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RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBJECT:

**ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE
READING IN AN EFL CLASSROOM WITH CHILDREN OF
SEVENTH YEAR OF BASIC EDUCATION AT “UNIDAD
EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE”,
DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011.**

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CERTIFICATE

We, Dra. María Eugenia Arcos Msc., Director and Msc. Olga Cárdenas, Co-Director, duly certify that the Thesis under the title: **“ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE READING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM WITH CHILDREN IN THE SEVENTH YEAR OF BASIC EDUCATION AT “UNIDAD EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE”, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011”** was totally completed by Susana Andrade, who has finished her studies in Applied Linguistics Career at the distance modality in the Army Polytechnic School, after being studied and verified in all its chapters; the dissertation is authorized in front of the correspondent university authorities.

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DEDICATORY

This project is dedicated to God and my mother who have never failed to give financial and moral support to me. I dedicate it to my brothers too, for giving me all I needed during the time I developed my studies. They taught me that even the hardest task can be accomplished if it is done one step at a time, with bravery and courage that enable us to get the goals we want.

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SUMMARY

This work has the objective to design strategies that might improve the reading comprehension for children from seventh year of basic education of the “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle”, located in Sangolquí Parish, Quito city. The ability to read is essential for successful functioning in society and therefore is one of the most important ‘survival’ skills to teach a foreign language to our children. Basing on the fact that, the goal of reading is to identify the meaning or message of the text at hand. It can be said that it involves the execution and integration of many processes. These processes roughly fall into two main categories, those involved in translating the written code into meaningful language units and those involved in combining these units into a meaningful and coherent mental representation. In the context of teaching young children reading skills, the bulk of attention of researchers and educators has been on the first set of processes, those involved in decoding. The second set of processes, those involved in comprehension, has received less attention.

This work has been developed upon the modality of a feasible project, which was developed in two facets. The first facet is the diagnostic to know the actual situation and the second facet: the pedagogic proposal is related to the strategies applied and which are strategies aimed at increasing comprehensive reading. The objective population under consideration is formed exactly for 56 children aged between 9 to 11 years old who are in the two groups of the school previously mentioned. The data was collected using a written question method and direct observation. The analysis of the results showed a low level of comprehensive reading for the children. These data indicate the greater need for strategies to be used in the teaching-learning process. From this diagnostic, some strategies were designed with the purpose to offer alternatives to improve the reading comprehension of these children.

INTRODUCTION

Learning to read in a foreign language is with no doubt a difficult task. It implies interaction between the reader and the text, a degree of knowledge of the world and determined topics, some knowledge of the target language and also the interpretation of the writer's message which can vary from reader to reader. Therefore, EFL reading can be understood as a process of receiving and interpreting information encoded in language form by relating to the context in which the text arises.

Through interpretation, readers can discover new aspects of the text or even change their initial understanding of it. The reading task also requires that the readers choose, select and apply some of what they know to each new text. When students make connections to the text they are reading, their comprehension increases because they are using their "previous knowledge" to make sense of the text. When we help students make those connections before, during, and after they read, we are teaching them a critical comprehension strategy that the best readers use almost unconsciously. It seems that "good" readers carry out the process very effectively while poorer readers find many difficulties. Most of the time, students of a foreign language face different obstacles, such as doubt, ambiguity, and contradiction while reading, which prevent them to understand and make sense of the words in a text.

Thus, the students of the seventh year of basic education under analysis lacked the skill to cope with reading comprehension. When they found unknown words while reading they got stuck and this fact prevented them to read fluently and understand the ideas in a text. They were young beginner learners of English (9-11 years old) who at the same time were in a concrete stage of cognitive development

Some sessions of reading learning strategies were planned and developed in order to provide the students with effective tools to succeed in the skill. A diagnostic text and a questionnaire were administered to the sample group, in order to examine the problem in depth, and consequently, decide what strategies would help to improve their initial situation. All the research instrument, resources and tools were designed according to the stage of development of the students.

In the present Action research project we will see how the students improved their reading comprehension and overcame some of the problems they had through the learning of some reading strategies which were chosen according to their level, age and needs, among other factors. Then, these group of students to whom I apply the treatment of this research will be benefited now and they at the same will use this knowledge the next year when they go to high school. The results were interesting and they suggested a significant breakthrough in the School. This work is presented according to the following chapters:

Chapter I: The problem which concerns the approach to study, objectives and justification

Chapter II. The theoretical frame: It refers to various investigations and theories about active teaching and learning strategies in L2. In addition, it discusses the hypothesis systems that will test the outcomes of this research.

Chapter III. Methodological Design: It describes the type of research, population, sample, and instruments used for data collection, processing and analysis.

Chapter IV. Testing the Hypothesis: Graphical exposition of results, Analysis of results,

Chapter V. Conclusions and recommendations

RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Research Theme

ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE READING IN AN EFL CLASSROOM WITH CHILDREN OF SEVENTH YEAR OF BASIC EDUCATION AT "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE", DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2010-2011.

1.2. Identification of the Problem.

During my research students attending the seventh year of Basic education La Llama del Valle, I have noticed that the students cannot read the English language in the best way. In my opinion, I think it happens, because they were not applied appropriate reading strategies, which could help them to overcome the lack of enjoying reading and for this reason they have poor comprehension and feel bored after reading for a while.

The reading is one of the most important skills in learning a new language, and in order to teach it, we as teachers, have to use as many methodologies, strategies and motivation as we can to solve this big problem.

On other hand, an essential element of any language is the ability to read and fully comprehend the information being read. But unbeknownst to some, learning to read is a complex process with specific steps to follow. Regarding a second language reading has an extra challenge of dealing with foreign sounds and words. We, as teachers must facilitate this process to our young learners and lead them down the path of literacy in a foreign language. There must be a strategy that will aid our students in understanding those new sounds, words, and ideas that we present to our students in class. Without a handy strategy, our students may find it nearly impossible; to recognize the letters and the phonemes those words produce. They will not be able to decode the written words on the page before them, either.

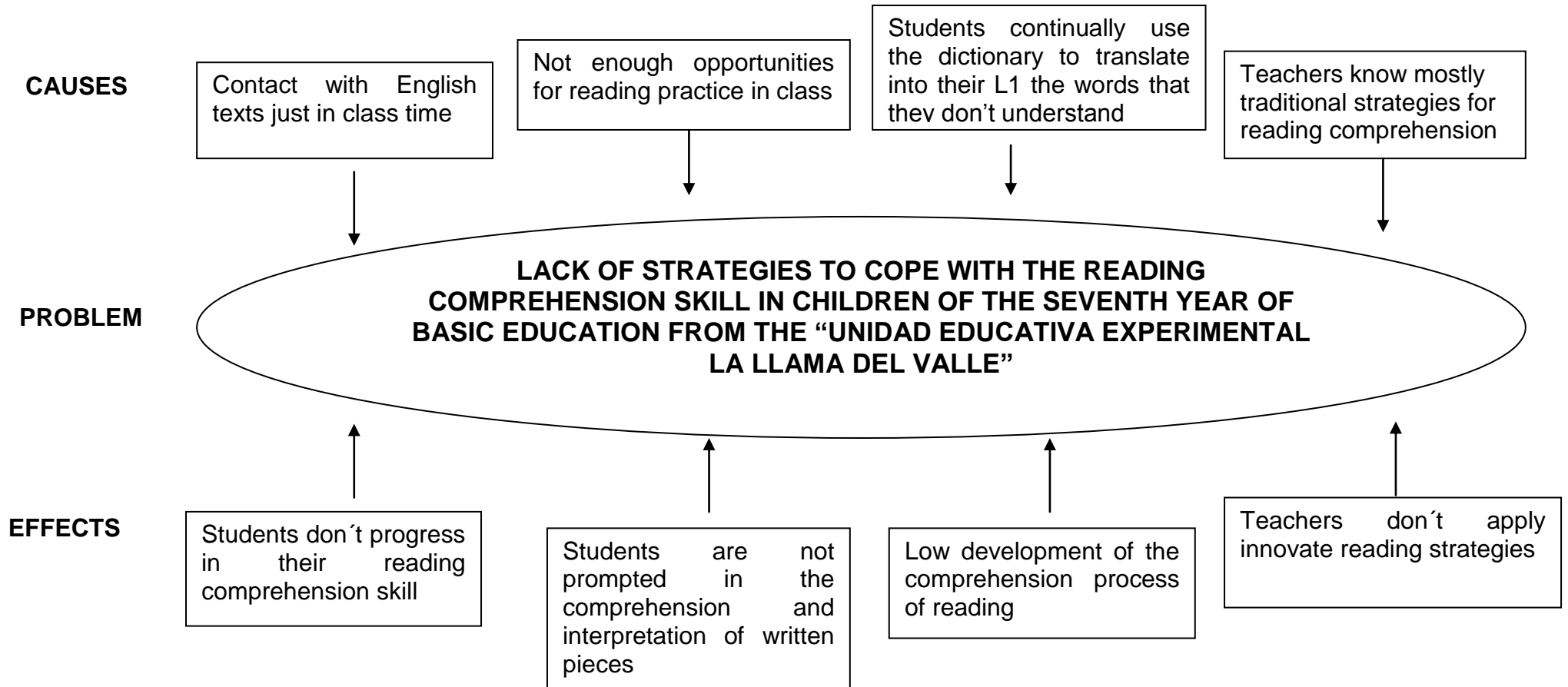
1.2.1 Main problem

How does the application of reading strategies in the classroom affect reading comprehension in the students of seventh year of Basic at “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle”?

1.2.2 Secondary problems

- How the limited contact with adequate English texts affect students of seventh year of Basic at “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle” in their reading comprehension?
- How does the lack of opportunities for reading practice obstruct comprehension in students of seventh year of Basic at “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle”?
- How to avoid students have the habit of translating into their L1 the words that they don't understand?
- How to train the teachers on how to apply comprehensive Reading strategies on their students?

ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE PROBLEM



1.3. OBJECTIVES

1.3.1. General

To determine the incidence of applying active teaching strategies in order to improve the reading comprehension skill of the seventh year of Basic Education students of “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle”

1.3.2. Specific

- To characterize some teaching strategies on reading production that facilitate to get the best benefit from English classes and improve reading comprehension in the students of seventh years of Basic Education at “Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle”
- To provide appropriate activities in order to attain as many opportunities as possible for reading practice
- To apply vocabulary games (ex: simple vocabulary game of antonyms and synonyms) to achieve a comprehensive, reflective and fluid reading, in order avoid the translation and elevate their self-confidence to read English language texts.
- To increase the level of reading accuracy of these students inside each class.

1.4. JUSTIFICATION

The reading comprehension problem in the English Language is an issue that occurs in many educational institutions. It is very common among children, but it could become more serious if we don't find the way to solve it. The deflection and school years loss may be the results of lack of reading comprehension.

As we know our today's world needs the best preparation of our students, in order to prepare them to face the biggest problems that our society has. The reading skill is one of the most important language skills, because students most all the time, know to write, listen and speak, but when they read, they do it but with many mistakes, so I need to apply the teaching for reading strategies to know if after it they will have overcome their problems in reading or not.

Most of the time, teachers think they are well prepared, teaching with the same methodology and strategies that have been used for a long period of time, and specially the oldest teachers believe that what they are teaching is the best, and they do not want to change, and I am sure they need more training of applying new reading strategies.

The present research was undertaken as an alternative solution to the problem that exists in a high percentage in the classroom of seventh years of Basic Education from Unidad Educativa Experimental "La LLama del Valle" during this current school year. It suggests creating new strategies (Using picture clues, Predicting, Using prior knowledge and Guessing words form context) for teaching reading according to the students' ages between ten and eleven years old. Then, this research is justified because, it looks to promote the students motivation to read and their taste like for reading not only inside the classroom but also outside it, and the reading should be pleasant and productive for students.

1.5. VARIABLES MATRIX

VARIABLES	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS	SUBDIMENSIONS
<p>Independent Variables</p> <p>Active strategies</p>	<p>Active strategies are a research program designed to develop the compressive reading skill and test pedagogy of understanding it.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using picture clues • Predicting • Using prior knowledge • Guessing words form context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It helps a reader figure out the meaning of unfamiliar words without having to look them up in a dictionary. • It tries to figure out what will happen next and how the selection might end. Then read on to see how accurate your guesses are. • It helps students to make connections from their experience to the text they are currently reading, • It provides a means by which students can rapidly increase their existing vocabulary base and helping them cope with increasingly difficult texts

VARIABLES	DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS	SUBDIMENSIONS
<p>Dependent Variables</p> <p>Reading Comprehension process</p>	<p>Comprehensive reading is the approximation to a text that seeks to obtain a more analytical view of text content. It concerns about the interpretation and critical understanding of the text, and then there the reader is not passive, but active in the process of reading.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating mental images (Visualization) • Clarifying portions of the texts that children do not understand • Generating questions • Retelling or summarizing all or part of the text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the five senses to build images in the mind that enhance the experience of reading • It gives the students the opportunity to have any unfamiliar words, locations or pronunciations 'made clear'. • Wondering and inquiring about the book before, during, and after reading • Making use of headings, sub-headings, and main ideas in each paragraph to summarize the reading text

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAME

2.1.1. Theoretical and Conceptual Focus

Reading theories and models have undergone various stages of development throughout time. From 1940 to 1960 under the dominance of audiolingualism, reading was neglected. During the 1960's reading was seen as a passive decoding process. Terms such as bottom-up, letter-and-word-recognition theory, text-based, text-driven or data-driven have been used to describe models and theories that hold this view of reading.

In general, these viewpoints claim that reading is linear in that readers recognize letters , transfer them to sounds and then move on to decode the next letter. Later studies took a step further suggesting that after readers master the letter and word recognition skill, they attend to letters and words automatically. Thus, meaning was built from the smaller to the larger units. Variables including grammar, vocabulary and syntax are the main focus of bottom-up theories and models.

In 1967 Goodman provided a definition of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game where the reader takes an active role in the activities of "prediction, sampling, confirmation and correction". This means that with linguistic cues, readers can confirm or disconfirm their predictions and expectations that are based on their background knowledge and experiences. In this view, some concepts associated to it are top-down, comprehension theory, knowledge-based, reader-based, reader-driven, concept-driven, or hypothesis-driven (Lally, 1998¹; Frehan, 1999). Variables including reader's background knowledge of the text and the world , cognitive development, use of strategy, and purpose of reading are the main emphasis of top-down theories and models.

¹ Lally, C. (1998) The application of first language reading models to second language study: A recent historical perspective. *Reading Horizon* ,38 (4), 267- 278.

Later in the 1970's Rumelhart² proposed a view of reading as an interactive, cognitive psycholinguistic process where both, bottom-up and top-down processes are simultaneously involved. This was called "the interactive approach" and it also considers an interaction between the reader and the text. Specifically, bottom-up processing is evoked by the incoming data from the text, while top-down processing occurs as the reader makes predictions in the light of his / her background knowledge. (Carrell & Eisterhold, 1983³).

In this model, good readers are both, good decoders and good interpreters of text, their decoding skills become more automatic but no less important as their reading skill develops. According to Rumelhart's Interactive Model:

1. Linear models which pass information only in one direction and which don't permit the information contained in a higher stage to influence the processing of a lower stage contain a serious deficiency. For this reason it is necessary to use an interactive model which permits the information contained in a higher stage of processing to influence the analysis that occurs at a lower stage.
2. When there is an error in word recognition, the word substitution will maintain the same part of speech as the word for which it was substituted, which will make it difficult for the reader to understand. (Orthographic knowledge)
3. Semantic knowledge influences word perception.
4. Perception of syntax for a given word depends upon the context in which the word is embedded. (Syntactic knowledge)

² Rumelhart, D .W. (1970). Schemata. The building blocks of cognition. In R.J. Spiro, B .C. Bruce, & W.F Brewer (Eds.), Theoretical issues in reading comprehension. (pp 33-57). Hillsdale, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

³ Carrel, P.L., & Eisterhold, J.C (1983). Schema Theory and ESL reading pedagogy. TESOL Quarterly, 17 (4), 553- 573

5. The interpretation of what we read depends on the context in which a text segment is embedded. (lexical knowledge).

All the sources of knowledge mentioned above, provide input simultaneously. These sources need to communicate and interact with each other, and the higher-order stages should be able to influence the processing of lower-order stages.

Although focusing mainly on cognition and failing to take some other crucial components such as social, affective or cultural factors into account, this viewpoint has gained its popularity since the emergency of schema theory in the 1980's. (Eskey, 1997⁴)

As we could see in the brief summary above, notions of reading comprehension have changed dramatically over the decades. We have moved from a behavioural perspective, which dominated the field from the turn of the century to the sixties and seventies, to a holistic or interactive approach, which began in the late seventies, and continues to shape our thinking about reading comprehension today.

Current practitioners of the interactive model view reading as a cognitive, developmental, and socially constructed task that goes beyond understanding the words on a page. In the past, reading was considered a relatively static activity. Meaning was imbedded in the text, and the reader's job was to understand what was being transmitted via the words on the page. Current research views reading as a more dynamic process in which the reader "constructs" meaning based on information he/she gathers from the text.

⁴ Eskey, D.E (1997). Models of reading and the ESOL student: Implications and limitations. Focus On Basics ,1 (B)

No matter the reading approach a teacher may choose, Hedge (2003)⁵ argues that any reading component of a language course may include a set of learning goals for:

- The ability to read a variety of texts in English.
- Building knowledge of language that facilitates the reading ability
- Building schematic knowledge.
- The ability to adapt the reading style according to the reading purpose.
- Developing awareness of the structures of written texts in English.
- Taking a critical position to the contents of the text

2.1.2 The Schema Theory

The research on the field of reading has extensively remarked the importance of learner's prior knowledge as being essential for learning to occur. According to schema theory, learning involves linking new knowledge with relevant prior knowledge and then the prior knowledge structure is activated. A schema then is an "abstract knowledge structure derived from repeated experiences with objects and events" (Garner, 1987:3⁶). This structure must be activated in order for learners to comprehend a text. Schemata may be thought of as "interacting knowledge structures" (Rumelhart & Ortony, 1977:100⁷) stored in hierarchies in long term memory. Schemata have also been called "the building blocks of cognition" (Rumelhart 1980). This stored information includes scenes, events, activities etc.

⁵ Hedge, Tricia. (2003). Teaching & learning in the language classroom. UK: OUP.

⁶ Garner, R. (1987). Metacognition and reading comprehension. Norwood, N.J: Ablex Publishing Co.

⁷ Rumelhart, D.W., & Ortony, A. (1977). The representation of knowledge in memory. In R.C Anderson, R.J. Spiro, & W.E. Montague (Eds.) Schooling and the acquisition of knowledge (pp 99-136). Hillsdale, N.J Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Schema Theory is a theory about knowledge, about how knowledge is represented, and about how that representation facilitates the use of knowledge in various ways. According to schema theorists, all knowledge is packaged into units called schemata, and embedded into these units of knowledge is information on how this knowledge is to be used. Each separate schema is a device for representing knowledge of a concept, along with specifications for relating it to an appropriate network of connections that seem to hold all components of that particular concept.

Research and practice in TESOL has been greatly influenced by Stephen Krashen's hypotheses on language acquisition, and particularly the effect of the "schema theory" on studies dealing with reading comprehension. Krashen's⁸ theory of the Natural Approach based on building competence through exposure to comprehensible input indicates the value of reading saying that it makes a useful contribution to developing language acquisition, benefiting the learner's competence and confidence. He states that ... "reading may contribute significantly to competence in a second language. There is good reason in fact, to hypothesise that reading makes a contribution to overall competence, to all four skills." (Krashen & Terrel, 1983:131⁹)

Today, a growing body of empirical research attests the role of schemata in ESL/EFL reading comprehension. Although most of the research has been made on reading comprehension of the first language, inside it has been adapted to suit SL reading comprehension studies throughout the time. Most important of all, specific attention is given to interactive approaches to reading, which argue that reading comprehension is a combination of identification and interpretation skills.

⁸ Krashen, S (1982) "Principles and Practice in Second language Acquisition". English Language Teaching series. London: Prentice Hall International (UK)

⁹ Krashen, S.D., & Terrel, T .D. (1983) .The Natural Approach: Language Acquisition in the Classroom. Oxford and San Francisco: Pergamon, Almany.

There are various influential ways of defining schema, for example Rumelhart (1980) put forward the concept of schema theory basically as a theory of how knowledge is mentally represented in the mind and used. He wrote that “all knowledge is packaged into units. These units are the schemata”. Three years later, Widdowson¹⁰ (1983) defined schema as “cognitive constructs which allow for the organization of information in a long-term memory”.

Modern schema theorists believe that schema, a data structure of general ideas stored in memory, consists of variables and slots. According to such a principle, meaning exists neither in oral nor in written language itself, but in the reader’s mind, depending on the activation of his or her brain schemata whose controlling structure or basic moving pattern is navigated through bottom-up data-driven-processing and top-down concept-driven-processing.

According to the schema theory in reading, the operations of bottom-up and top-down processing are simultaneous (Rumelhart, 1977). When input information, or particular cases, verifies the relevant concepts or fills the slots in a schema structure, or when input information is consistent with the reader’s schema knowledge which he or she uses to make predictions, ‘top-down’ processing facilitates the assimilation of new information into the information already stored and if it is not, the operation of ‘bottomup’ processing helps the reader to make appropriate responses. In addition, ‘top-down’ processing with known ideas help the reader to clarify misunderstandings and to select reasonable explanations from the input.

2.1.2.1 Types of Schemata

Generally, there are three major types of schemata, namely, linguistic schemata, formal schemata and content schemata, which are closely related to reading comprehension.

¹⁰ Widdowson, H.G. 1983. Learning purpose and language use. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

2.1.2.1.1 Linguistic Schemata

Linguistic Schemata refer to reader's existing language proficiency in terms of vocabulary, grammar and idioms. They are the foundation of other schemata. The linguistic knowledge plays an essential part in text comprehension. Without linguistic schemata, it is impossible for the reader to interpret and comprehend a text.

Therefore, the more linguistic schemata a reader has in his mind, the faster the reader acquires information and the better the reader can understand the message in a text.

2.1.2.1.2. Formal Schemata

Formal Schemata are the organizational forms and rhetorical structures of written texts. They include knowledge of different text types and genres, and also include the knowledge that different types of texts use, text organization, language structures, vocabulary, grammar and level of formality.

Formal schemata are described as abstract, encoded, internalized, coherent patterns of meta-linguistic discourse and textual organization that guide expectation in our attempts to understand a meaning piece of language. Readers use their schematic representations of the text such as stories, poems, essays, fantasy and/or science fiction, etc., to help comprehend the information in the text. Studies show that the knowledge of the type and genre of the text can facilitate reading comprehension for readers because it offers detailed evidence of the content in the text.

2.1.2.1.3 Content Schemata

Content Schemata refer to the background knowledge of the content area of a text, or its topic. They include topic familiarity, cultural knowledge and previous

experience in a determined field. Content schemata deal with the knowledge relative to the content domain of the text, which is crucial to understanding it.

Content schemata can make up for the lack of language schemata, to some extent, and thus help learners understand texts by predicting, choosing information and removing ambiguities. They contain an understanding of the topic of the text and the cultural-specific constituents required to interpret it. Content schemata can additionally be divided into two different types: background knowledge and subject matter knowledge. The earlier refers to the knowledge that may or may not be relevant to the content of a particular text, and the final is straightforwardly related to the text content and topic.

Many studies show that readers' content schemata influence their reading comprehension more greatly than formal schemata. On the whole, the familiarity of the topic has a direct influence on readers' comprehension. The more the reader knows about the topic, the more easily and quickly he gets the information of the text.

2.1.3 Reading Comprehension and Schema Theory

As we have seen so far, it is clear that schemata play an important role in reading comprehension. Proper schemata need to be activated to search for information in memory and to rebuild representation of memory.

Now it is convenient to analyse the relationship between schema and reading comprehension. As it was mentioned at the beginning, there are three models of reading comprehension processing: bottom-up, top-down and the interactive one.

2.1.3.1 The Bottom-up Approach

The Bottom-up Approach of reading process holds the view that reading is a process of building symbols into words, words into sentences and sentences

into the overall meaning, which reflects traditional attitudes toward reading. The argument is that without a literal or fundamental understanding of the language the top-down processing will not occur.

Bottom-up processes are those that take in stimuli from the outside world, letters and words for reading, and deal with that information with little resource to higher-level knowledge. In this model, readers begin with the lowest level, from which the symbols are identified. Strings of symbols are then analysed into morphological clusters, from which words are recognized and then strings of words are analysed into phrases and sentences. The meaning of the text is expected to come naturally as the code is broken based on the reader's prior knowledge of linguistic units like vocabulary, grammar, syntax.

From the point of view of bottom-up model, accuracy in understanding linguistic units is very significant and the lower-level processing skills in reading are important. This model weakens the significance of reading comprehension because the focus is on linguistic knowledge but little attention is paid to schema, i.e. related cultural background, the whole text, etc. Theories that stress bottom-up processing focus on how readers extract information from the printed page, claiming that readers deal with letters and words in a relatively complete and systematic fashion. Bottom-up processes take in stimuli from the outside world, in this case, the text itself.

Some example of reading activities used in this approach are:

- Finding or underlining examples of tenses or grammar structures.
- Scanning a text for specific information.
- Making a timeline of the events in the text
- Finding synonyms or definitions of words in bold.

2.1.3.2 The Top-down Approach

The top-down model emphasizes the use of readers' real world knowledge in memory because it relies on schema theory. This approach focuses "meaningful learning".

The most influential and comprehensive top-down model is put forward by Kenneth S. Goodman (1967¹¹), "The goal of reading is constructing meaning in response to text; it requires interactive use of graphophonic¹, syntactic, and semantic cues to construct meaning."

With top-down processes, the uptake of information is guided by the individual's previous knowledge and expectations. Thus, the reader does not read every word, but see through the text in order to be able to guess the meaning of the words or phrases.

During the reading process, readers take large units of meaning of the text at a time and match what they already know with the meaning they derive from the text. Topdown processing occurs as the system makes general predictions based on higher level and general schemata. It searches the input for information to fit into these partially satisfied, higher order schemata.

Theories that stress top-down processing hold that readers form hypotheses about which words they will encounter and take in only just enough visual information to test their hypotheses.

Some examples of reading activities that are based on this approach are:

- Predicting the text using titles, pictures
- Writing a journal entry about a time the learner had a similar experience

¹¹ Goodman, K.S (1967) Reading: A psycholinguistic guessing game. *Journal of the Reading Specialist*. 6 (1), 126-135.

- Expressing an opinion or reaction to the text
- Writing a summary of the text or of the author's point of view
- Taking notes in the margin of the main ideas of each paragraph
- Relating the text to something in current events.

2.1.3.3 The Interactive Approach

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that both bottom-up and top-down models have limitations. For example, according to Eskey¹² (1973), the decoding model is inadequate because it underestimates the contribution of the reader who makes predictions and processes information. It also fails to recognize that students utilize their expectations about the text, based on their knowledge of language and how it works.

In the case of the top-down model, one of its main limitations (Eskey¹³, 1988) is that it tends to emphasize higher level skills as the prediction of meaning by means of context clues or background knowledge at the expense of lower skills like the rapid and accurate identification of lexical and grammatical forms. In making the perfectly valid point that fluent reading is primarily a cognitive process, it also tends to minimize the importance of perceptual and decoding dimensions of that process.

The recognition of these results is a more comprehensive reading process, namely interactive model which is an interaction of bottom-up and top-down models claiming that prior knowledge and prediction facilitate the processing of input from the text. The interaction in this perspective takes place at three levels.

¹² Eskey, D.E (1973). A model program for teaching advanced reading to students of English as a foreign language. *Language Learning* 23: 169-184

¹³ Eskey, D.E. (1988) "Holding in the Bottom: an Interactive Approach to the Language Problems of Second Language Readers," in Carrell, P.L., Devine, J. and Eskey, D.E. (eds)(1988) *Interactive Approaches to Second Language Reading*. Cambridge: CUP

- 1) Between lower-level and higher-level skills;
- 2) Between bottom-up processing and top-down processing
- 3) Between the background knowledge presupposed in the text and the background of the reader.

In interactive reading processing, both bottom-up and top-down processing should be occurring at all levels of analysis simultaneously (Rumelhart, 1980). The data needed to fill out the schemata become available through bottom-up processing; top down processing facilitates their assimilation if they are assimilated or consistent with the reader's conceptual set.

Bottom-up processing, ensures that the reader will be sensitive to new information that does not fit his/her ongoing hypothesis about the content or structure of the text. With the top-down processing, the reader can solve ambiguities or select alternatives to possible interpretations of the incoming data.

Following the assumptions of the schemata theoretic view of language comprehension, we can understand the process of comprehending a text as an interactive one between the reader's background knowledge of content and structure, and the text itself. The text alone does not carry meaning; it rather only provides guidance for readers to find out the way they should construct the intended meaning from their own previously acquired knowledge.

Efficient comprehension requires the ability to relate the textual material to one's own knowledge (Adams¹⁴ & Collins, 1979). The linguistic competence is just one part of the total background knowledge so, comprehending sentences, words and discourse involves much more than just relying only on it.

¹⁴ Adams, M.J., et.al (1979) A schema-theoretic view of reading. In R.O. Freedle (ed.), *New Directions in Discourse Processing*. Norwood, N.J: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

2.1.4 Studies in Cognitive Psychology

The research in strategies done in the cognitive field during the 1980s helped ground the work in the information processing framework and this was an important contribution to language learning in particular.

Research done in cognitive psychology has shown that successful learners have effective ways of processing information and that these “strategies” can be taught to other learners.

Among the earliest cognitive psychologists to consider the social nature to learning was Slavin (1980) who found that students who were trained to use cooperative learning strategies did better than those who were not provided with such training.

Cooperative strategies have also been used in some reading comprehension activities and the results have also been positive because it has been proved that they enhance learning. (Dansereau, Larson & Spurlin¹⁵, 1983).

Brown and Palinscar (1982) argued that “...an ideal training package would consist of both, practice in the use of tasks-appropriate strategies, instruction concerning the significance of those activities, and instruction concerning the monitoring and control of strategy use” (p.7).

They tried to separate cognitive strategies from the metacognitive ones. According to them, cognitive strategies had to do with individual tasks and required the material to be manipulated or transformed to enhanced understanding. Metacognitive strategies on the other hand, were more concerned with planning the learning, monitoring of understanding, and

¹⁵ Dansereau, D.F., Larson, C.O., & Spurlin, J.E. (1983). Cooperative learning: Impact on acquisition of knowledge and skills. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal.

evaluation of one's own learning. Brown¹⁶ et al. (1983) stated that students need both type of strategies to maximize their learning potential.

In some studies, it has been posited that learning strategies could be placed within an information- processing model. O'Malley, Chamot & Stewner-Manzanares (1985) worked on their tripartite model comprising metacognitive, cognitive and social affective strategies in second language learning.

Weinstein and Mayer¹⁷ (1986) believed that information processing could help us understand the role of learning strategies in the learning process. They suggested four stages encoding process involving selection, acquisition, construction, and integration.

The process of selection and acquisition centres on the gathering of knowledge while construction and integration focuses on what knowledge is acquired and how it is organized. The authors argue that learners use learning strategies intentionally to facilitate their learning:

“Learning strategies affect learners motivational or affective state, or the way in which learner selects acquires, organizes or integrates new knowledge”
Weinstein et.al (p.315)

Sarig¹⁸ (1987) worked with students whose L1 was Hebrew and compared their strategy use when reading in Hebrew and when reading in English. The study revealed that a fifth of all strategy use reported by the students were a combinations of cognitive and metacognitive strategies. This was an important finding because it helped us understand why some learners are more successful at completing a language task compared to others.

¹⁶ Brown, A. L., Day, J. D., & Jones, R. S. (1983). The development of plans for summarizing texts. *Child Development*, 54, 968-979.

¹⁷ Weinstein, C.E., & Mayer, R.E. (1986). The teaching of learning strategies. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), *Handbook of research on teaching* (pp. 315-327). New York : Macmillan.

¹⁸ Sarig, G. (1987). High- level reading in the first and in the foreign language: Some comparative process data. In J. Devine, P. L. Carrell, & D. E. Eskey (Eds.), *Research in reading in English as a second language* (pp. 105-120). Washington, DC: TESOL.

The learning style is also an important factor in this sense. This refers to specific cognitive, affective, and psychological traits that determine the way learners' process information. These specific characteristics distinguish one learner from another which explains why some learners are visually or auditory oriented, reflective or impulsive and vary in their tolerance to ambiguity. The learning styles of an individual will help determine to some extent the strategies employed in language processing. (Cohen¹⁹, 1998; Oxford et.al, 2003).

Ehrman and Oxford (1990) worked with adult language learners and found that the learning style has a strong influence on the way learners use strategies and how they advance in their language learning.

They claim that a greater understanding of learning styles would enable trainers to better deal with different learners to enhance learning performance. A learner's ability and willingness to work is very much determined by his / her learning style and the learning strategies s/he employs to help him/her cope within various instructional methodologies. Understanding a learner's individual style preferences can help teachers to orient their L2 instruction and also apply appropriate strategy training.

Another important consideration which is crucial when teaching the reading skill is the motivational factor. Most studies in reading have focused the attention on the effective reading strategies that enhance students' comprehension. Guthrie (1996) states that most researchers study a single cognitive strategy rather than conducting a long-term study of multiple strategies. Besides, few studies have addressed the issue related to "motivation" and "engagement".

Guthrie explains:

"Engaged reading is based on motivational and cognitive characteristics of the reader...who is intrinsically motivated builds knowledge, uses cognitive

¹⁹ Cohen, A.D (1998). Strategies in learning and using a second language. New York: Longman.

strategies, and interacts socially to learn from text. These engagement processes can be observed in student's cognitive effort, perseverance, and self-direction in reading". (ibid, p. 404) In this sense, it is very important to select the appropriate materials, especially at early stages of learning.

2.1.5 Research of Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition

As Wended (1985) reminds us, there is an old proverb which states: "Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him how to fish and he eats for a lifetime". Applied to the language teaching and learning field, this proverb can be interpreted to mean that if students are provided with answers, the immediate problem is solved. But if they receive some strategy training to work out the answers for themselves, they can learn how to manage and enhance their own learning.

The term "strategy" has been distinguished in the reading research from the term "skill" based on consciousness. This seems widely accepted among researchers (e.g. Barnett, 1989; Williams & Moran, 1989 and Cohen, 1998). Following Oxford (1990) , we can say that there is no agreement in the literature on language strategies to define exactly what they are, how many exist, how they can be categorized and demarcated and whether it is possible to create a real , scientifically validated hierarchy of strategies.

Some definitions of learning strategies provided by Oxford are:

"Learning strategies are steps taken by the students to enhance their own learning. Strategies are especially important for language learning because they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which is essential to develop communicative competence" (Oxford, 1990b:1)

“Strategy instruction involves helping the students know more about themselves, so they can try out, test, and become expert in using the strategies that help them the most...”

Strategy instruction is a highly creative, multi-level process for teaching students to optimize their learning strategies for themselves as individuals. (Oxford & Leaver, 1996:228)

Learning strategy research findings depends on many factors such as the area being investigated, the age of the subjects, research data techniques, etc. So it is important to first find a conceptual framework in which linguistic acquisition, language learning in classroom settings, and cognitive psychology are combined and also to limit the scope of research clearly.

It is considered that the pioneering work in the field of language learning strategies was carried out in the mid seventies by researchers such as Rubin (1975) and Stern (1975). Those investigations emerged from a concern of identifying the characteristics of successful language learners. The first works corresponded to strategy lists based on folklore, common sense, and the unstructured personal observations of the list makers.

Although these lists were not systematically validated and theoretically grounded at the time they were presented, many of the strategies were also found in later more empirical and sophisticated studies and were nonetheless useful because they helped to identify strategies used by good language learners.

Those studies also provided later researches with bright insights into the behaviours of successful language learners. For Rubin (1975, 1987), learning strategies are techniques or devices which can help the learners to acquire second language knowledge. He refers to actions that learners can do to learn and regulate their learning.

The most remarkable finding of the study by Rubin is the fact that the success of strategy use will vary depending on various factors such as the task, the stage of the learner in the learning process, the age, the context of learning (whether inside the classroom or not), individual styles such as auditory, visual or kinesthetic, and especially cultural differences in cognitive learning styles.

The research done in the area of learning strategies in second language acquisition from the seventies to early eighties contributed greatly to our understanding of how strategies enhance and support language learning. Since then on, there has been awareness that language learning strategies have the potential to be “an extremely powerful learning tool” O’Malley et.al (1985, p.43).

Hosenfeld et.al (1981) using “think aloud” protocols, reported on the reading strategies of successful and unsuccessful second language learners and , more specifically, on a metacognitive strategy in which good learners evaluated their thinking using logic. This was one of the first SLA studies which attempted to train learners in the use of efficient reading strategies.

According to Oxford (1986e), the research field has proved that second language learning strategies are beneficial for four key reasons:

1. Appropriate learning strategies are related to successful language performance in the sense that successful language learners generally use appropriate strategies which explain their outstanding performance. It does not matter if they are aware of the strategies they are using but good language learners tend to use strategies that are appropriate to their own stage of language learning, personality, age, purpose for learning the language, and type of language. The opposite happens with inappropriate learning strategies which could also explain the frequent failures of poor language learners and even the occasional weaknesses of good language learners (Hosenfeld, 1979a, 1979b: Reiss, 1983, cited in Oxford ibid p4). To balance the topic, teachers and students can agree on what strategies to use

in a determined situation or while working on a specific skill in order to get great benefits to enhance second language performance.

2. Using appropriate learning strategies enables students to take responsibility for their own learning. Language learning strategies also enhances autonomy and selfdirection in the learners. According to findings in Cognitive psychology, all learning, (especially language learning) requires learners to actively link new information with the already existing mental structures, thus creating increasingly rich and complex structures. In that way, active language learners develop their own way of understanding the second language and culture. As they keep interacting and learning the second language, they gradually refine their own linguistic understanding and with practice increase their second language proficiency. It has been proved that independent learning is trained and developed during classroom instruction. Thus, the learners can keep on learning independently even when they are no longer taking formal language instruction or when a large part of the language learning takes place outside of the class.
3. Learning strategies have worked effectively in solving many difficulties in second language learning and they also help to improve the skills of all language learners. No matter the characteristics of the learners or their general cognitive styles, learning strategies are teachable. Research has proved that teachers can train students to use better learning strategies (Dansereau, 1978, 1985; Henner-Stanchina. 1982; O'Malley, Russo & Chamot. 1983. Russo & Stewner-Manzanares. 1985. Cited in Oxford ibid 1986 p 5)
4. Addressing learning strategies in their programs gives teachers an expanded role. Although one of the characteristic of learning strategies is that they foster autonomy in the students, this does not mean that teachers lose importance. On the contrary, they have an expanded role in providing new practice opportunities, offering, comprehensible input to the learners and also

observing which strategies the learners are using, assessing how appropriate those strategies are, and training the learner on how to use more appropriate strategies that foster self-directed learning.

A few years later, Oxford (1990) presented a system of strategies that support each other and can be associated with each other. She suggested grouping them into direct and indirect strategies. Direct strategies are made up of memory, cognitive, and compensation strategies while indirect ones comprise social, affective and metacognitive strategies.

This comprehensive classification system has provided the foundations for the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) which has been employed in many studies around the world to validate the effectiveness of learning strategies to language learning. It has been used in major studies, involved ten thousand language learners and it has been translated into more than twenty languages.

2.1.6 The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)

Type of Strategies

Between 1986 and 1990, Rebecca Oxford designed an instrument for assessing the frequency of use of language learning strategies in order to measure strategy use. Through years, many important studies have been carried out using the SILL. According to research report and articles published in the field, the SILL appears to be the only language learning strategy questionnaire that has been extensively checked for reliability and validated in multiple ways.

An important fact is that the SILL conceptualize language-learning strategies in a broad way to include the social and affective sides of the learner as well as

the more intellectual (cognitive) and "executive-managerial"(metacognitive). Therefore, when the SILL is related to language performance, it considers the "whole learner," rather than just the cognitive and metacognitive aspects. This implies therefore, that language is not considered just as a mental exercise but as an integral process.

The SILL was organized according to strategy groups using a factor analysis so that researchers could divide the instrument into dimensions usually referred to as subscales or factors. Six subscales were developed based on the early factor analyses so that each subscale have an adequate number of items to facilitate more in-depth understanding of the learning strategies for EFL/ ESL. These subscales include:

1. Memory strategies, such as grouping, imagery, rhyming, and structured reviewing (9 items)
2. Cognitive strategies, such as reasoning, analyzing, summarizing (all reflective of deep processing), as well as general practicing (14 items).
3. Compensation strategies (to compensate for limited knowledge), such as guessing meaning from the context in reading and listening and using synonyms and gestures to convey meaning when the precise expression is not known (6 items).
4. Metacognitive strategies, such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, planning for language tasks, self-evaluating one's progress, and monitoring errors (9 items).
5. Affective (emotional, motivation-related) strategies, such as anxiety reduction, self-encouragement, and self-reward (6 items).
6. Social strategies, such as asking questions, cooperating with native speakers of the language and becoming culturally aware (6 items).

As we can see the largest group of strategies belongs to the category of cognitive ones. Research on learning strategies suggests that cognitive strategies includes the greatest variety since they cover strategies related to practice and to the all-important “deep-processing” in which learners analyze, synthesize, and transform new information.(Oxford & Ehrman, 1995).

According to Oxford (1994), through strategy assessment, teachers can help their students to realize about the power of using language learning strategies for making learning quicker, easier, and more effective.

2.2. STRUCTURE

Independent Variable: ACTIVE STRATEGIES

2.2.1 GOALS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING READING

2.2.1.1. How do you teach reading comprehension strategies?

2.2.1.2 What are the key principles of reading instruction?

2.2.1.3 Reading Mechanics

2.2.1.4 Process of Reading

2.2.1.5 Principles to Guide the Reading Comprehension

2.2.1.6 Conditions for the Teaching of Reading Skills

2.2.1.7 Components for the Teaching of Reading Comprehension

2.2.1.8 The development of background information and vocabulary

2.2.1.9 Reading and writing relationship

2.2.2 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP READING SKILLS

2.2.2.1 Strategy 1: Using Picture Clues

2.2.2.2 Strategy 2: Predicting

2.2.2.3 Strategy 3: Using Prior Knowledge

2.2.2.4 Strategy 4: Guessing words from context

2.2.2.5. The Language Experience Approach (LEA)

2.2.2.6. The Importance of Learning Reading Comprehension Skills

2.2.2.7. Differences between reading skills and reading strategies

2.2.2.8. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies and Reading Comprehension

2.2.2.9. Metacognition and its Components

2.2.2.10. Role of Metacognition in Reading

2.2.3 DEVELOPING READING ACTIVITIES

2.2.3.1 Easy Reading Comprehension Activities

2.2.3.2 How to Improve Reading Comprehension with Worksheets

2.2.3.3 How to Make Reading Comprehension Worksheets

2.2.4 USING TEXTBOOK READING ACTIVITIES

2.2.4.1 Choose texts of the right difficulty and interest level.

2.2.4.2 Types of Texts for Reading Instruction

Dependent Variable: READING COMPREHENSION

2.2.5 ASSESSING READING PROFICIENCY

2.2.5.1 Use assessment to provide feedback and measure progress.

2.2.6 READING METHODOLOGY

2.2.7 LESSON PLAN

2.2.1 GOALS AND TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING READING

One of the main objectives of education in the Basic Education level, the teachers must help students acquire the necessary language skills to overcome the difficulties that they experience to understand the written texts in their own language.

Usually it is assumed that the person, who writes a text, wants to convey a meaning, and the person, who is reading, tries to get that meaning. The text's author uses his knowledge structures (cognitive development) and language mastery (linguistic competence), to communicate the meaning that he tries to convey.

On the other hand, the reader uses his language knowledge (linguistic competence), and ability to process the information (cognitive development) in order to reconstruct the meaning of the text. In addition, over time the reading has been conceived in different ways, according to Dubois (1987)²⁰, it was initially considered only as a set of skills and transference of information, then, as product of the interaction between thought and language and finally as a transaction process between reader and text.

Reading as a skill set involves some levels such as:

1. Knowledge of words
2. The comprehension
3. The evaluation.

Likewise, the comprehension of reading was formed various sub-levels: comprehension or ability to understand what is implied and critical reading or

²⁰ Dubois (1987) Reading and comprehension academically speaking. Nicodemo Maggioli Editore. Paris

ability to evaluate the text, the ideas and the author's purpose. By doing so, the reading was not seen as a total act, but as the sum of its parts.

Reading as an interactive process comes from advances in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology (schema theory), it postulates that readers use prior knowledge to interact with the text to construct meaning. It provides tools to explain how to make the implicit mental processes in the cognition: the presentations, the conceptualization, categorization and the process of themes.

2.2.1.1. How do you teach reading comprehension strategies?

Reading research indicates that the most successful way to teach reading comprehension strategies to students with limited reading proficiency is to use very direct and explicit instruction. The stages of instruction that are most often cited as being effective in helping a student learn strategies are the following:

1. To orient students to key concepts, assess, and ask students to make a commitment to learn.
2. To describe the purpose of the strategy, the potential benefits, and the steps of the strategy.
3. To model (thinking aloud) the behavioral and cognitive steps/actions involved in using the strategy
4. To lead verbal practice and elaboration of the key information and steps related to the strategy.
5. To provide for guided and controlled practice of the strategy with detailed feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers.
6. Gradually move to more independent and advanced practice of the strategy with feedback from the teacher and/or knowledgeable peers.

7. Posttest application of the strategy, and help students make commitments to generalize its use. Once the strategy is learned, the teacher must then ensure that students begin to transfer or generalize the strategy to new and different situations. The eighth stage, generalization, includes four distinct phases:

- (a) Orientation and awareness of situations in which the strategy can be used.
- (b) Activation by preparing for and practicing strategies in content-area classes.
- (c) Adaptation of the strategy steps for use in other tasks
- (d) Maintenance of the strategy for ongoing application in a variety of real-life learning and work place settings.

2.2.1.2 What are the key principles of reading instruction?

Teach reading comprehension skills and strategies at all levels of reading development. Teachers at every grade level and every subject area should always be planning how reading assignments will help students develop and practice skills and strategies. Students need teachers to teach and draw attention to appropriate strategy use in textbooks, especially in content areas where there are many reading demands (e.g., language, social studies, and often science). A reading comprehension skill is a developed ability to construct meaning effectively, immediately, and effortlessly with little conscious attention.

A reading comprehension strategy is defined as an overt process consciously selected and used by a reader to aid the process of constructing meaning more effectively and efficiently. Once a student uses a strategy effectively, immediately and effortlessly with little conscious attention to construct meaning, it becomes a reading skill. Most planning for comprehension instruction is targeted at teaching comprehension strategies and then developing practice

activities that help the student become skilled in the use of the strategy so that it is unconsciously selected and used in a variety of situations.

- Reading comprehension instruction must be responsive. Continually assess progress in learning, make specific instructional accommodations to meet individual student's needs, and provided individualized and elaborated feedback.
- Reading comprehension instruction must be systematic. Systematic reading instruction is structured, connected, scaffolded, and informative. Structured instruction is characterized by lessons that organize and group new knowledge and skills into segments that can be sequentially presented in a clear manner. Connected instruction is characterized by lessons that show the learner connections between the segments and what is already known. Scaffolded lessons are characterized by instruction in which the teacher provides to students, early in the learning process, a significant amount of support in the form of modeling, prompts, direct explanations, and targeted questions, for example using KWL Graphic Organizer where this handy chart will facilitate interactive responses for what your students know, "K," want to know, "W," and what they've learned, "L.". Then as students begin to acquire the targeted objective, direct teacher supports are reduced, and the major responsibility for learning is transferred to the student. Informative instruction is characterized by lessons in which the teacher explains the purposes and expected outcomes and requirements for learning and when and how that newly learned information will be useful.
- Reading comprehension instruction must be intensive. Intensive reading instruction means that sufficient time used wisely and with high student engagement, is provided direct instruction for students to master the reading skills and strategies they need.

- Reading comprehension instruction should involve authentic reading at all stages. Authentic reading involves incorporating a variety of "real" reading materials, such as books, stories, and cards with words into the instructional process.
- Reading comprehension instruction has to encourage children to read for pleasure because the children who read for pleasure have active imaginations and enjoy learning and teachers have to notice the differences in the scholastic achievements between children who read for pleasure and children who do not. Then reading for enjoyment should be modeled and encouraged at all grade levels. This requires providing ample materials to read at their independent reading level.
- Reading comprehension instruction requires collaboration with other professionals and shared responsibility for student success. All teachers play either a primary or secondary role in teaching students to read. All classroom teachers who expect students to learn the content of specific subjects need to be teaching reading. Studies have shown that one of the most damaging practices affecting struggling readers is the lack of coordination among educators that are responsible for literacy development. Building staff must work together to plan and implement effective instruction in reading comprehension.

2.2.1.3 Reading Mechanics

Effective teaching of early literacy requires that close attention be paid to the "mechanics" of speech and sounds. For a child to learn to read and write, it is necessary to have a solid understanding of how the sounds of spoken language work (Hill 2006, p, 117)²¹.

²¹ Hill, S 2006, *Developing early literacy: assessment and teaching*, Eleanor Curtin Publishing, Prahran, Australia.

Phonological awareness: an ability to pay attention to language sounds – rhymes, intonation, timing and stress.

Phonemic awareness: being able to hear individual sounds – the ‘small units of sound that affect meaning’ (Hill 2006, p. 117). Teachers can test for phonemic awareness in a number of ways – testing to see if the child can hear words, syllables, alliteration, rhyme, onset and rime. There are also many classroom activities that can be built into the literacy block: making rhyming books and clapping out syllables of names are two methods.

Letter knowledge and the alphabetic principle: an understanding of the letters of the alphabet, together with the sounds of the spoken language. Phonics is one method of teaching children to identify the sound-letter relationships so that they can de-code unfamiliar words, and should be taught as a ‘word investigation’ to encourage children to solve the puzzle (Hill 2006, p. 227).

All of these factors will come into play when children begin to read and are taught to use problem solving method and reading cues to make meaning of the written word. Again, there are many strategies and activities teachers can use, such as the child’s name, reading familiar books, language experience texts, reading aloud, making books, sentence stems, and word and sentence making (Hill 2006, p. 181).

Obviously, not only do children need to read the written word, but they also need to comprehend it: ‘the act of extracting and constructing meaning from text’ (Hill 2006, p. 190). Teachers can support the child’s comprehension of the text by asking questions, prompting the child to re-tell the story and setting activities that teach children how to extract meaning in interesting ways (Hill 2006, pp. 190-207).

On other hand, it is very important to mentions that the mechanics of reading involves three important steps, such as:

- **The physiology:** it permits to understand the human ability to read from the biological point of view, by studying the human eye, the vision field and the ability to stare.
- **Psychology:** it helps to define the mental process that takes place during reading, at decoding characters, symbols and pictures stages. It also involves the association phase of the display with the word.
- **The clinical pedagogy:** it is concerned with educational aspects regarding the teaching-learning process, literacy, the specific reading disorders, and the skills needed for an effective reading.

Applying the reading mechanics: it is very important for readers to know that not only their view is involved when reading, but also, it is a process which involve several aspects.

2.2.1.4 Process of Reading

The process by which we read consists of four steps:

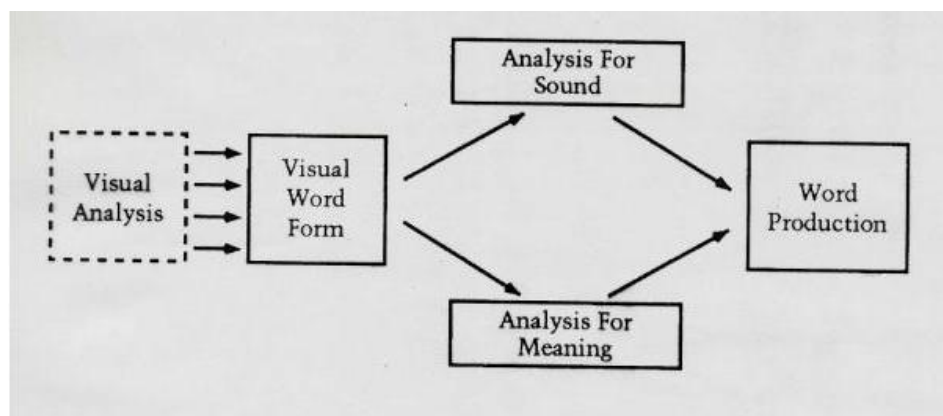
1. The visualization. When we read do not continuously look over each individual word, instead we operate via a batch process: each word absorbs visual fixation for about 200-250 milliseconds and 30 milliseconds to skip to the next word, which is known as motion saccade. The speed is relatively constant between most readers, however while a slow reader focuses between five and ten letters at a time, a regular reader can focus on approximately a dozen letters at a time. It is necessary to pay special attention to this process because the visual fixation and saccadic movements are very important to start the reading process.

2. Phonation. Oral articulation is conscious or unconscious; the information is passed from sight to speech. When we are talking it can be helpful vocalize the text as we read in as much it does not interfere with understanding.

3. Hearing. The speech information is passed by the ear.

4. Cerebration. The information passes from the ear to the brain and integrates the elements that are coming apart. This stage completes the understanding process.

The reading process proposed by the Basic Education Curriculum has absolute validity and consistency and mediating action of teachers in their development is essential and cannot be inferred to a mere review and final evaluation.



2.2.1.5 Principles to Guide the Reading Comprehension

Children begin their education learning to read, but soon transition to reading to learn. This stage requires the ability to comprehend what is being read. Educational researchers have spent years developing strategies to improve reading comprehension. These strategies should be used throughout the reading process and based in some principles, as the following.

- To facilitate the knowledge schemes development of the characters, which enable them to fully understand the different types of text
- To develop metacognitive strategies: the students are aware of the processes carried out so that they can plan, manage, review and evaluate all the steps that lead to an effective comprehension.

- Instruction can improve comprehension by focusing on concepts and the vocabulary used to express them.
- To build on students' background knowledge, therefore. by having a group discussion before reading.
- Teachers can guide students by modeling the actions they can take to improve comprehension. These actions include: asking questions about a text while reading; identifying main ideas; using prior knowledge to make predictions. Helfeldt & Lalik²²(1979)
- To teach a combination of different strategies is better than focusing solely on one.
- To choose reading materials that utilize students' local context. For instance, books about what students enjoy doing would be a good starting point.
- To use information texts that contain topics with which the students are familiar. This will allow them to use their prior knowledge and to learn more about the topic.
- **To provide clear goals for students:** If the student doesn't have clear what the goal is to achieve and what is its utility, s/he can implement the executive process of comprehension in an incorrect form.
- **The instruction must be carried out in real contexts to promote common generalization of teaching and learning situations:** One of the weaknesses of traditional instruction in comprehension and techniques for study was to practice a series of exercises to promote independent skill sets.

²² Helfeldt & Lalik (1979). Improving the Comprehension, New York, NY. Glencoe/McGraw-Hill

- **The teacher should provide feedback on the process of comprehension:** In traditional approaches the teacher's feedback focuses primarily on comprehension products rather than processes.

2.2.1.6 Conditions for the Teaching of Reading Skills

In order to teachers can teach reading skill, they should take in mind some conditions:

Start from what students know: the school is a very important step for children to give them the possibility of expanding their experience of the world and its representation/communication ways. It is precisely the social institution responsible for offering the opportunity to grasp more abstract modes of verbal representation and the written language. This learning should be through the progressive reconstruction of the concepts they already possess to a greater or lesser degree when they go to school. Therefore, the assessment of prior knowledge of written and stimulation to their continuity are some basic tasks of the school that should plan.

To familiarize students with the written language and create a positive relationship with the letter: in relation to the previous point, the children's familiarity with the writing world should be the main objective of school education in reading instruction. This will intensify contact of students with written texts in activities that preserve the normal sense and reading use in our society.

To encourage metalinguistic conscience: another characteristic required by the written communication is a high level of metalinguistic conscience, which can focus on language as a subject in itself and not as a meaning vehicle within a communication (Mattingly,²³ 1972). Although children have some determinate levels of metalinguistic conscience from their oral domain (you can ask, for

²³ Mattingly, (1972) Reading, the linguistic process, and linguistic awareness. (Eds.), Language by ear and by eye: The relationships between speech and reading. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

example what the meaning of a word is), the access to written language requires a less transparent use than the oral communication and at different levels of linguistic units.

To use texts designed for reading: it is important that teacher use text adapted to reading level, ages and attractions of the children. In this way, the children can familiarize with the text and have a better comprehension.

Reading aloud: Teachers have always read aloud to students, because they can stimulate their imaginations and emotions; models good reading behavior; exposes them to a range of literature; enriches their vocabularies and understanding of sophisticated language patterns; makes difficult text understandable; models the fact that different genres are read differently; supports independent reading; and can encourage a lifelong enjoyment of reading.

Reading aloud is an essential part of an effective literacy teaching because studies show more successful literacy outcomes for children who have been read to from a young age (Hill, p. 91). Some of the benefits include:

- The physical closeness of reading together makes an association between reading and pleasure for the child
- Stimulates their natural curiosity
- Builds self esteem
- Improves pronunciation and vocabulary
- Stimulates emotions and imaginations
- Exposes the child to new ideas and places
- Immerses the child in a rich world of literacy

In the classroom, an effective literacy teaching has a wide range of books that are regularly changed around. Books can be dramatized; stories told with puppets, students can do story maps or make their own books that can be as simple as traditional paper (Hill, pp. 90 –113)

2.2.1.7 Components for the Teaching of Reading Comprehension

There are many ways to think about reading comprehension and many factors that affect reading comprehension. Teachers should keep in mind two overriding questions about how to organize and how to teach reading comprehension. These questions are, "What strategies should I teach?" and "How should I teach strategies?"

1. What strategies should I teach? The most practical way of thinking about teaching reading comprehension is to organize instruction according to how you want students to think about strategies.

2. How should I teach strategies? The most straightforward way of organizing comprehension strategies is to think about strategies that one might use before reading, during reading, and after reading.

Before Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that a student learns to use to get ready to read a text selection. These strategies help the student get an idea of what the author might be trying to say, how the information might be useful, and to create a mental set that might be useful for taking in and storing information. These strategies could include previewing headings, surveying pictures, reading introductions and summaries, creating a pre-reading outline, creating questions that might need to be answered, making predictions that need to be confirmed, etc. The primary question for a teacher here is: "What steps (observable as well as unobservable) should I teach students to do regularly and automatically that will prepare them in advance to get the most out of a reading selection that needs to be read more thoroughly?"

When a teacher introduces a reading selection to students, walks students through the text, helps the students get ready to read through the use of advance organizers, or creates pre-reading outline. S/he is ensuring content learning by compensating for the fact that students have not developed good Before-Reading Strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of before-reading activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students have been taught to fluently use Before-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of before-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use Before-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction. This is why it is important to directly teach and provide practice that gradually requires students to use Before-Reading strategies.

Use pre-reading activities to prepare students for reading

The activities you use during pre-reading may serve as preparation in several ways. During pre-reading you may:

- Assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text.
- Give students the background knowledge necessary for comprehension of the text, or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess
- Clarify any cultural information which may be necessary to comprehend the passage.
- Make students aware of the type of text they will be reading and the purpose(s) for reading.
- Provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for class discussion activities.

Thus the pre-reading stage helps in activating the relevant schema. Most teachers tend to neglect the pre-reading procedure claiming that there is not enough time. In fact, pre-reading activities motivate students before the actual

reading takes place. For example, teachers can ask students questions that arouse their interest while previewing the text. Teachers can take the following procedure before reading a text:

- Using the title, subtitles, and divisions within the text to predict content and organization or sequence of information
- Looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs and their captions
- Talking about the author's background, writing style, and usual topics
- Skimming to find the theme or main idea and eliciting related prior knowledge
- Reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
- Reading over the comprehension questions to focus attention on finding that information while reading
- Constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related)
- Doing guided practice with guessing meaning from context or checking comprehension while reading

Pre-reading activities are most important at lower levels of language proficiency and at earlier stages of reading instruction. As students become more proficient at using reading strategies, you will be able to reduce the amount of guided pre-reading and allow students to do these activities themselves.

During Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that students learn to use while they are reading a text selection. These strategies help the student focus on how to determine what the author is actually trying to say and to match the information with what the student already knows. These strategies should be influenced by the Before Reading Strategies because students should be using or keeping in mind the previews, outlines, questions, predictions, etc. that were generated before reading and then using this information to digest what they are reading. The During Reading Strategies that help a student understand during reading include questioning, predicting, visualizing, paraphrasing,

elaborating (i.e., comparing what is read to what is known), changing reading rate, rereading, etc. The primary question for a teacher is: "What steps (observable and unobservable) should I teach students to do so that they will regularly and automatically figure out the intended meaning of the text and how it connects to what they already know?"

When a teacher develops reading guides and outlines that need to be completed during reading, requires students to ask and answer questions, creates summaries as they read, etc., they are compensating for the fact that students have not developed good During-Reading Strategies. We like teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of during-reading activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students are taught to fluently use Before-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of during-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use During-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction.

Match while-reading activities to the purpose for reading

In while-reading activities, students check their comprehension as they read. The purpose for reading determines the appropriate type and level of comprehension.

- When reading for specific information, students need to ask themselves, have I obtained the information I was looking for?
- When reading for pleasure, students need to ask themselves, Do I understand the story line/sequence of ideas well enough to enjoy reading this?
- When reading for thorough understanding (intensive reading), students need to ask themselves, Do I understand each main idea and how the author supports it? Does what I'm reading agree with my predictions, and, if not, how does it differ? To check comprehension in this situation, students may

- Stop at the end of each section to review and check their predictions, restate the main idea and summarize the section.
- Use the comprehension questions as guides to the text, stopping to answer them as they read.

The aim of while-reading stage is to develop students' ability in tackling texts by developing their linguistic and schematic knowledge. Modern interactive reading models enable SL readers to be less reliant on top-down processing and enable them to achieve greater reliance on bottom-up strategies as they become more proficient. It seems that teachers can use a balanced approach to teaching reading by incorporating both top-down and bottom-up processes, provided they are given flexibility in choosing the reading tasks.

After-Reading Strategies consist of those strategies that students learn to use when they have completed reading a text selection. These strategies are used to help the student "look back" and think about the message of the text and determine the intended or possible meanings that might be important. These strategies are used to follow up and confirm what was learned (e.g., answer questions or confirm predictions) from the use of before and during reading strategies. However, After-Reading Strategies also help the reader to focus on determining what the big, critical, or overall idea of the author's message was and how it might be used before moving on to performance tasks or other learning tasks. The primary question for a teacher is: "What steps (observable and unobservable) should I teach students to do so that they will regularly and automatically stop when they are finished reading a text selection and try to figure out the intended meaning of the text to determine what is most important and how they will use it?"

When a teacher reviews a reading selection, leads a discussion on what was important about the author's message, helps students summarize or "look back" at what was read, provides a post-organizer, or asks students to complete a

study guide over what was learned from reading text, the teacher is compensating for the fact that students have not developed good After-Reading Strategies. Teachers will need to continue to lead students in these types of before reading-activities to ensure content area learning occurs until students have been taught to fluently use After-Reading Strategies. Teacher use of after-reading prompts and activities does not necessarily lead students to develop and use After-Reading Strategies independently without direct and explicit instruction.

What are some examples of specific strategies? Some of these strategies could be used in all three categories. For example, questioning could be listed in the before, during, and after reading categories. Summarization could be listed as both during and after reading strategies. These are grouped based on where the greatest amount of instruction needs to take place.

Before-Reading Strategies

- Before Reading Self-questioning

During-Reading Strategies

- During Reading Self-questioning
- Paragraph Summarization
- Section Summarization

After-Reading Strategies

- After Reading Self-questioning
- After Reading Summarization

More specifically, in order to set up teaching targets, the following set of questions should be applied.

- Which part of the task is the child not able to complete accurately?

- What are the small steps needed to complete the task: can the child complete any of the steps?
- What vocabulary might the child need to complete the task: has the child got the appropriate vocabulary?

Teachers then need to match teaching strategies to identified areas for development. For example, a child who is failing to recognize another person's feelings in the text could be supported by completing an emotions graph for the character. In this way children can be encouraged to acquire a range of known comprehension building strategies that they can then apply when they experience a failure in comprehension.

Furthermore, teaching reading comprehension of the second Language should include three main components or elements, such as:

- The development of previous information and vocabulary.
- The configuration of certain processes and skills.
- The correlation of reading and writing.

The three elements do not work separately, but they are interlinked and juxtaposed to form the comprehension teaching.

2.2.1.8 The development of background information and vocabulary

The prior information of a person directly influences every aspect of their comprehensive ability. The research and theory with the development related to prior information of the reader to understand. The vocabulary acquisition is a specific facet of the prior information development. One of the main responsibilities of the teacher in his intention to improve the students' comprehensive ability is to develop the required information before they read anything.

2.2.1.9 Reading and writing relationship

Other factor considered in the teaching of reading comprehension is a correlation of the activities described with comprehension. The student that writes is who works very hard to organize his/her ideas with the objective understood by the reader. On other hand, the reader takes a look at what someone has written and tries to determine how the author's ideas have been structured or organized. The reading teachers can incorporate the three mentioned elements to this process of teaching.

Therefore, all teachers must assume the responsibility of helping students in their ability to understand a text in a better way and apply what they learn at different text types.

Reading comprehension of a second language requires that the reader individually process the clauses and phrases contents, but also to integrate information from these global meaning units.

The comprehension is actually conceived as a process through which the reader produces a meaning in his interaction with the text. The reading comprehension got by the reader is derived from their accumulated experiences. In this comprehension process, the reader relates the information that the author presents with his knowledge.

To understand the written words, a reader must be able to do the following:

1. To understand how the author has structured or organized the ideas and information in the text.
2. To relate the text ideas and information with other ideas or information stored in his mind. For these two routes, the reader interacts with the text to develop a meaning.

2.2.2 STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP READING SKILLS

This project is significant for the present work, because it serves as focus on a linguistic perspective and takes into account the reader and the text. Moreover, the results of this investigation show that knowledge and use of appropriate strategies can improve the reading comprehension level in children, when they are used as specific ways of organizing resources to get consistent results when realizing a task, always oriented towards a positive goal. Nuttall, C. (1996)²⁴ says that these strategies "are intentional activities carried out on certain information" to acquire, store and use information that enable the meaning construction.

On other hand, according L2 strategy training research, Rebecca Oxford²⁵ (1994) proposed the following principles concerning learning language strategies although they are subject to further investigation. They were all considered in this research:

- L2 strategy training should be based clearly on students' attitudes, beliefs, and stated needs.
- Strategies should be chosen so that they mesh with and support each other and so that they fit the requirements of the language task, the learners' goals, and the learners' style of learning.
- Training should, if possible, be integrated into regular L2 activities over a long period of time rather than taught as a separate, short intervention.
- Students should have plenty of opportunities for strategy training during language classes.

²⁴ (Nuttall, C. (1996). Teaching reading skills in a foreign language (2nd ed.) Oxford: Heinemann.

²⁵ Oxford, R. 1994 "Language learning strategies: An update".
<http://www.cal.org/resources/digest/oxford01.html>

- Strategy training should include explanations, handouts, activities, brainstorming, and materials for reference and home study.
- Affective issues such as anxiety, motivation, beliefs, and interests -- all of which influence strategy choice -- should be directly addressed by L2 strategy training.
- Strategy training should be explicit, overt, and relevant and should provide plenty of practice with varied L2 tasks involving authentic materials.
- Strategy training should not be solely tied to the class at hand; it should provide strategies that are transferable to future language tasks beyond a given class.
- Strategy training should be somewhat individualized, as different students prefer or need certain strategies for particular tasks.

After analyzing the students' answers in the pre-test and making some reflections about my own teaching and methodology, I decided to use the following strategies:

1. Using picture clues
2. Predicting
3. Using prior knowledge
4. Guessing words form context.

The intervention would last eight weeks and was designed to teach one strategy per two week. The first strategy was trained in three hours during the first and second week of the study.

The second strategy was trained in two hours during the third and fourth week. It is important to notice that every time we worked on a strategy, we also recycled the previous one in order to teach the students to use a variety of resources when reading a text, and consequently observe the influence of

learning strategies when students read, as stated in the objectives of the study. The third strategy was trained in three hours during the fifth and sixth week. Finally the fourth strategy was trained in two hours and a half during the seventh and eighth week.

2.2.2.1 Strategy 1: Using Picture Clues

There is an old saying that a picture is worth a thousand words, meaning that a visual display helps readers understand, organize, and remember some of those thousand words. Many students think visually, using shapes spatial relationships, movements and colors and can benefit greatly from this strategy. In the diagnostic reading comprehension text used for this study, not many students paid much attention to the picture clues available. For example to discover the meaning of the word “balloon” in Spanish or to discover that the three brothers tested their lungs by inflating a balloon. Visual representations of text help a reader see the information again. A graphic “re-presentation” allow readers to see relationships, understand organization, connect ideas, and make abstract ideas concrete.

Rubin²⁶ (1975) suggested that good L2 learners are willing and accurate guessers so it is important to help the students to use what the context offers in order to get the desirable comprehension. In children book, illustrations are there to help clarify the text and it is important for students to know this and learn how to use to them.

Using picture clues can help a young mind piece together a word. It also helps the students to activate their prior knowledge because they make associations between the text and the picture, and the students can get information without reading the text (for example in the second activity they immediately knew we were going to make a salt ball). In that sense, pictures can also be used to brainstorm with the students the words they already know.

²⁶ Rubin, J. (1975). What the "good language learner" can teach us. TESOL Quarterly, 9, 41-51.

Krashen (1982) pointed out that it is very important that teachers use non-linguistic means to encourage comprehension. The extra-linguistic support in the form of realia and pictures for beginning classes is not just a frill but a very important resource that teachers have to encourage language acquisition.

“The use of objects and pictures in early second language instruction corresponds to the caretaker's use of the "here and now" in encouraging first language acquisition, in that they all help the acquirer understand messages containing structures that are a little beyond" them.”(1982: ibid.)

2.2.2.2 Strategy 2: Predicting

This is a basic strategy for using prior knowledge to understand a text. It aims at generating hypothesis about the type, purpose, or scope of a text to provide a framework for transacting with the text to confirm comprehension. The previous strategy “using picture cues”, can also be used as a means to predict what is going to happen in a story. Predicting is also a way of focusing interest and establishing a purpose for reading a particular text to confirm or expand understanding.

Formal schemata define reader expectations about how pieces of textual information will relate to each other and in what order details will appear (Carrell²⁷, 1987). For example, in a detective story, a reader could expect the following chain of events: A crime occurs, possible suspects are identified, evidence is uncovered, and the perpetrator is apprehended.

When students make predictions they are deciding their purposes for reading. Prediction activities work hand-in-hand with background knowledge. As students synthesize what they know with the text they are reading, it helps them determine a purpose for reading.

²⁷ CARRELL, P.L. (1987). Content and Formal Schemata in ESL Reading. "TESOL Quarterly" 21 (3), 461-481

Using their background knowledge their goal becomes finding out, or predicting what is going to happen next. Further, they are engaged in generating predictions prior to reading by first drawing upon background knowledge.

"Good readers are constantly forming hypotheses about what is to come in the passage they are reading... Like so many other comprehension skills this requires prior knowledge about the content and about the structure of what is being read." (Irwin and Baker²⁸, 1989, pp. 161)

By applying this strategy students are given the opportunity to integrate what they know while they read and are also faced with new information that may conflict with their own assumptions which, in turn may bolster critical thinking skills.

Research has shown that good readers constantly try to make sense out of what they read by seeing how it fits with what they already know. When we help students make those connections before, during, and after they read, we are teaching them a critical comprehension strategy that the best readers use almost unconsciously.

The process of reading does not correspond to the linear sequence of linguistic components in writing, and it would be wrong to assume that language would consist of autonomous self-contained units of information; instead information is distributed among linguistic components for ease of comprehension.

For Smith²⁹, *"the basis of comprehension is prediction and prediction is achieved by making use of what we already know about the world, by making use the theory of the world in the hear"* (1978 : 87).

Such old or bound information, or familiar knowledge, is included in the components so that the reader has enough background to make the integration

²⁸ Irwin, J.W. & Baker, I. (1989). Promoting active reading strategies. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

²⁹ Smith, F (1978) "Making sense of reading and of reading instruction" in L.J. Chapman P. Czerniewska. Eds. 1978. pp. 106-117

of unfamiliar concepts possible. Thus, there is a common ground of shared concepts between the text and the reader. In sentences of written English, new of free information does not usually appear until the predicate.

The subject normally establishes the topic and the predicate expands and modifies the topic. It would be inefficient if the reader had to read and stop to interpret each component of the text.

The distribution of components therefore permits the reader to move forward and backward in the text and to regroup components around informational chunks. The mind of the reader retains not a linear sequence, but a storage of chunks in which information is kept, some perceptually more prominent than others.

Smith is of the opinion that *"written language has to be resolved from the text itself and experience is required to develop the habit of using the thread of an argument or story as a clue to the meaning of language"* Smith (1978: 136).

There are various stages of prediction/expectation for the reader while reading:

- (a)** A time factor will be accounted for within the situation described by the text
- (b)** A mental representation containing the agent or topic under discussion and its associate characteristics will appear
- (c)** Familiar concepts will be followed by new or unfamiliar ones
- (d)** The thread of argument will act as a clue to the meaning of a text.

As we saw above, the process of reading is not linear, but overlapped and interrelated with expectations and predictions.

2.2.2.3 Strategy 3: Using Prior Knowledge

We know that prior knowledge is an important step in the learning process. It is a major factor in comprehension: that is, making sense of our learning experiences.

“Proficient learners build on and activate their background knowledge before reading, writing, speaking, or listening; poor learners begin without thinking.”
Irvin³⁰ et al. (1996:5)

Prior knowledge facilitates comprehension in the sense that readers generally understand texts more easily if they are familiar with the topics covered. Brain-based research confirms the fact that the learning environment needs to provide a setting that incorporates stability and familiarity. It should be able to satisfy the mind's enormous curiosity and hunger for discovery, challenge, and novelty.

Creating an opportunity to challenge our students to call on their collective experiences (prior knowledge) is essential. Through this process we move students from memorizing information to meaningful learning and begin the journey of connecting learning events rather than remembering bits and pieces.

When students learn to make connections from their experience to the text they are currently reading, they have a foundation, or scaffolding, upon which they can place new facts, ideas, and concepts. As good readers read, they think about what they are reading and consider how it fits with what they already know. In this way, they build upon the schema that they already have developed. Learners can make connections between the text to self, between the text to world and also between text to text.

Abraham³¹ (2002) states that an interactive approach *“demands that the teachers activate the students’ schema”* during the pre-reading phase by

³⁰ Irvin, J.L.; Lunstrum, J.P.; Lynch-Brown, C. & Shepard, M.F. (1996).

helping “students recognize the knowledge that they already have about the topic of a text” (p. 6), i.e. through discussion of titles, subheadings, photographs, identifying text structure, previewing, etc. Such activities are called “pre-reading strategies”.

Hayes and Tierney³² (1982) found that presenting background information related to the topic to be learned helped readers learn from texts regardless of how that background information was presented or how specific or general it was.

Research clearly emphasizes that for learning to occur, new information must be integrated with what the learner already knows (Rumelhart, 1980).

To teach this strategy the KWL chart was included as a model of the active thinking expected when reading. The letters K, W and L stand for three activities students engage in when reading: recalling what they KNOW, determining what they WANT to learn, and identifying what they LEARN as they read.

This strategy is designed to help students develop a more active approach to reading expository material. Teachers first model and stimulate the kinds of thinking needed for learning and then give students individual opportunities to list what they know, what questions they want answered, and what they have learned from reading the text. In this way, the benefits of group instruction are combined with individual student commitment and responsibility.

Originally, this strategy was developed to translate current research findings about the active, constructive nature of reading into an instructional lesson format. In classroom testing, K-W-L has been shown to be an effective tool to help children become more active thinkers and to help them remember better

³¹ Abraham, Paul. (2002). Skilled Reading: Top-down, bottom-up. Field Notes, 10(2); Retrieved on Nov 1, 2004 from <http://www.sabes.org/resources/fieldnotes/vol10/fn102.pdf>

³² Hayes, David A. and Robert J. Tierney. "Developing Readers Knowledge through Analogy." Reading Research Quarterly 17(2), 1982, 256-80. [EJ 257 814]

what they read (Ogle, 1986). It has also been useful in helping teachers better communicate the active nature of reading in group settings.

The chart resulted as a good resource to lead students' active thinking process and to model the way they should make the "I" connections when reading a text.

2.2.2.4 Strategy 4: Guessing words from context

This strategy was one of the most important to consider in this study since as we saw in the diagnostic test, almost all the students declared to have problems in reading when they do not understand a word. Finding new words when reading is not uncommon for readers, particularly L2 learners. It might not impede the overall understanding of the text. But if too many words or the most essential ones are unknown, then comprehension will surely suffer a lot.

Vocabulary is one of the most troublesome aspects of reading for second or foreign language readers. Typically, non-fluent readers want to look up every unknown word from a dictionary; otherwise they feel they are unable to understand any of what they are reading. This forces the reader into a word-by-word reading style especially when the text has many unfamiliar words. Reading becomes a painstaking job and the reader is probably discouraged to read.

Of all the reading strategies commonly recognized today in both L1 and L2 reading, one of the most widely studied and encouraged is the guessing of the meaning of unknown words from context (hereafter referred to as the "guessing strategy"). It has a long history of research relative to L1 reading in English, with the great majority of studies demonstrating its value. Justification for applying it to L2 reading has come from cognitive science models of reading and schema theory, which are now widely accepted in ESL/EFL circles. This is especially true of models that emphasize topdown processing, with Goodman's

(1967) famous characterization of "reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game" as probably the most influential.

The numerous studies which indicate that the strategy is effective provide validation for a strategy that is in itself intuitively appealing and appears to offer many advantages over laborious, time-consuming, methodical instruction in vocabulary and collocation.

Another claim in support of the guessing strategy is that it involves generalizable skills of interpreting surrounding text, predicting, and testing predictions while reading, which enhance reading skills as a whole (Liu and Nation³³, 1985). In addition, guessing has been advocated instead of dictionary use because stopping to use a dictionary interrupts the flow of reading (Brown, 1972).

Many studies have shown that a key factor affecting L2 readers' ability to make use of context is vocabulary knowledge. Laufer's (1997) summary of L2 research on this topic provides some interesting conclusions regarding the importance of vocabulary in reading comprehension and strategy use:

- L2 learners tend to rely heavily on words as landmarks of meaning in text, less so on background knowledge, and to virtually ignore syntax.
- Vocabulary knowledge has been consistently shown to be more strongly related to reading comprehension than other components of reading.
- Even if a reader has and uses good metacognitive strategies in L1, they will not be of use in the L2 until the reader develops a solid language base.

To this list, we can add points from Barnett's (1989) discussion of research on the guessing strategy:

³³ Brown, H. D. (1972). "Cognitive Pruning and Second Language Acquisition". *The Modern Language Journal*, 56(4), 218-227.

- Usable context varies from rich to poor, and is affected by the proportion of known to unknown words.
- Readers with larger active vocabularies can use available context better than those with smaller vocabularies.
- Beginning readers and advanced readers have been shown to use guessing Strategies more than middle level readers

These findings have important implications. First, they support Bialystock's (1990) proposition that context is created by the L2 reader in proportion to preexisting knowledge, and show that vocabulary is an important part of that knowledge.

Second, they make it clear that a critical level of vocabulary and general language mastery is essential, not only for successful use of the guessing strategy, but also for the transfer of L1 strategies to L2 reading (Laufer, 1997).

Third, the seemingly paradoxical fact that low- and high-level L2 readers use the guessing strategy more than middle-level readers is, in fact, another indication that level of linguistic development plays an important part in guessing. All of these points have direct implications for L2 reading instruction.

2.2.2.5. The Language Experience Approach (LEA)

Language experiences come from the child's home, community and school, and their experiences give them a foundation for learning that may be extended in the classroom. Language experiences make literacy learning meaningful and relevant for the child – instead of reading about 'Dick and Jane', students participate in and contribute to experiences that personalize literacy for each child (Hill, pp 72-89).

To the left are some experiences from school that enrich the child's language, form the basis of literacy activities before and after the event, and that help make writing, reading and talking about the experience meaningful.

2.2.2.6. The Importance of Learning Reading Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension skills increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Strong reading comprehension skills help in all the other subjects and in the personal and professional lives. The high stake tests that control advancement through elementary, middle, and high school and that determine entrance to college are in large parts, a measure of reading comprehension skills. And while there are test preparation courses which will provide a few short-cuts to improve test-taking strategies, these standardized tests tend to be very effective in measuring a reader's reading comprehension skills. In short, building reading comprehension skills requires a long term strategy in which all the reading skills areas (phonics, fluency, vocabulary) will contribute to success.

The Reading Skills Pyramid illustrates that there are many steps to becoming a proficient reader. There are five key areas in learning to read: phonemic awareness, phonics, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading fluency.



2.2.2.7. Differences between reading skills and reading strategies

A reading skill is a helpful tool that a student practices in order to improve reading. (Hollas, 2002). Teachers teach various skills to improve the understanding of reading. Unfortunately, many of the students while decoding do not comprehend what they are reading.

Students today have difficulty getting through a short reading assignment, such as a story. This difficulty is associated with the lack of ability to focus and concentrate on written words. Due to this, many students need guidance and strategies to help focus on reading and to do more than just read the words on a piece of paper. The skills of a strategic reader in the content areas can be broken down into seven areas (Hollas³⁴, 2002):

1. Predict – declaring in advance or to foretell on the basis of observation and/or experience.
2. Visualize – forming mental pictures of scenes, characters and events.
3. Connect – to link two things together or to associate and see a relationship.
4. Question – to inquire or examine.
5. Clarify – to make understandable or to become clear and free of confusion.
6. Summarize – to concisely obtain the essence or main point of the text.
7. Evaluate – to form an opinion about what you have read.

The strategies of comprehensive reading are procedures of high character, that imply the presence of objective to achieve, the planning of actions that are used

³⁴ Hollas, B. (2002). Teaching your below-grade level students how to become strategic Tennessee. Washington, DC

to achieve to achieve them, as well as the evaluation and possible change. This affirmation has several implications:

- If the reading strategies are procedures and they are teaching content, then we need to teach strategies for reading comprehension
- If strategies are procedures in a higher order, they involve the cognitive and metacognitive, in the teaching, they can not be treated as precise techniques or skills. What characterizes to the strategic thinking is the ability to represent and analyze the problems and the flexibility to provide solutions.

While a particular strategy may reinforce strength that one student has or may provide the key to overcoming a reading difficulty, the same strategy may prove to be cumbersome or tedious to another student. For this reason, the explicit teaching of reading strategies should also include opportunities for students to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategy. By considering questions such as:

- How does this strategy help me to understand the text?
- How does this strategy relate to something I already do or don't do as a reader?
- How might I use this strategy with texts from other subject areas?
- Students will become increasingly aware of the strategies that help them to read more effectively.

To the knowledge of the own strategies is called metacognition, in other words, knowledge about one's own thinking. Metacognition is a powerful tool for understanding reading and improving reading comprehension, and can be used by all teachers and in every classroom where reading occurs and comprehension is a component of instructional outcomes (Flavell³⁵ 1976: 232). The metacognition increases with the age. Young children have little metacognitive possibilities while the older are more able about it.

³⁵ Flavell, J.H. (1976). Metacognitive aspects of problem solving. In L.B. Resnick (Ed). The nature of intelligence (pp. 231-235) Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

On other hand, the metacognitive strategies are teachable; it is necessary to educate children to consciously use an appropriate strategy to help them better grasp the elements of a task, to establish a proper plan to resolve and control the sequence of steps involved in the applied strategy. In this way, the reading strategies can be considered metacognitive.

Creating mental images (visualizing)

This strategy involves the ability of readers to make mental images of a text as a way to understand processes or events they encounter during reading. This ability can be an indication that a reader understands the text. In other words it is a skill that is essential for building reading comprehension. We know that when readers lose their mental picture, comprehension is lost as well.

When the children read, they create mental images of what is happening in the story as it unfolds, based on what they already know and understand about the world around them. They are tapping into prior knowledge, making connections, inferring information, and paying attention to details. Characters are created in their minds and their own unique version of the story begins to play out in their imaginations, just like a movie. This is exactly why some of them are rather disappointed when the book version of their favorite story hits the big screen.

Clarifying portions of the texts that students do not understand

Clarifying is the strategy that readers use while monitoring comprehension. It occurs when the readers meet with comprehension breakdowns or confusion and when they attempt to restore meaning, when, for example, the reference terms are unclear and the vocabulary is difficult or unfamiliar. Readers monitor their reading comprehension when they try to clarify what they have read (Lederer, 2002)³⁶.

³⁶ Lederer, J. (2002). Reciprocal teaching of social studies in inclusive elementary classrooms. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 33 (1), 99–107.

Clarifying enables readers to identify and question any unfamiliar, unnecessary, or ambiguous information in the text. The questioning, discussion, and reflection that take place both during and after reading is an opportunity for clarifying. Therefore, clarifying is an important part of monitoring comprehension.

Generating questions

Generating questions requires readers to identify information in the text they are reading. Questions are constructed to ask about the main idea or important information. The purpose of this strategy is to test whether the readers understand the text and to help her or him identify important information. In addition, encouraging readers to generate questions related to the content of a text has a positive effect on the development of their reading comprehension (Andre & Anderson, 1979). Moreover, questioning can frame and solve comprehension inadequacies, assisting the readers in monitoring their own comprehension.

Rosenshine, Meister, and Chapman (1996)³⁷ stated that when readers create questions, they pay more attention to the content. This makes reading an active process and focuses the readers' attention on the text. When readers generate questions, they may generate answers that they expect to be correct. If a different answer is offered by a peer, a comprehension failure occurs, and the readers need re-thinking to find the right answer.

Rosenshine also described how students need to use their text to search for information and formulate questions in order to help them understand what they read. This also enables them to become more involved when they are reading. Some useful question words are who, what, when, where, why, and how, such as in the questions "What is happening?" and "Why is this

³⁷ Rosenshine, B., Meister, C., & Chapman, S. (1996). Teaching students to generate questions: A review of the intervention studies. *Review of Educational Research*, 66 (2), 181–221.

happening?” Overall, teaching students to generate questions during the reading process fosters comprehension and improves reading comprehension.

Retelling or summarizing all or parts of the text

In summarizing, readers are required to identify the key idea of each paragraph. A good summary does not include details that are not important. Readers are encouraged to make use of headings, sub-headings, and main ideas in each paragraph to summarize the text they are reading. The readers should think of what a paragraph or a text is mostly about, find a topic sentence, and construct a sentence that reflects the most important information in the paragraph. Summarizing the main idea in each paragraph of a text helps readers not only to connect what they already know to the present piece of reading, but also to predict what might happen in the next paragraph to check the accuracy of their prediction (Greenway, 2002)³⁸.

Summarization is used to help readers grasp the main idea of a text in order to comprehend the whole picture and to guide them through further reading. It improves reading skills by focusing the awareness on the important information in a text and ignoring the unimportant information

2.2.2.8. Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies and Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is a constructive process by which readers use both cognitive and metacognitive strategies to build their understanding of a text. Cognitive strategies directly involve the target language and include different methods such as summarizing and deductive reasoning, predicting, using organization, taking notes on the main points, using prior knowledge, and

³⁸ Greenway, C. (2002). The process, pitfalls and benefits of implementing a reciprocal teaching intervention to improve reading comprehension of a group of year 6 pupils. *Educational Psychology in Practice*, 18 (2), 113–138.

guessing meaning from the context (Oxford, 1990)³⁹. Metacognitive strategies are actions that allow readers to control their own reading; in other words, they are strategies based on “thinking about thinking.”

That is, the readers know when and how to use these strategies and adapt them to suit their reading purposes. Metacognitive strategies consist of planning, evaluating, and regulating one’s own skills. These include such skills as determining the reading task, evaluating the predictions, focusing on important information, relating important information, ignoring unimportant new words, checking the effectiveness of guessing meaning, re-reading relevant information when failure in understanding, and checking the effectiveness of achieving the whole reading task (Oxford, 1990).

Many researchers on reading strategy instruction (Duffy, 2002⁴⁰; Palincsar & Brown, 1980⁴¹; Salataci & Akyel, 2002⁴²) confirm that metacognitive strategy training improves students’ reading comprehension. It gives students a chance to plan before reading, control their reading process, organize their own rules, and evaluate themselves.

2.2.2.9. Metacognition and its Components

Before discussing metacognition, it is necessary to understand the cognitive and affective states of which it is composed. The cognitive states involve knowledge of the world, one’s own knowledge and capabilities, and knowledge of strategies. The affective states are knowledge of emotions, motivations, and attitudes.

³⁹ Oxford, R. (1990). Language learning strategies: a synthesis of studies with implications for strategy training. *Systems*, 17 (2), 235–257.

⁴⁰ Duffy, G. (2002). The case for direct explanation of strategies. In C. Block & M. Pressley (Eds.). *Comprehension instruction: Research-based best practices* (pp. 28–41). New York: Guilford Press.

⁴¹ Palincsar, A.S., & Brown, A.L. (1984). Reciprocal teaching of comprehension– fostering and comprehension–monitoring activities. *Cognition and instruction*, 1, 117–175.

⁴² Salataci, R., & Akyel, A. (2002). Possible effects of strategy instruction on L1 and L2 reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. 14 (1), April. Retrieved April 2006

This being said, metacognition is explained as the higher level of mental process that learners learn and which they use to control their thoughts or knowledge. It consists of metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experience (Flavell, 1987). Metacognitive knowledge relates to an awareness of one's knowing about cognitive states and affective states, and one's control of this knowledge to reach a goal. This metacognitive knowledge is declarative, procedural, and conditional (Brown, 1980).

Declarative knowledge involves knowledge of what one knows about cognitive stages and activities and affective states (Brown, 1980; Flavell, 1987); procedural knowledge refers to the way these cognitive states and activities and affective states are used; and conditional knowledge refers to the reason and the appropriate time to apply this knowledge and evaluate the effectiveness of the application of these kinds of knowledge.

For their part, metacognitive experiences involve the awareness of one's own cognitive and affective processes (Flavell, 1979). These experiences can change learners' thought processes; they can integrate and justify their current experience with the new metacognitive knowledge experience (Hacker, 1998)⁴³.

In conclusion, metacognition includes two components, knowledge and experiences. Metacognitive knowledge is declarative (what one knows about one's cognitive states and activities and one's affective states), procedural (how to apply those types of knowledge), and conditional (when and why to apply those types of knowledge).

Metacognitive experiences refer to the way one controls and regulates this kind of knowledge through planning, monitoring, problem solving, and evaluating. Knowledge and experiences that are repeatedly used and proven effective will

⁴³ Hacker, D.J. (1998). Definitions and empirical foundations. In D.J. Hacker, J. Dunlosky, & A.C. Graesser (Eds.). *Metacognition in educational theory and Practice* (pp. 277–304).

be stored and used in the future, whereas ineffective knowledge and experiences will be rejected.

2.2.2.10. Role of Metacognition in Reading

Metacognition is thinking applied to one's own thinking. It appears to be the key for thoughtful and active reading and plays an important role in reading comprehension. Duffy (2002) states that metacognition is a core strategic behavior and leads to control over one's own reading. Not only do successful readers know the reading strategies, but they monitor and control their use. That is, they know what strategies to use, when, and why to apply them, and they adapt them to fit their purpose. Metacognitive readers plan, monitor, evaluate, and regulate their own skills (Block, 1992⁴⁴; Salataci & Akyel, 2002⁴⁵).

There are three foundational parts to metacognition: developing a plan, monitoring and controlling the plan, and evaluating the plan. Additionally, through these three fundamental parts, readers have a chance to solve the reading problems they face. They use their background knowledge and interact with the text in order to solve problems and learn new experiences.

Metacognition relates to the ability to apply reading strategies to solve problems when readers face difficulties in reading texts. It leads readers into thinking about their learning process, supports them in their development of a plan of action, helps them monitor their own learning in order to construct their own knowledge, and teaches them how to evaluate their own learning process. Metacognition facilitates the readers' improvement of their reading ability and helps them to reach the ultimate goal which is to become independent readers.

⁴⁴ Block, E.L. (1992). See how they read: Comprehension monitoring readers. *TESOL Quarterly*, 26, 319–343.

⁴⁵ Salataci, R., & Akyel, A. (2002). Possible effects of strategy instruction on L1 and L2 reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14 (1), April. Retrieved April 2006, from <http://www.proquest.umi.com.library.ecu.edu.au>.

It can conclude that the person with the most affective strategies make operation destined to capture the global meaning of the text and to produce a organized, hierarchical and coherent representation of the content, having in mind not only the text's content, but also the knowledge schemes of the own character.

There is a generalized agreement in considering that the makers of comprehension strategies during reading can be encouraged by shared reading activities, such as:

- To make predictions about the text that we read
- To ask questions about what has been read
- To clarify possible doubts about the text
- To summarize the ideas of the text

The objective of it is that the reader can establish coherent predictions about what they read, check and getting involved in an active process of comprehension monitoring.

2.2.3 DEVELOPING READING ACTIVITIES

Developing reading activities involves more than identifying a text that is "at the right level," writing a set of comprehension questions for students to answer after reading, handing out the assignment and sending students away to do it. A fully-developed reading activity supports students as readers through pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities. (Grace Stovall Burkart, ed.; Center for Applied Linguistics, 1998).⁴⁶

As students design reading tasks, they must keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in a text is an unrealistic expectation even for native speakers. Reading activities that are meant to increase communicative competence should be success oriented and build up students' confidence in their reading ability; here I mention some important points:

1. Reading Comprehension Activities: Get involved in Reading

Reading comprehension activities help children develop thoughtful interpretations of what they read. Being able to read text and understand its message is fundamental for success in countless situations. It's important for children to get involved in Reading of their reading and not avoid or compensate their way around it. There are five main categories of activities that can help a child's reading comprehension, questioning, creating connections, visualization, making inferences, and constructing information.

2. Reading Comprehension Activities: Five Fundamental Activities

To get the most out of reading comprehension activities, it's important to encourage children to become active participants in the classroom involving reading.

⁴⁶ (Grace Stovall Burkart, ed.; Center for Applied Linguistics, 1998). The site was developed for the National Capital Language Resource Center (NCLRC) by Catharine Keatley and Deborah Kennedy under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, CFDA #84.015A.

- **Questioning:** Pose questions about what the moral of the story is, have them come up with questions, ask if they understood what they read.
- **Create Connections:** Have them connect themselves or other people they know to certain characters within a story, compare what they already know to the new information in the text.
- **Visualization:** Have them visualize and describe a character, setting, or object that's being described. Ask them to relate to their own surroundings to visually come up with a connected picture book.
- **Make Inferences:** Have them come up with what they think will happen next. Look for adjectives and phrases that help them read between the lines.
- **Construct Information:** Evaluate, generalize, and draw conclusions from the story. Try to get at the core meaning. What are the key concepts that helped them form their opinion?

For example: While children read texts about events taking place in a particular scenario (e.g., on a farm), objects referred to in the text (e.g., a toy barn, tractor, and horse) are made available, and the children are asked to manipulate those objects to simulate the content of the sentences. Such manipulation should force indexing, thereby facilitating the children's derivation of meaning.

On other hand, it's very important to ask students to come up with alternate endings to a story that they have read with reasons to justify the proposed ending. These will help students focus on the story and also use their imaginations to come up with alternate endings. At the end of the class, we can ask the students to vote if they preferred the alternate ending proposed by a student or were satisfied with the author.

3. Reading Comprehension Activities: Confidence

These activities don't only train a child to read. The activities help children exercise their brain's mental skills such as cognitive skills. Cognitive skills are fundamental in any learning process. There is a direct link between the two, cognitive skill and reading comprehension. If a child has poor cognitive skills, reading comprehension can suffer.

2.2.3.1 Easy Reading Comprehension Activities

Reading comprehension activities help the students to make meaning, as the following:

Read Aloud.- A purposeful read aloud is the best technique out of all reading comprehension activities.

As I mentioned previously, a key element of teaching reading strategies with an interactive read aloud is to understand how a variety of genres work. Not all are "built" the same, and many students have difficulty conceptualizing the difference between reading a story and reading a factual text. This is often used when teaching reading strategies during guided reading mini-lessons.

Children who love to listen to stories are generally better readers. Try to read aloud at least three to four times per day. Choose books that kids love (and they aren't always the same ones you do). There will be plenty of time to choose deep, meaningful books later on. If your kids don't enjoy reading, you first need to hook them before you can do anything else.

Visualizing the Text.- Often children view listening to or reading a text like a train that is roaring by them. They hear or read the words but do not slow down to envision what is actually happening.

Reading intervention strategies that generate mental images are critical for these kids to make gains. Students will find that they will not create the same

images as their peers, thus bringing to light the fact that reading is a creative activity. Students who cannot generate a mental image of a text need to be taught specifically how to do it.

Select a passage that has rich, descriptive language. Read it aloud, and pause after each sentence. Think aloud to the class the images you are creating in your mind. After reading the passage, tell the class about your image from the text and invite them to add to it, or change it to fit what they saw.

Predicting.- The art of predicting is a critical reading comprehension activities. Students predictions will be based on their background knowledge of the subject matter, so be sure to build it appropriately.

Being able to predict what will happen in a text sets up scaffolding for the students to build upon. Students should make predictions using the elements of the text, such as title, pictures, table of contents, and the back cover.

Continue making predictions as you read the story. Record these predictions on a T-Chart and revisit them during and after reading the text. A simple check-mark beside each prediction is enough to verify if the predictions were accurate or not.

For example, I have students create a T chart, on the left side they write What I Want to Know. On the right Side they Write I Know it. I have students brainstorm questions they want to know about the topic. Then on the right side students try to answer their own questions AFTER they finish reading.

Story Mapping or Summarizing.- One of the goals of teaching reading strategies is to help students be able to accurately summarize a text.

Story mapping is one of the reading comprehension activities that visually demonstrates a summary or retelling. A story map focuses on story elements:

characters, setting, problem and solution. If I am working on a retelling, I will also include the main events.

To begin story mapping, choose a simple text with clear elements and few minor problems. This will make it easier for your students to conceptualize. You can use a summary chart or draw each part out on large paper. Allow the students to illustrate each story element, then put it together and orally re-tell the story.

2.2.3.2 How to Improve Reading Comprehension with Worksheets

Teachers have traditionally used worksheets in the classroom, a practice that administrators often frown upon. However, this type of instructional material can be beneficial if utilized appropriately. Worksheets cannot take the place of quality instruction, but they should not be relegated to the status of "busy work." Rather, use worksheets to help your students improve specific comprehension skills. The worksheets can be used in the following form:

- a)** Give kids comprehension worksheets to complete in class. When you assign worksheets for homework, there is no verifiable way to know if the student completed it. Kids sometimes forget and lose papers, or they may get someone to do the work for them. The most effective way to use worksheets is to complete them together as a whole-group activity.
- b)** Search for worksheets on subjects that interest the individual student. This will require extra effort on your part, but kids will be more enthusiastic if they can read about topics they like.
- c)** Teach phonics along with comprehension; students will build fluency decoding (sounding out) skills which are components of comprehension.

2.2.3.3 How to Make Reading Comprehension Worksheets

Reading comprehension should begin not long after a child begins reading. Young children need to understand that reading can serve a purpose as well as be enjoyable. In addition to practicing reading fluency, children can carry out reading comprehension activities. Teachers can easily create their own reading comprehension worksheets that are designed to fit the needs of the beginning readers in their class. For make a work sheet appropriate to children are necessary take in mind some points such as:

- 1.** To determine the word level of the students who will be completing the sheet. Ensure that the skill focuses on comprehension of what is read and not on the ability to read the words; include both sight words and blending.
- 2.** Create passages for the students to read. Begin with readings that are shorter and build to longer passages as students' progress. Choose passages from a beginning reader or create your own. Use topics that appeal to younger children such as pets.
- 3.** Generate questions or activities that will assess comprehension of the words read. Do not confine your questions to multiple choices. For example, ask students to draw a picture that relates to a sentence or paragraph, add a new ending to a paragraph or retell the passage to a friend. Have the students read a passage and act out the story for the class. Vary the questioning and activities, but also practice standard questioning for test preparation.
- 4.** Vary the questioning so that the wording is not always identical to that of the reading passage. Have the reader do more than locate the text and copy it. For example, if the wording states Kim's favorite pet is a dog, refrain from asking "What is Kim's favorite pet?" Instead, use wording such as "Which pet does Kim like best?" or "Does Kim like cats or dogs more?"

2.2.4 USING TEXTBOOK READING ACTIVITIES

It is the teacher's responsibility to motivate reading by selecting the appropriate materials and especially for those at the early stages of learning. A metaanalysis of studies performed in this research that manipulated several aspects of intrinsic motivation support for reading. These findings suggest that "meaningful conceptual content in reading instruction increases motivation for reading and text comprehension." The second motivation-supporting practice showed that students who were provided choice of text performed higher on reading tasks than those with no choice. The third practice was using interesting texts. This conforms in selecting task texts, where the teacher should seek interesting texts and consider variety of topics. Readers' interest can be revealed by setting "a reading interest questionnaire" where students check the fields that suit their interest, i.e. short stories, thrillers, science fiction, card with words, etc.

Textbooks play a fundamental role in this process: formalizing the curriculum, allowing teacher to plan and develop the classes and helping students to study and exercise independently.

Textbooks are a source of information that they are the immediate reach of the students and their families, contributing to the learning of all. Reading is not only to decipher the meaning of words or locate main ideas in a written text, but also it is a continual process that lasts a lifetime and it is developed according to various texts' types and different purposes that the reader has. Reading requires a constant learning of new reading techniques, new vocabulary, and new grammar; therefore, it requires the mastery of more complex reading skills. (Allende⁴⁷, 1994)

To choose a textbook, we must take into mind that it works to promote all kinds of reflection. For this, the teacher should select materials, for example,

⁴⁷ Allende, Isabel. Paula (1994). New York: HarperCollins.

textbooks that have fiction stories, and if it is possible, that they are related and connect with today. Although, they are constrained to foreign language teaching, they keep formats and discursive elements of the genre, getting good results.

The purpose of including this text kind is to generate a discussion where students will be able to relate between their previous knowledge and current events with those raised in the text and the same time, that they can identify various linguistic resources (strategies for identifying specific information) that enable them to optimize the comprehension of written texts.

It is important to select texts if possible, students have not read before, that have controversial issues to discuss about and where students can feel identified, especially with a particular character, experience, etc. In this way, the teacher makes his students interact with the text using different themes that are related to prior knowledge of students. The purpose of this text-reader interaction is to predict, find items in their own lives and realities that are more familiar.

It is not always necessary to use readings that appear in textbooks designed for English teaching as a foreign language, because the contents of these sometimes are not consistent with the interests and motivations of their students. The course is topic-based (based on content), emerging issues, rather cross, and sometimes, the textbook does not coincide with it.

2.2.4.1 Choose texts of the right difficulty and interest level.

Texts of the right reading level are neither too easy nor too hard for a particular reader. Choosing texts of the right difficulty and interest levels will encourage children to read and to enjoy what they are reading. Vocabulary, word length, grammatical complexity and sentence length are traditionally used to indicate the difficulty level of a text.

The subject matter of a book is also an important factor. For instance, readers with substantial prior knowledge of a subject will be able to use their knowledge to read more difficult texts. Cultural factors are important when choosing books for non-native speakers.

Some children's books may contain references to situations, objects and experiences that are unfamiliar to non-native speakers. For both children and adults, native and non-native speakers, it is important to use authentic texts. This means materials written with readers in mind, not texts constructed to illustrate specific vocabulary or word forms. It is also important to use a variety of authentic texts, including both information texts and narrative or story texts.

Students often have an easier time reading information texts when they can use their knowledge of the topic. For it, I mention some practical applications about how to choose an appropriate text, such as:

- When assessing the difficulty level of a text, it is important to consider the language used, as well as its subject matter, interest level and assumed cultural knowledge.
- Apart from text difficulty, choose books that are well-written in terms of style and language.
- Choose reading materials that utilize students' local context. For instance, books about what students enjoy doing would be a good starting point.
- Use information texts that contain topics with which the students are familiar. This will allow them to use their prior knowledge and to learn more about the topic.
- Introduce reading materials of different types (genres) and topics. A lack of variety of materials leads to a limited reading and language experience.

2.2.4.2 Types of Texts for Reading Instruction

The use of different types of texts is most significant at the beginning levels of reading. Here we can identify the different types of texts that are needed for effective reading instruction. There are six distinctly different types of texts that can be used for reading instruction: wordless books; predictable texts; controlled high-frequency vocabulary texts; decodable texts; authentic literature; and created, easy-to-read texts. Presented in Table 1 is a brief description with major uses for each type of text.

Table 1: Types of Texts for Reading Instruction

Type	Description	Major Use
Wordless Books	Text composed only of illustrations or photographs. No print is given.	Away to help children develop a concept of themselves as readers, develop oral language, and develop self-expression.
Predictable Texts	Texts that utilize a repeated pattern of some type. May be authentic literature or created text.	Used as a way to introduce children to reading through shared reading and to provide practice through repeated readings.
Controlled High-Frequency Vocabulary Texts	Text written specifically for beginning reading instruction using a core of high frequency words that have been carefully introduced.	Provide practice in reading high frequency words.

Decodable Texts	Text written using words that utilize decoding skills students have been taught.	Provide practice and application of phonics and structural skills that have been taught.
Authentic Literature	Stories and informational texts where no attempts have been made to control the words, patterns, or decoding elements used in the text. The text is in the original form written by the author.	Used for practice and application of reading once students have developed beginning decoding skills. Also used for shared reading and read aloud.
Created, Easy-to-Read Texts	Stories and informational texts that have been written to control the level of difficulty and some aspect of skill application.	Used for practice and application of reading skills for students who may be experiencing difficulty in certain aspects of learning to read or need practice in applying a targeted skill or strategy.

2.2.5 ASSESSING READING PROFICIENCY

Comprehensive Assessment of Reading Strategies Series is an effective tool that provides teachers with immediate feedback on students' reading strengths and weaknesses. This information allows teachers to focus their instructional goals to gain maximum student learning. Students are engaged with their learning progress through metacognitive self-assessments. Students are motivated to think about their reading performance and the acquisition of reading strategies. (Trimble, Gay, and Matthews⁴⁸ (2005)

The Teacher Assessments may be completed at the end of the program as an overview of each student's performance. The Teacher Assessments provide teachers with a tool for diagnosing areas of strength or areas where improvement is needed with the core reading strategies. Teachers are also able to use this information to construct a visual aid—a bar graph—so that levels of mastery can be easily compared. Teachers then communicate in writing the results of assessments so that an instructional plan can be completed. Teachers may also use the Class Performance Chart to track the overall assessment results of the students in their classroom.

Reading ability is very difficult to assess accurately. In the communicative competence model, a student's reading level is the level at which that student is able to use reading to accomplish communication goals. This means that assessment of reading ability needs to be correlated with purposes for reading.

Evaluation criteria (here are chosen the best Reading Plan criteria adapted to our unit and it is added the criteria of the unit development, linking with English as a Foreign language).

⁴⁸ Trimble, S., Gay, A., & Matthews, J. (2005). Using test score data to focus instruction. *Middle School Journal*, 36(4), 26–32.

1. Achieving global comprehension of a text: it asks students to demonstrate an understanding of the text identifying its main theme, selecting the main idea of a text and distinguish it from second ideas, etc.

2. Getting Information effectively: to obtain this information, readers should review, search, locate and select relevant information, identify the essential elements of a message, etc.

3. Making an adjusted interpretation to the reading done: This criterion requires that students extend their initial impressions assimilating the information; in this form, they understand what they read in a more complete and specific way. To evaluate, it makes the comparison and contrasting of information, drawing conclusions about the relationship between different sources.

4. Reflect about the contents of a text: the reader must relate the text information with knowledge from other sources; he/she must justify his/her own point of view providing external arguments to the text, etc.

5. Reflect on the form of a text: the reader must learn to distance themselves from the text, considering it objectively to assess his/her coherence and adequacy. For it, s/he must know the aspects structure, gender, of text etc.

6. Use prior knowledge to make sense of reading.

Pearson⁴⁹ (1992) argue that research has been conducted with adults, children, competent readers and training readers yield the same conclusion: the new information is learned and remembered better when it is integrated with previously acquired relevant knowledge or existing schemes

⁴⁹ Pearson (1992). Developing expertise in reading comprehension. In S.J. Samuels & A.E. Farstrup (Eds.), What research has to say about reading instruction (2nd ed., pp. 145–199). Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

7. Monitor the comprehension during the reading process. The evidence presented in the investigations show that comprehension monitoring is what distinguish the competent reader and which is not. Another characteristic of the competent reader connected to the monitor function is that it corrects and regulates the text comprehension as soon it detects that there are problems.

8. Take the necessary steps to correct the comprehension errors when they realize that they have misinterpreted what they read. Good readers know what to do when they do not understand what they are reading. When the reading is difficult, they spend more time in it; while the less competent or deficit readers spend the same time to the independent reading of its complexity level.

9. Can distinguish what is important in the texts that they read. To determine what is important in reading is fundamental in the comprehension process.

10. Summary the information when they read. Many studies confirm the usefulness of summarizing as a study strategy and reading comprehension.

11. Constantly make inferences during and after the reading. One of the most common findings on researchers who study reading comprehension process is that making inferences is essential for comprehension (Anderson⁵⁰ & Pearson, 1984).

12. Ask questions: it's very common that teachers ask questions as part of comprehension activities, but that students are who generate the questions, it's not. This process encourages higher levels of knowledge, lead to deeper levels of knowledge of a text and it improves comprehension and learning.

⁵⁰ Anderson, R.C., & Pearson, P.D. (1984). A schema-theoretic view of basic processes in reading. In P.D. Pearson, R. Barr, M.L. Kamil, & P. Mosenthal (Eds.), *Handbook of reading research*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

2.2.5.1 Use assessment to provide feedback and measure progress.

There are two forms of reading assessment. The first is to find out how well children are reading in order to help them improve (diagnosis). Diagnostic assessment is about giving feedback and assistance to learners. The second is to measure how much progress has been made. Both forms of assessment are needed for effective reading instruction. In beginning reading, assessment is normally done by listening to students reading aloud. Teachers assess word recognition and fluency in this way. Beyond this stage, assessment should focus primarily on text comprehension.

Text comprehension is usually assessed through questions. Questions should focus on main ideas and viewpoints, not minor details. These are called higher order questions. Methods of assessment vary with the types of responses students make to the questions. The students' responses can be spoken or written. Written responses can be in the form of a multiple-choice response, short answers or extended pieces of writing. Materials used for assessing reading should ideally be authentic. They should reflect the type of reading normally encountered in daily life.

Practical applications

- Use assessment to find out how well students are reading, and also how to help them read better.
- Choose a method of assessment appropriate for the level and type of student.
- Higher order questions take the form of 'how' and 'why', rather than 'what'.
- When choosing materials for assessing non-native speakers, be mindful of words and concepts that might be unfamiliar.

2.2.6 READING METHODOLOGY

Reciprocal teaching (Brown and Palinscar, 1985) is a classic method for teaching reading comprehension strategies. Children are first shown how to apply the strategies by their teacher who models the process. Children then read a piece of text, paragraph by paragraph, and they learn to practice the strategies of:

- generating questions
- summarizing
- attempting to clarify word meanings or confusing text, and
- predicting what will happen in the next paragraph.

The teacher supports the student while they practice, giving feedback and additional modeling (guiding) as necessary. Gradually it is intended that the guided practice becomes a dialogue in which groups of students work together with a text, asking questions of one another, commenting on answers, summarizing and improving the summary. In a similar vein, activities can include helping one another to infer the meaning of a word or to reason about story events.

Reading is an intensive process in which the eye quickly moves to assimilate text. Very little is actually seen accurately. It is necessary to understand visual perception and eye movement in order to understand the reading process. There are several types and methods of reading, with differing rates that can be attained for each, for different kinds of material and purposes:

Subvocalized reading: it consists of combining sight reading with internal sounding of the words as if spoken. Advocates of speed reading claim it can be a bad habit that slows reading and comprehension, but other studies indicate the reverse, particularly with difficult texts.

Speed reading is a collection of methods for increasing reading speed without an unacceptable reduction in comprehension or retention. It is closely connected to speed learning.

Proofreading is a kind of reading for the purpose of detecting typographical errors. One can learn to do it rapidly, and professional proofreaders typically acquire the ability to do so at high rates, faster for some kinds of material than for others, while they may largely suspend comprehension while doing so, except when needed to select among several possible words that a suspected typographic error allows.

Structure-Proposition-Evaluation (SPE) method, popularized by Mortimer Adler in *How to Read a Book*, mainly for non-fiction treatise, in which one reads a writing in three passes:

1. For the structure of the work, which might be represented by an outline.
2. For the logical propositions made, organized into chains of inference.
3. For evaluation of the merits of the arguments and conclusions.

This method involves suspended judgment of the work or its arguments until they are fully understood.

Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review (SQ3R) method, it involves reading toward being able to teach what is read, and would be appropriate for instructors preparing to teach material without having to refer to notes during the lecture.

Multiple Intelligences-based methods draw upon the reader's diverse ways of thinking and knowing to enrich his or her appreciation of the text. Reading is fundamentally a linguistic activity: one can basically comprehend a text without resorting to other intelligences, such as the visual (e.g., mentally "seeing" characters or events described), auditory (e.g., reading aloud or mentally

"hearing" sounds described), or even the logical intelligence (e.g., considering "what if" scenarios or predicting how the text will unfold based on context clues).

Rapid Serial Visual Presentation (RSVP) reading involves presenting the words in a sentence one word at a time at the same location on the display screen, at a specified eccentricity. RSVP eliminates inter-word saccades, limits intra-word saccades, and prevents reader control of fixation times and it controls for differences in reader eye movement, and consequently is often used to measure reading speed in experiments.

2.2.7 LESSON PLAN

A lesson plan identifies the enabling objectives necessary to meet the lesson objective, the materials and equipment needed, and the activities appropriate to accomplish the objective. McMullin, M. (1992).⁵¹

- Enabling objectives are the basic skills (reading skills such as vocabulary, grammar, comprehension) that are necessary to accomplish the objective.
- Materials and equipment should be identified and secured well before class time to ensure that activities can be carried out as planned. (real life materials like bus schedules and children's report cards), visual aids, teacher made handouts, textbooks, flip chart and markers, overhead projector, tape recorder, etc.
- Activities generally move from more controlled (e.g., repetition) to a less structured or free format (e.g., interviewing each other).

A language lesson should include a variety of activities that combine different types of language input and output. Learners at all proficiency levels benefit from such variety; research has shown that it is more motivating and is more likely to result in effective language learning. Furthermore, the resources provided by the teacher have to cover a variety of literacy-focused topics such as: comprehension, word lists, centers, reading skills, vocabulary, and more.

The lesson plans for both the experimental and the control groups were created based on the objectives and goals of the course Reading for Further Study of the Foreign Language division at Unidad Educativa La Llama del Valle. The instruction for both groups was divided in three stages: pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading

⁵¹ McMullin, M. (1992). ESL techniques: Lesson planning. Teacher training through video. White Plains, NY: Longman.

It is convenient to clarify that in this study the terms “comprehension” and “interpretation” are used as synonyms. According to the constructivist theory, reading comprehension can be defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. The readers bring background knowledge which would permit to link the new information with the previous one and consequently interpret and comprehend what it is written.

Strategies are ways for learners to solve problems encountered in constructing meaning in any context. Unlike skills, strategies chosen by learners are modified to fit the demands of the learning situation. Strategic learners know how and when to alter, modify, combine, and test individual strategies against their prior knowledge, beliefs, and experiences. Some authors that support the ideas in this research are Oxford and Leaver:

“Foreign or second language (L2) learning strategies are specific actions, behaviors, steps, or techniques students use -- often consciously – to improve their progress in apprehending, internalizing, and using the L2”(Oxford, 1994:1)

“Strategy

instruction involves helping the students know more about themselves, so they can try out, test, and become expert in using the strategies that help them the most... Strategy instruction is a highly creative, multi-level process for teaching students to optimize their learning strategies for themselves as individuals. (Oxford & Leaver⁵², 1996:228)

The learning strategies and experiences that are included in this study begin with the assumption that reading is a thinking process that connects prior knowledge with predicting and confirming strategies when dealing with text. All

⁵² Oxford R. L., & Leaver, B. L. (1996). A synthesis of strategy instruction for language learners. In R. L. Oxford (Ed.), *Language learning strategies around the world: Cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 227-245). Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

of the ideas are related to gaining meaning from specific texts or topics related to texts.

The approach to teach reading considered in this study corresponds to the “top-down” one since it has been proved that schemata guide the comprehension not only of events, scenes or activities, but also the interpretation of the linguistic representation of them-i.e. of oral and written texts. This is exactly the relevant aspect of schema theory in the process of linguistic texts and in comparing the processing in English as a native language and English as a second or foreign language. I also thought that this approach would be better to solve the initial problem of comprehension the students had because the focus was on meaning.

Goodman is often referred to as a leading advocate of the top-down approach, although by his own admission, he recognized his model as an interactive one using print as input and meaning as output. But he argues that the reader also provides input while interacting with the text by being selective in using some of the cues from the text as necessary to construct meaning. (Goodman⁵³, K. 1981)

I also considered the following features of the model cited from Gove⁵⁴ (1983)

- *Readers can comprehend a selection even though they do not recognize each word.*
- *Readers should use meaning and grammatical cues to identify unrecognized words.*
- *Reading for meaning is the primary objective of reading rather than mastery of letters, letter/sound relationships, and words.*

⁵³ Goodman, K.S. 1981. "Letter to the editors." Reading Research Quarterly.

⁵⁴ Gove, M. K. 1983. "Clarifying teacher's beliefs about reading." The Reading Teacher.

- *Reading requires the use of meaning activities rather than the mastery of a series of word-recognition skills.*
- *The primary focus of instruction should be the reading of sentences, paragraphs, and whole selections.*
- *The most important aspect about reading is the amount and kind of information gained through reading.*

The consideration of time was also important, since using a top-down approach would have meant to develop some time consuming activities such as checking grammar structures or reading through phonic for example, which I thought to be a difficult approach to teach reading considering the level of the students and their age.

The explanations and discussion of the strategies were carried out in L1. Little research exists to support teaching language learning strategies in the native language, the target language, or a combination of both. In general, studies of beginner language learners have reported using the L1 to explain and discuss learning strategies, whereas teachers of intermediate proficiency level students have been more successful in using the target language.

In this study the L1 of the students was the channel through which comprehension reading strategies were communicated, used, and made part of the students' reading repertoire. Had English been used as the medium of instruction would have implied a great difficulty in the oral interactions with the teacher and in the expressions of comment and ideas from the part of the students

2.2.8 CLASSES

The training strategy sessions were prepared to make something different every class and they were associated to stimuli that were entertaining to motivate students. For example, I considered that children love pictures, and they like using them to learn new things. That is why I decided that the first session should be devoted to “using picture clues”

When I started with that class, I showed the students some pictures on the wall for them to discover the names of some characters by reading some cues. I gave them five minutes to do it. Only eight out of the twenty seven students got all the answers right, while the rest had some mistakes. To give them feedback I modeled the strategy to show them how it should have been done. After that, I asked them directed new questions. Some kids could not give an answer which generated that the rest of them started raise hands enthusiastically to participate.

The same day, we tried a new activity to see if this time they could do it on their own. This time they had to follow some instructions in order to make a little ball with a balloon and salt. Every step of the instruction included a picture next to it. Before they could make the ball I asked them some questions to see if they had really understood the instructions. For example: “Put all the sand into the first balloon” What do you think is the meaning of “into”?

Almost all the class raised hands to answer. The reaction of the students to the activity was great and this shows the importance of associating the language learning process to stimulus that are fun so that the students know that they can enjoy the class but at the same time it is important to work hard. Another important aspect is that the students discovered that most of the times the pictures are there not just to decorate the sheet but to give them some clues and help them understand what they read.

Reading material that includes pictures can help learners to follow instructions and test themselves at the same time; if they follow instructions correctly they

will get the expected results, such as the confection of a plane, a salt ball or a nice dessert for example. But if at certain point of the instruction they fail, they will realize that something went wrong so probably they need to come back to a previous step or start over again.

At the end of the first session, when they followed the instruction to make the salt ball, most of the students told about their own previous experiences following instructions from other sources too, such as computer game instructions, manuals to fit a toy or “the myth and legend” cards.

This became an important finding for me because I will use it in my future lessons for sure. Using this sort of texts is a great way to teach vocabulary in context, make the input more comprehensible and interact with the material at the same time, in other words, with this material the learners can “learn by doing”. It also works to guess meaning of words in context, for example in the following sentence:

“Put all the sand into the first balloon”,

I asked my students if they could give me the meaning of the word in bold. They could look at the picture clues of the instruction and also at the surrounding words. More than a half of the class raised hands to answer and the chosen student did know the correct answer.

During the second class of “using picture clues” the students had to look at a comic story in which the conversation had been removed for students to say what it was happening. This activity had a double purpose; looking at picture clues to understand the story and also predicting the content of the story. There were very close versions to the original one and students reported to have fun making their own hypothesis.

The second strategy the students learnt was “predicting”. The students had already been asked to make predictions previous to listening activities because

it is the way the skill is introduced in the student's book. So the strategy was not unknown for them, but this time I planned the activity so that students could develop certain "awareness" of it as a strategy.

The students made some expected predictions according to a text and they were all very close to the story. I also asked them to observe the pictures in the sheet so that in this way they could use the previous strategy too. After reading the text we compared the predictions they have made with the real story. Since most of their answers were right, the students found the text easier although there were some words they did not know, but still they could understand the story.

In the second class for predicting, I briefly explained the concept of "skimming" to the students, so that they could identify main ideas in a text which can be used to make predictions. For example, the heading and subheading can contain key words that will help us to predict the content of a text. We can also get brief information by reading the first sentences of a paragraph and then predict and think about the ideas that will be developed in the rest of the text. The students worked in groups of three to develop a sense of collaborative learning.

I also offered a "reward" for the group with the best ideas and this fact added an extra value to the activity for students to participate actively to the class. In fact, some of them expressed the desire to create their own website or magazine about the same topic to follow up the activity but unfortunately we lacked of time to do this.

The fifth week of strategy training was dedicated to "using prior knowledge" which was in fact one of the most enlightening strategies in this research because it is directly related to the schema theory and the top- down approach to reading.

This time, I used a text related to the flower cycle and plants because the students had just studied the topic in the science class a few weeks ago. As soon as I gave out the reading sheet with the topic the students recognized the topic by looking at the picture clues on it.

They also recognized the title. Before I asked them, they started naming the parts of the flower and plants and identified some words which were similar to Spanish such as pollen, calyx, fertilization etc.

The students claimed to know the topic because they had seen it in the science class. At this stage, I observed that they were applying the two previous strategies which at the same time attracted students' attention and concentration. They also showed more confidence to participate in the class expressing what they knew about the topic.

When we brainstormed some ideas on the board, almost all the students wanted to say something. In that moment, we talked about the importance of learning to think about the previous ideas they have related to the topic because this makes comprehension easier. In terms of vocabulary, it was important that students recognized key words because they were also part of the previous knowledge, for example cognates.

I could verify the effectiveness of contextualizing the material according to the students' need and previous knowledge because in this way, teachers can help the students to build up bridges to connect the previous and new information. In that way the students can familiarize the new information with what they know about the world and do not feel the sense of vagueness. Research studies have demonstrated that content schemata can make up for the lack of language schemata, to some extent, and thus help learners understand texts by predicting, choosing information and removing ambiguities.

Many studies show that readers' content schemata influence their reading comprehension more greatly than formal schemata. On the whole, the

familiarity of the topic has a direct influence on readers' comprehension as we saw in this analysis.

The more the reader knows about the topic, the more easily and quickly he gets the information of the text. An important resource to activate previous knowledge is the KWL chart which refers to three important steps when reading a text:

- What I know

- What I want to learn

- What I learned.

I used this resource during the second session for activating previous knowledge. Since I needed to first model the strategy, the students and I agreed on the ideas to fill in each step of the chart on the board. The connections to the text arose pretty soon. The most important finding here was the fact that “awareness” of learning strategies is fundamental for students to learn to think. As I said before, since we started the learning strategy sessions, more students started to participate in class actively and for me this is an evidence of the strategies working in their minds. After six sessions they started demonstrating that they could use the strategies as real tools to face reading comprehension activities.

Modeling strategies for students is also fundamental to show them how to think, especially with young beginner learners. The use of the chart demonstrated to be a great source to guided thinking. For example, when we filled in the first column of the chart, most of students could make the expected “I connections” and at the same time they could express many simple sentences in English.

The last strategy I taught was “guessing meaning from context”. This strategy aimed straight to help the students with the initial problem of getting stuck when

finding unknown words. The most important point was to make them realize that when reading we may often find a word or phrase we don't understand.

When dealing with those words or phrases we should first determine whether they are important or not by following the following steps:

- 1) Checking to see if the word is defined in the text.
- 2) Looking for similarities with words in Spanish
- 3) Trying to guess the meaning of the word by looking at the surrounding words.

After doing the activities to use the strategy, the students soon started to make important connections and hypothesize about the meaning of some words and phrases. For example, one student translated the word "colorful" as "color" in Spanish and although it should have been "colorido" the translation still was close to the intended meaning.

Another student got the meaning of the word "link" as "conectar" because she associated it with "an internet link", something she uses in her daily life. This last example proves the connection of the student with her previous knowledge which at the same time shows some degree of assimilation of the strategies. The students could identify and interpret what they were reading.

On the second session of "guessing words from context" I prepared a worksheet with different exercises to guess words from context. The following is an example:

Hurricanes and tornadoes are treacherous. Only a very foolish person would go out during that kind of weather.

What does treacherous probably mean?

- a) exciting
- b) dangerous
- c) funny
- d) safe

The idea behind this exercise was to find out the way students thought to get the answer. When we checked the exercises, I asked them to tell me how they had found the answers. For example, in the exercise above, many students agreed on saying that a tornado and a hurricane could not be exciting, funny or safe under any circumstances so they chose “dangerous” as the correct answer. I knew the word “foolish” was unknown for them, but I intentionally put it there to see if it interfered when deciding the correct answer. I did this considering that I had previously told the students that when we found unknown words in a text, we needed to first evaluate if they were important or not, and in this case, the meaning of “foolish” was not essential to answer the question.

By discussing the other exercises the students showed understanding about the desirable processing. Inferring the meaning of words is not an easy task though. Many times “the guessing” does not work. This is the case of false cognates, for example. But in that case it would be convenient to dedicate some sessions to explain students how to deal with uncertainty and to get used to it as part of the process of learning a new language. This could be part of future action plans to improve the students list of strategies.

2.3. HYPOTHESIS SYSTEM

2.3.1. Working Hypothesis

The active strategies applied to get a good comprehensive reading in the EFL classroom will improve the level of reading comprehension to children of the seventh year of basic education of the **“Unidad Educativa Experimental La LLama del Valle”**

2.3.2. Null Hypothesis

The active strategies applied to get a good comprehensive reading in the EFL classroom won't improve the level of reading comprehension to children of the seventh year of basic education of the **“Unidad Educativa Experimental La LLama del Valle”**

METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN

The methodological framework of this work describes the techniques and instruments set used for data collection. It also indicates the type of research, population and selected sample. We analyze the studied situation and results of the strategies application to develop the comprehensive reading with children of the seventh year of Basic Education from “UNIDAD EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE” .

3.1. RESEARCH TYPE AND DESIGN

The analytical portion of this thesis study consisted of a quasi-experimental design using questionnaire methodology for data collection. We have two variables. An independent one, which is Active Strategies that are going to be applied and the dependent variable, has to do with the Reading Comprehension that students will perform and how these variables relate each other. In this research are a control group and an experimental group, the students of the experiment were not randomly assigned to groups but they were formed before the experiment. A pretest and a posttest will be given to both groups in order to measure the results of this study.

G1	O1	x	O2
G2	O3	--	O4

Description:

G1 = Experimental Group (Students from the parallel “B”)

G2 = Control Group (Students from the parallel “A”)

O1 = Pre-Test of the Experimental Group

O2 = Post- Test Experimental Group

O3 = Pre-Test of the Control Group

O4 = Post-Test of the Control Group

X = Experiment Application

In other words, it was conducted in two phases: an initial diagnostic phase, which show the reading comprehension level in children from seventh year of basic education, and a second phase which it was produced a pedagogical proposal referring to strategies to improve comprehensive reading in children from the school mentioned previously.

3.2. POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.2.1. Population

A population is a group of individual people, objects, or items from which samples are taken for measurement for example a population of presidents or professors, books or students. Webster, M. (1985).⁵⁵

This research was made at Unidad Educativa Experimental “**La LLama del Valle**”, it is located at Leopoldo Mercado and Atuntaqui Street in Sagolqui Parish, Quito city with students that did not have knowledge about strategies to help them get a comprehensive reading are not clearly apply.

The mentioned school has six levels with two parallel each one: from Second to seventh year of Basic Education with a total school population of 246 students; and it is distributed as follows:

⁵⁵ Webster, M. (1985). Webster`s ninth new collegiate dictionary. Meriam - Webster Inc.

Table 2. Number of students for each level from the U.U.E. "LA LLAMA DEL VALLE"

LEVELS	Parallel "A"	Parallel "B"	Total
SECOND OF B.E.	17	17	34
THIRD OF B.E.	21	22	43
FOURTH OF B.E.	19	21	40
FIFTH OF B.E.	20	16	36
SIXTH OF B.E.	18	19	37
SEVENTH OF B.E.	29	27	56
TOTAL	124	122	246

Table 3. Population used to the research

LEVEL	STUDENTS
Parallel "A"	29
Parallel "B"	27
TOTAL	56

The table 2 shows that the seventh years of Basic Education which will take part in this research have a total population of 56 students.

3.2.2. SAMPLE

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985).

The population chosen for the purpose of this study consists of two groups, a group of 29 students (Parallel A) which will be the Control Group and the other group of 27 (Parallel B) which will be the Experimental Group, in total there are fifty six students is attending their seventh year of Basic Education at elementary school.

The first class (Parallel A) is made up of seventeen girls and twelve boys, and the second class (Parallel B) is made up of eleven girls and sixteen boys, aged between nine and eleven years old. In general, they all have a good economic situation. Their parents are all professionals and some of them belong to the business area. They invest money in after-school activities and private tutoring for their children in case they have problems in any subject. Academic achievements and grades are top priorities for most parents. Parents want their children to learn English because they see it as a necessary tool for professional development in terms that if a person wants to achieve a higher position in his / her career, certain knowledge of English is required.

The school is not a bilingual one and the level of the students can be defined as basic users, which means they:

- Can express opinions on abstract/cultural matters in a limited way or offer advice within a known area, and understand instructions or public announcements.
- Can understand straightforward information within a known area, such as on products and signs and simple textbooks or reports on familiar matters.
- Can complete forms and write short simple letters or postcards related to personal information.

To calculate the sample was used the following formula:

Formula:
$$n = \left(\frac{N \times Z^2 \times P \times Q}{d^2 \times (N - 1) + Z^2 \times P \times Q} \right)$$

In this work was used a confidence level of 95% and an error of 5%, establishing the variables for the calculation in the following form:

Description:

Z = Confidence level at 95%= 1,96

N = Total Population = 246 students

P = success probability, or expected proportion= 0,05

Q = Failure probability= 1-P = 0,95

d = Error = 5%= 0,05

Calculation:

$$n = \left(\frac{246 \times 1,96^2 \times 0,05 \times 0,95}{0,05^2 \times (246 - 1) + 1,96^2 \times 0,05 \times 0,95} \right)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{246 \times 3,84 \times 0,05 \times 0,95}{0,0025 \times 245 + 3,84 \times 0,05 \times 0,95} \right)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{44,87}{0,62 + 0,18} \right)$$

$$n = \left(\frac{44,87}{0,8} \right) = 56,08$$

The result is that the population sample is 56 students where the research was applied. It took two levels to form the sample total where the Control Group are students from the seventh year of basic education, Parallel "A", with 29 students who were applied a Pre-test and Post-test but without applying the active strategies to develop comprehensive reading. While the second group is the Experimental Group with students from the seventh year of basic education, Parallel "B" at the same school with 27 students who were applied the reading

comprehensive strategies and evaluated by a Pre-test and Post-test, also compared with the Control Group to determine if the hypothesis was accepted .

3.3. FIELDING WORK

The research was based on two different types of questionnaires (pre-Test and Post-Test) that were given to students from the “A” and “B” parallels of seventh year of basic education at the “Unidad Educativa La Llama del Valle”, in which it included to whom the survey was directed, the objective, instructions, as well as the content which was made of eight multiple choice questions with four parameters, or options of responses.

This survey type was very useful and a great contribution when we were analyzing and processing the data collected from our field investigation, in order to determinate if the research helped to develop reading comprehensive in the students.

3.4. INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The questionnaire technique was applied, which allowed collecting primary and essential data, and analysis of physical evidence. The instrument was consisted on a diagnostic reading comprehension by a written test with open and closed questions, in order to determine the reading comprehension level that had children where the students had to read and interpret.

The answers to the first questionnaire (Pre-test) allowed me to verify the students' weaknesses in the reading comprehension level and consequently make a decision of what learning strategies the students needed to learn. I chose this method of data collection because it was a faster way to collect the data in order to design my intervention.

3.5. PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS.

The collected data from a Pre-Test and a Post-Test applied to the students from the seventh years of basic education at the “Unidad Educativa La Llama del Valle”, was processed and analyzed by the descriptive statistics and the graphic representation, in order to integrate in a clear way the results before and after of the instruction plan application about strategies of reading comprehension in the foreign language.

4.1. PREVIOUS FOR THE DATA COLLECTION

To determine the effectiveness of using reading comprehension strategies in the children of the seventh years of basic education, who answered a questionnaire before and after the research. The results were analysed by a descriptive statistics analysis and a bar graph. This statistical procedure allowed determining the difference between the groups (control and experimental group before and after the application of reading comprehension strategies) at two different times and comparing the means and standard deviations.

4.2. ANALYSIS FOR STUDENTS AND BETWEEN THE GROUPS

4.2.1. PRE-TEST RESULTS

FORMULAS USED TO CALCULATE DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Mean:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum Xi}{n}$$

Variance:

$$s_1^2 = \frac{\sum (x_{i1} - \bar{x}_1)^2}{n_1 - 1}$$

Standard Deviation:

$$s_{x1} = \sqrt{s_1^2}$$

Table 4. Students' grades of the seventh year of Basic Education Parallel "A" before to apply the strategies (Control Group)

PRE-TEST		
Nº	Students	Score
1	Arteaga María Paz	12
2	Acosta Sebastián	11
3	Alvarez Jairo	9
4	Arias Gabriel	14
5	Baquero Emilio	6
6	Caiza Emilia	10
7	Cifuentes Paula	5
8	Cueva Nicol	7
9	Cevallos Doménica	13
10	Cun Evelyn	12
11	Erazo Emilio	9
12	Gavilanez Dana	17
13	Garofalo Sayline	8
14	Guzmán Miguel	9
15	Gross Sara	6
16	Jácome Iván	12
17	Jaramillo Evelin	16
18	Larrea Mariela	5
19	Mejía Dylan	15
20	Miño Carlos Luís	6
21	Monteros Guillermo	5
22	Morales Gabriela	7
23	Murry Leonardo	7
24	Palacios Mateo	11
25	Pazmiño Diana	13
26	Rosales Mirela	10
27	Romero Camila	9
28	Shiguango Brigith	17
29	Vanegas Telma	5

Table 5. Descriptive statistics calculation of the Control Group

Nº	Students	xi	$xi - \bar{x}$	S²
1	Arteaga María Paz	12	2,14	4,57
2	Acosta Sebastián	11	1,14	1,29
3	Alvarez Jairo	9	-0,86	0,74
4	Arias Gabriel	14	4,14	17,12
5	Baquero Emilio	6	-3,86	14,92
6	Caiza Emilia	10	0,14	0,02
7	Cifuentes Paula	5	-4,86	23,64
8	Cueva Nicol	7	-2,86	8,19
9	Cevallos Doménica	13	3,14	9,85
10	Cun Evelyn	12	2,14	4,57
11	Erazo Emilio	9	-0,86	0,74
12	Gavilanez Dana	17	7,14	50,95
13	Garofalo Sayline	8	-1,86	3,47
14	Guzmán Miguel	9	-0,86	0,74
15	Gross Sara	6	-3,86	14,92
16	Jácome Iván	12	2,14	4,57
17	Jaramillo Evelin	16	6,14	37,67
18	Larrea Mariela	5	-4,86	23,64
19	Mejía Dylan	15	5,14	26,40
20	Miño Carlos Luís	6	-3,86	14,92
21	Monteros Guillermo	5	-4,86	23,64
22	Morales Gabriela	7	-2,86	8,19
23	Murry Leonardo	7	-2,86	8,19
24	Palacios Mateo	11	1,14	1,29
25	Pazmiño Diana	13	3,14	9,85
26	Rosales Mirela	10	0,14	0,02
27	Romero Camila	9	-0,86	0,74
28	Shiguango Brigith	17	7,14	50,95
29	Vanegas Telma	5	-4,86	23,64
Σ		286		389,45
\bar{x}		9,86		
s_1^2		13,91		
s_{x1}		3,73		

Table 6. Students' grades of the seventh year of Basic Education Parallel "B" before to apply the strategies (Experimental Group)

PRE-TEST		
Nº	Students	Score
1	Aguirre Francisco	8
2	Acosta Mateo	9
3	Amador Lavihve	13
4	Arévalo Daniel	7
5	Ávila Pablo	15
6	Benítez Miguel	14
7	Bustamante Diego	13
8	Cela Giuliano	9
9	Chávez Johan	7
10	Dávila Alicia	12
11	Delgado Emilio	10
12	Fonseca Estefanía	11
13	Goyes María Belén	5
14	Gross Milena	8
15	Jara Gabriela	17
16	Jurado Paola	14
17	Lara Verónica	13
18	León Erick	14
19	Martínez Natalia	9
20	Miño Paula	9
21	Morales Jorge	7
22	Salazar Javier	8
23	Shiguango Liseth	12
24	Tamayo Santiago	11
25	Toledo Andrés	5
26	Zorrilla Jimmy	12
27	Yanez Luís	5

Table 7. Descriptive statistics calculation of the Experimental Group

Nº	Students	xi	xi- \bar{x}	S²
1	Aguirre Francisco	8	-2,26	5,10
2	Acosta Mateo	9	-1,26	1,59
3	Amador Lavihve	13	2,74	7,51
4	Arévalo Daniel	7	-3,26	10,62
5	Ávila Pablo	15	4,74	22,47
6	Benítez Miguel	14	3,74	13,99
7	Bustamante Diego	13	2,74	7,51
8	Cela Giuliano	9	-1,26	1,59
9	Chávez Johan	7	-3,26	10,62
10	Dávila Alicia	12	1,74	3,03
11	Delgado Emilio	10	-0,26	0,07
12	Fonseca Estefanía	11	0,74	0,55
13	Goyes María Belén	5	-5,26	27,66
14	Gross Milena	8	-2,26	5,10
15	Jara Gabriela	17	6,74	45,44
16	Jurado Paola	14	3,74	13,99
17	Lara Verónica	13	2,74	7,51
18	León Erick	14	3,74	13,99
19	Martínez Natalia	9	-1,26	1,59
20	Miño Paula	9	-1,26	1,59
21	Morales Jorge	7	-3,26	10,62
22	Salazar Javier	8	-2,26	5,10
23	Shiguango Liseth	12	1,74	3,03
24	Tamayo Santiago	11	0,74	0,55
25	Toledo Andrés	5	-5,26	27,66
26	Zorrilla Jimmy	12	1,74	3,03
27	Yanez Luís	5	-5,26	27,66
Σ		277		279,19
\bar{x}		10,26		
s_1^2		10,74		
s_{x1}		3,28		

4.2.2. POST-TEST RESULTS

Table 8. Students' grades of the seventh year of Basic Education Parallel "A" after to apply the strategies (Control Group)

POST-TEST		
Nº	Students	Score
1	Arteaga María Paz	13
2	Acosta Sebastián	9
3	Alvarez Jairo	10
4	Arias Gabriel	14
5	Baquero Emilio	8
6	Caiza Emilia	11
7	Cifuentes Paula	6
8	Cueva Nicol	5
9	Cevallos Doménica	10
10	Cun Evelyn	14
11	Erazo Emilio	10
12	Gavilanez Dana	16
13	Garofalo Sayline	9
14	Guzmán Miguel	9
15	Gross Sara	7
16	Jácome Iván	11
17	Jaramillo Evelin	14
18	Larrea Mariela	6
19	Mejía Dylan	16
20	Miño Carlos Luís	8
21	Monteros Guillermo	5
22	Morales Gabriela	8
23	Murry Leonardo	7
24	Palacios Mateo	11
25	Pazmiño Diana	15
26	Rosales Mirela	13
27	Romero Camila	9
28	Shiguango Brigith	15
29	Vanegas Telma	7

Table 9. Descriptive statistics calculation of the Control Group

Nº	Students	xi	xi-\bar{x}	S²
1	Arteaga María Paz	13	2,79	7,80
2	Acosta Sebastián	9	-1,21	1,46
3	Alvarez Jairo	10	-0,21	0,04
4	Arias Gabriel	14	3,79	14,39
5	Baquero Emilio	8	-2,21	4,87
6	Caiza Emilia	11	0,79	0,63
7	Cifuentes Paula	6	-4,21	17,70
8	Cueva Nicol	5	-5,21	27,11
9	Cevallos Doménica	10	-0,21	0,04
10	Cun Evelyn	14	3,79	14,39
11	Erazo Emilio	10	-0,21	0,04
12	Gavilanez Dana	16	5,79	33,56
13	Garofalo Sayline	9	-1,21	1,46
14	Guzmán Miguel	9	-1,21	1,46
15	Gross Sara	7	-3,21	10,28
16	Jácome Iván	11	0,79	0,63
17	Jaramillo Evelin	14	3,79	14,39
18	Larrea Mariela	6	-4,21	17,70
19	Mejía Dylan	16	5,79	33,56
20	Miño Carlos Luís	8	-2,21	4,87
21	Monteros Guillermo	5	-5,21	27,11
22	Morales Gabriela	8	-2,21	4,87
23	Murry Leonardo	7	-3,21	10,28
24	Palacios Mateo	11	0,79	0,63
25	Pazmiño Diana	15	4,79	22,97
26	Rosales Mirela	13	2,79	7,80
27	Romero Camila	9	-1,21	1,46
28	Shiguango Brigith	15	4,79	22,97
29	Vanegas Telma	7	-3,21	10,28
Σ		296		314,76
\bar{x}		10,21		
s_1^2		11,24		
s_{x1}		3,35		

Table 10. Students' grades of the seventh year of Basic Education Parallel "B" after to apply the strategies (Experimental Group)

POST-TEST		
Nº	Students	Score
1	Aguirre Francisco	13
2	Acosta Mateo	15
3	Amador Lavihve	16
4	Arévalo Daniel	13
5	Ávila Pablo	18
6	Benítez Miguel	18
7	Bustamante Diego	16
8	Cela Giuliano	15
9	Chávez Johan	16
10	Dávila Alicia	17
11	Delgado Emilio	14
12	Fonseca Estefanía	17
13	Goyes María Belén	12
14	Gross Milena	14
15	Jara Gabriela	20
16	Jurado Paola	18
17	Lara Verónica	17
18	León Erick	14
19	Martínez Natalia	20
20	Miño Paula	15
21	Morales Jorge	16
22	Salazar Javier	6
23	Shiguango Liseth	16
24	Tamayo Santiago	17
25	Toledo Andrés	15
26	Zorrilla Jimmy	18
27	Yanez Luís	13

Table 11. Descriptive statistics calculation of the Experimental Group

Nº	Students	xi	xi- \bar{x}	S²
1	Aguirre Francisco	13	-2,52	6,34
2	Acosta Mateo	15	-0,52	0,27
3	Amador Lavihve	16	0,48	0,23
4	Arévalo Daniel	13	-2,52	6,34
5	Ávila Pablo	18	2,48	6,16
6	Benítez Miguel	18	2,48	6,16
7	Bustamante Diego	16	0,48	0,23
8	Cela Giuliano	15	-0,52	0,27
9	Chávez Johan	16	0,48	0,23
10	Dávila Alicia	17	1,48	2,19
11	Delgado Emilio	14	-1,52	2,31
12	Fonseca Estefanía	17	1,48	2,19
13	Goyes María Belén	12	-3,52	12,38
14	Gross Milena	14	-1,52	2,31
15	Jara Gabriela	20	4,48	20,08
16	Jurado Paola	18	2,48	6,16
17	Lara Verónica	17	1,48	2,19
18	León Erick	14	-1,52	2,31
19	Martínez Natalia	20	4,48	20,08
20	Miño Paula	15	-0,52	0,27
21	Morales Jorge	16	0,48	0,23
22	Salazar Javier	6	-9,52	90,60
23	Shiguango Liseth	16	0,48	0,23
24	Tamayo Santiago	17	1,48	2,19
25	Toledo Andrés	15	-0,52	0,27
26	Zorrilla Jimmy	18	2,48	6,16
27	Yanez Luís	13	-2,52	6,34
Σ		419,00		204,74
\bar{x}		15,52		
s_1^2		7,87		
s_{x1}		2,81		

4.2.3 GRAPHICAL EXPOSITION OF RESULTS

Chart 1. Comparison between the used variables in the Descriptive statistics from the Control Group before and after the test

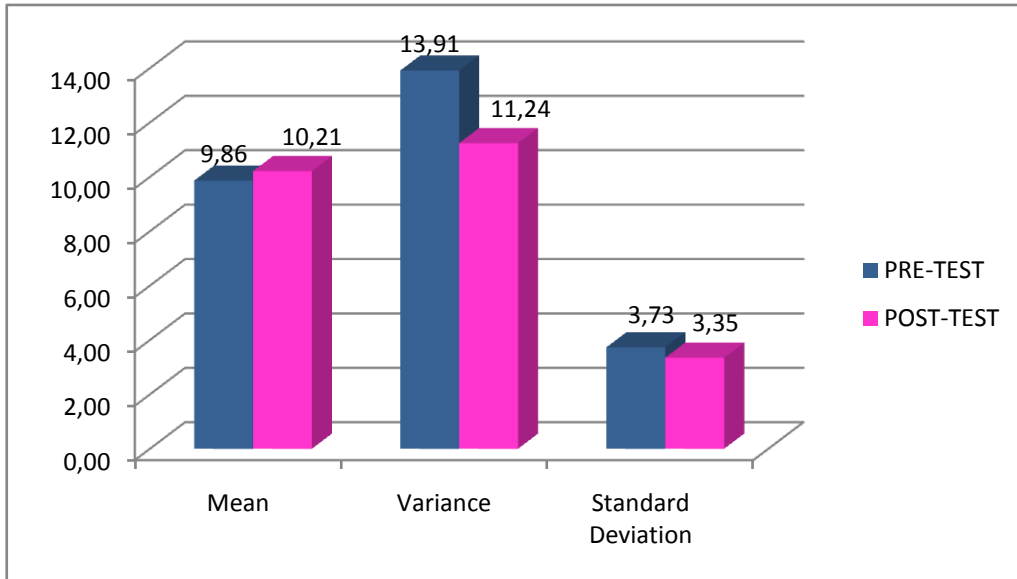


Chart 2. Comparison between the students' grades of the Control Group before and after the test

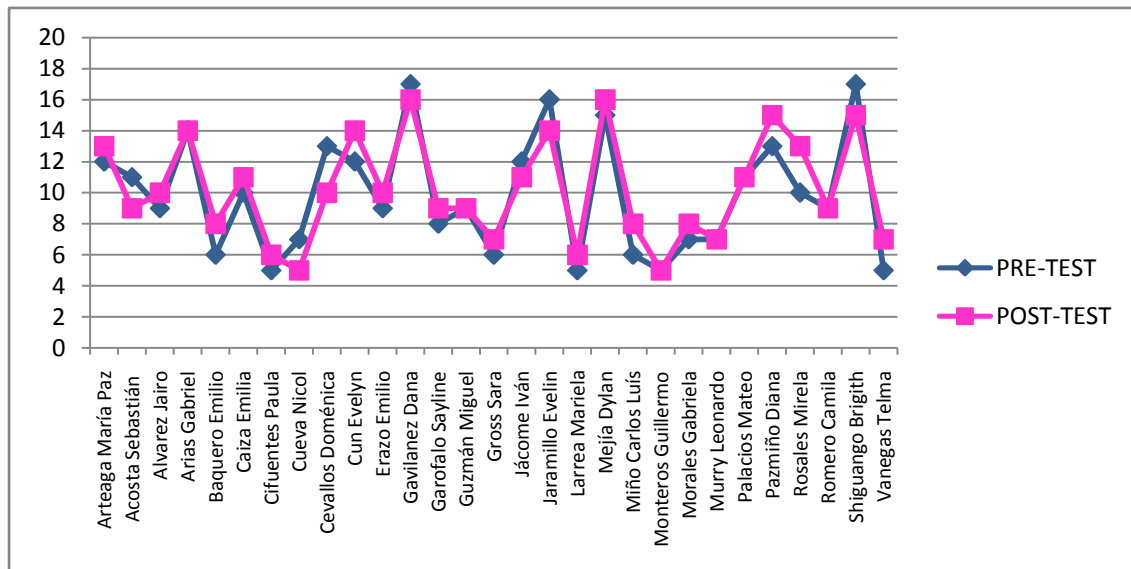


Chart 3. Comparison between the variables used in the Descriptive statistics from the Experimental Control Group before and after the test

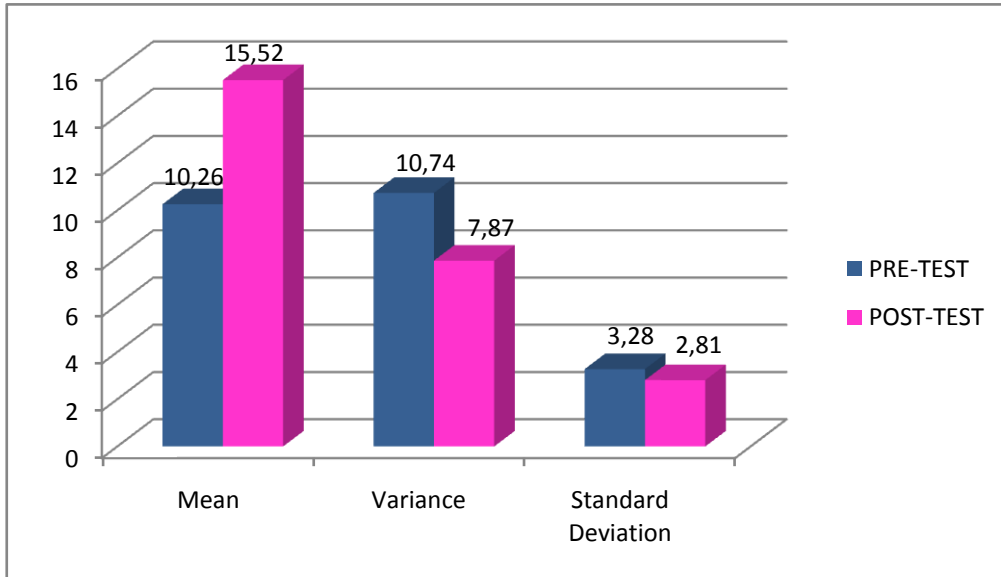
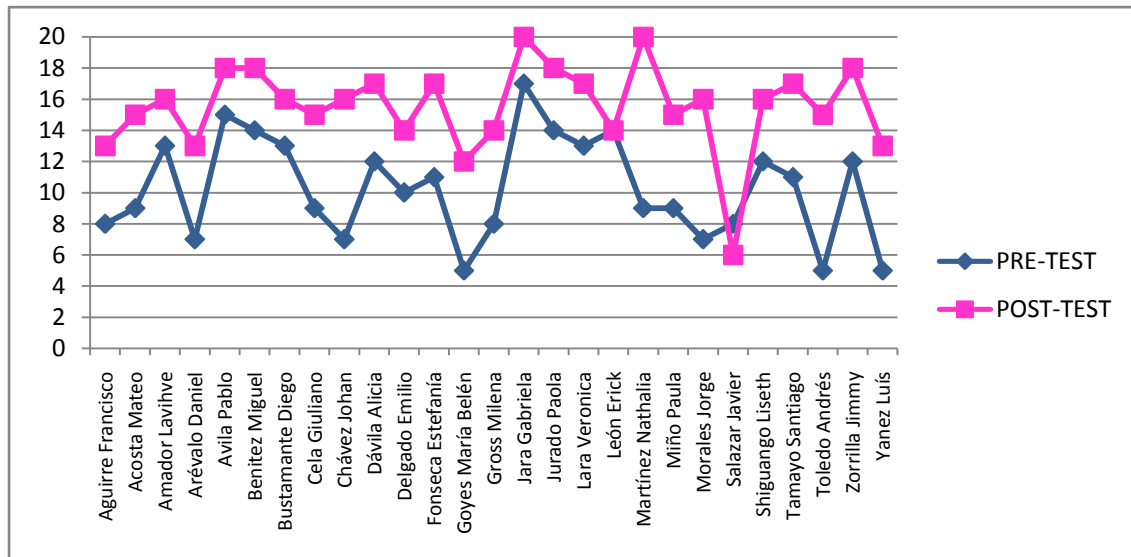


Chart 4. Comparison between the students' grades of the Experimental Group before and after the test



4.2.4. STUDENT'S T-TESTS

FORMULAS USED TO CALCULATE THE T-STUDENT TEST

Mean:

$$\bar{d} = \frac{\sum d}{n}$$

Standard Deviation:

$$\sigma d = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (d - \bar{d})^2}{n-1}}$$

T-student:

$$t = \frac{\bar{d}}{\frac{\sigma d}{\sqrt{n}}}$$

Table 12. t- Student calculation of the Control Group

Nº	Students	Before	After	d	d - \bar{d}	(d - \bar{d}) ²
1	Arteaga María Paz	12	13	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
2	Acosta Sebastián	11	9	2,00	2,34	5,50
3	Alvarez Jairo	9	10	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
4	Arias Gabriel	14	14	0,00	0,34	0,12
5	Baquero Emilio	6	8	-2,00	-1,66	2,74
6	Caiza Emilia	10	11	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
7	Cifuentes Paula	5	6	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
8	Cueva Nicol	7	5	2,00	2,34	5,50
9	Cevallos Doménica	13	10	3,00	3,34	11,19
10	Cun Evelyn	12	14	-2,00	-1,66	2,74
11	Erazo Emilio	9	10	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
12	Gavilanez Dana	17	16	1,00	1,34	1,81
13	Garofalo Sayline	8	9	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
14	Guzmán Miguel	9	9	0,00	0,34	0,12
15	Gross Sara	6	7	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
16	Jácome Iván	12	11	1,00	1,34	1,81
17	Jaramillo Evelin	16	14	2,00	2,34	5,50
18	Larrea Mariela	5	6	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
19	Mejía Dylan	15	16	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
20	Miño Carlos Luís	6	8	-2,00	-1,66	2,74
21	Monteros Guillermo	5	5	0,00	0,34	0,12
22	Morales Gabriela	7	8	-1,00	-0,66	0,43
23	Murry Leonardo	7	7	0,00	0,34	0,12
24	Palacios Mateo	11	11	0,00	0,34	0,12
25	Pazmiño Diana	13	15	-2,00	-1,66	2,74
26	Rosales Mirela	10	13	-3,00	-2,66	7,05
27	Romero Camila	9	9	0,00	0,34	0,12
28	Shiguango Brigith	17	15	2,00	2,34	5,50
29	Vanegas Telma	5	7	-2,00	-1,66	2,74
Σ				$\Sigma d = -10,00$		$\Sigma (d - \bar{d})^2 = 62,55$
\bar{d}		-0,34		t-student value with a significance level at 95% and 28 of freedom Degrees = 1,7011		
σd		1,49				
T		1,24				

$t_{obs} < t_{tab}$ it is accepted the H_0

Table 13. T- Student calculation of the Experimental Group

Nº	Students	Before	After	d	d - \bar{d}	(d - \bar{d}) ²
1	Aguirre Francisco	8	13	-5,00	0,26	0,07
2	Acosta Mateo	9	15	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
3	Amador Lavihve	13	16	-3,00	2,26	5,10
4	Arévalo Daniel	7	13	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
5	Ávila Pablo	15	18	-3,00	2,26	5,10
6	Benítez Miguel	14	18	-4,00	1,26	1,59
7	Bustamante Diego	13	16	-3,00	2,26	5,10
8	Cela Giuliano	9	15	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
9	Chávez Johan	7	16	-9,00	-3,74	13,99
10	Dávila Alicia	12	17	-5,00	0,26	0,07
11	Delgado Emilio	10	14	-4,00	1,26	1,59
12	Fonseca Estefanía	11	17	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
13	Goyes María Belén	5	12	-7,00	-1,74	3,03
14	Gross Milena	8	14	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
15	Jara Gabriela	17	20	-3,00	2,26	5,10
16	Jurado Paola	14	18	-4,00	1,26	1,59
17	Lara Verónica	13	17	-4,00	1,26	1,59
18	León Erick	14	14	0,00	5,26	27,66
19	Martínez Natalia	9	20	-11,00	-5,74	32,96
20	Miño Paula	9	15	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
21	Morales Jorge	7	16	-9,00	-3,74	13,99
22	Salazar Javier	8	6	2,00	7,26	52,70
23	Shiguango Liseth	12	16	-4,00	1,26	1,59
24	Tamayo Santiago	11	17	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
25	Toledo Andrés	5	15	-10,00	-4,74	22,47
26	Zorrilla Jimmy	12	18	-6,00	-0,74	0,55
27	Yanez Luís	5	13	-8,00	-2,74	7,51
Σ				$\Sigma d = -142,00$		$\Sigma (d - \bar{d})^2 = 207,19$
\bar{d}		-5,26		t-student value with a significance level at 95% and 26 of freedom Degrees = 1,7056		
σd		2,82				
T		9,68				

$t_{obs} > t_{tab}$ it is accepted the H_a

4.3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION INSIDE THE GROUPS

To investigate whether the participants in the experimental group improved their reading ability after receiving instruction through application of active strategies to improve the comprehensive reading, the mean scores of their results on the pre- and post-administration of the English reading comprehension section were calculated using the dependent t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference before and after the instruction.

Then, after analysing the data, the obtained results in this investigation showed that there is no incidence of the application of ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE READING, it means that it is accepted the null hypothesis for the Control Group using t- students test by $T_{obs} < T_{tab}$, showing that the obtained means from the students' grades of students from seventh year of basic education, parallel "A" at "UNIDAD EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE", without applying active strategies are equal. With Descriptive statistics analysis it was observed that there is only a slight increase of 0.35 points and the standard deviation decreases by 2.67. Then it shows that without implementing the strategies there is not a big increase in the reading comprehension level of the students previously mentioned.

The same result can be appreciated when analysing the basic statistical factors, taken within the pre-test and the post-test in the Experimental Group where were significantly different from their mean score. Here, it is accepted the alternative hypothesis using t-student test being $T_{obs} > T_{tab}$, showing that the means are different with the students' grades of students from seventh year of Basic Education, parallel "B" after applying ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP COMPREHENSIVE READING, it clearly shows an increase in the

average of 5,26 points and the standard deviation decreased with 0,47. Then, it means that the group has obtained better results after applying the strategies that helped to increase significantly the students' scores in the evaluations and in the same time their reading comprehension level. This result strongly supports the fact that the participants instructed through active strategies to improve the reading comprehensive developed better metacognitive reading awareness, self-regulation, and reading comprehension.

I can to prove that the students can understand the main ideas from, write the most important notes, to make predictions about the text and showing more interest for the reading after applying the reading strategies (Using picture clues, Predicting, Using prior knowledge and Guessing words form context). Also, it's important mention that the students had some problems at first of implementing the reading strategies because it was a new technique, but they could link up in a better way with the dairy practice, making progress in the process and helping them to improve their retention and reading comprehension.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained from the instrument (Pre-Test) application before the strategy implementation showed the students' weaknesses in the reading comprehension level of the foreign language. The results indicated that the active strategies to develop the comprehensive reading (Using picture clues, Predicting, Using prior knowledge and Guessing words form context) had a significantly positive effect on the English reading comprehension and metacognitive reading strategies of school students. The post-test mean score of the experimental group was significantly higher than that of the control group.

Subsequently, the results obtained after applying active strategies to develop comprehensive reading showed a few use of reading comprehension strategies by students. Such information allow us to affirm that the low use of reading comprehension strategies directly influence to the development of it, because students don't know about the strategies that help for improve the reading comprehension and understand the text ideas.

On the other hand, Students from seventh year of basic education at "Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle" during the school year 2010-2011 that have difficulties in reading comprehension can understand the text in a easier way when the reading materials are appropriate to enable the personal work in a higher level, because they based on their experiences and basic vocabulary and the teacher acts as a master tutor.

When reading comprehension is promoted at students from seventh year of basic education of "Unidad Educativa Experimental La Llama del Valle" they will

learn to use the content of what they read and that helps them to get gradually the habit of reading and of course to improve their school performance.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated the effects of active strategies to develop the reading comprehensive (Using picture clues, Predicting, Using prior knowledge and Guessing words form context) in the EFL classroom. Through the analysis of its results, the application reading strategies was shown to have advantages over skill-based teaching and to improve students' reading comprehension. From the raised conclusions is recommended the following points:

- To create reading areas in the different educational institutions where students and teachers can receive guidance aimed at developing reading and comprehension habits
- To facilitate workshops to the teachers to know the different strategies for developing reading comprehension and their benefits at foreign language learning.
- To apply strategies to improve reading comprehension level without forgetting the students' academic level their knowledge about the foreign language.
- To use learning strategies in each academic area, allowing a better comprehension about the contents to be studied, which facilitate students to learn in an active, easy and enjoy way.
- To remember that reading is to understand and we can not overemphasize that reading is one of the most important lessons provided by the school and foreign language learning. This facilitates the access to the written culture, socialization, and all knowledge and information kinds.
- Among the techniques to encourage comprehensive reading, is preferably one that is conducive the students' active participation to develop their skill in a best way.

- To teach Students that reading is an expression means and a powerful learning tool. Who learns to read develops a part of his/her thinking, and this becomes a vital tool for intellectual growth of the student.

6.1. DATA REPORT

A HANDBOOK BASED ON ACTIVE STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP THE READING COMPREHENSION SHARING AMONG ENGLISH TEACHERS IN A SEMINARY AT “UNIDAD EDUCATIVA EXPERIMENTAL LA LLAMA DEL VALLE”

6.2. BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSAL

Once the research has been finished, and considering the results obtained in the previous diagnosis, it is presented the following proposal elaborated with the goal that the teacher knows practical strategies in teaching of reading comprehension, and take ownership of some tools to achieve meaningful learning in students. It is focused as strategies, with suggestions about activities that can be developed to improve the student’s reading skills, it’s not designed as prescriptions, but as flexible and reflective resources, of which the teacher can appropriate to achieve their goals, with freedom to modify or adapt to the interests and the context of the students. Also, the teacher will have the possibility to create new exercises, taking into account that the students ever are who anticipate, infer, and summarize the constructed meanings. I planned an action research project to investigate:

1. How can I, as teacher, help improve reading comprehension levels of junior students in the school?
2. What can I learn about teaching reading strategies to struggling readers?
3. How do I positively influence students’ attitudes about reading?
4. How can I incorporate what I learn into my daily practice?

In this way, the students who participated in the study received specific reading strategy instruction, through a balanced literacy approach, to improve their comprehension. These students shared a simplistic view about reading, and their ability to assess how they solved reading challenges was limited.

6.3. JUSTIFICATION

The reading is cause of numerous studies, concerns the education sector and in many other areas of society. At different educational levels and in the research on student achievement have been conducted; show that the success or failure of students is closely linked to their ability to read.

The reading as the cornerstone in the educational process has reason to care due to serious deficiencies in reading comprehension that show several children. From there, the reading comprehension is presented in all theatres of all educational levels and it is considered a critical activity for student learning, since a large amount of information that students acquire, discuss and use in ESL classrooms arise from written texts.

It should be emphasized that the relevance of this proposal is coupled with the concern of many teaching professionals, because of the importance that reading has on education.

On other hand, this proposal is interesting that as stated in the Basic Education Program, students from the beginning of schooling must be taught for what he or she studies and the countless benefits that will yield a good intellectual training.

The results may make a contribution to curriculum planners, teachers and supervisors, seeking to improve the teaching-learning process. It is just as a contribution to the implementation of studies related to the variable reading comprehension strategies, along with other indicators to improve reading comprehension skills.

6.4. OBJECTIVES

- To let teachers be aware of the importance of applying innovative reading strategies in order to improve comprehensive reading in the students of La Lama del Valle School
- To have practical experience in learning/teaching according to this approach, including experience in using a variety of strategies to improve student reading and writing skills.
- To gain knowledge in the approach to English reading teaching/ learning based strategies, appropriate to all levels of students.
- To provide teachers tools that permit them to be more effective in their teaching, especially in the reading comprehension training.

6.5 FUNDAMENTATION

This proposal builds on the psycholinguistic and cognitive approach to reading, in this sense; learning occurs inside the theory that the student has of the world and, as Goodman says, "The understanding is a process where the reader constructs meanings from his conceptual background and textual language keys."

Then, the teaching of reading has as main objective is the appropriate use of language because as we know that communicative competence is the set of processes of knowledge that the speaker / writer have to use for produce or understand different types of speeches appropriated to the situation and context of communication.

Taking into account the above, in teaching is a process where the teacher promotes a learning environment of shared freedom, generating respect for students' personal meanings, and understand that it is on them where the students construct new knowledge and the construction depends on the characteristics of the context and the teacher's mediation. This integration of knowledge in their communicative dimension, intellectual and attitudinal can be produced from the communicative interaction - Constructive and pedagogical criteria.

In this way, the language axis, aims has the objective of form men and women who understand that the communicative exchange is in the expression of messages coherently organized, clearly adapting to the language context use and the validity of verbal and nonverbal language uses.

From this perspective the teacher should see the active student, able to act and build their own learning created by the teacher in the classroom, resource use, the running activities and the provided guidance to resolve the conflicts or problems about the reading comprehension.

Thus, the teacher should provide moments of communication among students, separating the traditional teaching approaches that emphasize the formal way, forgetting to help students know how to do things with words, to acquire the higher possible level of communicative competence in various situations and contexts, to know the procedures involved in reading comprehension and the role of communicative interaction within the social and cultural context where the student are.

Furthermore, Reading comprehension is of crucial importance for EFL students, who find it very hard to achieve a good level and cannot even interpret what they are asked to do in simple tasks. More often than not our students of English do not understand what they read.

In the educational context we take into account for our work, teachers are limited in taking professional decisions. Current-traditional instruction still exists and is dominant in some institutions. It is well known that teachers are not satisfied with their teaching results, but their working conditions do not leave them time to improve their practice. Due to low salaries and the difficulty of having all their classes in only one school, they are pushed to give classes in different institutions. Besides, educators receive over crowded classes with students that come from different social backgrounds and this makes it difficult for them to meet each student's needs.

We know that Institutions are complex settings in which reading in L2 must take place. It is our desire to help teachers know about an alternative way of developing strategies to improve the reading comprehension. We sincerely

believe that obstacles to understanding reading texts in students can be rectified with SFL.

6.6. DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR READING COMPREHENSION

1. Reading Competence

- 1.1 Introduction of the Seminar
- 1.2 Goals of this Seminar
- 1.3 A review of approaches for EFL teaching
- 1.4 Analysis of the three types of language learning Principles: Cognitive, Affective and Linguistic.

2. Reading Comprehension Teaching Approach

- 2.1 Characteristics and Objectives of Applying Active Teaching strategies
- 2.2 Developing of the active strategies
- 2.3 Brief Description of each Strategy Approach
- 2.4 Comparison among the different types of strategies

3. Cooperative learning

- 3.1 Selection of Methods to elevate the Reading comprehension level
- 3.2 Teachers' Role
- 3.3. Techniques and Activities

4. Interactive Classroom activities

- 4.1 Teachers' Role and Application
- 4.2 Practice through demonstrative classes
- 4.3 Techniques and Activities

5. Developing of Classroom activities

- 5.1 Reading zone
- 5.2 Reading game
- 5.3 Samples of Active Techniques and Strategies
- 5.4 Application of Active Techniques
- 5.5 Assessment

DIDACTIC UNIT 1

Subject: Seminary on reading strategies

Responsible: Miss. Susi Andrade

Topic: Reading Competence

Period: Three hours (60 minutes)

Year: 2010- 2011

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Introduction of the Seminary - Goals of this Seminary - A review of approaches for EFL teaching - Language learning Principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To describe the context in which teachers develop their work - To know what is and how to develop comprehensive reading - To encourage teachers to use innovative techniques for reading comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organisation and spatial use of the classroom in order to maximise the effectiveness of teaching and learning. - Use of materials and teaching resources; - Models of schemes of work and units of work - Feedback - Backward build up drill - Transformation Drill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stories - Worksheets - Cards - Slides - Computer - Pencils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimuli-response - Class performance in a written and orally form - Attitudinal - Teachers will answer some question - Individual Participation - Group work

DIDACTIC UNIT 2

Subject: Seminary on reading strategies

Responsible: Miss. Susi Andrade

Topic: Reading Comprehension Teaching Approach

Period: Three hours (60 minutes)

Year: 2010- 2011

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Characteristics and Objectives of Applying Active Teaching strategies -Developing of the active strategies -Brief Description of each Strategy Approach -Comparison among the different types of strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know the theory and principles of the Reading Comprehension Teaching Approach. - To review the strategies of the Reading Comprehension Teaching method. - To make teachers value the principles of Reading Comprehension Teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tasks and activities for students - Scrambled Sentences - Picture Strip Story - Grammar game - Strategies to motivate students to read effectively - Ludic activities and pastimes - Assessment techniques which may be used before, while and after the reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Story sheets with pictures - Cards - Pencils - Authentic Materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimuli-response - Class performance in a written and orally form - Attitudinal - Teachers will answer some question - Individual Participation - Group work

DIDACTIC UNIT 3

Subject: Seminary on reading strategies

Responsible: Miss. Susi Andrade

Topic: Cooperative Learning

Period: Three hours (60 minutes)

Year: 2010- 2011

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
<p>-Methods to elevate the Reading comprehension level</p> <p>-Teachers' Role</p> <p>-Techniques and Activities</p>	<p>- To describe the principles of the Cooperative learning</p> <p>- To appreciate the work in groups</p> <p>- To consider this method for teaching classroom use.</p>	<p>- work in mixed groups</p> <p>- exchange information</p> <p>- Planning</p> <p>- Methodology for teaching reading skill and other components of the curriculum: grammar, vocabulary, linguistic, socio-linguistic and socio-cultural aspects, etc</p> <p>- Report</p>	<p>- Sheets with a reading</p> <p>- Cards</p> <p>- Pencils</p> <p>- Blackboard</p>	<p>- Stimule-response</p> <p>- Individual Participation</p> <p>- Group work</p> <p>- Class performance in orally form</p> <p>- Attitudinal</p> <p>- Teachers will answer some questions</p>

DIDACTIC UNIT 4

Subject: Seminary on reading strategies

Responsible: Miss. Susi Andrade

Topic: Interactive Classroom Activities

Period: Three hours (60 minutes)

Year: 2010- 2011

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Teachers' Role and Application -Practice through demonstrative classes -Techniques and Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know the Teachers' role and application. - To propose by practice the techniques and strategies of the reading process - To know how to apply and explode in the classroom reading comprehension strategies. - To experience how fun can be Interactive classroom activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Three minute review - Demonstrative classes - The teaching practice and feedback - Application techniques strategies of and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paper - pictures - Board - Pencils - Books 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimuli-response - Class performance in a written and orally form - Attitudinal - Teachers will answer some question - Individual Participation - Group work

DIDACTIC UNIT 5

Subject: Seminary on reading strategies

Responsible: Miss. Susi Andrade

Topic: Developing of Classroom Activities

Period: Three hours (60 minutes)

Year: 2010- 2011

CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	RESOURCES	EVALUATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reading zone -Reading game -Samples of Active Techniques and Strategies -Application of Active Techniques -Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To know the advantages and how to create a reading zone in the classroom - To practice reading comprehension using appropriate techniques and strategies. - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Classroom Set up - Role Play - Development and application of active techniques and strategies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Posters - Stories - Pictures - Cards - Paper - Pencils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stimule-response - Class performance in orally form - Attitudinal - Teachers will answer some questions - Individual Participation - Group work

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