forms of communication have not been widespread on the Communist island.

Even though most people have smartphones, they can only use them to make calls, not to log on to social media sites like Facebook and Twitter. Public access to the Internet is limited to a few parks and some hotels. Very few people, mostly rich government officials and businessmen have Internet access at home.

However, since the United States and Cuba have agreed to normalize relations things have improved. Recently, the government in Havana has announced that it was rolling out broadband Internet access in the capital. More and more WiFi access points are being set up across Cuba's largest city. This comes at a time when business travelers and tourists are coming to Cuba in large numbers.

Cubans are desperately wanting to connect with the outside world. The Communist country has one of the world's lowest internet access rates. Only 10 - 20% of Cuban citizens have any type of access to the Internet. Only about 150 000 Cubans use the 58 wireless access points across the island every day.

Because of high prices, it is a luxury only few can afford. While Internet cafés have started to lower their prices, an hour still costs about \$2 an hour, a tenth of the average monthly salary.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/technology/internet-comes-slowly-to-cuba.htm>

Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How good or bad is the internet connection in Cuba?
- b. Who can have internet connection in Cuba?
- c. Where is possible to get internet connection in Cuba?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *pace*?

- a. Steps
- b. Speed something moves
- c. Manner of walking

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *rate*?

- a. The period of time
- b. The price
- c. The amount or number

A. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. In Cuba is easy to have internet connection _____
2. Cubans agree with the price they have to pay for internet _____
3. In Cuba people prefer to talk with friends in the park rather to talk with family members who are outside of the country _____
4. In Cuba most of the people have no cell phones _____

B. Answer the following questions

Does the middle-class in Cuba have money to pay for internet connection in their homes?

Who can have easily access to internet?

Are the **wireless** access points enough for the population in Cuba? Why?

Appendix B

Reading No. 2

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Read the title and predict what information you will find. Tell your partner.

Bananas are turning into the ‘green gold’ of Angola



Figure 15. Embajada de la República de Angola. Angola crece [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.embajadadeangola.com/noticias/img/noticia-angola-creciendo-14b.jpg>

In the 1970s Angola was the leading exporter of coffee and sugar cane. But all that was seriously damaged by its 27-year civil war that ended in 2002.

Now, in order to diversify its economy and achieve food security for its people, this large country, twice the size of France, is taking advantage of more than 58 million hectares of land for cultivation.

In 2011, Angola was a net importer of bananas. Three years later, it was producing 253,000 tons of bananas, ensuring self-sufficiency and becoming a net exporter in the process.

João Mpilamosi – President of “Caxito Rega, S.A.”

“We consider now that the banana is our ‘Green Gold’”, says João Mpilamosi, President of Caxito Rega, S.A. “Not only in terms of commercial value, but also in its

nutritional value. Today, the volume of annual banana sales, is almost \$100 million dollars. And today, the project is already exporting bananas to Africa.

The government provides training and funding for irrigation products, but the challenges are immense. Of Angola's 24 million people, there are over two million small farmers. They provide 80 percent of basic food crop production, and much of the work is done by hand.

The government helps with transportation and distribution. The products are often found on the shelves of supermarkets where local production is promoted and affordable prices are on offer for the emerging middle class.

We already export to the regional African market and there are also indicators that Angola can become an exporter not only for the African markets, but also for the entire world.”

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/video/business-economy/bananas-green-gold-of-angola.htm>

While-reading task

Slashed / Cut up texts:

- A. Read your piece of text then work collaboratively to answer the questions since no one has the whole of the text.**

From what source is Angola taking advantage to diversify its economy?

- B. Choose the correct answer**

In 2014 how many tons of bananas did Angola produce?

- 253,000
- 243,000
- 203,000

C. Answer the following questions.

What are the reasons why João Mpilamosi, thinks that bananas are the “Green gold”?

What percentage do small farmers produce?

Post-reading task

Summarize:

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 2

Name: _____

Bananas are turning into the ‘green gold’ of Angola



Figure 15. Embajada de la República de Angola. Angola crece [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.embajadadeangola.com/noticias/img/noticia-angola-creciendo-14b.jpg>

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Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/video/business-economy/bananas-green-gold-of-angola.htm>

A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. What is the green gold in Angola?
- b. How many tons of banana is Angola producing?
- c. How many tons of coffee is Angola producing?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *leading*?

- a. principal
- b. one of exporters
- c. country

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *funding*?

- a. Information
- b. Place
- c. money

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Angola is producing bananas _____
2. Angola is going to export bananas to Ecuador _____
3. Much of the work in Angola is done by hand _____
4. The government in Angola helps with the production of bananas _____

C. Answer the following questions.

Is Angola becoming an important exporter of bananas?

Is the middle-class able to obtain the product?

Where is Angola exporting its product?

Appendix C

Reading No. 3

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Read the title and predict what information you will find. Tell your partner.

China Wants to Become a Soccer Superpower



Figure 16. Albatross2147 (2008). Chinese National Football Team 2008 [Online image]. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_national_football_team_06-JUN-2008-ANZstad.jpg

The Chinese government plans to make soccer the number one sport in the country. By 2050 it wants to get 50 million children and adults to play the game.

Although the most populous country in the world, China has never been really good at the world's most popular sport. According to the government, 20000 training centers are planned and 70000 new soccer fields will be built within the next decades. It also wants to set up soccer schools and offer young players more training programs.

FIFA hopes that the China's desire to become a global player in soccer will raise the country's rankings, currently at number 80 in the FIFA list. In contrast to men, who

have only qualified for the World Cup once in 2002, Chinese women are more successful in the sport. They have even made it to the World Cup finals in 1999.

China's leader Xi Jinping is the driving force behind the new sport initiative. He loves soccer and played the game during his youth. Xi wants China to play a major role in Asia and maybe even win the World Cup one day. Recently, Chinese billionaires have started to invest in China's Super League, luring top European players to the country. Guangzhou Evergrande, one of China's top teams, has paid 45 million dollars for Atletico Madrid top star Jackson Martinez.

Source: *English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners* by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/sports/china-wants-to-become-soccer-superpower.htm>

While-reading task

Slashed/Cut up texts:

- A. *Read your piece of text then work collaboratively to answer the questions since no one has the whole of the text.***

What is the aim of the government regarding soccer in China?

- B. *Choose the correct answer***

Chinese government is expecting to have

- a. Good soccer players
- b. To contract international soccer players
- c. To send Chinese soccer players to other countries

- C. *Answer these questions.***

What is Xi Jinping's aim?

What has been one of the contributions done by Chinese billionaires?

Post-reading task

Summarize the article:

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 3

Name: _____

China Wants to Become a Soccer Superpower



Figure 16. Albatross2147 (2008). Chinese National Football Team 2008 [Online image]. Retrieved from https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:China_national_football_team_06-JUN-2008-ANZstad.jpg

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. Who is helping Chinese soccer to become one of the best teams?
- b. What are the main reasons why Chinese soccer is not one of the best teams?
- c. What are the expectations of Chinese soccer by 2050?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *raise*?

- a. cultivate
- b. decrease
- c. to improve

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *driving force*?

- a. couch
- b. motivator
- c. leader

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. 50 million of people play soccer in China _____
2. Women are best in soccer than men in China _____
3. Many changes are expected in the next decades in China to improve soccer _____
4. Xi wants China to play a major role in Europe _____

C. Answer the following questions

What is the main reason why the Chinese government plans to build soccer training centers?

What is the FIFA's expectation?

Who contracted a European soccer player?

Appendix D

Reading No. 4

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Read the title and predict what information you will find. Tell your partner.

China Faces Problems with Drinking Water



Figure 17. Wikimedia Commons/Anjali aisha (2016). Water pollution in China [Online image]. . Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/Conflict03-pollution-china_13151_600x450.jpg

A report released by China shows that the country is facing a serious problem with drinking water. According to the study about 80% of the country's shallow ground water is not clean enough to drink or bathe in. It can only be used for industrial purposes.

Dirty drinking water exists especially in the countryside, where the population gets water from shallow wells. This water has become more and more contaminated through farming, factories and household waste.

While air pollution has caught the attention of the country's politicians, the situation of underground water has widely been ignored. China may be facing another big environmental problem.

According to the report large cities are not affected by water pollution because they get their water from underground reservoirs that are often hundreds or thousands of feet deep. In addition, cities operate purification plants that get rid of harmful substances before drinking water gets to the people.

On the other hand the use of shallow underground water in rural areas has grown considerably in the past decade. The report states that nitrates and ammonia are the major pollutants. In some areas heavy metals were also found in the water.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/environment/china-faces-problems-with-drinking-water.htm>

While-reading task

Slashed/Cut up texts:

- A. *Read your piece of text then work collaboratively to answer the questions since no one has the whole of the text.***

What is the reason why China is facing a problem with drinking water?

- B. *Choose the correct answer***

Shallow underground water is contaminated because of:

- a. farming, factories and household waste
- b. volcanos, rain and earthquakes
- c. rain, earthquakes and household waste

C. Answer these questions.

Why large cities are not being affected by this problem?

Is it possible for humans to consume water that contains ammonia?

Post-reading task

Summarize the article:

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 4

Name: _____

China Faces Problems with Drinking Water



Figure 17. Wikimedia Commons/Anjali aisha (2016). Water pollution in China [Online image]. . Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/Conflict03-pollution-china_13151_600x450.jpg

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. What is another environmental problem that China is facing?
- b. What are the main reasons why shallow water is not good for drinking?
- c. What are the solutions to solve this problem?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *facing*?

- a. Observe
- b. tackle
- c. look

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *household waste*?

- a. Objects people have inside their houses such as furniture and electronics.
- b. Products that people use in their houses such as sprays and perfumes.
- c. Garbage and rubbish such as bottles, cans, clothing, disposables and food packaging.

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. A great percentage of shallow water is clean _____
2. Humans are the ones who contaminate water _____
3. Air pollution is another problem in China _____
4. Water that contains heavy metals is good for consume _____

C. Answer the following questions

What is the used that can be done to contaminated water?

Why large cities don't have problems with drinking water in China?

What is the function of purification plants?

Appendix E

Reading No. 5

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Look at the picture and predict what the text is going to be about.

Panama Papers-Biggest Document Leak in History



Figure 18. Brian Gratwicke. Panama City - where the Panama Papers originated [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/business-economy/panama-city.jpg>

More than 11 million secret documents of a law firm in Panama have been leaked to the German *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The documents, nicknamed the *Panama Papers*, reveal how thousands of politicians, celebrities, athletes and other wealthy people around the world use tax havens to hide their money.

2.6 terabytes of information were secretly given to journalists of the German newspaper last year. They then started investigations, working through the documents with journalists from other countries. The *Panama Papers* are the biggest leak in journalism in history, much larger than what was published by *WikiLeaks* some years ago.

There are several world leaders who are suspected of being involved in the money scandal, including Russia's Vladimir Putin and Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron, who admitted that he profited from an offshore account set up by his father. A number of Chinese politicians are also supposedly involved in the scandal.

Only a few days after the news was released Iceland's Prime Minister resigned from office after the public found out that his wife owned an offshore account.

The Panamanian offshore law firm *Mossack Fonseca* is at the center of the scandal. Representatives from the company have announced that it has never done anything illegal. It is not known who gave the documents to the German newspaper.

Many rich people around the world put their money into tax havens where there is little or no tax to pay. These are mostly countries that do not share tax information with other countries. Banks help their customers hide their money in such secret offshore accounts. According to the journalists' investigations, over \$2 billion have been secretly funneled through banks in the past 40 years.

Source: *English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners* by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/business-economy/panama-papers-biggest-document-leak-in-history.htm>

While-reading task

Information-gap activity:

A. Exchange information in order to accomplish a task. Ask each other for missing information in order to get the task completed.

A's Information:

Example: How many millions of secret documents were found?

1. 11 million		Thousands		Journalists
2.	Money		Chinese	
3. Mossak Fonseca		Little		2

B's Information:

Example: What is the nickname of the documents?

1.	Panama Papers		2,6	
2. wikileaks		leaders		Vladimir Putin
3.	Wife		Illegal	

Post-reading task

Role Play task:

Students will construct a conversation based on the reading topic they will practice their conversation in pairs then they will share with the class.

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 5

Name: _____

Panama Papers-Biggest Document Leak in History



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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How many Ecuadorian politicians are involved in this scandal?
- b. How many documents have been discovered?
- c. How many billions of dollars have been funnel?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of nickname?

- a. formal name
- b. informal name
- c. legal name

According to the passage, what is the meaning of offshore account?

- a. a bank account in another country where you pay less tax
- b. a bank account in another planet where you pay less tax
- c. a bank account in your country where you pay tax

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Millions of politicians, celebrities , athletes are involved in this scandal _____
2. 2.6 terabytes of information were secretly given to the president of Germany _____
3. This is a scandal directly related with important documents of different countries _____
4. The Panamanian offshore law firm Mossack Fonseca is out of the scandal _____

C. Answer the following questions

Who started to investigate this scandal?

Is David Cameron the Prime Minister of Britain involve in this scandal?

Why many rich people choose Panama to save their money secretly?

Appendix F

Reading No. 6

Predicting: Look at the picture and predict what the text is going to be about.

Obesity around the World Continues to Rise



Figure 19. FatM1Ke (2015). Central Obesity [Online image]. Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/53/Central_Obesity_011.jpg/623px-Central_Obesity_011.jpg

A new medical report has found out that the number of obese people around the world has increased by 600% over the past 40 years. The report says that about 12% of the world's population suffers from obesity. Within the next decade 20% of the world's population will be overweight.

The report is based **on** the body mass index (BMI), the relationship between height and weight. A normal, healthy person has a BMI of between 20 and 25. People with a BMI of over 30 are considered to be obese.

It is no surprise that most of the world's obese people live in the wealthy countries of the world. Six countries - the US, Britain, Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand account for a fifth of the world's obese people. China and the United States have the highest number of obese in the world. In contrast, the poorest countries have

the lowest number of overweight people. In southern Asia and southeastern Asia, for example, 25% of the population are underweight.

Having too many overweight people puts an enormous financial burden on our health system, through rising costs for medication, doctors and hospitals.

Medical experts point out that obesity cannot be treated with medication and exercise alone. It is also important to change your diet and consume less fatty food and sugary drinks. We also need to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and reduce the intake of processed food.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/health-medicine/obesity-around-world-continues-to-rise.htm>

While-reading task

Information-gap activity:

Exchange information in order to accomplish a task. Ask each other for missing information in order to get the task completed.

A's Information:

Example: What is the topic of the Reading?

1. obese		12%		20%
2.	30		Lowest	
3. medication		Diet		Reduce

B's Information:

Example: How much has increased that percentage of obese people?

1.	600%		suffers	
2. height and weight		Wealthy		25%
3.	Exercise		Fresh	

Post-reading task

Role Play task:

Students will construct a conversation based on the reading topic. They will practice their conversation in pairs then they will share with the class.

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 6

Name: _____

Obesity around the World Continues to Rise



Figure 19. FatM1Ke (2015). Central Obesity [Online image]. Wikimedia Commons. Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/5/53/Central_Obesity_011.jpg/623px-Central_Obesity_011.jpg

A new medical report has found out that the number of obese people around the world has increased by 600% over the past 40 years. The report says that about 12% of the world's population suffers from obesity. Within the next decade 20% of the world's population will be overweight.

The report is based **on** the body mass index (BMI), the relationship between height and weight. A normal, healthy person has a BMI of between 20 and 25. People with a BMI of over 30 are considered to be obese.

It is no surprise that most of the world's obese people live in the wealthy countries of the world. Six countries - the US, Britain, Ireland, Australia, Canada and New Zealand account for a fifth of the world's obese people. China and the United States have the highest number of obese in the world. In contrast, the poorest countries have

the lowest number of overweight people. In southern Asia and southeastern Asia, for example, 25% of the population are underweight.

Having too many overweight people puts an enormous financial burden on our health system, through rising costs for medication, doctors and hospitals.

Medical experts point out that obesity cannot be treated with medication and exercise alone. It is also important to change your diet and consume less fatty food and sugary drinks. We also need to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and reduce the intake of processed food.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/health-medicine/obesity-around-world-continues-to-rise.htm>

A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How much percent of the population will be obese in the future?
- b. How much of body mass index (BMI) is normal?
- c. How surgery can be the treatment for this problem?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *overweight*?

- a. Extra height
- b. More than usual
- c. Less than usual

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *wealthy*?

- a. Rich
- b. Delicious
- c. Large

D. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Over the past 4 decades obesity has increased _____
2. The poorest countries have the highest number of overweight people _____
3. Obesity represents a financial problem _____
4. Obesity can be treated just with medication and exercise _____

E. Answer the following questions

What percent of population is affected by this problem?

Where do the majority of obese people live?

What products do obese people should consume less?

Appendix G

Reading No. 7

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Look at the picture and predict what the text is going to be about.



Figure 20. Bernice, Russell. Young woman drinks 1.9 litres of soda [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/health-medicine/tax-on-sugary-drinks.jpg>

Mexico's Tax on Sugary Drinks

Mexico has the highest rate of obese adults in the world. Its population also consumes more sugar and soda per capita than anywhere else. About 10 million Mexicans suffer from diabetes and other sugar-related illnesses. To battle obesity, Mexico imposed a 10% tax on sugary drinks in January 2014.

Two years later, a study found out that the sales of sugary drinks has gone down by 12%, even by 17% with poorer people. The same study claims that bottled water purchases have risen by 4%.

Mexicans are extremely unhealthy. Each person drinks about 163 liters of sugary drinks every year, among the world's highest rates. In addition, over 70% of adults

are overweight. Especially children suffer from obesity. They start consuming carbonated drinks from a low age.

For the government the success of the soda tax is the first step towards creating a healthier society. It plans to introduce further measures to combat obesity, including healthier school meals, more information on food labels and a ban on junk food for children.

Critics of the tax on sugary drinks remain skeptical. They do not think that drinking less soda results in an overall decrease of calories because some people may actually eat more because of this. Others state that Mexicans have become more health conscious and have attained better eating habits.

Health experts around the world are watching Mexico closely. If the tax works in the long-term other countries will follow the country's example and try to reduce their population's sugar intake. In the United States, a similar soda tax has been put into effect in Berkeley, California.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/health-medicine/mexicos-tax-on-sugary-drinks.htm>

While-reading task

Information-gap activity:

Exchange information in order to accomplish a task. Ask each other for missing information in order to get the task completed.

A's Information:

Example: What is the highest rate in?

1. obese		10%		4%
2.	70%		Society	
3. skeptical		Long term		Similar

B's Information:

Example: How many millions of Mexican people suffer from diabetes?

1.	10 million		12%	
2. 163		Carbonated drinks		Labels
3.	decrease		reduce	

Post-reading task

Role Play task:

Students will construct a conversation based on the reading topic they will practice their conversation in pairs then they will share with the class.

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 7

Name: _____

Mexico's Tax on Sugary Drinks



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Mexicans are extremely unhealthy. Each person drinks about 163 liters of sugary drinks every year, among the world's highest rates. In addition, over 70% of adults are overweight. Especially children suffer from obesity. They start consuming carbonated drinks from a low age.

For the government the success of the soda tax is the first step towards creating a healthier society. It plans to introduce further measures to combat obesity, including healthier school meals, more information on food labels and a ban on junk food for children.

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How much percent this tax will increase in the future?
- b. How much this tax has contributed to avoid obesity?
- c. Which country has the highest rate of unhealthy adults?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *per capita*?

- a. Amount per person
- b. Amount per family
- c. Amount per pet

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *purchase*?

- a. The act of selling something
- b. The act of buying something
- c. The act of persuading

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. The majority of adults in Mexico are obese _____
2. Each person drinks about 163 cups of sugary drinks every year _____
3. The plan of the government is to create a new tax _____
4. Other countries have adopted this tax _____

C. Answer the following questions

How many Mexicans suffer from diabetes?

What was found after two years?

What are other measures that the government plan for this problem?

Appendix H

Reading No. 8

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Look at the picture and predict what the text is going to be about.



Figure 21. Best Reviews (n.d.). *Online dating apps are often accessed via smartphone* [Online image]. Retrieved from <https://dating-sites.bestreviews.net/files/online-dating-smartphone.png>

More Americans Use Online Dating Websites

According to a national survey, 15% of all adult Americans have logged on to an online dating website. In 2013, only 11% admitted that they used dating apps. The survey was based on interviews with 2000 American adults.

The highest increase has come to young people between 18 and 24 years of age. Their share has nearly tripled, while the number of online dating app users in their mid-50s to mid-60s has doubled in the past two years. Much of the growth is attributed to mobile phone apps, like *Tinder*. Older users tend to use desktop computers and laptops to access dating websites.

Adults who have tried online dating websites usually have a positive opinion about them. Most of them think it is a good way of getting to know other people. More than half say that they would get to know people whom they otherwise wouldn't.

On the other hand there are negative aspects as well. Safety is a big issue when using such apps. Almost half of those questioned, especially women, say that online dating is more dangerous than other ways of meeting people. According to another report sexual assaults and rapes related to online dating have increased.

Many users also think that getting to know people online is very time-consuming because you spend hours preparing your profile and uploading appropriate images.

The survey has also found out that those who use online dating websites are wealthier and more educated than others, partly because they may have better access to laptops and smartphones.

In any case, attitudes towards online dating apps have changed over the years. In the past you were thought to be desperate when using such websites, today it has become a widespread method of finding your ideal partner.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/living/more-americans-use-online-dating-websites.htm>

While-reading task

Information-gap activity:

Exchange information in order to accomplish a task. Ask each other for missing information in order to get the task completed.

A's Information:

Example: What is the percentage of Americans adults who have had online dates?

1. 15%		11%		18 and 24
2.	issue		Assaults	
3. time consuming		Wealthier		widespread

B's Information:

Example: What do Americans need to do in order to have an online date?

1.	Logged on		2000	
2. Tinder		Dangerous		rapes
3.	Images		Attitudes	

Post-reading task

Role Play task:

Students will construct a conversation based on the reading topic they will practice their conversation in pairs then they will share with the class.

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

SSA: _____

SSB: _____

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 8

Name: _____

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Adults who have tried online dating websites usually have a positive opinion about them. Most of them think it is a good way of getting to know other people. More than half say that they would get to know people whom they otherwise wouldn't.

On the other hand there are negative aspects as well. Safety is a big issue when using such apps. Almost half of those questioned, especially women, say that online dating

is more dangerous than other ways of meeting people. According to another report sexual assaults and rapes related to online dating have increased.

Many users also think that getting to know people online is very time-consuming because you spend hours preparing your profile and uploading appropriate images.

The survey has also found out that those who use online dating websites are wealthier and more educated than others, partly because they may have better access to laptops and smartphones.

In any case, attitudes towards online dating apps have changed over the years. In the past you were thought to be desperate when using such websites, today it has become a widespread method of finding your ideal partner.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/living/more-americans-use-online-dating-websites.htm>

A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How many people are dating online?
- b. How much online dating has increased?
- c. Some problems that have appeared with online dating

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *log on*?

- a. to connect with others by phone
- b. to contact people in person
- c. to connect a computer system by typing your name

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *assault*?

- a. a violent attack
- b. a violent dispute
- c. a violent encounter

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- a. The majority of American adults have logged on a dating website _____
- b. Much of the growth of online dating is attributed to mobile phone apps _____
- c. Is there the same possibility to know the same people, face to face as there is the possibility to know them online _____
- d. It is a fast process to know people online _____

C. Answer the following questions

In which group of people the use of online dating websites has increased?

What's adults opining about dating online?

What is one disadvantage of dating online?

Appendix I

Reading No. 9

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Answer the quiz to find out what do you know about the topic.

Do you have an account at Facebook or in other social network?

How many hours a day do you chat with friends using social networks?

Have you had a girlfriend or boyfriend online?

Do you prefer to chat online or face to face with your friends?

What is one advantage and one disadvantage of using social networks?

Social media networks are changing our way of having relationships



Figure 22. Revista Merca2.0 (n.d.). Social media Logotype background [Online image]. Retrieved from <https://files.merca20.com/uploads/2016/12/Redes-Sociales-Pinterest-Internet-Instagram-Flickr.jpg>

Communication technology is invading our life more than ever before. Mobile phones are never farther than a reach of our hands away. Emails, social networks, the internet are more present than ever before. More than 60% of all internet users also

communicate via social networks and over 85 % of all teenagers have accounts on social networks. Psychologists have started to define terms like Facebook addiction in their reports. Social media sites can be so addicting that people, especially youngsters, do not want to spend time with anything else, they live their relationships in a virtual world.

People often choose to talk to each other via mobile phone, Skype or communicate via Facebook because they may be afraid of getting to know each other, face to face. However, by doing this, they are missing out on their partner's facial expressions or the gestures that the other makes. Emotions are reduced to *Likes* or *Dislikes*, smiley faces or other emoticons.

Psychology experts have also noticed that more and more marriages are breaking up. One of the reasons may be because Facebook makes it possible to communicate with old friends from high-school or former boy or girl friends that you have not had contact with in ages.

Couples are not communicating with each other as they should in real life. They sometimes even break up over Facebook and other social networks. Frequently, they do not argue about things in the usual way, they tend to carry out quarrels in public. As a result, others comment about something that should be solved privately. They don't share with each other, they share with everyone.

It is strange to consider the fact that software developers and social network creators are, in real life, not really very social. Most of them are shy people who like to stick to their computers and do not create lasting friendships.

In the future more social networks may pop up. We may be able to not only share photos with others but also our shopping lists or illnesses. More and more sites on the web are telling people to share. The more followers and friends we have the more excited we get.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/living/social-media-networks-are-changing-relationships.htm>

While-reading task

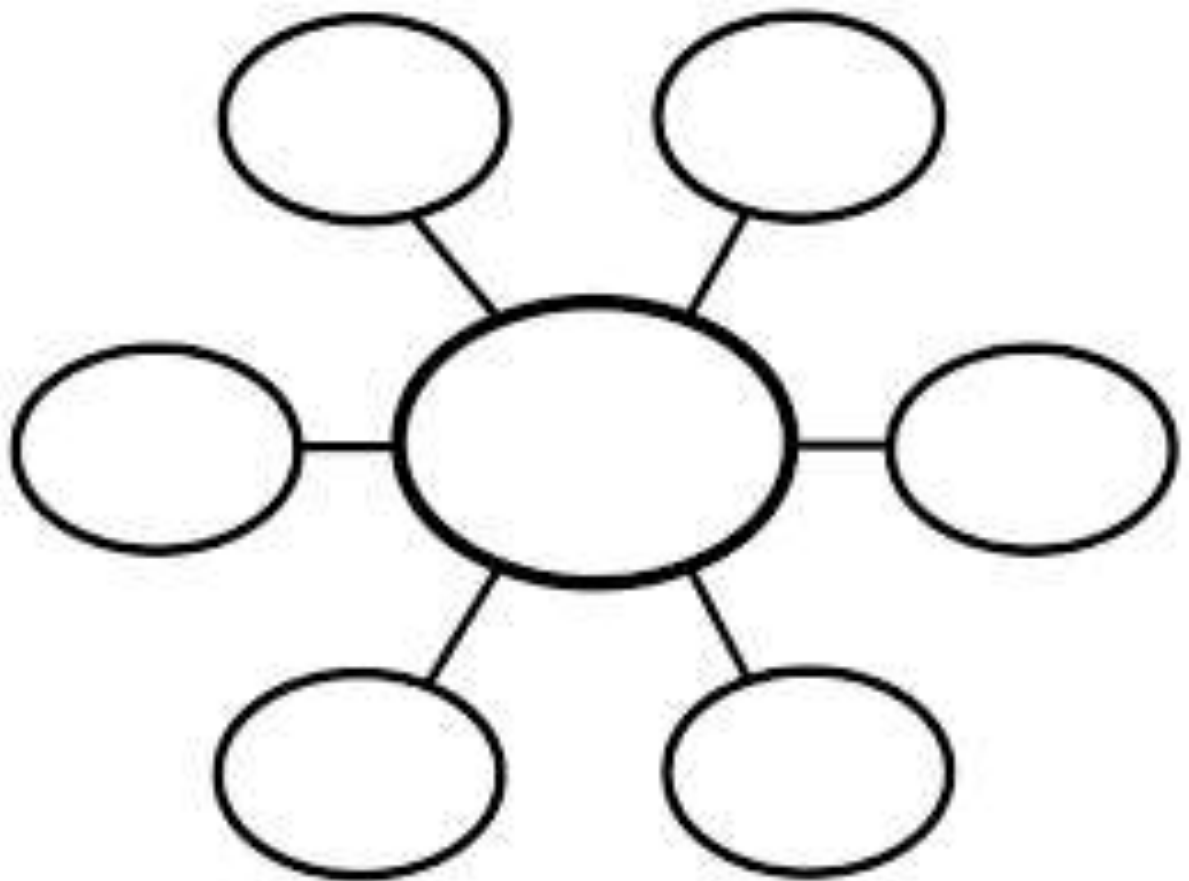
Opinion-gap activity:

Students will be given a social problem, and they will be asked to elaborate a list of possible solutions.

Imagine that you are a parent and your son or daughter is using the social networks many hours a day, make a list of suggestions you will give to your son or daughter in order to avoid addiction to social networks.

Post-reading task

Elaborate a graphic organizer including the most important information. At the center include the main topic and on the circles around the most relevant ideas.



Source:

South Carolina Center for Child Care Career Development. (2015, December 8). Graphic Organizers – A Highly Effective Learning Tool for Adults. [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://www.sccccd.net/Training/Blog/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Graphic-Organizer-Circles-Blue-FRAMEjpg.jpg>

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 9

Name: _____

Social media networks are changing our way of having relationships



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Communication technology is invading our life more than ever before. Mobile phones are never farther than a reach of our hands away. Emails, social networks, the internet are more present than ever before. More than 60% of all internet users also communicate via social networks and over 85 % of all teenagers have accounts on social networks. Psychologists have started to define terms like Facebook addiction in their reports. Social media sites can be so addicting that people, especially youngsters, do not want to spend time with anything else, they live their relationships in a virtual world.

People often choose to talk to each other via mobile phone, Skype or communicate via Facebook because they may be afraid of getting to know each other, face to face. However, by doing this, they are missing out on their partner's facial expressions or the gestures that the other makes. Emotions are reduced to *Likes* or *Dislikes*, smiley faces or other emoticons.

Psychology experts have also noticed that more and more marriages are breaking up. One of the reasons may be because Facebook makes it possible to communicate with old friends from high-school or former boy or girl friends that you have not had contact with in ages.

Couples are not communicating with each other as they should in real life. They sometimes even break up over Facebook and other social networks. Frequently, they do not argue about things in the usual way, they tend to carry out quarrels in public. As a result, others comment about something that should be solved privately. They don't share with each other, they share with everyone.

It is strange to consider the fact that software developers and social network creators are, in real life, not really very social. Most of them are shy people who like to stick to their computers and do not create lasting friendships.

In the future more social networks may pop up. We may be able to not only share photos with others but also our shopping lists or illnesses. More and more sites on the web are telling people to share. The more followers and friends we have the more excited we get.

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. Some inconveniences of using social networks
- b. The advantages of using social networks in marriages
- c. Social networks creators are not very social people

According to the passage, what is the meaning of youngster?

- a. A nice person
- b. A little monster
- c. A young person

According to the passage, what is the meaning of a former boyfriend or girlfriend?

- a. Boyfriend or girlfriend you had in the present
- b. Boyfriend or girlfriend you had in the past
- c. Boyfriend or girlfriend you will have in the future

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- 1. The majority of all internet users communicate **via** social networks _____
- 2. Youngsters have more risk to become addict to social networks _____
- 3. With the use of social networks more marriages are breaking up_____
- 4. The creators of social networks are social people _____

C. Answer the following questions

When people chat only using social networks what are they missing from a face to face conversation?

Why the use of Facebook is provoking more marriages to break up?

What will be the advances of social networks in the future?

Appendix J

Reading No. 10

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Answer the questions to find out what do you know about the topic

Do you think, sleeping is important?-

How many hours a day do you sleep?

Do you think sleeping is necessary and why?

Do you think that you rest enough at night?

Why Humans Need Less Sleep than Other Animals



Figure 23. Calamusa, Rachel. Humans need less sleep than other mammals. [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/living/sleeping-girl.jpg>

Researchers have been looking at the differences in sleep patterns between humans and other animals. Now they have found out that humans need less sleep, but sleep better than other mammals. 21 primate species were studied, including monkeys, chimpanzees and lemurs.

Human sleep is of higher quality. One of the big differences is the time we spend in REM sleep, a kind of intensive, deep sleep, in which we dream a lot. While, for example, monkeys spend only 5% of their total sleep in REM status, we humans reach 25%, the highest rate of any primate species. According to scientists, REM sleep is good for brain development.

We can get along with about seven hours of sleep a day, while other primates need much more. Lemurs, for example, can sleep for up to 17 hours while chimpanzees sleep around 11 hours a day.

Over millions of years of evolution our sleeping patterns have changed. Our ancestors, millions of years ago, could not sleep as deeply as we do. They had to spend most of their time in the wilderness and be aware of enemies at all times. The first humans probably slept in trees, where they built platforms to rest properly.

About two million years ago the Homo erectus left the trees. As they got heavier they started sleeping on the ground where they gathered in groups around fires. They could sleep more deeply because they took turns protecting themselves from enemies around them.

We could imagine that street lamps, computer screens and other forms of artificial lighting are responsible for people sleeping for shorter periods of time, but researchers have found out that this is not necessarily true.

The report shows that hunters and gatherers in Africa and South America, who don't have that much access to electricity and artificial lighting, sleep even less than people in modern societies.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/living/why-humans-need-less-sleep-than-other-animals.htm>

While-reading task

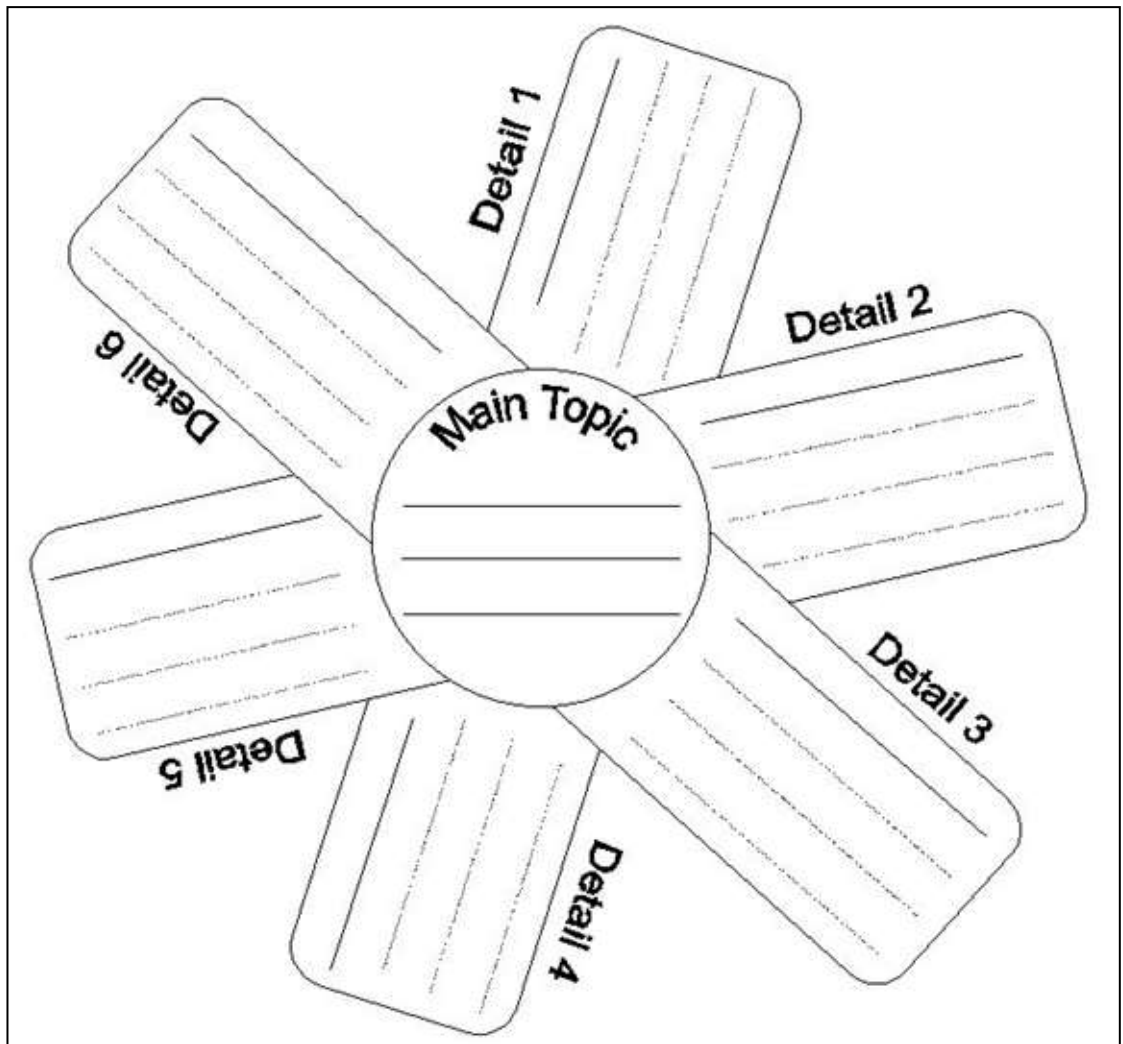
Opinion-gap activity:

Students will be given a social problem, and they will be asked to elaborate a list of possible solutions.

Imagine that you are a parent and your son or daughter is not sleeping enough, make a list of suggestions you will give to your son or daughter in order to sleep the necessary time.

Post-reading task

Elaborate a graphic organizer including the most important information. Follow the directions on the chart.



Source:
Google Image. Retrieved from
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/a7/dd/ff/a7ddff434ed82eba0d51e78b12a3d076.gif>

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. K

Name: _____

Why Humans Need Less Sleep than Other Animals



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The report shows that hunters and gatherers in Africa and South America, who don't have that much access to electricity and artificial lighting, sleep even less than people in modern societies.

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. How did people sleep in the past?
- b. What are the reasons why people sleep less than other animals?
- c. Why do people living in the city sleep more than people living in the countryside?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *status*?

- a. A position
- b. Admiration
- c. Importance given to a person

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *wilderness*?

- a. An area where is difficult to live in
- b. An area where people can live
- c. A tall building

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- 1. *People spend in REM sleep 35%* _____
- 2. *In the past people slept in trees* _____
- 3. *Natural light is responsible for people sleeping longer periods of time* _____
- 4. *People who don't have much access to electricity sleep 11 hours* _____

C. Answer the following questions

How many hours do chimpanzees sleep a day?

What's one reason why in the past humans couldn't sleep well?

How did Homo Erectus could sleep more deeply?

Appendix 11

Reading No. 11

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Answer the questions to find out what do you know about the topic.

Who is a refugee?

Do you know someone who is a refugee in your country?

Do refugees have time to sell properties before abandoning their countries?

Does Ecuador receive refugees?

Refugees



Figure 24. Manzari, Vito. Refugees seeking asylum in Lampedusa [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/world/africa/refugees-in-lampedusa.jpg>

Who is a Refugee?

International law defines a refugee as a person who has fled from their homeland and cannot come back for many reasons. They are protected by the Geneva Convention, which makes sure such people are not forced to return to the country they have fled from.

Protecting refugees around the world is done by the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees). The organization tries to help them get back to the country of their origin, if possible. It also helps them seek asylum or integrate in the country they have fled to. Many countries do not always give refugees the same rights that they give their legal citizens.

Today, it is hard to keep refugees apart from economic immigrants, those who leave their home country voluntarily to go somewhere else in search of a better life and more income.

Major refugee movements in history:

Refugees have always been a part of history. In the middle Ages people became refugees because they did not agree with the religion of their country. Roman Catholics made Jews leave Spain, French Catholics expelled Protestants from France.

During the Russian Revolution about 1.5 million people left their country because they were against Communism. Over a million Armenians fled Turkey because they were in fear of being persecuted.

By the end of World War II there were over 50 million refugees and displaced people in Europe alone. Many were Jews who fled Nazi leaders in Germany. Germans also had to leave areas where they had settled before the war.

When a Communist government took over China in 1949 two million people fled to Hong Kong and Taiwan. In 1947 almost 20 million Muslims and Hindus had to cross borders between India and the new state of Pakistan.

After World War II over 3 million East Germans escaped to West Germany. The movement was halted in 1961 when the Berlin Wall was built.

Source: *English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners* by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from http://www.english-online.at/current_affairs/refugees/refugees.htm

While-reading task

Opinion-gap activity:

Students will be given a social problem, and they will be asked to elaborate a list of possible solutions.

Imagine that you work for an organization who helps refugees, make a list of suggestions you will give them to initiate a new life.

Post-reading task

Elaborate a graphic organizer following the directions included.

3-2-1

3 Facts You Learned

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

2 Questions You Still Have

1. _____

2. _____

1 Opinion You Have

1. _____

© 2012 Delena Allen-Learn With ME in Grade Three

Source: Learn with me in Grade Three by Delena Allen(2012) Retrieved from <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/21/1d/39/211d39092cf155a8ec8f6135c99878ea.png>

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. L

Name: _____

Refugees



Figure 24. Manzari, Vito. Refugees seeking asylum in Lampedusa [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/world/africa/refugees-in-lampedusa.jpg>

Who is a Refugee?

International law defines a refugee as a person who has fled from their homeland and cannot come back for many reasons. They are protected by the Geneva Convention, which makes sure such people are not forced to return to the country they have fled from.

Protecting refugees around the world is done by the UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees). The organization tries to help them get back to the country of their origin, if possible. It also helps them seek asylum or integrate in the country they have fled to. Many countries do not always give refugees the same rights that they give their legal citizens.

Today, it is hard to keep refugees apart from economic immigrants, those who leave their home country voluntarily to go somewhere else in search of a better life and more income.

Major refugee movements in history:

Refugees have always been a part of history. In the middle Ages people became refugees because they did not agree with the religion of their country. Roman Catholics made Jews leave Spain, French Catholics expelled Protestants from France.

During the Russian Revolution about 1.5 million people left their country because they were against Communism. Over a million Armenians fled Turkey because they were in fear of being persecuted.

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The reasons because refugees exist
- b. Important situations that have as result refugees
- c. What are benefits that a refugee can have in Ecuador?

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *fled*?

- a. To stay in one country
- b. To escape from a country
- c. To go and live in a different city

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *income*?

- a. Money that you lend from the bank
- b. Illegal money a person obtain
- c. The money you obtain by working

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- 1. Refugee as a person who has **escaped** from their homeland and can come back easily. _____
- 2. The UNHCR is an organization that tries to attack refugees _____
- 3. Immigrant is the same as refugee _____
- 4. In the past many Jews abandoned Germany because of Nazi leaders _____

C. Answer the following questions

What is the function of Geneva Convention?

Why refugees have existed since the past?

Why many people left China in 1949?

Appendix 12

Reading No. 12

Pre-reading task

Predicting: Answer the questions to find out what do you know about the topic.

In which continent China is located?

How many children would you like to have in the future?

Do you think the government can tell you how many children to have?

Are there policies in your country about how many children people should have?

China Announces End of One Child Policy



Figure 25. English Online (2016). *China ends one child policy* [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/world/asia/china-ends-one-child-policy.jpg>

The Chinese government has announced the end of its one-child policy. It has been in effect since 1979 and has slowed down population growth in China for over three decades. Without the policy, China would probably have a total of

1.7 billion people instead of the 1.3 billion it has today. Now Chinese couples can officially have two children.

The decision comes at a time when Chinese authorities are worried about their country's ageing population. China's economic growth is endangered because fewer young workers are entering the workforce. At the moment, about a third of China's population is over 50. By 2050, over 35 % of the population will be over 65.

China started its family planning policy, aimed at slowing down population growth, at the end of the 1970s. Couples who had a second child had to pay fines and suffered from disadvantages at work. The single child of a family was supported by state benefits and free education up to a university degree. While this policy focused mainly on urban areas, families in rural China were allowed to have two children if the first was a girl. The policy led to hundreds of thousands of abortions over the decades. Illegally-born girls were often laid away or adopted by westerners. This has led to a gender imbalance in China.

Human rights organizations continue to criticize China's population planning. They say the new regulations simply change a one-child policy into a two-child policy. Women still do not have the right to determine how many children they want to have.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/world/asia/china-announces-end-of-one-child-policy.htm>

While-reading task

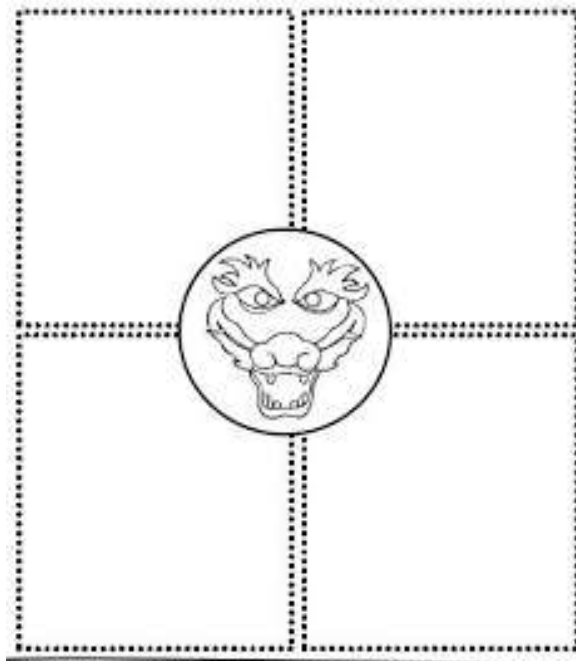
Opinion-gap activity:

Students will be given a social problem, and they will be asked to elaborate a list of possible solutions.

Imagine that you are the president of your country and it is overpopulated, which policies you would create to control this problem? Make a list.

Post-reading task

Elaborate a graphic organizer including the most important information. Follow a sequence according to the reading.



Source: Kid's Activities Blog [Web log post]. Adapted from <http://bonlacfoods.com/images/chinese-new-year-for-1st-grade/chinese-new-year-for-1st-grade-22.jpg>

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 12

Name: _____

China Announces End of One Child Policy



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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The policy of how many children people in China can have
- b. The problem that the majority of people in China are over 50 years old
- c. The new policy of how many children people in China can have

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *growth*?

- a. Increase
- b. Mature
- c. Reduce

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *workforce*?

- a. A group of people who work in a country.
- b. A person who work in an office
- c. The quality of job

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Now people in China can have officially 2 children _____
2. The majority of people are between 20 and 30 years old _____
3. During the policy, people with two children paid fines _____

4. There were no abortions during the policy _____

C. Answer the following questions

Why do the authorities decided to finish the policy?

Was the policy for all people who live in China?

What is the critic from Human's right organizations?

Appendix 13

Reading No. 13

Pre-reading task:

Skim the first paragraph for gist and then predict. (Read paragraph number one very fast and try to obtain the most important idea).

Voluntourism - A New Trend in Travel



Figure 26. Planète Urgence. International volunteer helps people in southern India [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/travel/voluntourism.jpg>

Volunteering to help people in need combined with travelling to faraway places is a new trend in the travel industry. It is called voluntourism. People travel to other countries, learn languages and other cultures and gain new experiences. On the other side, they volunteer to help others who are not as well off as they are.

Recent statistics show that in the past few years voluntourism has been one of the fastest-growing areas of tourism. More than 1.6 million people around the world are volunteers in other countries. They work in orphanages, help build schools, assist in hospitals and do farming work in developing countries. Some of them establish lasting bonds with people far away.

While voluntourism has been around for over a century, modern volunteering started with the Peace Corps, a program that the US government started in the 1960s.

There are many reasons why people want to engage in voluntourism. Students see it as a gap year after school, others simply want to take time out from a job and do something else. Then there are those who are bored and merely seek adventure. However, many voluntourists do not see volunteering as what it is. They think it is a cheap way of traveling and don't really want to get involved in hard work.

Not everyone sees voluntourism in a positive way. Critics say that if people really want to help those in need there are many opportunities in their own community to do this. On the other side, volunteers are often not skilled enough for the tasks that they do. Travel experts point out that in some cases voluntourists are exploited by the organization that sets up the trips.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/news-articles/travel/voluntourism-new-trend-in-travel.htm>

While-reading task

Based on real information students will be asked to construct new information.

Why do you think that in paragraph one the author mentioned “On the other side, they volunteer to help others who are not as well off as they are”.

Would you like to participate in voluntourism? Why?

Why do you think in the last paragraph it is mentioned that “*voluntourists are exploited by the organization that sets up the trips*”.

Post-reading task

Express opinions about the topic.

What do you think about the topic, is it interesting? Why?

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 13

Name: _____

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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The purposes of participating in voluntourism
- b. The amount of people who have been voluntourists
- c. The case of a student who was bored and decided to be a voluntourist.

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *lasting bonds*?

- a. Long relationship
- b. Long bone
- c. Large group

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *engage*?

- a. To interest someone in something
- b. To attack
- c. Get involved in

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- a. Voluntourism has as one purpose to travel to collaborate with others ____
- b. Voluntourists have existed less than 60 years _____

- c. Everybody in the world thinks positively about voluntourism _____
- d. All voluntourists are always skilled _____

C. Answer the following questions

Do voluntourists make friends when they travel?

What are some of the intentions of getting involve in voluntourism?

Only voluntourists can help other people?

Appendix 14

Reading No. 14

Pre-reading task:

Skim the first paragraph for gist and then predict. (Read paragraph number one very fast and try to obtain the most important idea).

Beyonce Knowles - An American Entertainer



Figure 27. English Online (2015). *Beyonce Knowles* [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/entertainment/beyonce-knowles/beyonce-knowles-american-entertainer.jpg>

Beyoncé Knowles is one of the really multitalented entertainment stars of the present. She is an American singer, songwriter, record producer, actress, dancer and fashion designer. Knowles became famous as the lead singer of the Rhythm and Blues group *Destiny's Child*, probably the most successful female groups of all times.

At the age of 7 she attended dance school and later on became a solo singer in her church's choir. Together with a few of her friends she started a quartet and at first performed in their back yards. In 1996 the group signed up with Columbia records and became very successful in the early 2000s.

After successful CDs with *Destiny's Child* Beyoncé released her first solo Album *Dangerously in Love* in 2003. With its singles *Crazy in Love* and *Baby Boy* it rose to the top of the charts in the UK and America. In 2004 Knowles earned five Grammy Awards.

In 2001 Knowles turned to acting. Her most famous role came in 2006 in an adaptation of a Broadway musical. *Dreamgirls* is based on the success of the Supremes, a black female group of the 1970s. Knowles was nominated for two Golden Globes including Best Actress.

Beyoncé Knowles also has worked a lot for the poor and hungry people in our world. She helped form Survivor *Foundation*, an organization that provides housing for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. She also went to Ethiopia and promised to help poor people there. On the other hand, animal rights organizations have criticized her for wearing fur.

Source: *English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners* by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/entertainment/beyonce-knowles/beyonce-knowles-american-entertainer.htm>

While-reading task

Based on real information students will be asked to construct new information.

Why Beyoncé is considered as a “multitalented star”?

One of her songs is “crazy in love”, what does this title mean to you?

Beyoncé has helped different groups of people, do you think artists should help others, why?

Post-reading task

Express opinions about the topic.

What do you think about the topic, it is interesting? Why?

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 14

Beyonce Knowles - An American Entertainer



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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The last tour of Beyoncé.
- b. The different roles she has performed.
- c. The help she has provided to poor people.

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *successful*?

- a. Have money but not much
- b. Become popular
- c. Accomplish only a few objectives

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *rights*?

- a. One side of your body
- b. Considered morally good
- c. Political party

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Beyoncé is probably the least talented actress _____
2. One of her solo album is hazardously in love _____
3. Beyoncé is only a singer _____
4. Beyoncé does not pay attention to poor people _____

C. Answer the following questions

Beyoncé has been in the music since early age?

What awards has she received?

Why has she been criticized?

Appendix 15

Reading No. 15

Pre-reading task:

Skim the first paragraph for gist and then predict. (Read paragraph number one very fast and try to obtain the most important idea).

Tourism



Figure 28. Shebs Stan. Airboating in the Everglades [Online image]. Retrieved from <http://www.english-online.at/travel/tourism/airboating-in-everglades.jpg>

Tourism is travelling for pleasure or to enjoy yourself away from the place you live. People do this for many different reasons – to have fun, visit other countries and learn about other cultures or just relax from stressful working life. Tourists go to various destinations - countries with great landmarks, places with lovely beaches or simply areas of wilderness and untouched nature.

In the last few decades tourism has grown very much, mostly because people's lifestyles have changed. They don't want to stay at home any more. They spend more money on travelling than previous generations did. Travelling has also become cheaper and more affordable. The rise of budget airlines has made it possible to afford trips to faraway countries.

Tourism is a worldwide industry. In many countries it is the most important largest source of income. Global tourism is growing at a rate of 4% a year.

The tourist industry provides jobs and brings a country foreign currencies. Many groups profit from tourism: travel agencies, store owners, and airlines, hotels, restaurants, etc.

However, mass tourism, can also lead to environmental problems. It can pollute beaches or create noise in otherwise quiet regions. Popular tourist attractions must be controlled by authorities.

Source: *English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners* by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from: <http://www.english-online.at/travel/tourism/tourism.htm>

While-reading task

Based on real information students will be asked to construct new information.

Why tourism is important for people?

How does your family organize the budget for a trip?

It is convenient to spend money traveling? Why?

Post-reading task

Express opinions about the topic:

What do you think about the topic, it is interesting? Why?

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 15

Tourism



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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The advantages of tourism
- b. The disadvantages of tourism
- c. The most popular destinations

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *pleasure*?

- a. Dissatisfaction
- b. Satisfaction
- c. Frustration

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *affordable*?

- a. Very expensive
- b. Popular
- c. Not expensive

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

- 1. People enjoy themselves when they travel for pleasure _____
- 2. Today's generation spends more money in traveling _____
- 3. Tourism is usually the least income source _____
- 4. Tourism has only positive aspects _____

C. Answer the following questions

Why do people do tourism?

Has tourism grown significantly?

Why do people travel more now than in the past?

Appendix 16

Reading No. 16

Pre-reading task:

Skim the first paragraph for gist and then predict. (Read paragraph number one very fast and try to obtain the most important idea).

The Oasis of the Seas - The Biggest Cruise Ship in the World



Figure 29. Wikimedia. The Oasis of the Seas – Baldwin 040. Retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0a/MS_Oasis_of_the_Seas_Aft.jpg

The Oasis of the Seas is the world's largest cruise ship. It can carry up to 6,200 passengers, who are served by over 2000 crew members. The vessel is 40% bigger than any other cruise ship in the world, has a weight of 225,000 tons and is five times the size of the Titanic. It has a total of 15 decks and is as high as a twenty-story building.

The ship was built in Finland and is owned by Royal Caribbean International. Its maiden voyage is scheduled for early December 2009. The ship is stationed in Fort Lauderdale Florida, from where it will go on week-long cruises of the Caribbean Sea.

The Oasis of the Seas has virtually everything a tourist can dream of. Biggest attraction is a giant open-air theatre for 750 passengers that is a swimming pool by day and an entertainment arena at night. Passengers can wander through a park full of real trees and exotic plants, eat and drink in 24 restaurants or travel up and down between decks in a movable bar. There is something for everyone: a small golf course, a basketball court, an ice rink and two rock-climbing walls for those looking for athletic

activities. Mothers can leave small children in nurseries while they go shopping in the ship's boutiques.

The best and latest technology makes the Oasis of the Seas one of the most modern ships on the seas. But, the captain says, it's very easy to manoeuvre because everything is automated and runs with computers.

The owners hope that the Oasis of the Seas will earn them a lot of money. The vessel cost over 1.5 billion dollars to build and with a starting price of about 1,700 Euros for a nine day cruise it is not exactly cheap. But spending a holiday on the world's biggest ship should be worth something.

Source: English Online. Articles in Easy Understandable English for Learners by Rosmanitz, Klaus (2017). Retrieved from: <http://www.english-online.at/travel/cruise-ships/oasis-of-the-seas.htm>

While-reading task

Based on real information students will be asked to construct new information.

Have you traveled by ship?

Do you prefer to travel by ship or by plane? Why?

What are the advantages to go on a cruise?

Post-reading task

Express opinions about the topic.

What do you think about the topic, it is interesting? Why?

Reading Comprehension Quiz No. 16

The Oasis of the Seas - The Biggest Cruise Ship in the World



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A. Choose the correct answer for the following questions

Which topic is NOT discussed in the passage?

- a. The capacity of the ship
- b. The cost of the trip
- c. The travel speed

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *scheduled*?

- a. Date
- b. Number
- c. Place

According to the passage, what is the meaning of *story*?

- a. Text
- b. Comic
- c. Floor

B. Read the following sentences. Check true or false

1. Is the "Oasis of the seas" the biggest cruise ship in the world _____
2. People can practice sports on the ship _____
3. Babies are alone while mothers go shopping _____
4. The owners expect to recover the money invested _____

C. Answer the following questions

Where does the ship go?

What are some of its attractions?

Why is it easy to maneuver?

Appendix 17

Reading Survey

Answer the following questions about your reading comprehension ability. This survey is anonymous, that means no one will know who you are. The reason for this is to encourage you to be honest. Please answer all questions truthfully. There are no right or wrong answers. Answering truthfully will help your teacher to help you become a better reader.

1. When you read a story or other information, you understand it.

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

2. When you read you use illustrations or titles to help you figure out what a story is about.

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

3. When you don't understand a word, you use the information you have already read to guess its meaning.

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

4. When you find a story or written information difficult to understand, do you give up?

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

5. When you read you use a dictionary when you can't understand words

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

6. When you read, do you try to see the pictures in your head?

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

7. When you read, do you guess what will happen before you read?

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely Never

8. Do you ask yourself questions ...

	Always	Sometimes	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
before you read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
during the reading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
after the reading?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. When you read do you...

	Always	Sometimes	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) relate the story to your own life?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) make a link to something similar you have read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

10. Have you used the following strategies?

	Always	Sometimes	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
a) Predictions based on the title	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Predictions based on illustration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Working collaboratively to answer questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Summarizing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Pre-reading Quiz	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Information gap activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Graphic organizers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Skimming	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Opinion gap activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Express opinions about the topic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Reasoning gap activity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Role play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Thanks for your collaboration!

Source: Survey Monkey, modified by Bertha Salvador

Appendix 18

Post-reading Survey

Answer the following questions honestly in order to get the most reliable results about the implementation of task-based reading strategies.

1. How useful was the pre-reading strategy, *predicting by reading the title*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

2. How useful was the pre-reading strategy, *predicting by looking at the picture*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

3. How useful was the pre-reading strategy, *predicting by answering the pre-quiz*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

4. How useful was the pre-reading strategy, *skimming* (Read the first paragraph fast and try to obtain the most important idea)?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful

- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

5. How useful was the while-reading strategy, *slashed / cut up texts* (collaborative reading)?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

6. How useful was the while-reading strategy, *Information-gap activity?* (Exchange information in order to accomplish a task. Ask each other for missing information in order to get the task completed).

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

7. How useful was the while-reading strategy, *Opinion-gap activity?* (Students will be given a social problem, and they will be asked to elaborate a list of possible solutions)

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

8. How useful was the while-reading strategy, *Reasoning-gap activity?* (Based on real information students will be asked to construct new information).

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

9. How useful was the post-reading strategy, *role play task?*

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful

- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

10. How useful was the post-reading strategy, *summarizing*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

11. How useful was the post-reading strategy, *graphic organizers*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

12. How useful was the post-reading strategy, *express opinions about the topic*?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

13. The pre-reading, while –reading and post-reading strategies you have worked with, during the last four months have contributed to facilitate comprehension.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

14. Scaffolding (support) from the teacher has led you to a better understanding of the reading.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

Strongly disagree

15. The readings selected were interesting for you.

Strongly agree

Agree

Neutral

Disagree

Strongly disagree

Thanks for your collaboration!

Source: Bertha Salvador

Appendix 19

Observational Field notes

<i>Observational Field notes – Application of pre-reading, while- reading and post-reading strategies</i>	
Setting:	
Observer:	
Role of the Observer:	
Time:	
Length of Observation:	
Description (events – activities)	Reflective Notes (Personal thoughts)
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Source: Creswell, J. W. (2002), *John Educational Research Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Pearson Education.



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Yo, **Salvador Pacheco, Bertha Paola**, con C.C: # **0104046040** autora del trabajo de titulación: **Design, Implementation and Testing of a Set of Task-based Strategies to Improve EFL Reading Comprehension Skills Targeted to A2.2 Level Students Attending a Public Urban High School**, previo a la obtención del título de **Magister en Enseñanza de Inglés como Idioma Extranjero** en la Universidad Católica de Santiago de Guayaquil.

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TEMA Y SUBTEMA:	Design, Implementation and Testing of a Set of Task-based Strategies to Improve EFL Reading Comprehension Skills Targeted to A2.2 Level Students Attending a Public Urban High School		
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ÁREAS TEMÁTICAS:	EFL methodology, Teaching Reading		
PALABRAS CLAVES/ KEYWORDS:	Reading comprehension, reading strategies, scaffolding, and autonomy		
RESUMEN/ABSTRACT:	<p>study presents the testing of a set of task-based strategies in teaching reading in a four-month period. Each month three strategies were taught and used by the students in the study: one at the pre-reading stage, one at the while-reading stage, and one at the post-reading stage. It was applied to a group of 21 students attending first year of <i>bachillerato</i> in a public school in Cuenca, Ecuador. Their ages were between 15 and 17 and their level of English was A2.2. The main purpose of this study was to determine if after working with pre-, while- and post-reading task-based strategies, the students could improve their reading comprehension skills. Moreover, scaffolding accompanied the selected strategies to verify if it could be another important factor that could contribute to reading comprehension ability. The methodology included the qualitative method through observational field notes; the researcher collected information in order to determine whether scaffolding benefited students who were developing comprehension skills and to check if it was possible to remove it progressively in order for these students to gain autonomy. The methodology also included the quantitative method: two surveys were applied; one before the testing period and one after it to know to what extent students knew about task-based reading strategies and to learn their perceptions in relation to the strategies they worked with. Furthermore, quizzes were given to students to assess reading comprehension. The results based on the qualitative data revealed scaffolding is an important component to develop reading comprehension. The analysis of the quantitative data showed that all the students, at different levels, improved their reading comprehension ability after the four-month term. Consequently, reading is an activity that needs strategies to be mastered, and the support of the teacher is important for students to achieve improvement and to gain autonomy.</p>		
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