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Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada

THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO IMPROVE
READING COMPREHENSION IN A PRE-INTERMEDIATE EFL CLASS
AT SAGRADOS CORAZONES HIGH SCHOOL,
CUENCA, ECUADOR

Tesis previa a la obtención del
Grado de Magister en Lengua Inglesa y
Lingüística Aplicada.

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CUENCA-ECUADOR
2014



Resumen

Esta investigación se centra en el uso de Organizadores Gráficos para contribuir al mejoramiento de la lectura comprensiva en una clase de nivel pre-intermedio de inglés en un colegio privado en Cuenca, Ecuador.

La falta de destrezas de lectura puede afectar el rendimiento académico de los estudiantes haciendo necesario el proveerlos con herramientas eficaces que faciliten su mejoramiento. Varios beneficios obtenidos por el uso de Organizadores Gráficos como herramientas de lectura, han sido comprobados como influencia positiva en la comprensión lectora, por lo que se ha considerado que su aplicación debería extenderse a la enseñanza del inglés y sus efectos en el aprendizaje deberían ser estudiados en forma sistemática.

La metodología usada fue principalmente cuantitativa con la aplicación de una prueba previa, 14 actividades de lectura comprensiva, una prueba posterior y un cuestionario aplicados a los grupos experimental y de control. Los datos fueron procesados y analizados por comparación de los resultados cuantitativos obtenidos por las participantes. Información adicional sobre la experiencia, sentimientos y opiniones de las estudiantes fue también incluida en el experimento.

El Capítulo I presenta el contexto teórico básico y las variables de este estudio. El Capítulo II describe la metodología, su aplicación, herramientas de investigación utilizadas e información recolectada. El Capítulo III presenta e interpreta los datos recolectados. Los resultados muestran que la hipótesis ha sido correcta: El uso de Organizadores Gráficos influyen positivamente en la lectura comprensiva. Finalmente el Capítulo IV expresa las conclusiones, sugerencias y recomendaciones hechas basadas en los resultados obtenidos.

Palabras Claves: Organizadores Gráficos, herramientas de lectura, influencia positiva, lectura comprensiva, destrezas, rendimiento académico, lectura estratégica, aprendizaje autónomo



ABSTRACT

This research study focuses on the use of Graphic Organizers to contribute to the improvement in reading comprehension in a pre-intermediate EFL class at a private high school in Cuenca, Ecuador.

The lack of reading skills can affect the students' academic performance making it necessary to provide students with effective tools to facilitate reading comprehension improvement. Various benefits obtained by the use of GOs as reading tools have been proven to influence reading comprehension in a positive way. It was felt, therefore, that their application should be extended to ESL/EFL classes and their effects on learning should be studied in a systematic fashion.

The methodology used was mainly quantitative with the application of a pre-test, 14 sets of reading comprehension activities, a post-test and a questionnaire administered to the treatment and the control group. Data was analyzed by comparing the quantitative results and processed according to the scores obtained by the participants. Additional information about the students' experience, feelings and opinions regarding the treatment was also included in the experiment.

Chapter I introduces the basic theoretical context and the variables of this study. Chapter II describes the methodology, its application, the research tools used and the data gathered. Chapter III presents and interprets the data collected in the course of the research. The results show that the hypothesis has been correct: the use of Graphic Organizers can be a helpful tool when attempting to improve reading comprehension. Finally, Chapter IV contains the conclusions; suggestions and recommendations are also made in line with the results obtained.



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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tania Cecilia Bustamante Saavedra", written over a horizontal line.

Tania Cecilia Bustamante Saavedra

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to God for all his love, for being the strength and the light in my life and to my daughters Carolina and Gabriela for being the most beautiful gifts that life has given to me. They have given me the inspiration just as they give the ultimate meaning and significance to everything that I do.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the University of Cuenca and my teachers for helping me to accomplish this goal. My special appreciation goes to Mrt. Erzsebet Agnes Bekes for being a great professional and human being. Her encouragement and advice helped me face the challenges involved in carrying out my research and writing up my thesis.

I thank my family, especially my husband, Patricio for his love, dedicated support, and comprehension, for being by my side in every step of my life.



BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Considering that English is a universal language, the ability to understand and communicate in this *lingua franca* has become an essential skill. Nowadays, the skill of having a proficient level of English can open doors to professional and educational opportunities worldwide. Nuttall points out that among the obvious advantages of knowing a foreign language like English is the fact that one may enjoy better job prospects as well as access to a wealth of literature (3). Besides, English is not just any foreign language, it is also a global, international language and the need to learn it is recognized by billions. This fact is stressed by Graddol in his book entitled “English Next” (published in 2006) when he says: “A massive increase in the number of people learning English has already begun, and is likely to reach a peak of around 2 billion in the next 10-15 years” (14).

It is difficult to determine the exact number of students learning English in Ecuador at present. At different universities across the country the number of English students increases every year. For example, the “Escuela Politécnica Nacional” in Quito has about 3000 students in their different English courses; most of them are high school students, while another significant group is made up of professionals who need to learn English for academic purposes and in order to get better jobs (“El idioma inglés pasó de una obligación a una necesidad”).

Ecuadorian students, just like others worldwide, need to learn English to be able to communicate and process information both for personal reasons and academic purposes at all educational levels. However, students in Ecuador face major problems when trying to understand English texts because they do not have the necessary skills for reading in English.

Be it a first or a second language, reading is an essential part of our lives. In his book entitled “Teaching Reading to ELLs”, Farrell states that “Reading can be one of the greatest pleasures we experience throughout our lives” (1). However, reading is not



only an enjoyable pastime; as is well-known, reading provides us with both information and instruction, and it facilitates interaction of all kinds with other people.

Reading is a great tool to develop knowledge of a new language. In order to build reading motivation, it is necessary to be aware of the benefits and understand the reasons for reading. It is essential for the students to start reading as early as possible; it is also important for the teacher to choose the methodology according to the readers' interests and preferences and to be consistent (Gallagher 4-12).

According to UNESCO, in the year 2011 the number of books read by individuals in Ecuador was the lowest in Latin America. Ecuadorians barely read half a book per year while, for example, the Chileans' rate was 5.4 and that of the Argentinians 4.6 books per person. The difference is even greater when we compare these figures with other countries like Spain where the number stood at 10.3 or Norway, Switzerland, China and Finland, where each person read an average of 47 books per year (González).

Statistical data on the topic reveal that reading skills in Ecuador are poor and, therefore, it is of great importance to implement reading campaigns to promote reading, and especially the inseparable skill, reading comprehension (Machuca León).

Poor reading skills can affect the students' academic performance since reading and understanding what we read is essential in all subjects. Therefore, it is necessary to provide learners with effective tools to help them develop their reading skills at school (before tertiary level) and facilitate their independent learning as well.

The researcher's personal experience has been that the Ecuadorian educational system and methodology usually do not give students enough opportunities to develop the ability to analyze and evaluate information while reading and to become active learners in the process. Class participation is often very limited, since most of the reading is conducted in lecture-style, allowing little room for the development of thinking skills.

Returning to the issue of English teaching in particular, over the past decades there have only been a few steps taken by those in charge of the educational system of Ecuador with respect to English instruction. In 1992 the Ecuadorian and British



governments started the implementation of an English teaching project with the aim of improving English instruction in Ecuador. This was called CRADLE; the acronym stands for 'Curriculum Reform and Development for the Learning of English'. In 1993 the Ecuadorian educational authorities decided to make an effort to improve English language education in public secondary schools by increasing English instruction to five class periods each week (Ministerial Agreement No. 2511). But the students' English proficiency still needs to develop and the government continues its efforts to improve the English teaching-learning process in Ecuador (Zambrano Zambrano 2).

Ecuador is not the only Latin American country where the standards of English teaching are not as high as they should be. Based on the 2011 ranking of EPI (English Proficiency Index) analyzed by Education First, Latin America was one of the weakest regions in English proficiency and Ecuador was 37th among the 42 countries listed (Ecuador tiene falencias en enseñanza del Inglés, promedio en escuelas y colegios es de 13 sobre 20). Furthermore, according to the data published by the National Secretariat of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (SENESCYT), the average English proficiency level of Ecuadorian Year 10 and junior students was as low as 13/20.

Consequently, it is necessary to look for instructional alternatives including new methodologies and strategies to facilitate active learning with due emphasis on reading comprehension. The present research study is looking at ways of how this could be accomplished by using a special instructional tool that come under the title of Graphic Organizers, such as for example, Venn Diagrams, Cause and Effect, Categories charts, Single and double bubbles maps, chain or sequence of events, etc. If the students acquire the necessary tools to improve reading comprehension, they will be able to improve their academic performance and even become strategic readers, which could eventually lead to better life opportunities.



INTRODUCTION

This research study proposes the use of Graphic Organizers to contribute to the improvement of reading comprehension in a pre-intermediate EFL class at a private high school in Cuenca, Ecuador.

Reading is the primary source of information for humans; it is also of great importance in foreign language learning, because it increases vocabulary and writing performance; it makes people smarter and opens doors for the future (Gallagher 17).

Problem Statement

Learning English is a crucial educational requirement today. When learning English as a second/foreign language, students will most probably face difficulties in the area of reading since understanding texts can be very challenging, especially for EFL learners, who get little language support away from the classroom. This was one of the reasons why the researcher came to the conclusion that there is a need to apply some new strategies and tools to help students improve their reading, especially reading comprehension skills, and to facilitate their acquisition of active learning skills in the process.

It has been acknowledged for a number of years now that the Ecuadorian educational system and methodology need to improve and give students wider opportunities to develop the ability to analyze and evaluate information while becoming active learners in the process. Those responsible for educational reforms in Ecuador are in agreement that class participation needs to increase and it is necessary to promote the development of thinking skills as well. Consequently, there is a need to look for alternatives, including new methodologies and strategies, to facilitate the active learning component of reading comprehension. Eventually, the students should be able to solve real-life problems and leave high school with the required tools to become self-sufficient and skilled lifelong learners. Improving learning strategies, especially those related to reading, will benefit not only the students but society at large as well.



The use of Graphic Organizers has been shown to be beneficial for reading comprehension (Inspiration 2, 10); therefore, these were the tools chosen to be introduced to the students in the course of the project.

Research Questions

- To what degree can the use of Graphic Organizers improve the reading comprehension skills of pre-intermediate students?
- To what degree can the use of Graphic Organizers help students become strategic readers?

The objectives of this study were:

- To teach students to use Graphic Organizers as a reading strategy
- To instruct students on how to become strategic readers through the use of Graphic Organizers as a complementary strategy for reading
- To identify the benefits of the use of Graphic Organizers to improve reading comprehension of pre-intermediate English learners

The hypothesis for the study was stated as follows: The use of Graphic Organizers will improve the reading comprehension skills of pre-intermediate English learners.

Research methodology

The methodology used was mainly quantitative. The Quasi-Experimental approach was adopted, with the application of a pre-test and a post-test designed to determine the effectiveness of the strategy with the treatment group; the comparison of the quantitative results was made with the control group that was assigned the same reading activities and tests. Both groups were intact classes, since random assignment was not feasible. Data has been processed in a quantitative (statistical) way based on the scores obtained by the learners. Additionally, a questionnaire was administered to the students in both groups to learn more about their experiences, feelings and opinions regarding the treatment.



Delimitation of the research

From among the four basic skills, this research project focused on reading, specifically on comprehension, and introduced an appropriate strategy to achieve this, namely, the use of Graphic Organizers. A set of reading activities using Graphic Organizers has been designed and implemented for the research involving 38 pre-intermediate female students between the ages of 15 and 16 at “Sagrados Corazones”, a private high school located in Cuenca, Ecuador. Nineteen students constituted the treatment group and the same number of students participated as members of the control group. The duration of the research was a total of 64 class periods of 40 minutes each over a six-month period in 2012/13.

As for the educational institution where the research was conducted, it should be noted that “Sagrados Corazones” is a private religious educational institution in Cuenca committed to providing high quality education. The school gives special consideration to the importance of English by promoting bilingualism with the aim of getting students to communicate in English. The school’s mission and aims are described in the document called Planificación por Bloques Curriculares.

It is important to mention that the school year at the time of the research was divided into two five-month terms; a different schedule was set for each five-month period. When the study started, the treatment group had English classes during the period right before the recess, and the control group took their classes right after the break. During the second half of the study, the schedules changed and the treatment group’s English classes took place right after the recess, while the control group was assigned the period before the break.

The chapters are organized as follows:

Chapter I is the Literature Review in which the author gives an account of the basic theoretical background and provides a detailed review of the concepts referred to in this research study. It examines information related to the importance of reading in L1 and L2, focusing on comprehension and the reading difficulties students face, as well as the teacher’s role in teaching reading to EFL students.



Chapter II describes the research methodology and its application; it discusses the research variables as well as the research instruments and the materials chosen for the study. Additionally, it describes the manner in which the treatment was implemented and provides information about the data gathering process.

Chapter III presents and interprets the data obtained by employing statistical methods. This was accomplished by the application of the different research instruments used: a pre-test, 14 pieces of reading texts chosen with the purpose of including GOs in the reading comprehension phase, a post-test, and a questionnaire.

Finally, conclusions are arrived at and recommendations are made based on the results of the applied methodology.



CHAPTER I

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading is one of the primary means of receiving information and is, therefore, essential for obtaining knowledge about the world around us. People mainly read with the purpose of achieving comprehension which is crucial for learning, both in someone's first and second language.

In the Literature Review that follows the author will examine what is involved in reading in L1 and L2, with special regard to the difficulties that arise when teaching English as a Foreign Language. There will be an overview of the types of reading and the relationship between reading and comprehension, as well as the strategies that may be applied during reading. In the second section, a detailed description of the research that has been carried out in the field of reading comprehension in EFL so far and the use of Graphic Organizers will be presented.

The importance of reading in L1 and L2

When learning a second language, in the beginning and throughout the early stages, students will probably mainly use the oral form but, inevitably, all of them, sooner or later, will face reading tasks in their studies as well as in their practical use of the language. Reading is the primary source of information for both first and second/foreign language users. Having good reading skills is considered important in foreign language learning, because it increases vocabulary and writing performance; it makes people smarter and opens doors for the future (Gallagher 17).

Reading is a very effective way to expand a person's knowledge of a language, but in addition to the regular readings used for the language classroom, every student needs to learn how to read for comprehension on their own. The experience of finding meaning in a text can be very motivating for students, and it can also provide a good opportunity for teachers to encourage language learning in general.

Therefore, the main goals of the reading lessons should be the enjoyment of reading and the enhancement of comprehension in the foreign language in an



autonomous way. In order to help students to read in a foreign language, teachers need to prepare for the reading lessons by considering thoughtfully the purposes of the activity and by using carefully chosen texts that are aligned with the readers' interests (Nuttall 30-31).

Reading and understanding texts can be a real challenge for many students; they need to learn how to organize and use their previous knowledge and connect it to the new information they encounter in the texts. EFL students need even more assistance to develop their reading skills, since their previous knowledge related to their L1 may not always help interpret what they are reading. By improving their reading they can recall more information, relate main ideas to details, and eventually comprehend complex texts more effectively.

Nuttall stresses that apart from choosing the appropriate texts, teachers engaged in reading activities have a great role to play since they are in the best position to help. They can discover the actual reading abilities of their students and monitor their development with regard to comprehension (32-33).

Several definitions of reading imply that reading is not a passive process. Farrell emphasizes that reading is not a simple task either; on the contrary, it is a complex interactive process that takes place in the brain and consists of intangible cognitive and non-cognitive actions that help us to understand the meaning of a text. This means that the reader is actively interacting with the text. While reading, the reader interprets the text (the writer's meaning) by linking it to previous knowledge and experiences in order to build his/her own perception and create meaning (13-17).

Grabe and Stoller likewise define reading as an interactive process, because during reading interaction takes place at several levels between the text and the reader. Reading is a process: while words are being recognized, their meanings are kept in people's short-term memories, the structures of the sentences are also being analyzed to obtain the main idea and, thereby, to understand the text. Reading is also interactive, because the linguistic information from the text interacts with the background knowledge (long-term memory) of the reader, thereby helping him or her to interpret the text (Grabe and Stoller 18).



Anthony et al. also emphasize the interactive element in reading when stating that “Reading is the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among the reader’s existing knowledge, the information suggested by the written language, and the context of the reading situation” (qtd. in Farrell 20).

The interactive aspect of reading is further explained by Nuttall, who says that even though most people believe that the meaning of a certain piece of reading is found in the text itself, this is not completely true, because readers take an active part in finding meaning by using the mental structure of preconceived ideas, or schemata that each reader has (18).

The purposes and models of reading

Grabe and Stoller emphasize that the purposes for reading can be varied. People may read for many reasons. For example, they may be looking for information or they may read out of academic interest. Depending on the actual purpose for reading, the required reading skills can also vary; for example, it might be necessary to search for data and to summarize information, to implement critical thinking, or to just skim. Most people usually read for comprehension, which basically means wanting to get a correct understanding of the main ideas and details while making an attempt to connect them to previous knowledge (11-12).

Consequently, Grabe and Stoller classify the main purposes for reading into the following categories: 1. reading to research, 2. reading to skim, 3. reading to learn from texts, 4. reading to integrate information, 5. reading to write, 6. reading to critique, 7. reading for general comprehension (13).

Reading is a multi-faceted activity which can be described as follows:

a) Reading is an evaluating process (the reader has to decide whether the information is coherent and relevant) which influences the reader’s motivation, feelings and attitudes towards reading.

b) Reading is purposeful (it depends on the reader’s purpose and motivation for reading).



c) Reading is a comprehending process. By being a purposeful and comprehending activity, reading is a learning process, which is evident especially in the academic field.

d) Finally, reading is a linguistic process since it is necessary to recognize the language to understand a piece of text (Grabe and Stoller 18-19).

Therefore, according to Grabe and Stoller reading is a multi-faceted and purposeful comprehending and linguistic process (18-19).

The following main models of reading presented by Farrell explain the processes that take place during reading:

1. The top-down processing model implies a general perception of the text. It considers reading as governed by the mind in combination with previous knowledge and experiences in order to comprehend a text. After previewing a text, the reader predicts the information by trying to relate it to the schemata he/she already has to interpret the text (18-19).

2. In Farrell's bottom-up processing model, the reader gets the meaning from the text only. The information is processed starting with the words, and develops progressively to expressions, sentences and the text organization. The reader's familiarity with vocabulary and syntax constitute the basis for reading comprehension (18-19).

Nuttall explains that this model is used when the reader lacks the required knowledge (the writer's presumptions) or if the writer's views differ from the readers' point of view: this makes it necessary to check vocabulary and syntax more carefully to find the correct meaning (17).

3. In the interactive processing model both of the other models are used, namely, the top-down and the bottom-up types of reading take place at the same time throughout the reading. The interpretation of meaning is based on prior knowledge and experiences as well as on the text itself (Farrell 18-19).

In the early stages of reading, EFL students are more inclined to use the bottom-up process and pay more attention to individual words until they acquire a sufficient amount of vocabulary. Initially, these students might not comprehend the author's



intentions correctly. However, EFL teachers should take into consideration that their students already have a certain amount of previous knowledge to which they can relate the new information in order to construct meaning and comprehend a piece of text.

Farrell emphasizes that since the comprehension process is a combination of bottom-up and top-down skills that directly increase reading comprehension (according to the interactive model), it is necessary for teachers to practice both types of skills with their students (20-21).

Reading is not simply identifying words or repeating mechanically what we see on the page; it requires understanding or comprehending what we read. Buehl defines reading comprehension as “the process of obtaining meaning from print” (5). The term comprehension, therefore, refers to the complex two-way process of the author/text transmitting an idea (the writer’s thoughts) to the reader’s mind and the reader’s mind grasping or “getting” this idea correctly by using thinking skills and previous knowledge. This two-way process allows the reader to acquire information and to understand the main idea of the text.

As referred above, while reading, the reader is actively involved in the processing of information. Nuttall stresses that the interpretation of a given text will depend on the personal assumptions or mental structures activated during the process (8). She adds that sharing similar systems of organizing and perceiving new information (i.e. schemata) with the writer facilitates communication and therefore enhances comprehension.

However, foreign language learners often struggle when trying to comprehend texts because of the lack of vocabulary and/or background knowledge (Nuttall 10-11). Buehl (2001) states that the comprehension of a given text implies that the learner is actively constructing meaning. The way this process takes place may vary from one reader to another depending on the particular circumstances like the reader’s personal characteristics, motivation, and relevant previous knowledge which facilitates the comprehension of a text. There are many other factors that influence reading comprehension, such as the writing and the language style and the profoundness of the concepts described by the author of the text (5).



The processes involved in reading comprehension

Grabe and Stoller emphasize that reading comprehension, as a mental activity, is difficult to define, because it involves several processing abilities which are organized diversely according to the reading purpose(s) (18). The same authors claim that the essential processes that take place during reading can be classified as lower-level and higher-level processes (20).

Lower-level processes are essential for comprehension to happen. They are frequently used during fluent reading comprehension. They involve automatic, spontaneous and skill-based linguistic practices like lexical access, syntactic parsing and semantic proposition formation. When these processes operate effectively, they work conjointly and are executed as part of working memory activation, keeping information active for a few seconds while the brain processes active information. If this processing takes too long, the information will vanish and consequently re-activation will be needed (Grabe and Stoller 19-30).

Higher-level processes have not been specified consistently in the literature on comprehension. However, research conducted over the last decade has made it possible to synthesize in a logical manner the way the above processes contribute to comprehension. The related studies underline that these processes require the reader's capability to attend intentionally to the text (Grabe 39).

Both lower-level and higher-level processes are cognitive tools and the choice as to which ones are applied usually depends on the given reading purpose(s). In order for these processes to function efficiently, the reader needs to have sufficient background information and the required linguistic resources. When L2 readers lack these cognitive and language tools, they tend to translate information mechanically or accommodate the text to fit their preconceived notions resulting in a lack of comprehension or loss of motivation (Grabe and Stoller 19-30).

This limited (or complete lack of) reading comprehension skills (both higher and lower cognitive-comprehensive processes), may have to do with the way these skills are taught in the EFL classroom. Hussein draws attention to the fact that several studies



have shown that the vast majority of questions directed at students in class tend to evaluate literal comprehension and disregard the inferential and critical skills they need to develop through all the educational phases (237-240).

Hussein conducted a study on what lay behind the reading comprehension difficulties experienced by first year English students at a private university in Jordan. The author found that students lack many of the necessary reading comprehension skills. The reason is that, apparently, reading comprehension is not being given enough attention; it is especially higher level inferential and critical skills that are neglected. As a result, the students' conception of reading comprehension is limited to the idea that it is merely a decoding system. This underlines the necessity of providing more opportunities to develop these abilities at previous educational levels (Hussein 244-245).

The differences between reading in L1 and L2

When learning to read in a second language, some of the processes used are similar to the ones used when learning to read in the first language. Undoubtedly, second language reading also differs in many aspects and this can be a challenge especially at the initial stages of learning.

Grabe and Stoller point out that the linguistic differences between any two languages may influence L2 reading comprehension. For example, in an L2 classroom with different L1 students one may find that L1 Romance language students tend to pay special attention to the suffixes of words to obtain grammatical information while L1 Chinese and Japanese learners tend to rely on the visual processing of words because of the orthography of their native language. Speakers of languages with higher levels of morphological difficulty, like Arabic or Hebrew, take longer to read the same amount of text (47).

Farrell mentions the fact that, unsurprisingly, L1 readers have a much larger vocabulary as well as a greater amount of implicit grammatical knowledge than L2 readers. These factors obviously influence L2 students' reading aptitudes as well as their reading and comprehension (2).



Moreover, the learner's aptitude, intellectual growth, and learning habits in the first language also influence his/her reading performance in L2. Farrell states that the transmission of reading abilities is easier for ELLs who are better skilled in their first language. For example, when learning to read in a second language, the strategies used by a four-year-old are going to be different from those used by an adult. According to Farrell, the adult has the advantage in reading performance because of the previous knowledge that the adult has accumulated in the first language as well as the strategies applied by him or her (4).

At higher levels, L1 and L2 reading abilities tend to be very similar. Grabe and Stoller consider general comprehension as the basic reason for reading which demands fluency and inferring abilities like skilled word processing, key ideas recognition, and the management of reading processes under limited time conditions. For fluent L1 and L2 students, these processes do not represent too much difficulty, since they occur in an almost automatic way, whereas less advanced L2 students face greater difficulties, especially when reading longer texts under time pressure.

It needs to be said at this stage that the advances in teaching methodology observed in L1 contexts have not yet filtered through to L2 contexts where the students need to be instructed in a manner that can help them improve their reading ability as much as possible (Grabe and Stoller 10-15).

Teaching reading in L2

Initially, L2 educational methods and instructional theories were based on bottom-up processes that saw reading as a decoding ability which directly influenced reading comprehension. It is only since the late 1970s that ESL/EFL reading has been perceived as an active process which uses the top-down approach. A major implication or result of this new perspective is that the reader's knowledge, conceptual abilities and process strategies are seen as elements that create comprehension. Therefore, the interactive/top-down model recognizes that the reader, with his/her linguistic content and formal schemata functioning creatively, plays a crucial role in reading.



The theory proposed by Goodman suggests that the reader recreates the writer's graphically implied message (qtd. in Carrell 2). Accordingly, the reader participates actively in the reading process by guessing and confirming the guesses which are mainly grounded in prior knowledge and experiences. Carrell sums up Goodman's argument saying that "...the reader need not (and the efficient reader does not) use all the textual clues. The better the reader is able to make correct predictions, the less confirming via the text is necessary."(2).

Goodman holds that reading involves confirming or refuting hypotheses and creating new ones, if required. This has been called the "psycholinguistic model of reading" and is often referred to as a variant of the top-down method of reading. This method has strongly influenced ESL reading education and aroused the interest of other authors, who wanted to find out, for example, the degree to which lower- and higher-level processing strategies were employed by literate L2 readers. They also sought to establish if L2 readers truly follow the assumptions of this method (Carrell 1-4, 56-58).

There is no doubt that reading in a foreign language is a complex task. Keshavarz, Atai, and Ahmadi carried out a study which used the simplification of language and content schemata to analyze how they affected intellectual reading abilities like comprehension and recall. 240 students participated in the study; they were organized in 4 groups of 60 with the same number of high proficiency and low proficiency students in each.

The authors used two types of texts (familiar and unfamiliar content) which in turn were designed in 4 different forms of language simplification (original, syntactic, lexical and syntactic-lexical). Each group was given only one form of language simplification for each type of text. The results showed that EFL reading skills like recall and comprehension were considerably enhanced by the original complex text, however, language simplification did not result in a similar improvement.

The researchers emphasize that "EFL teachers and students should remember that EFL students may have problems reading original texts for which they do not have the required background knowledge" (Keshavarz et al). The authors believe that using familiar content is very important in EFL teaching; by choosing the appropriate articles



or texts, the students' proficiency in reading comprehension and recall will increase. Developing vocabulary, comprehending new concepts and expanding knowledge will occur gradually.

As stated above, reading comprehension is the ability of making sense of a text by combining the reader's previous knowledge and experience with the information provided and the position that he/she takes with regard to the text. However, it can be assumed that L2 readers, more often than not, lack the relevant previous knowledge and experience, and this may lead to difficulties in comprehension (Farrell 26-27).

The necessary background information that enables readers to anticipate the direction and organization of the text can also facilitate the interpretation of the given piece of writing in accordance with the reader's feelings, goals and experiential expectations (Grabe and Stoller 27).

Learning and reading strategies

One of the ways of making up for the lack of schemata by L2 learners is the use of reading strategies. Before discussing what reading strategies might be applicable to L2 reading, let us first consider learning strategies in general.

Describing the findings on the effects of strategy instruction for students with learning disabilities, Pat Beckman starts by saying: "a strategy is a tool, plan, or method used for accomplishing a task". She goes on to discuss thinking skills and defines cognitive strategy as "a strategy or group of strategies or procedures that the learner uses to perform academic tasks or to improve social skills".

It is important to teach students to become strategic learners because once they learn how to use the strategies involved, they gain control over their own learning and become autonomous in the process.

Beckman draws attention to the outcomes that can be expected when students are strategic. They become more confident and this enhances their self-esteem; they can recognize that there are different ways of doing something; they are capable of self-evaluating, identifying their own errors and looking for solutions. Finally, they enhance



their learning, their memory, their quality of performance and their capacity to engage with and focus on a task.

Teaching relevant strategies is vital to improve learning, whether it is in an L1 or an L2 context. Brown states that “Teaching learners how to learn is crucial” (130) while according to Wenden, the aim of language teaching should be the learners’ independence which can be achieved through the learning of strategies (qtd. in Brown 130).

As for the learning strategies used for reading comprehension specifically, Lee and VanPatten state that “written language serves as input for language acquisition”. They add that reading increases the vocabulary and grammar acquisition of second language learners; therefore, teaching reading comprehension strategies is of great importance in language learning (227-228).

It is important to appreciate the difference between reading skills and reading strategies. Skills are abilities developed by repetition and used in a subconscious way, while Farrell contends that “reading strategies are deliberate actions used by readers to achieve specific goals” (28). When skills are used in a conscious way they become strategies. Fluent readers use a combination of skills to interact with the text while L2 students, at least in the initial stages, mostly use decoding skills that lack interaction with the text (Farrell 28).

Reading goes hand in hand with learning, but the use of processing abilities alone does not guarantee the readers’ proficiency. Reading is a purposeful and comprehending process that requires the reader to be strategic, in other words, the reader needs to process, identify and recall information, to connect new to prior knowledge, to make decisions and to monitor the comprehension of the information through the development of special cognitive abilities in order to obtain the maximum benefit from a text.

Strategic reading has been defined by Chamot and El- Dinary (qtd. in Koda 205) as “mental procedures that assist learning and that occasionally can be accompanied by overt activities”. These strategies can be used and adapted according to individual



learning needs; they motivate and help students to reflect, organize and assess the information (Koda 205).

Researchers like Paris et al. stress that strategic reading is essential for academic purposes, especially because their flexible and selective use can enhance the development of cognitive strategies to increase memory, attention, communication and learning (qtd. in Koda 206).

The improvement of cognitive and metacognitive abilities is related to the acquisition of strategic reading. In L2 reading, low-level processing skills and L1 strategy transfer can influence L2 reading. In their study Chamot and El-Dinary compared the quantity and quality of reading strategies used by high and low-performing elementary students of French, Japanese and Spanish. They found that the total number of strategies used by both groups was similar, but they differed in the kinds of strategies. About 50% of the strategies used by low-level performing students belonged to the group of decoding strategies while most of the strategies used by high-level performing students corresponded to the conceptual kind like inference, predicting, elaborations, etc.

Another study with older students revealed that low-achieving students mostly used traditional strategies. The same pattern was shown when Young and Oxford compared strategic conducts in L1 and L2 reading. English speaking college students of Spanish used relatively confined strategies while reading in Spanish, but chose more universal strategies when reading in their native language (Koda 219).

Research recommends teaching reading strategies to ELLs. It has been proven that when students acquire them, their levels of attention, retention and comprehension increases (Farrell 36).

Research has also shown that good readers have the ability to differentiate between important and less important pieces of information and use hints in the text to predict information while reading (Farrell 36). Neil Anderson conducted an important study in order to find out if weaker and stronger students used different strategies while reading. His research study involved 28 students who had to give an account of the strategies that they used while reading a piece of text (qtd. in Grabe and Stoller 138).



Anderson divided the students into three groups according to their language proficiency level. They were asked to give an account of the strategies they used in the form of “think- alouds”. Stronger readers gave accounts of actively using some reading strategies, while the weaker students were aware of the same strategies but failed to employ them in an effective manner.

Based on the findings of his study, Anderson states that “...strategic reading is not only a matter of what strategy to use, but also the reader must know how to use a strategy successfully and orchestrate its use with other strategies. It is not sufficient to know about strategies; a reader must be able to apply them strategically” (qtd. in Grabe and Stoller 139).

The phases of teaching reading strategies

According to Farrell, the following phases should be considered when teaching reading strategies to ELLs.

A) Before-reading activities help to activate previous knowledge. Predictions can be used before reading to anticipate events based on prior knowledge or experiences. Predicting during reading helps to verify or adjust prior predictions (Farrell 37-39).

B) During reading the students read the first paragraph, they can verify previous guesses and make adjustments, if necessary. They can then make predictions again about the upcoming information (Farrell 40-41).

C) After reading the students can accomplish follow-up activities to verify comprehension and discuss the topic (Farrell 44-45).

As regards the usefulness of before-reading activities, the reading research conducted by Hsiu-Chieh Chen and Michael F. Graves (qtd. in Grabe and Stoller) studied two well-known pre-reading strategies (pre-viewing and assisting with proper background knowledge previous to reading) in order to find out the improvement in reading comprehension when students are provided with either previous information or background information, or both together about a story (qtd. in Grabe and Stoller 142-143).



According to Margaret Cleveland (14), previews consist of observing and taking a quick interpretation of the entire text, its illustrations, etc. to get an idea of what it might be about. The researchers divided the students into four groups: the first group was given previews of the story before reading. The second group was given background information while the third one was given both sets of information before reading; the control group did not use any pre-reading strategy. After reviewing the results of the study, it was established that all groups using pre-reading strategies obtained better results in comparison with the control group.

Based on the results, the conclusions state that offering a preview before reading provides the same results as a preview in combination with background knowledge. Furthermore, using only previewing has proved to be more effective than using background knowledge alone or no pre-reading activities at all. Therefore, previewing has been suggested as an excellent pre-reading strategy to enhance reading comprehension (qtd. Grabe and Stoller 142-143).

There are several other reading activities that help with the processing of written texts. Guided reading is used to assist students with reading until they acquire a strategy to read effectively on their own. Students are asked to preview the text and identify unknown vocabulary. They are also guided to connect their prior knowledge to the text. Finally, they are invited to reflect on their responses (Content Area Reading 95).

Retelling benefits the processing of information, the ordering of events and recalling; at the same time, it improves the learner's grammar. Research shows that retelling enhances the quality and quantity of comprehension. Retelling can be initially done by writing (Content Area Reading 21).

Reading aloud is a very helpful skill for enhancing reading and engaging readers. It enables the reader to relate the information he/she is listening to and the printed material he/she is reading. Previewing (skimming) helps the reader to draw up a mental framework of the text to be read (Content Area Reading 12-16).

Chunking the text consists of dividing the text into shorter units to enable the student to reflect on what is being read.



Directed reading and thinking activities (DRTAs) promote critical consciousness and enhance reading at different levels. In addition to the activities chosen, it is essential for the development of good reading to create a favorable environment which will nudge students to volunteer and participate, and will encourage prediction, proving, and the analysis of the content of a text.

In this process, the students first skim the text, and then predict its meaning and the main ideas. Following this, they examine the text for main and secondary ideas, or identify the main components of the story. Next, they proceed to identify the way the text can be divided into meaningful units to ease comprehension (Content Area Reading 13-14).

Graphic Organizers in reading

According to Hall & Strangman, “a Graphic Organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and /or ideas within a learning task”.

There are many definitions of Graphic Organizers (GOs) that basically describe them as important visual illustrations of information or resourceful educational tools used to improve learning skills and strategies. Graphic Organizers come in different shapes and sizes and help students mainly by providing them with the opportunity to visualize information and understand the interrelationship of ideas in the text, as well as grasp text organization. Additionally, they help with the comprehension of the text by teaching how to think in a categorical way as well as facilitate the recalling of information (Content Reading Area 29-44).

Identifying the text structure benefits the reader’s comprehension. According to Jones, Pierce and Hunter, Graphic Organizers used for reading are designed to provide a general comprehension of the text by exposing the main ideas and the interrelation among them in a text (qtd. in Öztürk 39). These teaching tools can be easily adapted since some of them are general and can be used for similar text structures, while others are more specific.



Öztürk says that, initially, the teacher should be the person who carefully selects the graphic design according to the text structure and provides enough practice to get the students to learn how to do this on their own. They can, eventually, become the designers of their own Graphic Organizers (38-39).

Research on using Graphic Organizers

Extensive research seems to support the use of Graphic Organizers demonstrating their effectiveness when used in combination with other learning strategies to develop literacy and cognitive skills of the learners. An interesting feature of Graphic Organizers is that they have widespread applications; thus they are useful for improving learning and performance with a large range of learners. Previous research produced evidence suggesting that the number of students who benefit from using these tools is greater than those who do not (“Using Graphic Organizers to Make Sense of the Curriculum” 3-6).

Buehl states that thinking can be encouraged at any instruction level or stage. “By using classroom strategies that teach students to activate, focus, select, organize, integrate, and apply as they learn, we foster the development of individuals who are purposeful thinkers and independent learners” (9). Graphic Organizers can be used with students with these purposes in mind since they can be adapted to different activities through the reading process (9).

The research findings by Howard and Ellis on the use of GOs in reading comprehension suggest that they are beneficial in the case of regular students of all ages. Langford et al. have shown that after adding GOs, checklists and text analysis to the students’ daily program of study, an improvement in accessing previous knowledge, the organization of ideas and the establishment of comprehension links has occurred (qtd. in Howard and Ellis 1). It has also been shown that the use of concept-map strategies influence the understanding and summarizing abilities of students.

Chang et al. carried out a study with 126 fifth grade students which demonstrated that map correction, increased the students’ ability to comprehend texts and summarize (qtd. in Howard and Ellis 1). Map correction consists of an approach that combines



using experts' maps and map construction as an outline that eases the comprehension of texts and reduces the amount of work of map construction (Chang et al. 8).

One of the latest research studies on Secondary LD (Learning Disabilities) students reported by Howard and Ellis corresponds to Boyle's study, which analyzed the results after using the Venn diagram strategy with a group of 26 high school students who had minor incapacities and reduced reading comprehension. The students who used GOs displayed an improvement in the literal and relational comprehension scores.

Similarly, advanced story map instruction benefited reading comprehension. Gardill & Jitendra (qtd. in Howard and Ellis) state that each and every student obtained a passing grade on story-related grammar tests after their treatment that employed story mapping. According to the authors, the combination of good quality instruction and training resulted in improvements in comprehension. This seems to suggest that the use of GOs help students with the organization and retention of critical story features which, in turn, benefits comprehension (Howard and Ellis 7-8).

Sáenz and Fuchs consider the use of visual representations of ideas - for example, GOs - as appropriate for text structure teaching in a similar fashion; they recommend their use before and during reading, and suggest that the students should construct their own GOs (qtd. in Howard and Ellis 12).

Hall and Strangman looked at 15 studies regarding the use of GOs for reading comprehension the latter being the most common learning indicator researched. Seven of them demonstrated that GO usage resulted in higher comprehension indicators, for example, when taking comprehension and acquisition tests and writing summaries (3).

Moore and Readence (qtd. in Hall and Strangman 4) analyzed 23 different studies which confirmed a minor but constant beneficial influence of GOs on reading comprehension.

Only three of the studies did not confirm any influence of Graphic Organizer usage on comprehension, apparently because of deficiencies during the treatment. In the study carried out by Carnes, Lindbeck, & Griffin (qtd. in Hall & Strangman 4) there were no positive results reported arising from the use of Graphic Organizers on reading



comprehension, probably because the students did not receive appropriate training in the use of these tools.

A similar explanation can be given for Clements-Davis & Ley's study because, once again, the learners were not given any instruction on how to apply GOs. Another study that failed to provide meaningful results was the one implemented by Alvermann and Booth, because of the ceiling effect, namely, comprehension was already high before the treatment (qtd. in Hall & Strangman 4).

Although there are some similarities between L1 and L2 learners, it also seems to be a fair assumption that somewhat different Graphic Organizers should be used as effective teaching/learning tools for each group, since reading in L2 may have its own difficulties (Hall & Strangman 4).

Previous studies have confirmed that applying GOs as reading tools can influence the way students read texts and can facilitate their long-term reading development. Considering that L2 students require special attention paid to reading development, the application of GOs as reading tools is recommended in the EFL class.

However, there is concern regarding the lack of studies on the use of Graphic Organizers with EFL and ESL learners, because most of the studies have so far focused on L1. Therefore, more research on the effects of Graphic Organizers on L2 reading would seem justified (Jiang and Grabe 46).

Jiang examined the effectiveness of using discourse or text structure Graphic Organizers (DSGOs) to develop reading comprehension with a group of 340 EFL college students at a Chinese University. The students took a DSGO test and a TOEFL reading comprehension test before beginning the treatment, right after finishing the treatment, and finally after 7 weeks of the instructional treatment. The DSGO completion task results revealed considerable progress in the students' discourse comprehension; the effect persisted even after 7 weeks of the DSGO treatment having been concluded. Reading comprehension improvement was also demonstrated in the TOEFL post-test, but the effect did not last for the delayed posttest (Jiang 84).

Jiang stresses that an awareness of text structure is essential for developing L1 and L2 reading comprehension, since it facilitates the reader's comprehension of the



rationality and logic of the text as well as the identification of main and secondary ideas, but, most importantly, it enables the student to transfer these developed reading abilities to other subjects and contexts (85).

Identifying text structures can be obtained through methodical training and considerable reading practice. Several studies using GOs to improve comprehension demonstrated considerable improvement regarding the identification of ideas and the recalling of relations among different elements of a text.

After studying the effects of GOs on students with different abilities, Armbruster et al. showed that GO instruction can benefit students regardless of their level of ability. Additionally, Alvermann and Boothby stated that the length of the treatment using GOs is a very important factor when it comes to developing comprehension and the recall of information (qtd. in Jiang 86).

Studies carried out in the mid-1990s on using GOs demonstrated that they improve the comprehension of categorized texts and their organization. More recent studies conducted by Williams et al. have shown the effectiveness of using GOs to improve comprehension of comparison and contrast texts. Williams et al. were further able to verify that the use of GOs can also improve the comprehension of cause-effect type instructional texts (qtd. in Jiang 86).

In his research, 'Construcción de Organizadores Gráficos para Promover y Desarrollar la Lectoescritura,' Villalobos (1) describes the findings of other researchers (like Dunston), who found that when Graphic Organizers were presented to primary school students as pre-reading activities, they helped students comprehend and remember information. He adds that when students themselves constructed Graphic Organizers, information recall increased even more. He also mentions that when secondary school students used Graphic Organizers, their scores on vocabulary and comprehension improved (Villalobos1).

Dunston has concluded that better results can be obtained from the use of Graphic Organizers when sufficient training on the use of these tools has been provided and especially if the learners themselves construct the graphics. Thus, it is evident that



both the theory and the research done so far support the use of Graphic Organizers as a strategy that activates learning (Villalobos 1).

After conducting a research study on the use of Graphic Organizers to improve reading comprehension of students aged between 18 and 22 at ESPE in Quito, Llumiquinga has demonstrated the effectiveness of the use of these tools to improve reading comprehension and suggests further research to investigate the effectiveness at different levels of EFL learning (Llumiquinga 85).

The results of the study conducted by Pan (qtd. in Öztürk 41) and entitled “The effects of the implication of schema theory, metacognition, and graphic organizers in English reading comprehension” showed that the students in the treatment group performed better in the reading comprehension tests and were able to use reading strategies more effectively.

Similarly, Robinson et al. (qtd. in Öztürk 41) did a study with a group of psychology students at the University of Texas; the results demonstrated that the use of GOs helped students not only to obtain higher grades regarding the subject matter of their course, but it also contributed to their being able to better identify the structure of the texts they had to read.

After conducting a study on text structure training with ESL students, Carrell (qtd. in Öztürk 41) found that text structure training helps the students’ reading comprehension skills and increases their reading confidence in English. Additionally, GO training seems to have modified the learners’ confidence and attitude to reading in English. For example, Mede (qtd. in Öztürk 41) did a study with 54 intermediate EFL students and was able to establish that after the instruction sessions the students’ attitudes were affected in a positive way. They reported that they had come to enjoy reading and found it easier to recall main information by using GOs (Öztürk 41).

Alagözlü says that the use of GOs seems to be an appropriate technique for reading short stories, because it helps students visualize different aspects of the story, for example, events and characters (Öztürk 41).

Öztürk conducted a second research study with the purpose of determining “The effects of instruction of using GOs on reading comprehension of EFL learners”. The



participants were 50 intermediate level ESL students from a preparatory Turkish university program. Twenty five male and female participants chosen by random sampling were included in each group - both control and treatment. Pre-tests were assigned to both groups. The treatment group received 4 hours of training on GOs while the control group did the same reading activities except for the use of GOs. Over 12 weeks, members of the treatment group designed their own GOs for the texts they read and shared them in class. Once the treatment was over, both groups had to take the same post-test, which was statistically analyzed.

Results from the data analysis showed that even though the pre-test results were very similar for both groups, the results of the post-test led the researcher to the conclusion that “ GOs had a positive effect on the reading comprehension achievement of English language learners” (Öztürk 43). The students’ attitude towards reading was also positively influenced by the use of GOs. The use of these tools also helped to improve reading in both the foreign and the native language. These findings were consistent with those of other authors like Carrell and Mede (Öztürk 44).

Undoubtedly, there have been disagreements as to the effectiveness of Graphic Organizers for the purposes of improving reading comprehension. The issues mainly concern the fact that the generalizability and validity of many interventions were limited and that owing to the shortness of some of the treatments the usefulness of the tool was difficult to measure (Jiang and Grabe 84-85). However, most of the studies researching the use of GOs concluded that GOs have a favorable effect on reading. Robinson has shown that from a total of 16 studies on the use of GOs against using texts only, 14 revealed that using GOs had positive effects (qtd. in Jiang 86).

As has been stated above, while a number of studies have already been done on the use of GOs for L1 reading, there has been far less research on how effective GOs might be for L2 reading comprehension. Jiang mentions Tang as the only author publishing a piece of experimental research about the use of GOs for reading comprehension with ESL students.

Tang conducted an experiment using two groups of students; the experimental group was given the information in partially completed graphic organizers. The students



had to complete the information and write a summary after reading. The control group was provided with the same passage, but these students processed the text differently; they studied the key vocabulary, answered questions about the reading, and wrote a summary. The results revealed that the experimental group was able to recall information better in the post-test than in the pre-test, while the control group obtained the same results in both the pre-test and the post-test (Jiang 87).

It follows from what has been said above that there seems to be a need to study the impact of Graphic Organizers on EFL reading at high school level in order to get a better understanding of the effectiveness of these tools for reading comprehension in the Ecuadorian context.

Graphic Organizers in language teaching

In language classes, Graphic Organizers can benefit students in many ways. Cleveland mentions the following benefits: they facilitate the identification of main ideas and supporting information, help students visualize the different writing patterns, preview new topics, associate previous knowledge with new information, and identify the relationships between ideas. Once the students become familiar with the use of these tools, they can even adapt them to fit their own learning needs (V).

Identifying the main idea and specific details in a text has long been considered the most essential reading skill for the comprehension and recalling of information, while comparing and contrasting help to organize and arrange information and, therefore, facilitate comprehension. Cleveland emphasizes that by using charts the students can develop other skills as well, for example, identifying facts and opinions, estimating similarities and differences, listing down pros and cons etc. (3-16).

Graphic Organizers may be any kind of graphic representations or charts that are used to associate pieces of information or organize them into categories. Cleveland claims that Graphic Organizers can be used for several purposes when teaching reading. For example, they are useful for pre-reading activities, since they can help with the processing of new information by requiring students to review previous knowledge. These graphic representations are also helpful in the during-reading phase when



students can use them to add information as the activity progresses. Finally, they can be applied in the after-reading phase, for example, to visualize the main points that will help to retain the learned material (3-16).

Conclusion

On the one hand, as has been affirmed by numerous scholars in the field of education, many of whom are practicing teachers, reading - in the sense of being able to read well, with comprehension and retention – is essential for effective learning in every area of human knowledge. On the other hand, developing strategic learners is one of the main goals of education, and to become a strategic learner, one must become a strategic reader. It is, therefore, important, indeed crucial, to teach students how to become strategic readers by using the appropriate skills and methods to increase students' reading comprehension, retention, and enjoyment. This, in turn, will generate "the reading habit," the love of reading, which is the basis for all strategic learning.

Farrell defined reading comprehension as the ability to create sense from a text by combining different factors, like previous knowledge and self-experience, with the new information provided and the writer's intention, as well as the readers' position respective to the text (1). Research done by Grabe and Stoller has evidenced that reading for general comprehension is the most common purpose for reading (13-14).

The nature of reading is that of an interactive process. Therefore, readers need to develop different reading skills to be able to make use of them according to their reading and learning needs. Due to globalization, learning English has become very important for intercultural communication. Therefore, gaining reading comprehension skills in English can be a genuine need for the students of today and tomorrow. However, the fulfillment of this need may be a real challenge, especially because of the students' lack of reading skills which can negatively affect both their learning and their communication.

Graphic Organizers are versatile visual tools that can be used for teaching reading and facilitating a more dynamic interaction of the reader with the text through



the processing of information which includes analyzing the text, identifying its organization, getting its main ideas, connecting prior knowledge and experiences to the new information, and remembering important information.

The findings of methodical research have evidenced that the use of GOs can influence students' attitudes towards reading positively. But there is a need for further research of this issue in the EFL field. This need has motivated this researcher, who considered it to be worth the effort to contribute to this project with this study. This work has been undertaken with the hope that by providing the students with these tools (Graphic Organizers and related activities) they will be better able to choose and decide which tools are most productive for them according to their individual situations and needs.



CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The quasi-experimental approach was adopted. A pre-test and a post-test were designed to determine the effectiveness of the strategy administered to the treatment group. A comparison was made between the quantitative results of the latter and those of the control group that was assigned the same reading activities and tests but was not exposed to Graphic Organizers. Both groups were intact classes, since random assignment was not feasible.

The hypothesis for the study was: the use of Graphic Organizers by students will improve reading comprehension of pre-intermediate English learners.

The independent variable: the use of Graphic Organizers in reading comprehension activities

The dependent variable: improvement in reading comprehension

The dependent variable was calculated by comparing the scores based on the answers to the reading comprehension questions which focused on the abilities the students may have developed:

- List ideas about previous knowledge
- Identify cause and effect
- Identify specific information or details
- Identify sequence of events
- Differentiate between what they know, want what they want to know, and what they have learned from a given piece of text
- Categorize or classify information
- Compare and contrast
- Identify similarities and differences
- Identify information regarding the aspects of Who, What, When, Where, and Why in a story or text
- Summarize information
- Identify main ideas or characteristics about a topic
- Recall information



Extraneous variables like the naturally occurring ones, e.g., maturation, the subjects' or the researcher's expectations, etc., could have affected the results of the outcome of the research.

The results have been processed mainly quantitatively (statistically) for the analysis of the data gathered through the calculus of group averages of the corresponding scores obtained by the learners.

Additionally, a questionnaire was administered to the students to obtain information about some relevant demographic characteristics of all the participants` as well as information concerning the treatment group's opinions, feelings, and experiences about the use of Graphic Organizers for improving reading. The latter information was analyzed both in a quantitative and qualitative way.

Before the start of the research study, the participants' parents gave their consent to their children being involved in the process (Appendix 1). The treatment started in November 2012 and finished at the end of May 2013.

The research took place at "Sagrados Corazones High School" in Cuenca, Ecuador. The study was carried out with the participation of 38 pre-intermediate female students between the ages of 15 and 16 from the First Bachillerato English Class Level I. The participants were all Ecuadorian students whose native language is Spanish; they have been studying English as a foreign language for ten years, in other words, since they started school. Most of them come from relatively well-established middle class families.

The treatment was administered almost every week and each intervention lasted two class periods which corresponded to 90 minutes. In total, 64 hours were taught in the two groups.

The following table illustrates the different activities that took place during the research project. Copies of the reading materials as well as the pre- and post-test employed in this study are included in Appendix 2.



Research Project Activities

Date	Activity	Topic	Participants	G.O. used
November 5 th , 2012	Teaching	GOs and their use for reading comprehension	Treatment Group	
November 7 th	Pre-test	Robots	Treatment/Control	
November 9 ^h	Activity 1	Untitled	Treatment/Control	Cause and effect
November 26 th	Activity 2	Write around the world	Treatment/Control	Categories chart
December 13 th	Activity 3	The famous mathematician David Hilbert	Treatment/Control	Sequence of events
January 9 th , 2013	Activity 4	Save the rainforest	Treatment/Control	KWL chart
January 17 th	Activity 5	The tropical rainforest	Treatment/Control	KWL chart
January 22 nd	Activity 6	The tropical rainforest	Treatment/Control	Categories' chart
February 19 th , 20 th	Activity 7	The world of birds: the biggest and the smallest	Treatment/Control	Venn Diagram
March 3 rd , 4 th	Activity 8	The sky went green	Treatment/Control	5 Ws chart Categories chart
March 11 th , 12 th	Activity 9	Looking for Keiko	Treatment/Control	5 Ws chart
March 18 th , 19 th	Activity 10	A new home	Treatment/Control	Sequence of Events
April 2 nd , 3 rd	Activity 11	Fiancée loses her ring in Eastern egg swap	Treatment/Control	Cause(s)/ Consequence(s)
April 8 th , 9 th	Activity 12	Talking about penguins	Treatment/Control	Single/double bubbles
April 15 th , 17 th	Activity 13	Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage	Treatment/Control	Sequence of Events
May 6 th , 7 th	Activity 14	World's largest marsupial	Treatment/Control	Single Bubble
May 20 th , 21 st	Post-Test	An atom apart	Treatment/Control	
May 27 th , 28 th	Questionnaire	Section I and II Section I only	Treatment Group Control Group	

TABLE 1. Treatment chronology



Results from one student in the control group were not considered for the data analysis due to the fact that the student is a native speaker of English and was, therefore, treated as an outlier.

Research instruments used in the course of the study

Before starting the treatment, the experimental group received an introductory class on Graphic Organizers and their use for reading comprehension. A pre-reading activity was carried out with both the experimental and the control group. Almost every week a reading session was dedicated to the research study; a set of 14 reading comprehension activities were applied in both groups with the aim of comparing the results obtained. At the end of the treatment phase, a post reading activity was accomplished in both groups.

Finally, a two-section questionnaire consisting mostly of multiple choice questions was administered to the participants; it was answered by the students individually and anonymously (Appendix 3).

The first section of the questionnaire consisted of 13 questions and was intended to collect information on the constant demographic characteristics of all the students participating in the research study (both the treatment and the control group).

The second section was only administered to the students in the treatment group. This section consisted of 12 questions and was designed with the aim of collecting information about the students' attitudes, opinions and experiences concerning the use of Graphic Organizers for reading.

Choosing and adapting the reading activities was a complex task; the texts were carefully selected from varied sources taking into consideration different aspects, for example, the students' English proficiency level. For the purposes of the research study, the texts also needed to be appropriate for the use of a specific Graphic Organizer. The topics for reading were also chosen judiciously, since the aim was to engage the students. Accordingly, the activities were mainly based on short texts and stories.

The implementation was based on the three acknowledged phases of reading and involved pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities with the implementation of Graphic Organizers and using other strategies, like predicting,



connecting to previous knowledge, using context to determine meaning, taking notes, etc. Different Graphic Organizers suggested for language learning and specifically for reading were taken from various sources.

The following Graphic Organizers were used during the treatment:

Graphic Organizer	Characteristics and uses	Activity	Source:
Cause and Effect	*Illustrate the connection between cause and effect. *Consolidate the scheme of a narrative text (Cleveland 34) *The cause=is what makes something else happen *The effect=what happens as a result or consequence of the cause	Act.1	Adapted from the Content-Area Graphic Organizers: English / Language Arts
Categories chart	Especially helpful for the classification of information The categories for the information are written in the upper section of the columns and the detailed information is classified under each category (Cleveland 72)	Act. 2	Adapted from Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll (11)
Categories (Layers)	A different version of Categories charts		Adapted from: <i>The Big Book of Graphic Organizers</i>
Sequence of Events or Chain of Events employed by McKnight (148, 200)	Facilitate the analysis of text structure and organization of narrative stories supporting comprehension	Act: 2-3-10.	Taken from freeology.com. Adapted from The Big Book of Graphic Organizers
KWL chart (Three-column chart)	Useful to record information throughout the three phases of reading. *The first column is intended to record the previous knowledge about the topic so it could be used as a pre-reading activity, *The second column is to be used for the information the reader wants to know about the theme *The third column is for the information learned	Act. 4-5.	
Event-Prediction	Used as a pre-reading activity	Act. 3 Act. 6	Taken from www.freeology.com . Adapted from The Big Book of Graphic Organizers
Venn Diagrams	Facilitate the comparison of similarities and differences between themes.	Act. 7	Taken from the Big Book of Graphic Organizers



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Each circle is labeled with a particular topic. *The similarities should be recorded in the intersected area of the graphic *In the open area of the circles the differences are placed (Cleveland 75) 		
<p>5Ws chart: By answering the 5 Ws: What, When, Where, How and Why, the reader is capable to better comprehend texts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Helps in the connection of ideas, use of previous knowledge, prediction and inference *Developed by McKeown and Worthy (qtd. in McKnight 116) *Benefits concentration on the content and main ideas to identify the characters and the main plot of a story (McKnight 90,116) 	Act.8	Taken from www.freeology.com .
The Single Bubble map or web	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Helpful to connect information or ideas about a topic *Useful for all phases of reading *Before reading=helpful to identify previous knowledge *During reading allows the addition of details about the topic *After reading= helps to recall the main ideas. 	Act. 12	Adapted from www.freeology.com .
Double bubbles	Helpful to visualize connections, remember and organize information by representing the topic or main idea and dividing the rest of information into two different areas under the main category (Cleveland 8)		
The pre-test and post-test			Taken from **"American More 3," Six-Level edition, and *Reading Extra and *Super Teacher worksheets (Appendix 4)

TABLE 2. Graphic Organizers used during the treatment

Treatment Description

The treatment started at the end of November 2012 and finished at the end of May 2013. The research was carried out with the participation of 38 high school students whose English proficiency corresponded to the A2 level of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) classification system.



The implementation was based on the three phases of reading suggested by Farrell (described previously in the Literature Review): pre-reading, during-reading and after-reading activities. Additionally, other useful reading strategies, like guided reading, chunking, reading aloud, and the directed reading teaching activity (DRTA) suggested by Stauffer (qtd. in Farrell 40, 41) were employed during each reading activity throughout the research.

The procedure followed for the reading activities was the same for each lesson during the course of the whole treatment in both groups. The only difference was the application of Graphic Organizers with the treatment group.

The following table shows the procedure used with each group during the treatment.

Treatment Group	Control Group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic Organizer's presentation • Brain storming • Preview and/or predict information • Read the first paragraph • Predict information in the rest of the text • Skim the text to identify the general idea • Guided reading/reading aloud • Explanation of additional vocabulary • Second reading (individual) while filling a Graphic Organizer • Answering reading comprehension questions • Review of answers to the questions • Short discussion sharing opinions about the topic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brain storming • Preview and/or predict information • Read the first paragraph • Predict information in the rest of the text • Skim the text to identify the general idea • Guided reading/reading aloud • Explanation of additional vocabulary • Second reading (individual) • Answering reading comprehension questions • Review of answers to the questions • Short discussion sharing opinions about the topic

TABLE 3. Procedure

Students in the treatment group were presented with Graphic Organizer(s) and a brief explanation about the purpose of using it/them.

At the beginning of each lesson the basic new vocabulary was presented to both the treatment and the control group. Brain storming was the next step; the students in both groups were given the reading material and invited to preview and/or predict the



information in the text based on the illustrations, the labels, or the titles as a way to activate their prior knowledge.

At this point the students recorded ideas or expressions about their predictions, either listing them down (control group) or using the graphic tool provided (treatment group). Next, they had to read the first paragraph and predict the information or vocabulary in the rest of the text/article. After that the students proceeded to skim the rest of the text to get a general idea of the content. Then guided reading or reading aloud took place by taking turns, while the students circled additional new vocabulary or expressions individually. Only the most difficult words or expressions identified by the students during the first reading were explained or clarified by the teacher to the students and they then proceeded to read the text a second time individually. In the case of less difficult words and phrases, the students were expected to find out the meaning from the context.

The students in the treatment group completed a Graphic Organizer while they were reading; the students in the control group only had to read. After reading, both groups of students proceeded to answer the reading comprehension questions. Once all the answer sheets were collected, the teacher reviewed each question from the after-reading activity with the entire class as a way of checking the right / best answers. Afterwards, the students were encouraged to share their opinions about the topic and have a short discussion about the text as a whole class activity.

Finally, as a complementary activity, the students in both groups had to write a summary of the story which could be shared with a partner, if the students so wished and time allowed.

Sample reading activity description

Reading Comprehension Activity 7

Reading topic: "The world of birds: the biggest and the smallest"

Teaching objective: To compare and contrast: identifying similarities and differences.

The classes in the two groups were given in the following way:



Before starting the reading activity, the teacher asked the students to brainstorm vocabulary related to birds in both groups. The next activity was only carried out in the treatment group. The teacher introduced a Venn diagram to the students and explained its use when identifying similarities and differences.

Following this, the students were asked to talk to a partner and share their previous knowledge about birds; then the teacher asked the students if they liked birds or not and encouraged them to explain why or why not. (Some students said they liked them because they are colorful and sing beautifully, but the majority of students in both groups decided they didn't like them because, as they said, birds were dirty.)

The students brainstormed vocabulary about birds and checked it with a partner. After this the students read the title and the subtitles of the text and made predictions about the information they thought would be found in the text. Some students in the treatment group thought the text was going to be about kinds of eggs, others thought that they could find information about birds that can or cannot fly. There were some who thought that the text will be about kinds of birds. The students in the control group thought it would be about big and small birds or nice and ugly birds.

The students in both groups proceeded to work on a key vocabulary activity provided and guided by the teacher. After that the students were asked to write down the similarities or shared characteristics they could find in the text about ostriches and hummingbirds. The students in the treatment group filled the central part of the diagram as a pre-reading activity, while the students in the control group just listed them.

All students were provided with a key vocabulary list.

During reading, the students read the text aloud by taking turns, checked the new vocabulary together with the teacher and then proceeded to read the text silently for a second time. The students in the treatment group were asked to complete the Venn diagram recording further similarities and differences they found. The students in the control group were asked to pay attention to the similarities and differences and list them while they were reading.

After reading the text, the students in both groups answered the reading comprehension questions individually.



Next, the worksheets were collected and the teacher reviewed each answer to the comprehension questions orally with the class while encouraging students to share their opinions about the text and discuss new or interesting information found in the text.

Finally, the students in both (control and treatment) groups were divided into two teams (by choosing two animals from the same species) and were asked to brainstorm vocabulary thinking of the animals' general characteristics. Further, they had to compare and contrast information about these animals and write a short composition together on the board. This activity was done as a sample activity with the entire class. In the end, the students were asked to write a composition using the text provided as an example; the compositions were shared during the next session with the entire class.

The pre-test and post-test reading activities were taken from the students' course book, "American More 3", Six-Level edition. An entire class period was dedicated to each test. The procedure for the tests was similar to the rest of the reading practices. The reading started with the pre-reading activities of pre-viewing and predicting the text followed by a guided reading practice with the explanation of basic vocabulary, after which the students did a second reading individually. At this point students in the treatment group completed the corresponding Graphic Organizer provided by the teacher, before answering the comprehension questions provided.

It is worth pointing out that both groups (control and treatment) were very similar from the point of view of the number of students, their age, gender, English proficiency level, and academic performance reports for English. Additionally, the majority of the students in both groups were taught by the same teacher (the researcher) for two consecutive academic years and belonged to a similar socio-economic background.

As regards the questionnaire mentioned above, the first section consisted of 13 questions which were aimed at collecting information on all the students participating in the research study (treatment and control group) and trying to find out if there were differences in the students' motivation to learn English. Questions 1 to 6 were designed to find out information about the students' experiences visiting English speaking countries and the opportunities they had to practice the language with English speakers.



Questions 7 to 9 helped to obtain information about the amount of time the students dedicated to practicing English outside school and the different ways in which they practiced the language. Questions 10 and 11 provided information about the students' opinions on reading in English and the reasons for their answers. Finally, questions 12 and 13 were intended to investigate the kind of reading the students did outside school.

The second section of the questionnaire was administered only to the students in the treatment group and consisted of 12 questions designed to collect information about the students' attitudes, opinions and experiences concerning the use of Graphic Organizers for reading.

In questions 1 to 5 the students had to rate general statements to indicate their opinions and preferences with respect to the use of Graphic Organizers as reading tools, the stories chosen and their intentions about continuing to use these tools in the future.

In questions 6 to 11 the participants had to answer multiple choice questions concerning the following aspects: the reading skill in which they felt Graphic Organizers helped them most; their favorite Graphic Organizer design; the story or text they liked the best; the way they felt about using these tools for reading; their intentions to continue using these tools for future reading and the aspects of reading they found more difficult than others.

For questions 7 and 8, over and above the closed-ended questions, the students were asked to explain their answers so that more qualitative information could be obtained. Finally, in question 12 the students were given the option to provide comments on the whole process.

In Chapter Two, an attempt was made to provide a detailed account of the research methodology. This included the description of the tools and techniques used both for the delivery of the teaching material and the gathering of the data. The process of how the readings were explored in the treatment and the control group has been described. We have highlighted the fact that the teaching methodology applied in the two groups only differed in one aspect: the treatment group worked with Graphic



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Organizers, while the control group did not. What follows is the data analysis, the purpose of which is to establish if statistically meaningful differences in the reading comprehension achievements of the two groups may be found or not.



CHAPTER III

DATA ANALYSIS

Data Description, Analysis, and Interpretation

The following chapter contains a detailed description of the data gathered in the course of the research and presents the outcomes of this study. Additionally, an analysis and interpretation of the data is provided.

The data presented was obtained from the different research instruments used: the pre-test, the results from 14 reading activities which constituted the treatment, a post-test, and a questionnaire administered in a similar way to both groups. The data is analyzed by comparing the results for both groups in a quantitative way.

The table below summarizes the new evaluation and grading scale introduced by the Ecuadorian government through what is called the “Reglamento General a la Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural” (LOEI), which has been in effect since March 31, 2011. It applies to the whole Ecuadorian educational system and sets 7/10 as the minimum passing grade. The table below has been used as a reference point for the analysis of the results of the students’ reading comprehension performance both for the pre-tests and the post-test.

Escala cualitativa (Qualitative scale)	Escala cuantitativa (Quantitative scale)
Supera los aprendizajes requeridos (Exceeds the learning requirements)	10
Domina los aprendizajes requeridos (Fulfills the learning requirements with ease)	9
Alcanza los aprendizajes requeridos (Accomplishes the learning requirements)	7-8
Está próximo a alcanzar los aprendizajes requeridos (Is close to accomplishing the learning requirements)	5-6
No alcanza los aprendizajes requeridos	≤ 4



(Does not meet the learning requirements)

TABLE 4. Qualitative and quantitative scale used for evaluation

Source: "REGLAMENTO GENERAL A LA LEY ORGANICA DE EDUCACION INTERCULTURAL

Suplemento - Registro Oficial No. 754" 29

Questionnaire Section I

Before looking at the results of the pre-test, some demographic data may help describe the language proficiency and learner profile of the participants. The students were asked to answer the following questions.

Question 1. Have you ever been to an English speaking country?

The following figure shows the number of students in each group who have been to an English speaking country.

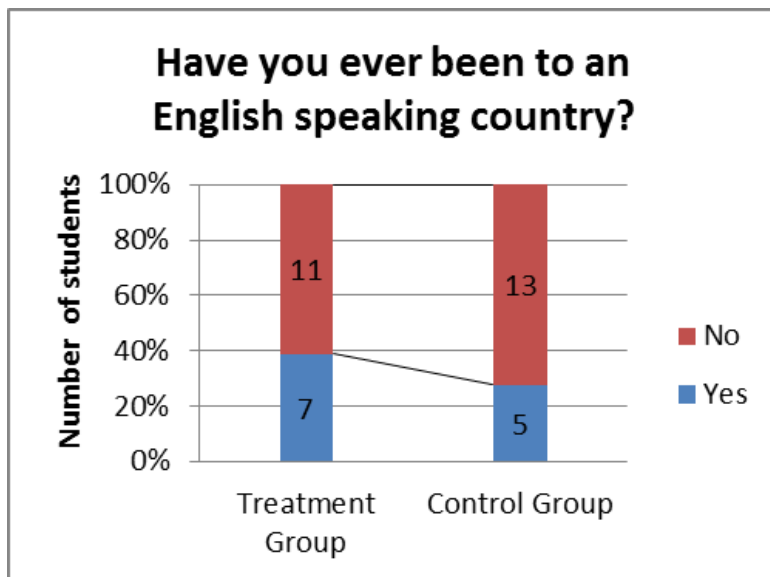


FIG. 1. Participants' answers to Question 1

Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

Figure 1 shows that the majority of the participants -- 11 out of 18 in the treatment group, and 13 out of 18 in the control group -- have not been to an English speaking country. The number of students who have had this experience is relatively low in both groups; however, the treatment group has a higher number of students who have been abroad (7) than the control group (5).



Question 2. If yes, how long did you stay there?

The following figure shows the number of students and the length of time they stayed in an English speaking country.

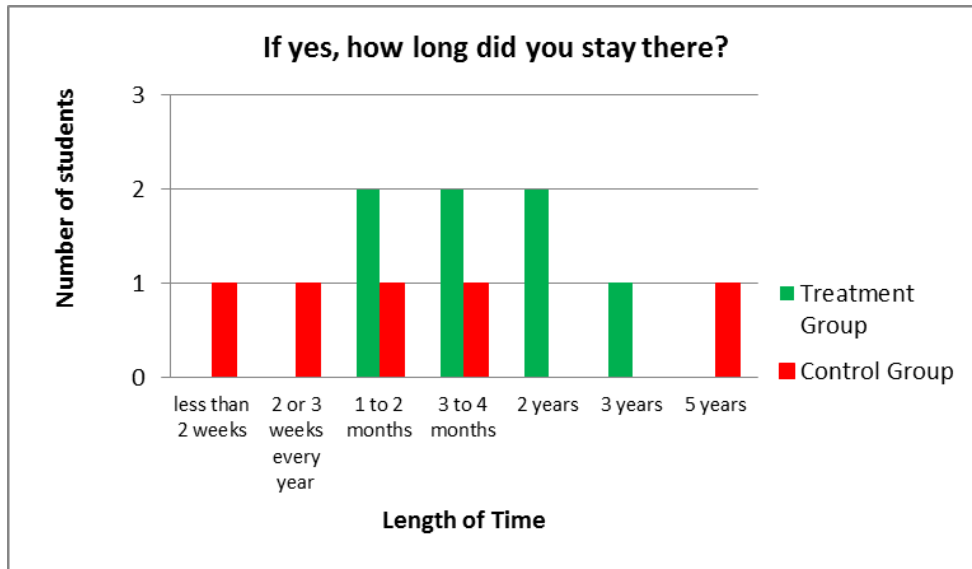


FIG. 2. Participants' answers to Question 2

Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

In Figure 2 it can be seen that 7 students of the treatment group have spent some time in an English speaking country. Four of them were there for 1-4 months, but 3 of them spent as long as 2-3 years abroad. As for the control group, there is only one true outlier, the student who lived abroad for 5 years. Since the researcher was looking at average group results, the length of stay abroad did not result in any outstanding performance and evened out during the data analysis.

Question3. Do you have English speaking relatives?

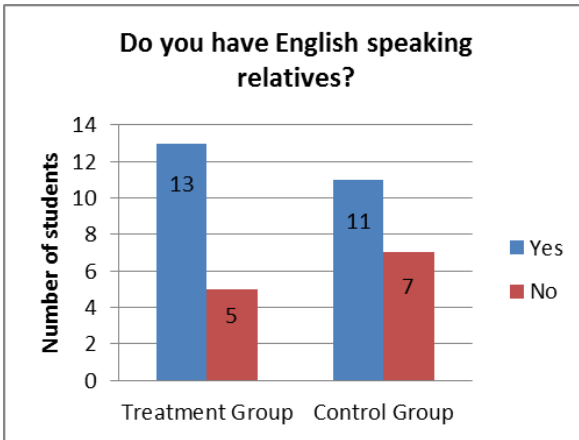


FIG. 3. Participants' answers to Question 3
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

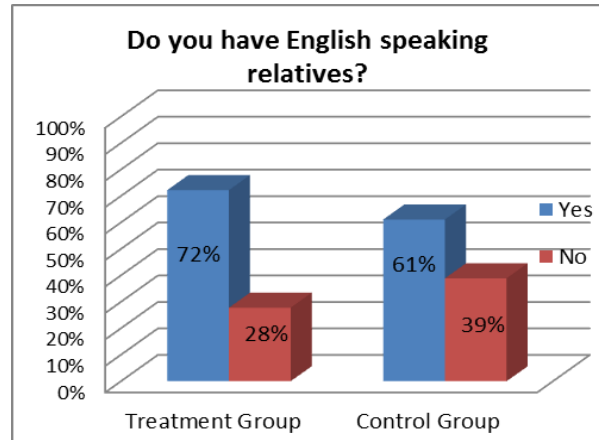


FIG. 4. Participants' answers to Question 3
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

Figure 3 shows the number of students in each group who responded that they had English speaking relatives. The data indicate that the number of students who answered “yes” to this question is very similar in both groups. However, more students from the treatment group (13) said they had English speaking relatives than in the control group, where only 11 students said “yes”. Even so, it could be said that the two groups may have a fairly similar experience as regards English speaking relatives.

Looking at the data in percentage terms, the ratios are 72% and 61%, respectively. This information is considered to be very important since it can be interpreted as an opportunity for the students to have some kind of contact with English, which is a foreign language for them, and receive some authentic input provided by their relatives who speak English. The next question was designed in order to explore this aspect.

Question 4. If yes, do you practice English with them?

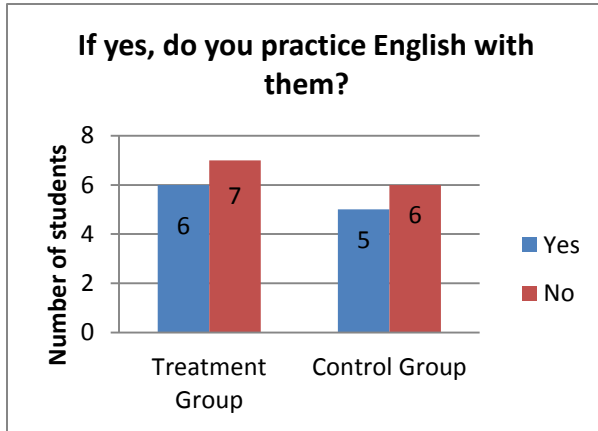


FIG. 5. Participants' answers to Question 4
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

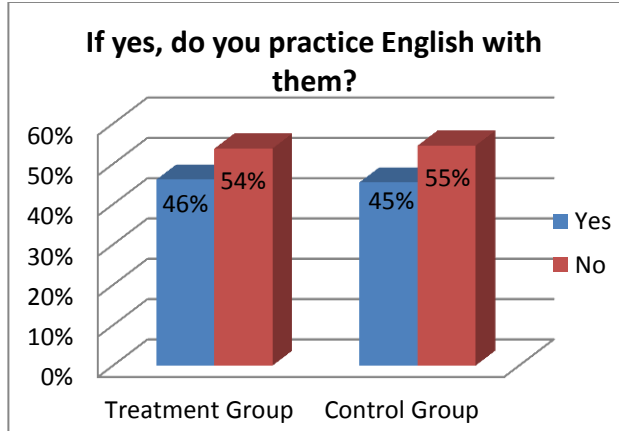


FIG. 6. Participants' answers to Question 4
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

The majority of students in both groups reported having relatives who speak English, but this does not necessarily mean that the students practice the language with them. As it can be seen in Figure 5, only 6 students out of 13 from the treatment group and 5 students out of 11 from the control group, practice English with their relatives. Figure 6 represents the data in percentage terms and highlights that the two groups are almost identical in this respect. It is also evident that from the total number of students who have English speaking relatives in each group, more than half of the students do not practice the language with them.

Question 5. Do you have English speaking friends?

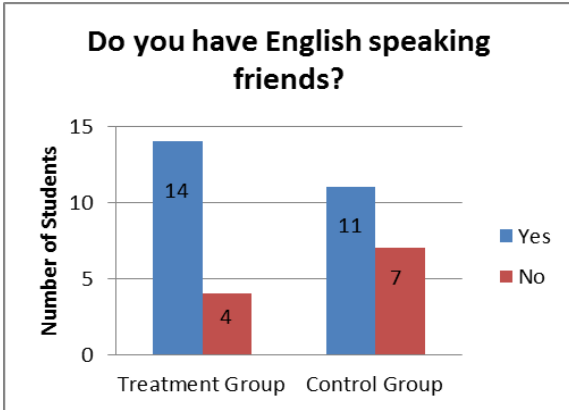


FIG. 7. Participants' answers to Question 5
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

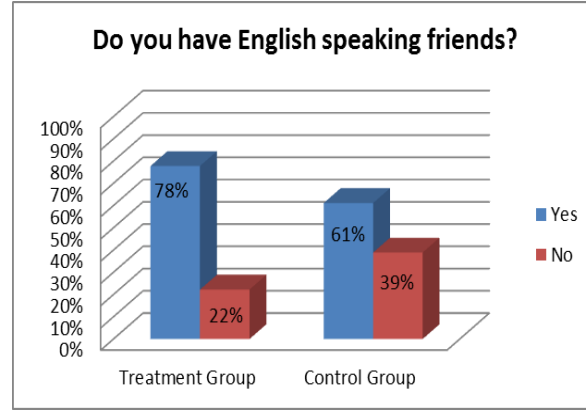


FIG. 8. Participants' answers to Question 5
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

Question 5 asked the students if they had English speaking friends. The answers to this question are shown in Figures 7 and 8. Fourteen students from the treatment group and 11 from the control group reported that they had English speaking friends. Once again, the figures are higher for the students in the treatment group, which can be interpreted as an advantage for the latter. Figure 8 shows the same data in percentage terms. The results demonstrate that there is a difference of 17% in favor of the students in the treatment group regarding the number of English speaking friends that they have. Question 6. If yes, do you practice English with your friends?

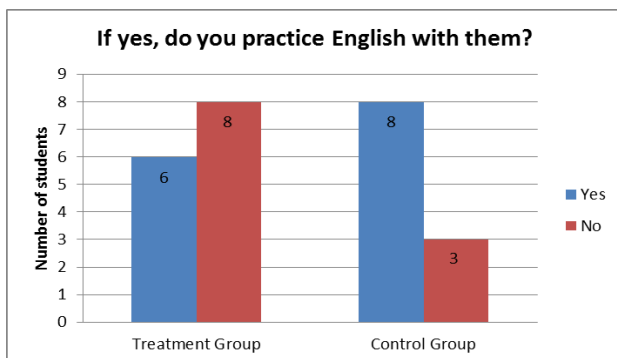


FIG. 9. Participants' answers to question 6
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

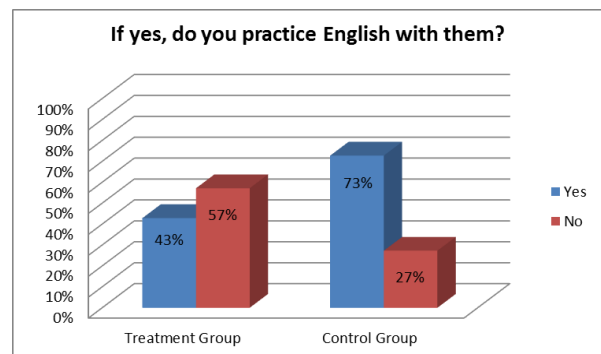


FIG. 10. Participants' answers to question 6
Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

The aim of Question 6 was to get information about the number of students who in each group would actually practice the language with their English speaking friends. As it can be seen in Figure 9, in the treatment group, from a total of 14 students who



had English speaking friends, only 6 of them practiced the language with their friends, while in the control group from a total of 11 students, 8 of them did so.

The same data are presented in Figure 10 displaying the results in percentage terms. It highlights the fact that even though more students in the treatment group had English speaking friends than in the control group, the percentage rate of the students who actually practiced the language with their friends is higher for the control group - 73% - compared with 43% of the students in the treatment group.

Question 7. Do you practice English outside school?

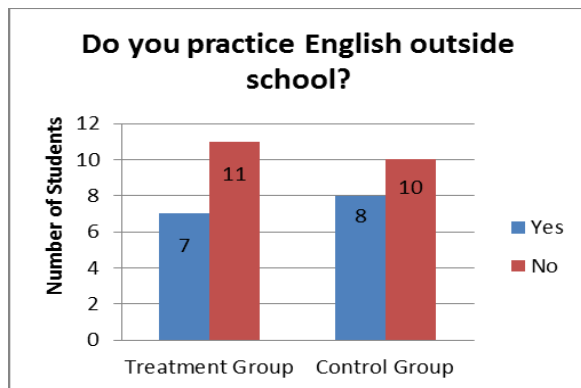


FIG. 11. Participants' answers to question 7

Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

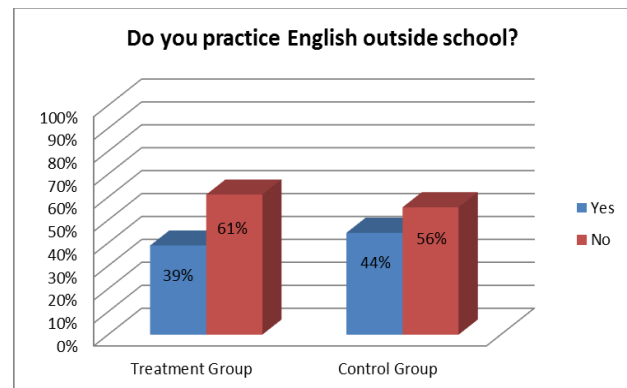


FIG. 12. Participants' answers to question 7

Source: Questionnaire Section 1: Demographics

In Question 7 the participants were asked to provide information about additional English language practice outside school. Figure 11 shows the results derived from the answers to this question in both groups. It can be seen that from the total number of students, 7 of them in the treatment group practiced the language outside school as compared with 8 students in the control group. Figure 12 presents the data in percentage terms: the rate is 39% for the treatment and 44% for the control group, which denotes a marginal difference in favor of the control group.

The results of the demographic questionnaire show that the groups chosen for the research were very similar in most aspects. However, even though the results for both groups were generally very close, the small differences in results could provide



important information when it comes to the students' predisposition to or motivation for learning English.

Based on the data gathered with the help of the questionnaire, one would have assumed that the students in the treatment group would get more additional practice of the language, since more students reported having friends or relatives who spoke English. However, when the students were asked if they practiced the language with those people, the students in the control group were the ones who had more additional practice. Therefore, it can be assumed that the students in the control group were more motivated to practice and learn English, because they were more likely to practice the language on their own.

In the next section the pre-test given to both groups will be analyzed. This pre-test was taken from the students' course book and was the very first reading they did in the school year. It was a short description of robots in which the vocabulary was presented with the help of a key-words chart. The reading text contained 5 illustrative pictures and started with a general question as an introduction to the definition of a robot.

The students were introduced to the topic by being asked to brainstorm ideas and refer to their previous knowledge about robots. Then they proceeded to read the text individually to finally answer a set of comprehension questions. Once all the students finished answering the questions, the papers were collected and the researcher proceeded to check the answers orally with the entire class.

The results of the pre-test administered to both the treatment and the control group are summarized in the pie charts below.

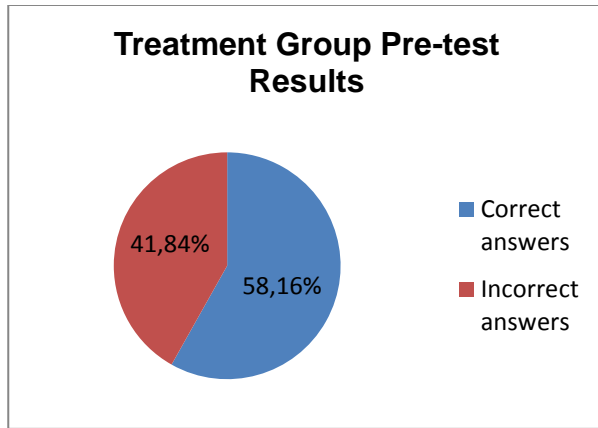


FIG. 13. Participants' performance in Pre-test
Source: Pre-test results

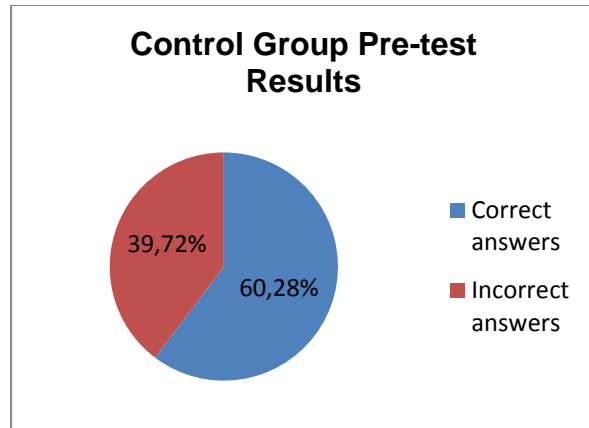


FIG. 14. Participants' performance in Pre-test
Source: Pre-test results

The data presented in Figures 13 and 14 show that the average rate of correct answers to the comprehension questions of the pre-test was 58.16% in the treatment group and 60.28% in the control group. This implies that they were both lower than the required minimum passing grade of 70%.

The following bar chart presents the results of the two groups side by side.

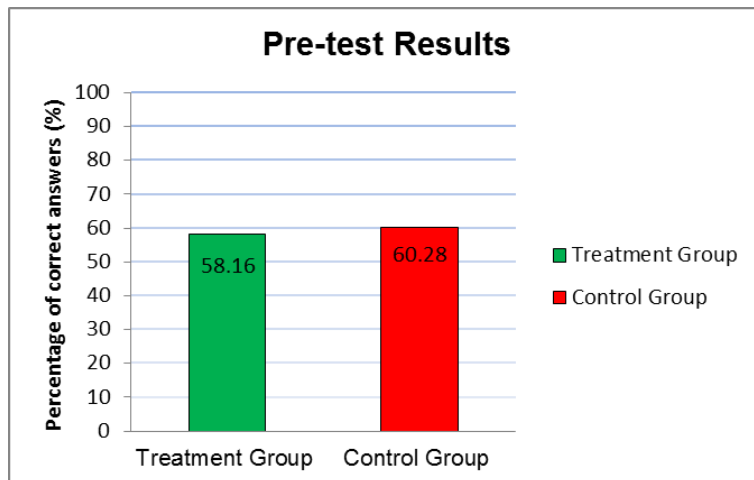


FIG. 15. Participants' performance in the Pre-test
Source: Pre-test results

The bar chart above shows that the average performance of both groups regarding the percentage of correct responses to the pre-test questions is very similar - a fact that increases the validity of the research. The average of both groups was



around 60% and they differed by only 2.12%. However, the results implied that, according to the qualitative and quantitative grading scale of the LOEI (as presented above), the performance of both groups was approximately 10% under the minimum requirement. In other words, they were "close to accomplishing the learning requirements" but, obviously, there was room for improvement.

The following table shows the average performance of each group in each reading activity from readings 1 to14.

Reading activities	Treatment Group	Control Group	Difference
1	6.46	7.67	1.21
2	8.95	9.16	0.21
3	7.46	6.54	0.92
4	6.68	7.26	0.58
5	4.95	6.68	1.73
6	7.08	7.71	0.63
7	9.16	8.95	0.21
8	8.09	7.89	0.2
9	5.72	6.18	0.46
10	6.19	5.55	0.64
11	4.42	4.61	0.19
12	6.7	7.02	0.32
13	8.11	8.37	0.26
14	7.14	7.36	0.22
Average Results	6.94	7.21	0.27

TABLE 5. Participants' averages in activities 1 to 14

Source: Reading Activities Averages

As Table 5 above shows, the performance of the students in the treatment group was slightly lower than those of the students in the control group, except for activities 3, 7, 8, and 10. All the activities were graded over 10 points. The average performance of



the treatment group during the treatment was 6.94, while the performance of the control group was 7.21 - a difference of 0.27. In most activities the average performance of the treatment group continued to be lower throughout the sequence, even though there was a noticeable improvement when compared with the results of the pre-test.

The next figure illustrates the performance of both groups in each reading activity during the treatment.

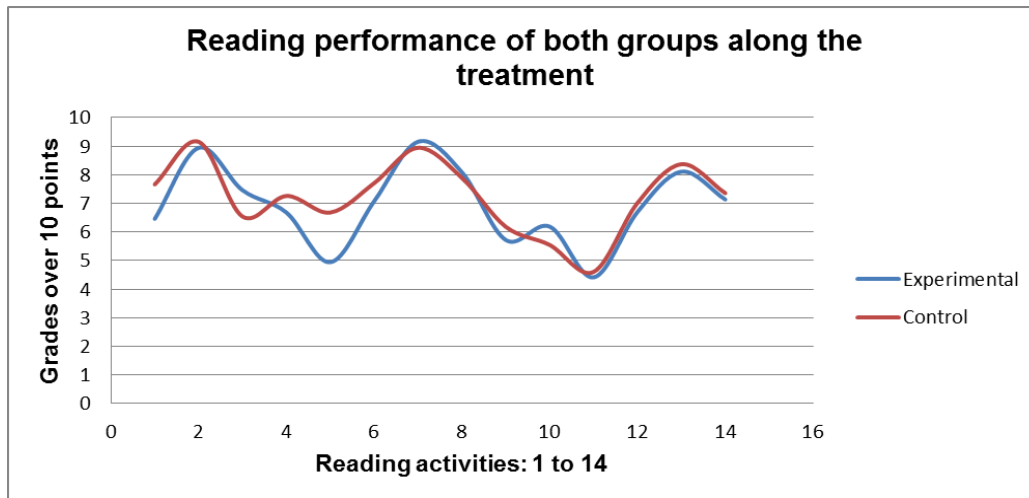


FIG. 16. Participants' performance in Activities 1 to 14

Source: Reading Activity Results

As is shown in Figure 16, the level of performance of both groups was very close in each reading activity. However, as the graph above indicates, the tendency was that the treatment group performed lower than the control group, except for four of the activities in which this group performed higher (3,7,8, and 10) .

The detailed results of the individual reading sessions for both groups are presented below.

Reading Activity 1: Untitled reading

Teaching Objective: Identifying cause(s) and effect(s)

The following figure illustrates how both groups did when answering the questions of the after-reading activity sheet.

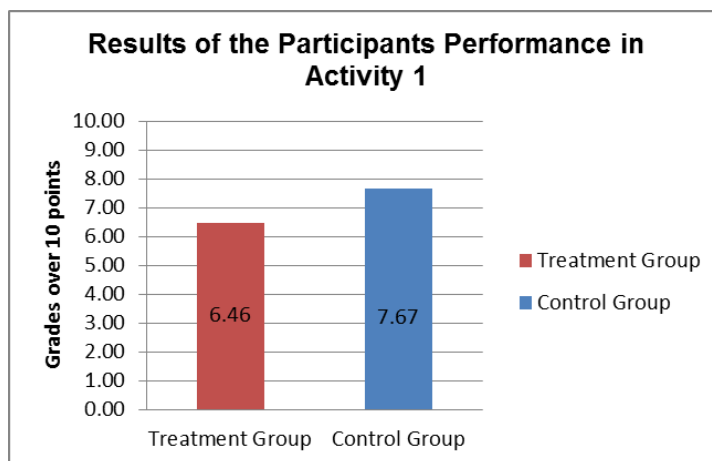


FIG. 17. Participants' performance in Activity 1

Source: Reading Activity Results

In the first reading activity, the average performance of the treatment group was 6.46 while the control group got an average of 7.67. This implies that even though the difference between the two groups is not more than 0.71, it appears to be a significant variance considering that the treatment and the control group started out almost the same.

In this activity, the students in the control group performed better than the students in the treatment group. At this point it was not possible to tell what the reason was for the difference in the results.

It needs to be emphasized that, just like with all the other reading activities, the only difference between the two groups was that the treatment group was using Graphic Organizers while the control group was not. The treatment group actually used two Graphic Organizers, one for the pre-reading and one for the during-reading stage. The use of two Graphic Organizers for each reading was a consistent feature of the research project.

Observation and interpretation: The vast majority of participants in both groups were not used to reading informative pieces of texts in English. The students in the control group seemed to be more motivated to read and it took them less time to complete the task. The students in the treatment group, who were not familiar with Graphic Organizers and their use for reading, took longer to complete the reading



activity which demanded a bigger effort. As a consequence, they were apparently tired by the time they began answering the questions. The students in both groups reported that they had difficulties with vocabulary.

Reading Activity 2: Write around the world

Teaching Objective: Reading for specific information and details

The following figure shows the average results of both groups for Reading Activity 2.

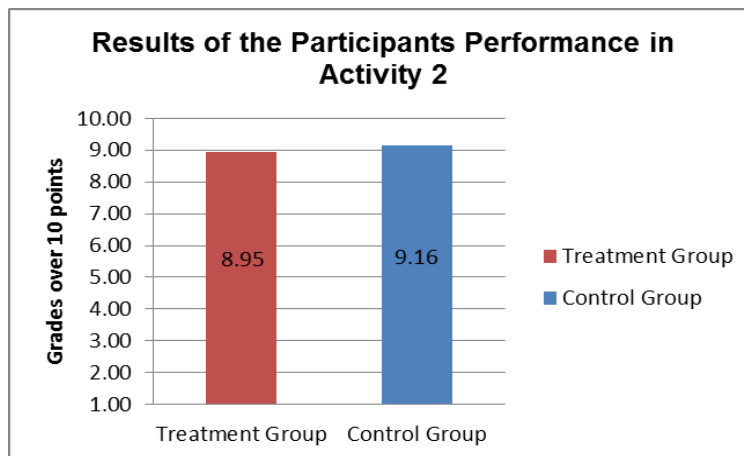


FIG. 18. Participants' performance in Activity 2

Source: Reading Activity Results

As is shown in the chart above, the treatment group again performed more poorly than the control group. In this activity, the treatment group got an average of 8.95 while the control group obtained 9.16. However, it needs to be noted that the difference between the two groups was a lot smaller (0.21) than in the case of Reading Activity 1.

What could explain the fact that the difference between the performance of the treatment and the control group is not as pronounced as it was in Reading Activity 1? One explanation might be that even though Graphic Organizers were still a new element in the teaching methodology of the treatment group, the specific Graphic Organizer employed during reading (Categories chart) may have been an especially useful tool for comprehension and, as a result, helped the students when it came to answering the questions of the post-reading sheet.



Observation and interpretation: Even though the students in the treatment group showed an interest in using Graphic Organizers, they did not seem very happy about having to complete them, because they found them challenging. They definitely took longer than the other group to finish the activity.

Reading Activity 3: The famous mathematician David Hilbert

Teaching Objective: Identifying the sequence of events

The chart below shows the results of the participants' performance in this activity.

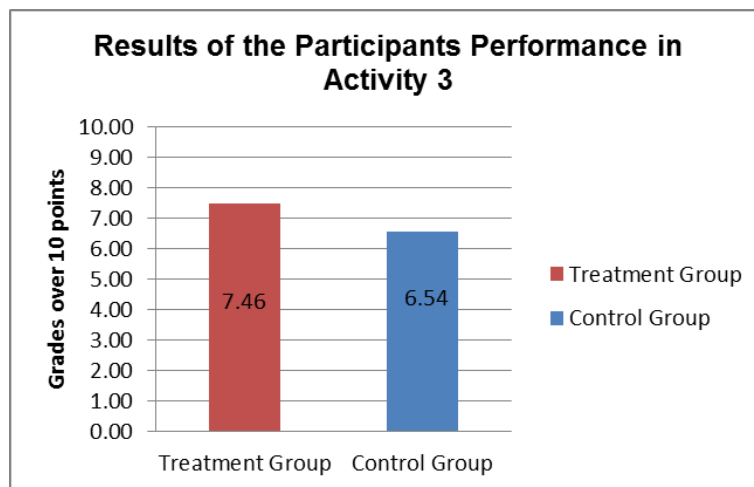


FIG. 19. Participants' performance in Activity 3

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it can be seen in Figure 19, this time the treatment group's average performance was higher than that of the control group. The treatment group reached 7.46 while the control group attained 6.54, so the difference between the two results was 0.92 in favor of the treatment group.

Observation and interpretation: The question arises as to what might be behind the turning of the tables. In the case of Reading Activity 1 and 2, a relevant external factor might be that the treatment group had their sessions before the morning recess, while the control group had their session after the break. One may assume that students, in general, are more alert and energized after the break, which seems to have worked in favor of the grades of the control group so far. However, the pattern for the first batch of



readings, namely that the control group was doing better, seems to have been broken on this occasion.

The teacher-researcher's observation on the given day was that the treatment group was particularly enthused by the fact that the reading, which they expected to be a straightforward biographical description, actually turned out to be a funny story about an absent-minded professor. The surprise element may have heightened the students' motivation and could have led to better learning results.

At this stage, it would have been impossible to decide if the Graphic Organizers used during this session had also contributed to the better results achieved by the treatment group, but obviously this factor cannot be completely disregarded.

Reading Activity 4: Save the rainforest

Teaching Objective: Utilizing previous knowledge

The chart below illustrates the participants' performance in Activity 4.

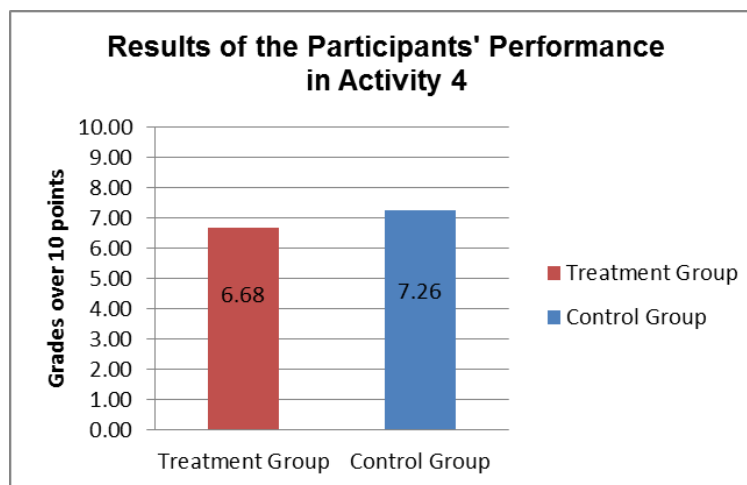


FIG. 20. Participants' performance in Activity 4

Source: Reading Activity Results

Figure 20 above shows the average results of both groups in this activity. The treatment group's performance was 6.68, once again lower than the control group's average of 7.26. The difference between the two groups was 0.58, closer to the variance found for Reading Activity 1 than for Reading Activity 2.



Observation and interpretation: One of the reasons why the treatment group achieved slightly lower results than the control group could be the fact that the treatment group used the KWL chart for the very first time. This Graphic Organizer aims at focusing the students' attention on trying to link previous knowledge with the new knowledge obtained as a result of the learning process. KWL stands for: What I know; What I Want to know; and What I have learned. The learning process is related to the so-called Schema Theory developed by Richard C. Anderson and the social-constructivist theory of learning developed by Lev Vygotsky.

Reading Activity 5: The Tropical Rainforest

Teaching Objective: Utilizing previous knowledge

The following figure shows the average results of both groups in this activity.

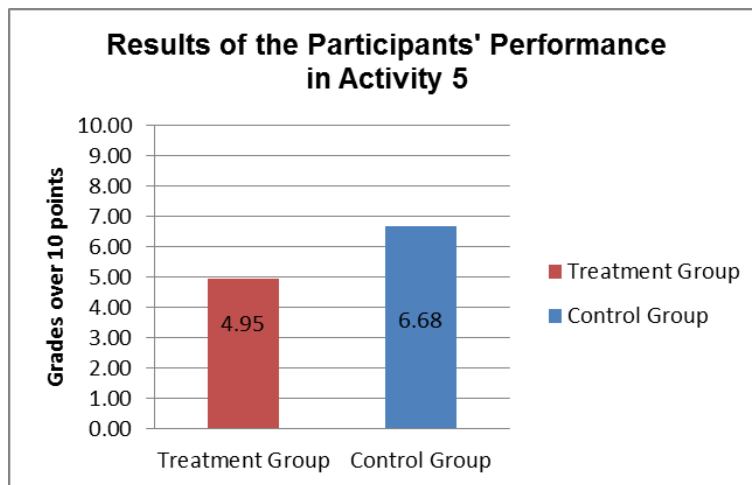


FIG. 21. Participants' performance in Activity 5

Source: Reading Activity Results

Figure 21 reveals that the average performance of the treatment group was 4.95, which again fell below the one obtained by the control group - 6.68. This time the performance difference is 1.73 in favor of the control group, which is the biggest difference, measured during the treatment. In this activity, the treatment group used the KWL chart for the second time, so they were already somewhat more familiar with this tool.



Observation and interpretation: The students from both groups participated enthusiastically in the activity and seemed to be focused while reading; nevertheless, both groups lowered their performance as compared to Activity 4. One of the reasons for the results could be a psychological factor, since the students in the treatment group were very tired and worried after taking a difficult exam in the previous class period. The students in the control group performed the reading activity after recess time, they appeared more rested, but they were also anxious, because they had to take the same exam during the next class period.

Reading Activity 6: The Tropical Rainforest

Teaching Objective: Categorizing information

The following figure indicates the average performance of the participants during this activity.

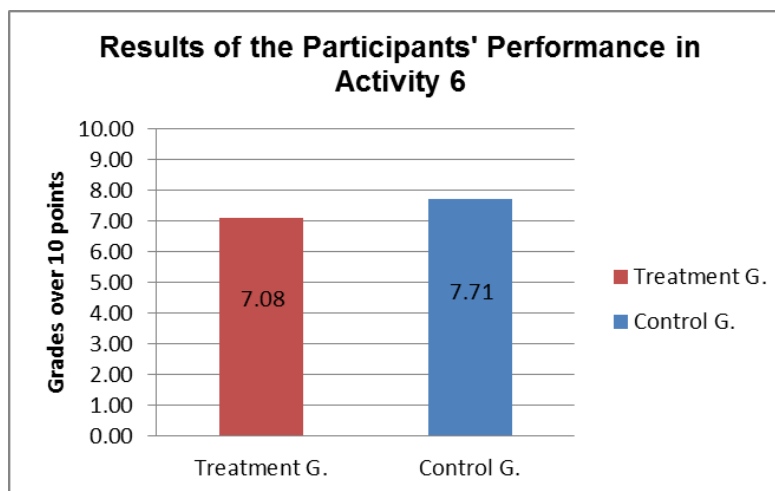


FIG. 22. Participants' performance in Activity 6

Source: Reading Activity Results

As is shown in Figure 22, the control group's performance was higher (7.71) than that of the treatment group (7.08) with a difference of 0.63, which means that the difference between the groups had narrowed for this particular activity.

The students in the treatment group said that they liked the "categories chart", because they were able to organize the information provided more easily. The teacher-researcher observed that while answering the questions, the majority of the students in the control group kept going back and forth looking for the answers to the questions in



the text, while the students in the treatment group referred to the chart they had completed.

Observation and interpretation: As expected, the students in the treatment group took longer to read the text and write the information down, so once again, they felt tired when answering the after-reading questions. Probably, this could have affected the performance of the students in the treatment group, or simply the students in the control group were better readers of this particular piece of text.

Reading Activity 7: The world of birds, the biggest and the smallest

Teaching Objective: Comparing and contrasting or identifying similarities and differences

The following figure shows the average performance of both groups in this activity.

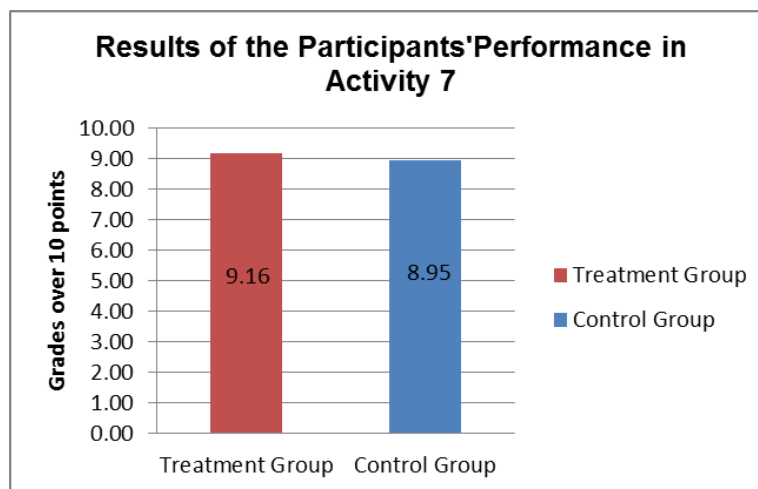


FIG. 23. Participants' performance in Activity 7

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it can be seen in Figure 23, the treatment group's average performance was 9.16 placing the group in the level that corresponds to the fulfillment of learning requirements in the qualitative and quantitative Ecuadorian grading scale, while the control group obtained 8.95 which is almost reaching the same level. The difference of 0.21 was in favor of the treatment group on this occasion.

Observation and interpretation: The reason for the results could be that even though the treatment group used a Venn diagram for the first time during the treatment,



this was just a different way of classifying information (similarities and differences), and they were probably getting used to analyzing and organizing their ideas graphically. During this activity, students in the treatment group were more participative than the other group. It is important to mention that at this point all the students were getting more familiar with reading in English so, probably, they started to feel more comfortable with the activities.

It is also worth pointing out that from the time of this activity onwards the English schedules changed for both groups: the treatment group had their English classes after the recess, while the control group had theirs right before the break.

Reading Activity 8: The sky went green

Teaching Objective: Identifying and differentiating the order of events

In the figure below the results of the average performance of both groups in this activity are presented.

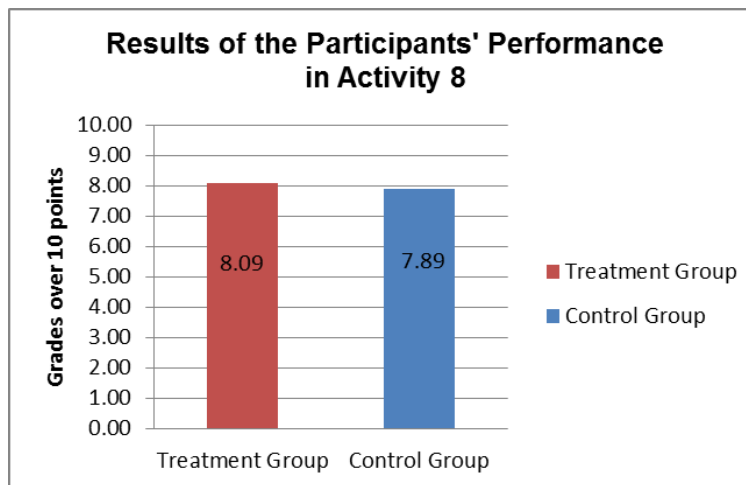


FIG. 24. Participants' performance in Activity 8

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it is apparent in Figure 24 above, in this activity we can see an improvement in the treatment group's average (8.09) in comparison with that of the control group (7.89). This time the performance difference was 0.20 in favor of the treatment group, which is more or less the same difference as observed in Activity 7 and is the exact opposite of the results obtained in Activity 2.



Observation and interpretation: Although both groups had lowered their average performance, the results were very close and the students were still accomplishing the learning requirements as prescribed by the Ecuadorian grading scale. There is a possibility that the fact that the treatment group was using a sequence of events chart for the second time benefited them and helped to improve their results. Both groups liked the topic of this activity, since it was about UFOs and they claimed they liked mystery and science fiction. Both groups were actively participating and sharing information they had from before and were curious about the text.

Reading Activity 9: Looking for Keiko.

Teaching Objective: Identifying the main plot of a story

The following figure indicates the results achieved by the students in Reading Activity 9.

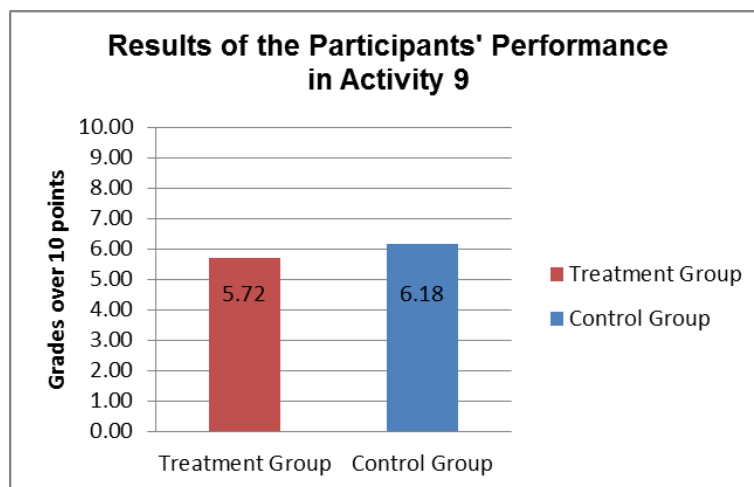


FIG. 25. Participants' performance in Activity 9

Source: Reading Activity Results

It can be seen in Figure 25 that the treatment group's performance was lower than that of the control group. The difference of 0.46 represents a significant decrease in the treatment group's performance in comparison with the difference in the results for the previous activity. In fact, both groups went down considerably in their grades during this activity: the treatment group obtained an average of 5.72 while the control group got 6.18.



Observation and interpretation: The students in both groups were actively participating, especially while using their background knowledge during the first phase of the reading. They felt comfortable sharing ideas related to the text and even shared some anecdotes about the topic. However, the students in both groups experienced some difficulty because it was for the first time that they had to identify the main plot as well as the main and secondary ideas of a story. Additionally, this was the first time that the treatment group used a 5Ws chart.

Reading Activity 10: A New Home

Teaching Objective: Identifying the sequence of events and recalling information

The figure below illustrates the participants' results in activity 10.

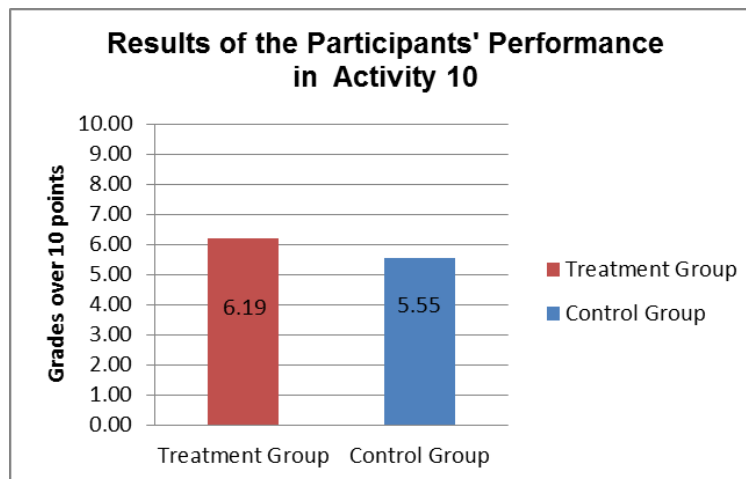


FIG. 26. Participants' performance in Activity 10

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it can be seen in Figure 26, the performance of the treatment group improved while the control group's performance was poorer on this occasion. This time round the difference in performance was 0.64 in favor of the treatment group. The treatment group improved its average by getting 6.19 against the control group which reached an average of 5.55. Both groups were instructed in a similar fashion: they were encouraged to use prior knowledge about the topic and were asked to use prediction.

Observation and interpretation: A new feature of this activity was that the students were not allowed to refer to the text again at the time of answering the



questions. This was done on purpose by the researcher to check the recall ability of the students in both groups. The students in the treatment group performed better and the researcher's assumption is that this might have been due to the fact that they were already familiar with the use of a sequence of events Graphic Organizer. Additionally, filling the chart could have benefitted them while they were recalling the pertaining information. The students in both groups said that they liked this activity. It was about aliens moving to the Earth, which seemed an unusual scenario for the students.

Reading Activity 11: Fiancée loses her ring in Easter egg swap

Teaching Objective: Identifying cause(s) and consequence(s)

The figure below illustrates the participants' performance results in Activity 11.

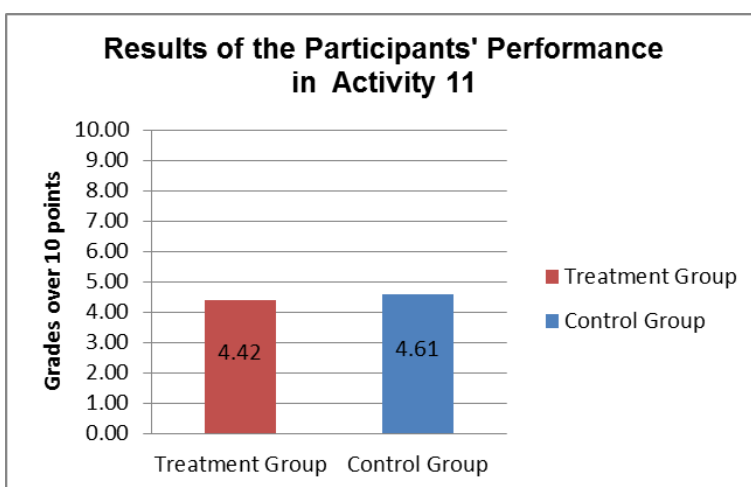


FIG. 27. Participants' performance in Activity 11

Source: Reading Activity Results

The results obtained by the students in both groups were less than satisfactory. Actually, they obtained the lowest results during the whole treatment. In this activity, the treatment group obtained 4.42 and the control group 4.61; the difference between the groups was only 0.19 in favor of the control group.

The story was related to Easter celebrations in North America, so background knowledge related to it was required and duly given to the students. The text described a funny but awkward situation faced by a couple who were about to get engaged; the



fiancée was supposed to find the engagement ring in a chocolate egg, but she was not too keen on this type of sweets. Even though the students were encouraged to participate and key vocabulary was also provided, the activity did not create the expected enthusiasm.

Observation and interpretation: The students seemed to be tired and demotivated. When they were asked about the reason for their poor participation and lack of cooperation, they said it was because they had just received bad news about a classmate and close friend for most of them. Therefore, it might be assumed that the students' gloomy mood and worried state of mind was the reason for their unusually poor participation in this activity, which demonstrates that feelings and moods can directly influence the students' performance, especially in this adolescent age range.

Reading Activity 12: Talking about Penguins by Guy Belleranti

Teaching Objective: Classifying and categorizing information

The figure below shows the results of the participants in Activity 12

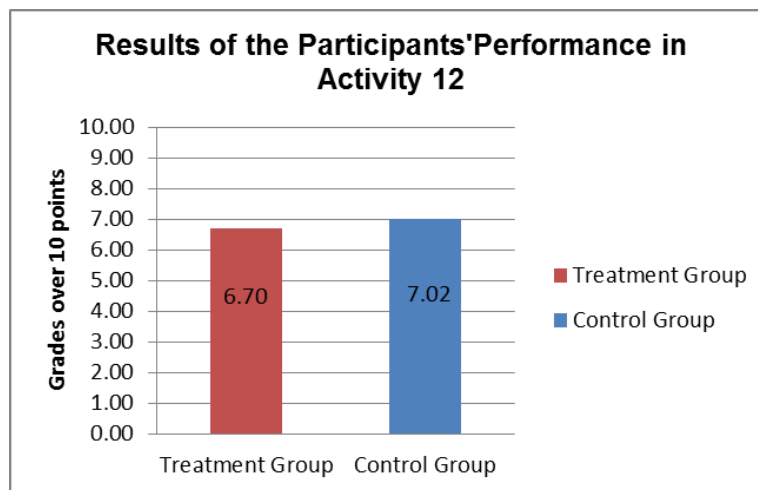


FIG. 28. Participants' performance in Activity 12

Source: Reading Activity Results

As is illustrated in Figure 28, the control group's average performance was higher (7.02) than that of the treatment group (6.70) with a difference of 0.32 in favor of the control group.



Observation and interpretation: As compared to the previous activity, both groups improved their performance in a considerable manner. The students in the treatment group utilized a double bubble map during reading for the first time. It is important to mention that during the second phase of the reading activity, the treatment group was suddenly interrupted by the school administrator for about 7 minutes. This could have caused some distraction and possibly affected their final performance. Nevertheless, after the interruption the students continued working and seemed focused. They were interested in the new information about their beloved animals.

Finally, all the students were given a writing activity which they seemed to enjoy and even said they were happy they could use the new vocabulary they learnt in the summaries they had to write. The students in both groups participated actively; they said they liked the topic because they were fond of penguins and the text was easy to understand.

Reading Activity 13: Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage

Teaching Objective: Identifying the sequence of events and summarizing information

Figure 30 states the results of the participants' performance in Activity 13.

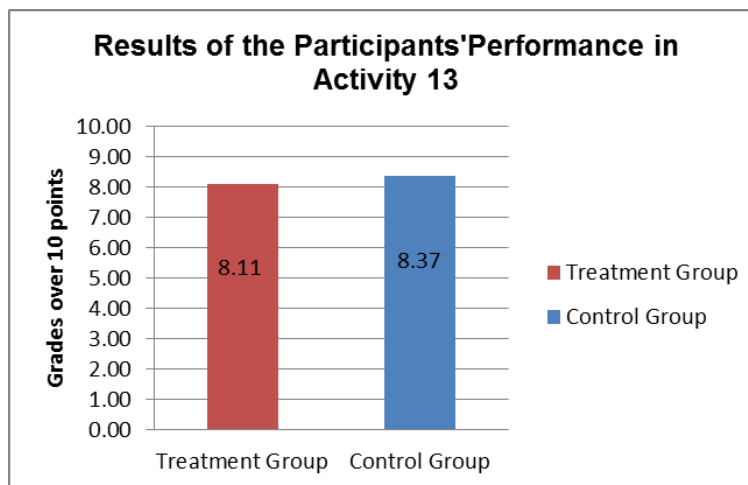


FIG. 29. Participants' performance in Activity 13

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it can be seen in Figure 29, once again the treatment group performed worse than the control group since it achieved 8.11 and the control group obtained 8.37. The



difference in performance was 0.26 in favor of the control group. By this time the students in the treatment group were familiar with the use of graphic organizers for the sequencing of events; nevertheless, their performance was below that of the control group.

The activity was about the story of a couple's who had been together for 77 years. The average performance of both groups in this activity was one of the highest during the treatment.

Observation and interpretation: The students said they liked the story because they considered it romantic and found it especially interesting because it was a real life story and they were able to relate it to long-lasting marriages in their families, for example, the matrimony of their grandparents.

Reading Activity 14: World's Largest Marsupial

Teaching Objective: Identifying main characteristics

The following figure shows the results of the participants' performance in the last activity of the treatment.

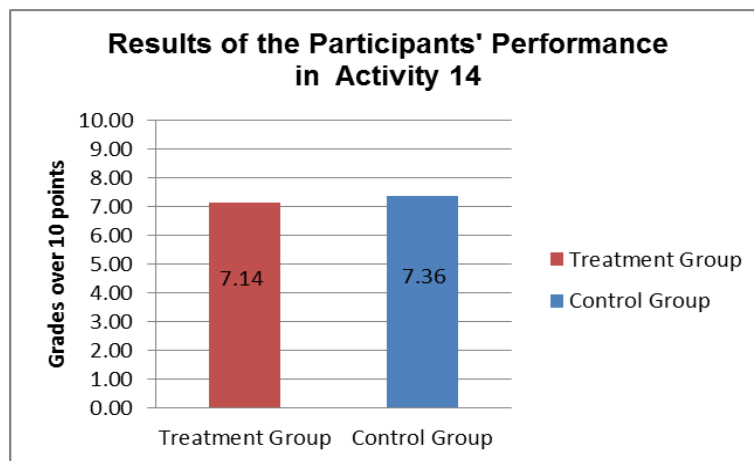


FIG. 30. Participants' performance in Activity 14

Source: Reading Activity Results

Figure 30 presents the results of both groups for the last reading activity. The treatment group's average was 7.14; still a little lower than the control group's average of 7.36 with a difference of 0.22 between them in favor of the control group.



Nevertheless, when comparing the average performance average of the treatment group in this activity (7.14) with the same group's performance in the first activity (6.46), we can see an improvement of 0.68, while the same does not seem to have happened with the control group. Their average performance was lower than the one for the first activity with a decrease of 0.31.

The next figure shows the results of the participants' average performance in both groups across all activities from 1 to 14.

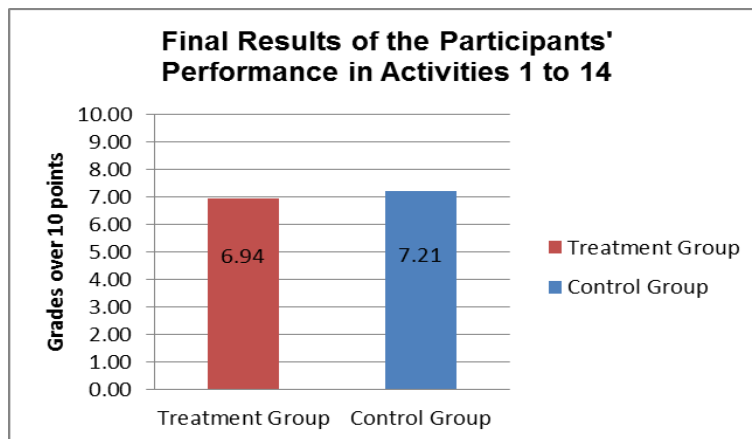


FIG. 31. Participants' final average performance in Activities 1 to 14

Source: Reading Activity Results

As it is evident from Figure 31, the treatment group's average performance across the treatment was 6.94, while the control group's average performance was 7.21. The difference between the groups was 0.27 in favor of the control group.

Post-test Topic: An Atom Apart by Leslie Cargile

Teaching Objective: To evaluate the participants' reading comprehension performance

The post-test reading was about atoms. The students in both groups had already some background knowledge about the topic and they participated actively. During the activity, reading was guided in the same way as in all the previous activities. Both groups were given a list of key words and were instructed in exactly the same way. However, at this stage, neither group was provided with a graphic organizer to complete. Both groups did the same pre-reading and during-reading activities. Finally, the participants answered the reading comprehension questions.



The following figures show the results of the groups in the post-test.

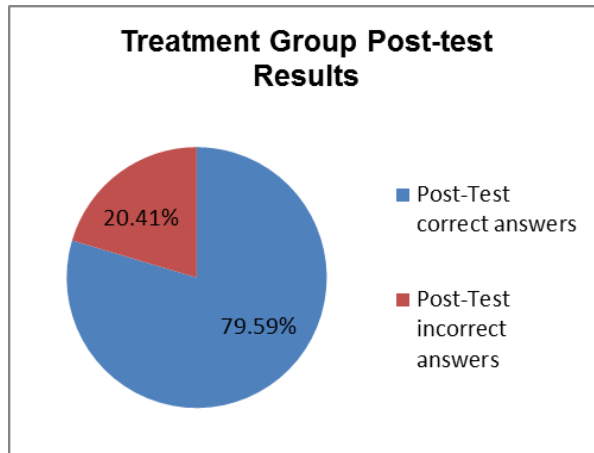


FIG. 32. Treatment group's average performance in the post-test

Source: Post-test Results

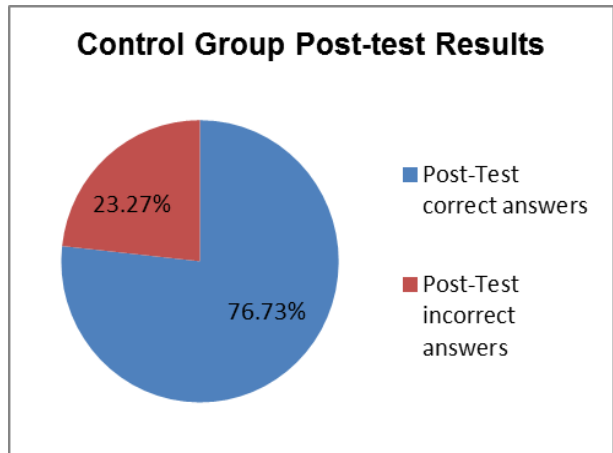


FIG. 33. Control group's average performance in the post-test

Source: Post-test Results

In Figures 33 and 34 above, the results show the similarity in performance of the participating groups; they both improved their performance. This is most probably the consequence of the students' regular exposure to reading for a considerable length of time. The methodology used helped both groups, but the higher rate of improvement was observed in the case of the students who were trained to use Graphic Organizers – the treatment group.

The following figure shows the average results of the participants for both groups in the post-test set side by side.

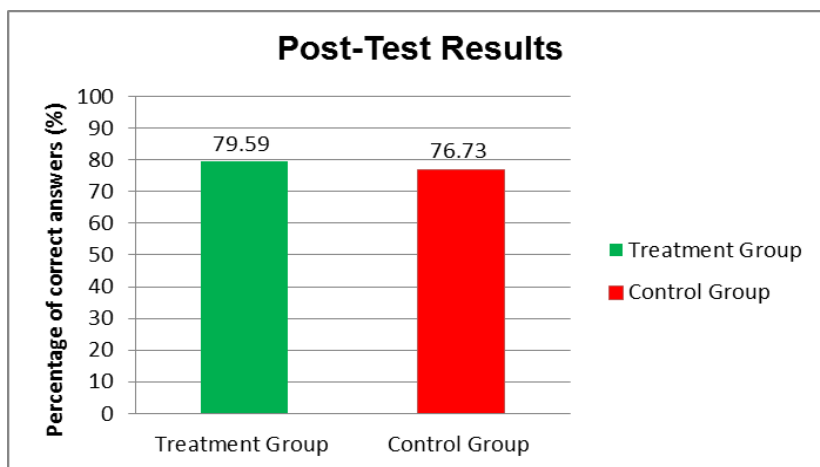


FIG. 34. Participants' average performance in the post-test
Source: Post-test Results

Figure 34 shows the participants' results in percentage rate terms for both groups in the post-test. The treatment group's percentage rate in the test was 79.59 while the control group's percentage was 76.73. The difference was 2.86% in favor of the treatment group.

The figure below shows the percentages obtained by the participants in the pre-test and post-test respectively.

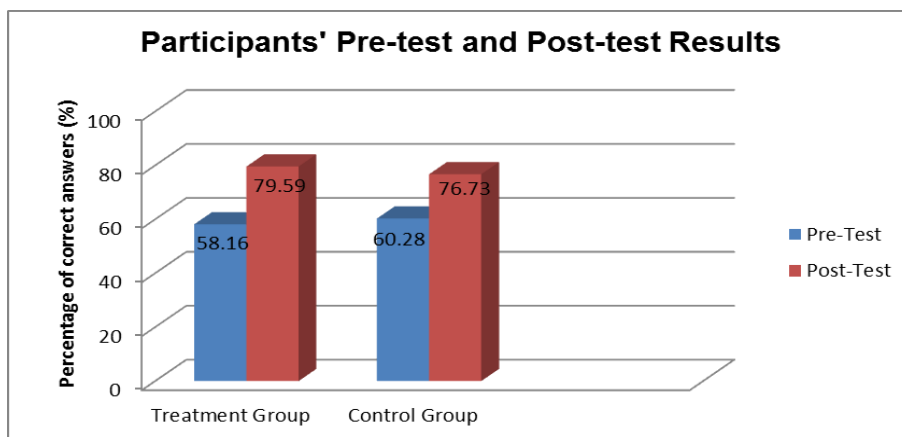


FIG. 35. Participants' average performance in the pre-test and post-test
Source: Pre-test and post-test results

Figure 35 shows the results of both groups in the pre-test and post-test. Both groups' reading comprehension performance has improved markedly after the 14 reading activities included in this study. The treatment group experienced a performance increment of 21.43% while the control group's improvement was 16.45%.



It is evident that the treatment group's reading comprehension increment was higher than that of the control group. This group not only reached the control group's average performance but it also surpassed it at the end of the treatment.

Questionnaire Section II

The next step that was taken in the course of the research was the administration of the second part of a questionnaire to the treatment group. The first part of this questionnaire, which aimed at drawing out data regarding the demographic profile of all the participants, has already been surveyed above. The aim of the second part of the questionnaire was to find out information regarding the experimental group's feelings, opinions and experiences related to the use of Graphic Organizers.

This section consisted of eleven statements or questions which were presented to the eighteen participants at the end of the treatment. The answers to each item are displayed below.

Item1. The use of graphic tools helped me to improve my reading comprehension.

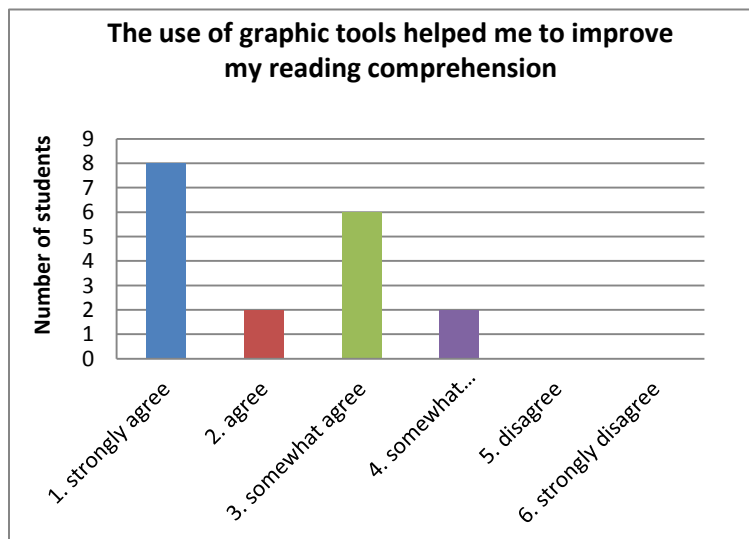


FIG. 36. Participants' answers to Item 1

Source: Questionnaire Section II

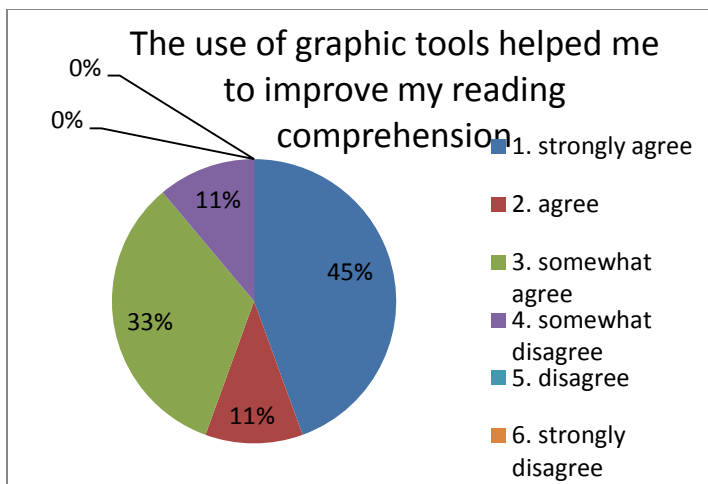


FIG. 37. Participants' answers to Item 1

Source: Questionnaire Section II

As is evident from Figure 36, from among the 18 students 8 stated that they strongly agreed with the statement presented, 2 students agreed, 6 said they somewhat agreed, and 2 said they somewhat disagreed. No students disagreed or strongly disagreed. Figure 37 presents the data in percentage terms. The first three options together represent the students who gave a positive answer to the statement. The percentages of the answers in favor add up to 89% while only 11% said they somewhat disagreed. According to these results, the majority of students felt that using graphic tools (GOs) helped them to improve reading comprehension and only a little more than 10% were ambivalent about the use of GOs.

Item 2. I enjoyed using graphic tools when reading.

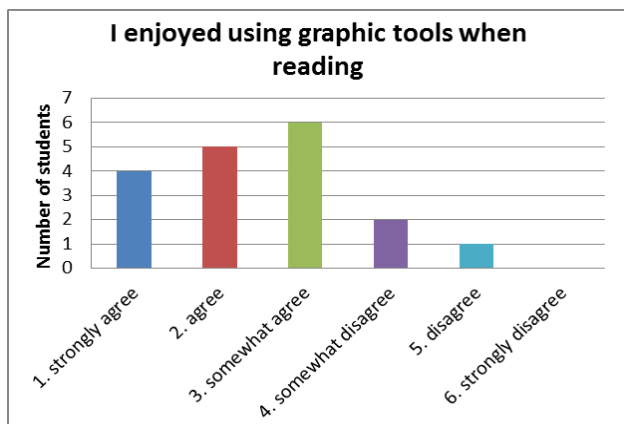


FIG. 38. Participants' answers to Item 2

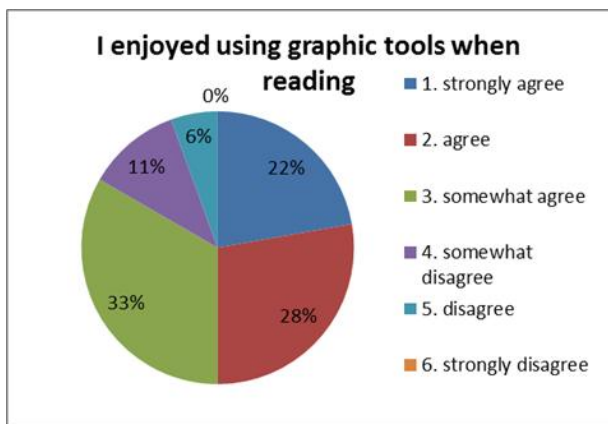


FIG. 39. Participants' answers to Item 2



Source: Questionnaire Section II

Source: Questionnaire Section II

Figure 38 illustrates the students' answers to Item 2 in which 4 respondents strongly agreed with the statement that they enjoyed using graphic tools when reading, 5 of them agreed, 6 said they somewhat agreed, 4 somewhat disagreed and 1 student disagreed with the statement. Figure 39 shows the corresponding percentages which demonstrate that 83% of the students clearly liked this tool and only 17% were less than enthusiastic.

Item 3. I liked the stories or texts chosen.

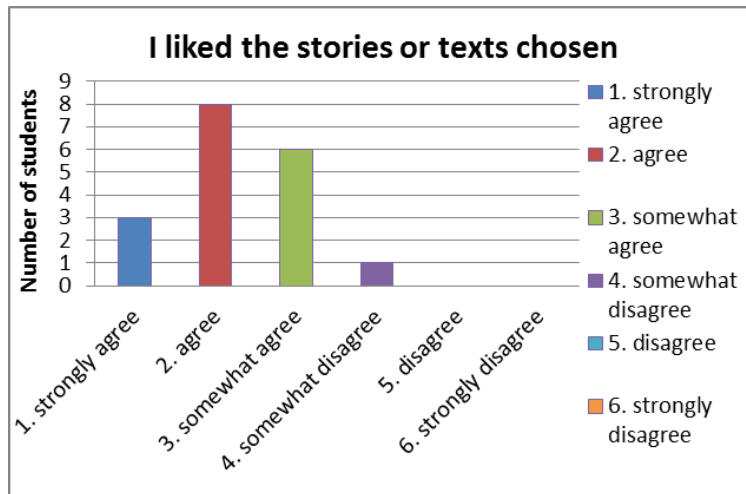


FIG. 40. Participants' answers to Item 3

Source: Questionnaire Section II

As can be seen in Figure 40, when the students were asked if they liked the stories or the texts chosen, 3 of them strongly agreed with the statement, 8 of them agreed with it, 6 said they somewhat agreed while 1 somewhat disagreed, but there were no students who disagreed or strongly disagreed with it.

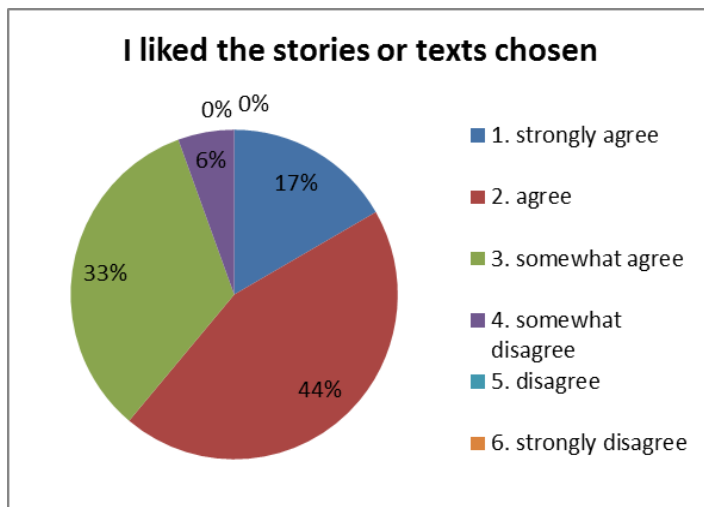


FIG. 41. Participants' answers to Item 3
Source: Questionnaire Section II

Figure 41 shows the same data in percentage terms. When answering this item, 17% of the students strongly agreed with it, 44% agreed and 33% said they somewhat agreed so that 94% of the students answered in positive terms. Only 6% stated that he/she probably did not like all of the texts used in the treatment.

Item 4. The use of Graphic Organizers helped to stay focused and pay attention.

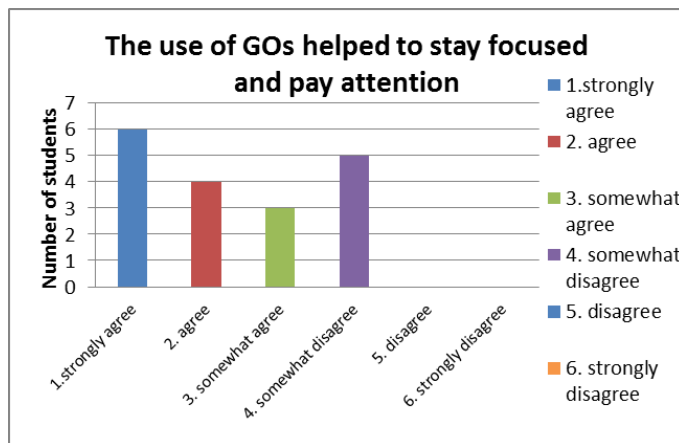


FIG. 42. Participants' answers to Item 4
Source: Questionnaire Section II

Item 4 had the purpose of finding out if the use of GOs helped the students to stay focused and pay attention. Six students strongly agreed, 4 agreed, 3 said they

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somewhat disagreed and 5 somewhat disagreed with it. No students reported disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the proposition.

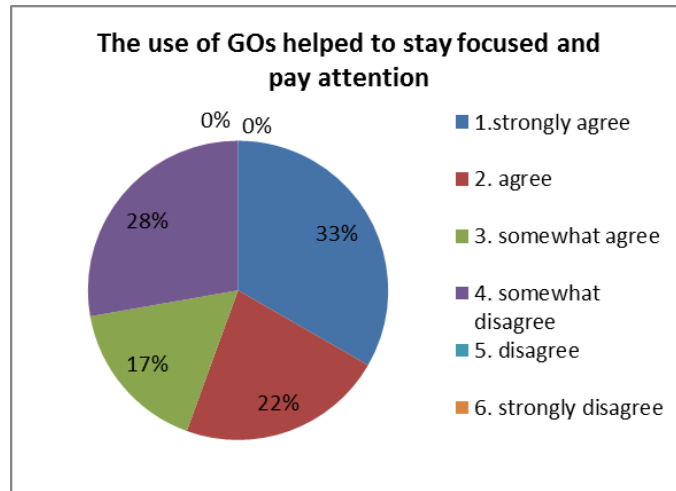


FIG. 43. Participants' answers to Item 4

Source: Questionnaire Section II

Figure 43 shows the percentages of the answers provided for the different options for Statement 4. The majority (72%) of students agreed in some way with the proposed statement that GOs helped them to stay focused and pay attention to the text. Less than one-third of the students (28%) somewhat disagreed with it.

Item 5. I think I will continue to use Graphic Organizers for future readings on my own.

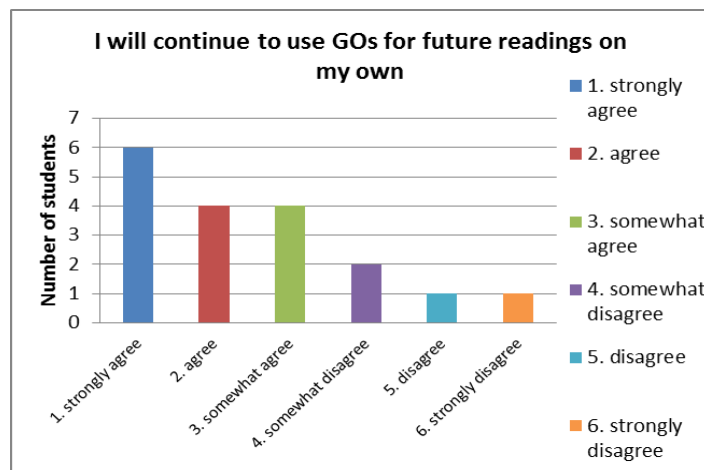


FIG. 44. Participants' answers to Item 5

Source: Questionnaire Section II



When the students were asked if they would continue to use GOs for future readings on their own, 6 strongly agreed with this option, 4 agreed, 4 somewhat agreed, 2 somewhat disagreed, 1 disagreed, and 1 strongly disagreed.

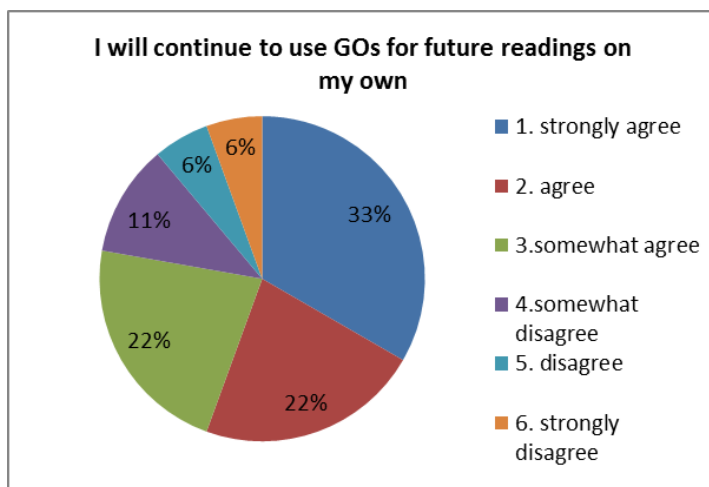


FIG. 45. Participants' answers to Item 5

Source: Questionnaire Section II

As is shown in Figure 45, a total of 77% of the students stated they would continue to use these graphic tools for future readings, while a much lower percentage (23%) disagreed with the idea.

Item 6. I think the use of graphics for reading helped me especially ...

	Number of Students
Reading abilities	
a. To list ideas or words about my previous knowledge	0
b. To identify cause and effect	0
c. To identify specific information or details	4
d. To sequence events	1
e. To differentiate between What I Know, What I want to know and What I have learnt about a text	1
f. To categorize or classify information	2
g. To compare and contrast / identify similarities and differences	1
h. To identify information on Who, What, When, Where, and Why in a story or text	4
i. To summarize information	3
j. To identify main ideas or characteristics about a topic	2
k. To recall information	0
Other	0
Total	18

TABLE 6. Participants' answers to Item 6



Source: Questionnaire Section II

Table 6 illustrates that each and every student reported getting some benefit from the use of GOs when it came to improving certain aspects of their reading skills. Four students said that the use of these tools was beneficial when the task was to identify specific information or details. Another 4 students thought GOs had helped them to identify information on who, what, where, etc.; 3 students reported that they found the use of GOs helpful for the summarizing of information, 2 students chose the option for categorizing and classifying information, and 2 more students said that the use of graphic tools was beneficial when identifying main ideas or characteristics about a topic. One student chose the option for sequencing events, another thought it was helpful when differentiating between previous knowledge, what she wanted to learn and newly learnt knowledge. Finally, 1 student thought these graphics helped her to compare and contrast, or to identify similarities and differences.

In summary, all students found the use of GOs beneficial in some way for improving their reading skills. It is interesting to note that even though GOs were systematically used in the pre-reading phase to list down words and ideas, no student mentioned this aspect as particularly helpful.

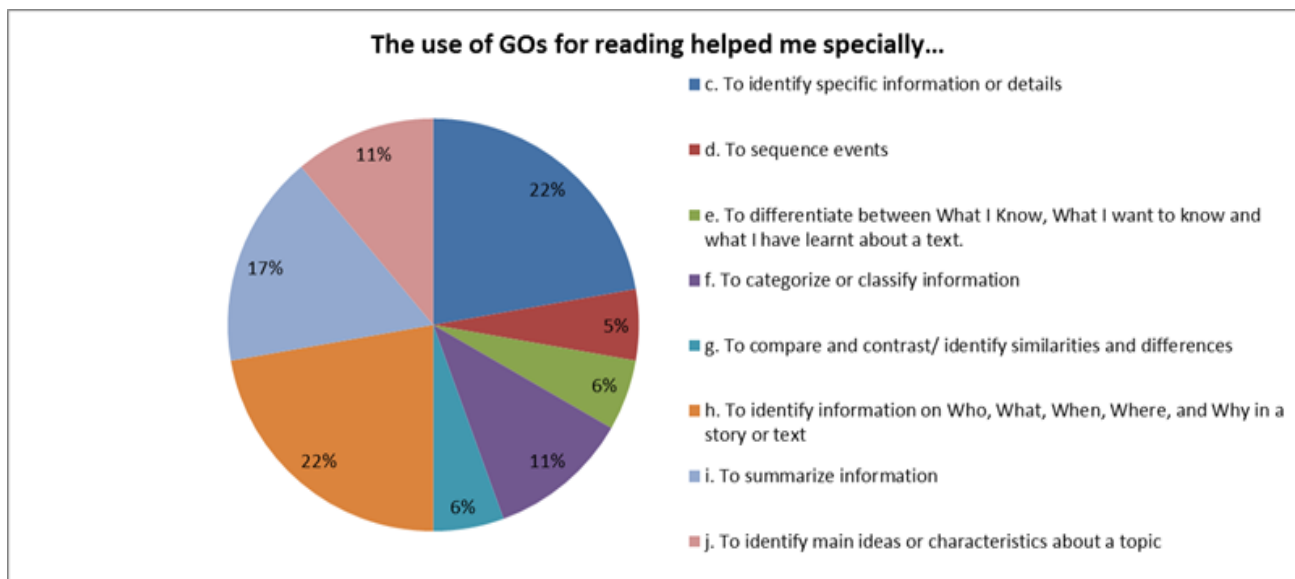


FIG. 46. Participants' answers to Statement 6

Source: Questionnaire Section II



Item 7. The Graphic Organizer I liked the most is:

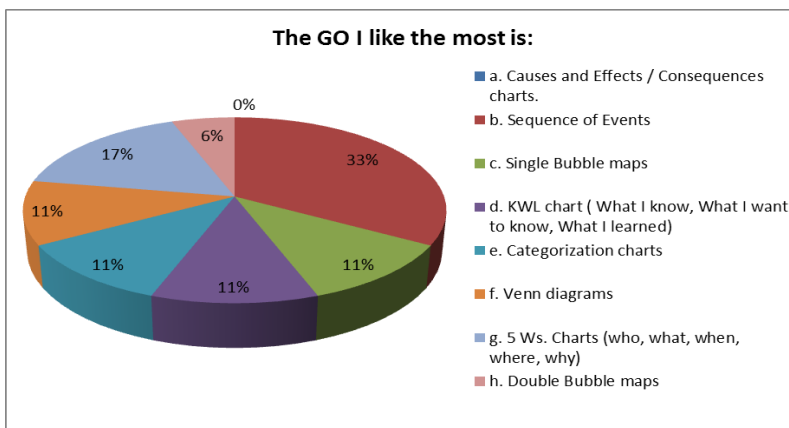


FIG. 47. Participants' answers to Item 7

Source: Questionnaire Section II.

As shown in the graphic above, 33% of the students said that Sequence of Events was the Graphic Organizer they liked the most, followed by Single Bubble maps which had 11% of the students' preference; the other three Graphic Organizers that had the same percentage of acceptance were: the KWL chart, Categorization charts, and the Venn diagram. 17% of students chose the 5Ws chart as their favorite one. Finally, the Double Bubble map was chosen by 6%. There were no students choosing category a), namely, the Causes and Effects / Consequences chart.

The students were also asked to explain their choices. Table 6 displays the answers.

Graphic Organizer	Students' explanation for their choice.
b. Sequence of Events	It's interesting and helps to identify the sequence of information. It is easy to understand the story and organize information
c. Single Bubble maps	They help to identify main ideas about the topic
d. KWL chart (What I know, What I want to know, What I learned)	It helps to classify main ideas and summarize the most important information
e. Categorization charts	They help to understand the story and is comfortable to collect information



f. Venn diagrams	They help to identify the ideas and understand the information
g. 5 Ws. Charts (who, what, when, where, why)	Collecting data in the charts helps to identify the most important information in the story
h. Double Bubble maps	They help to summarize and recall information

TABLE 7. Students' explanations for their answers to Item 7

Source: Questionnaire Section II

The students who preferred the sequence of events chart considered it interesting and helpful when there was a need to identify the sequence of information. They also said that this type of GO made comprehension easier. Other students chose the Single Bubble map because they found it useful for the identification of the main ideas related to a given topic.

The students who preferred the KWL chart stated that it helped them to classify main ideas and summarize the most important information. Other students choose the categorization charts because they felt comfortable with them when collecting information and considered them helpful for a better understanding of the story. Venn Diagrams were the favorites of some of the students because, apparently, they helped to identify ideas and facilitated the understanding of information.

The 5Ws charts were considered helpful by another group of students who thought these Graphic Organizers were good for identifying the most important information in a story. Finally, the students who chose Double Bubble maps found them helpful in the course of summarizing and recalling information.

Item 8. Which story or text did you like best?

In the questionnaire the students were also asked to say which story they liked the most with the aim of finding out about the students' reactions to the texts or stories chosen.

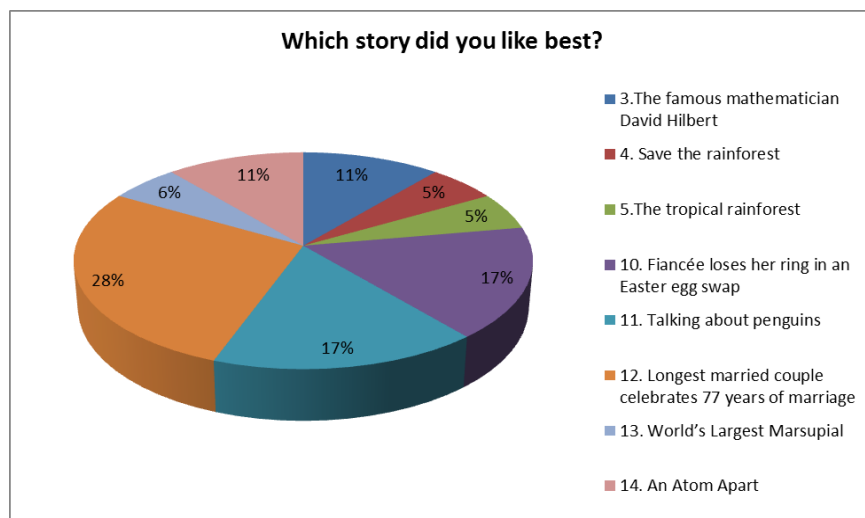


FIG. 48. Participants' answers to Item 8

Source: Questionnaire Section II

Figure 48 above shows that a good number of students (28%) liked the story on how the longest married couple celebrated 77 years of marriage. The second most liked stories were: “Fiancée loses her ring in an Easter eggs swap”, and “Talking about penguins” with 17% of the students’ support for each reading. “Fiancée loses her ring in an Easter eggs swap” was a funny story about a couple who had problems when the groom tried to surprise his fiancée with an engagement ring hidden inside a chocolate egg. “Talking about penguins” was a descriptive paragraph about the general characteristics of penguins. There were also two readings in the third place: “The famous mathematician David Hilbert”, which was an amusing piece of reading about the problems that a man had because he forgot things, and “An atom apart”, which was a descriptive text about the general characteristics of atoms. Both readings had 11% of the votes for each. The fourth place was taken by “The world largest marsupial” with 6% of preference; this was also a descriptive piece of writing about kangaroos. Finally, the readings: “Save the rainforest” (a piece of reading about how to protect this environment) and “The tropical rainforest” (a descriptive reading about some special features of the rainforest) were the students’ last choices with 5% each.

The students were asked to explain their choices.



Reading Number	Activity Title	Students' Explanations (Samples)
3	The famous mathematician David Hilbert	It's interesting; the vocabulary was easy to understand.
4	Save the rainforest	It was very interesting, I learned a lot.
5	The tropical rainforest	I was able to learn more about the topic.
10	Fiancée loses her ring in an Easter egg swap	Was very interesting and funny
11	Talking about penguins	Penguins are interesting and I like to learn more about them.
12	Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage	The story was very interesting and romantic.
13	World's Largest Marsupial	Kangaroos are interesting animals, I love animals.
14	An Atom Apart	I liked it because it's about science.

TABLE 8. Participants' explanation for their choices in Item 8

Source: Questionnaire Section II

The reasons the students gave were basically referring to the amount of interesting information they found in the texts, the level of difficulty they found in comprehending the vocabulary, the fact of being able to learn something new from the texts, their preferences for a certain kind of stories, like fun or romantic stories. Others felt good about reading a topic they liked, for example, the life of penguins and other animals or the topic about science which was a familiar, cross- curricular topic for these students.

Item 9. How did you feel using graphics for reading?

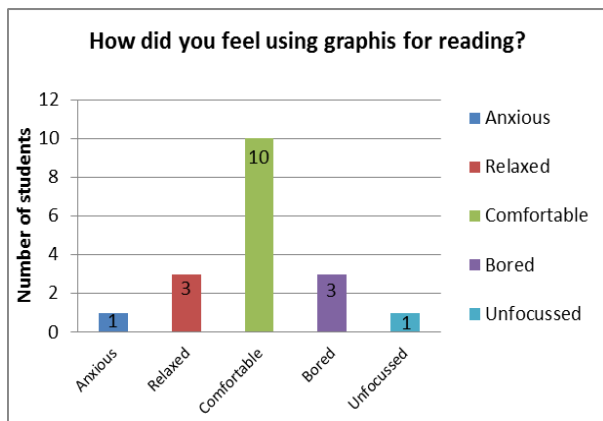


FIG. 49. Participants' answers to Item 9
Source: Questionnaire Section II

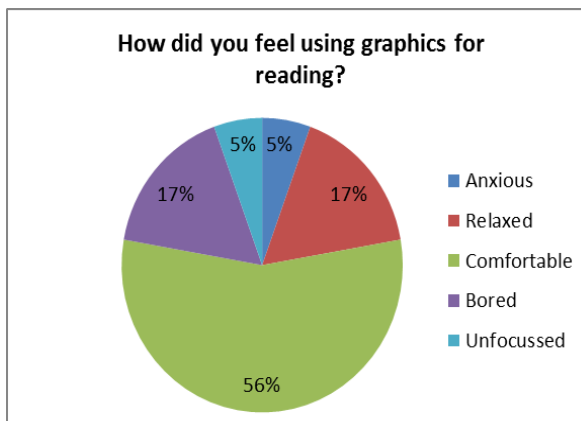


FIG. 50. Participants' answers to Item 9
Source: Questionnaire Section II

Item 9 was designed in order to gain information about the students' feelings regarding the use of Graphic Organizers. As Figures 49 and 50 above show, the greatest number, 10 out of 18 students (56%) reported feeling comfortable while using Graphic Organizers. Three (17%) said they felt relaxed working with these graphics. Three students (17%) said they were bored using them. One student (5%) reported feeling anxious and finally one more student (5%) reported feeling unfocused while working with these tools.

Item 10. How often do you think you will use Graphic Organizers for reading?

The purpose of Item 10 was to obtain information concerning the frequency with which the students intended to use Graphic Organizers for future reading activities.

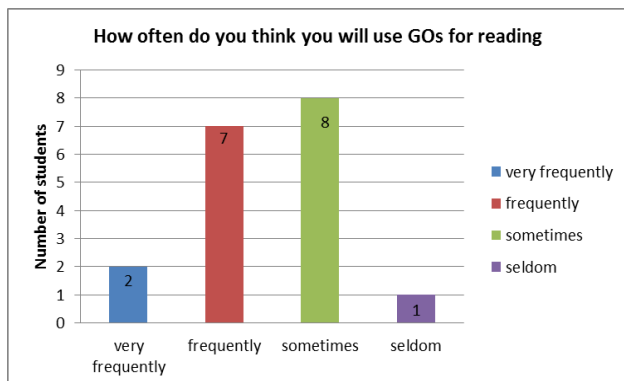


FIG. 51. Participants' answers to Item 10

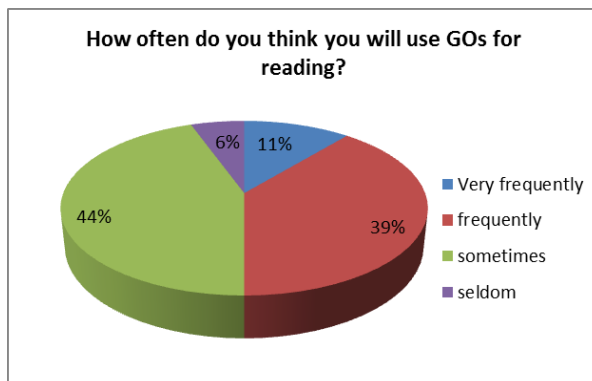


FIG. 52. Participants' answers to Item 10



Source: Questionnaire Section II.

52Source: Questionnaire Section II.

In the graphics above we can see that 2 students (11%) would like to use GOs very frequently for future reading on their own, 7 students (39%) said they will use them frequently. Eight students (44%) had the intention of using these tools occasionally and one student (6%) said they would hardly ever make use of these visual tools. According to these results, almost all students and some of them a lot more frequently than others, plan to use Graphic Organizers for future reading on their own.

Item 11. What aspect of reading was the most difficult for you?

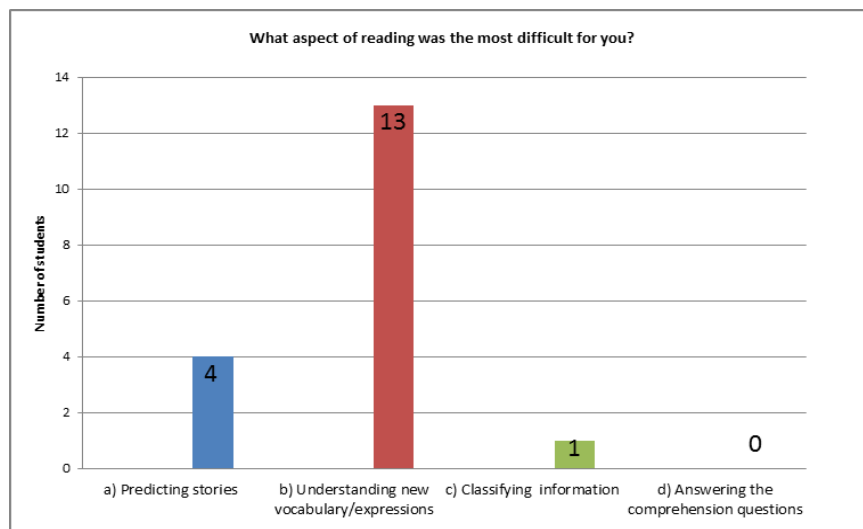


FIG. 53. Participants' answers to Item 11

Source: Questionnaire Section II

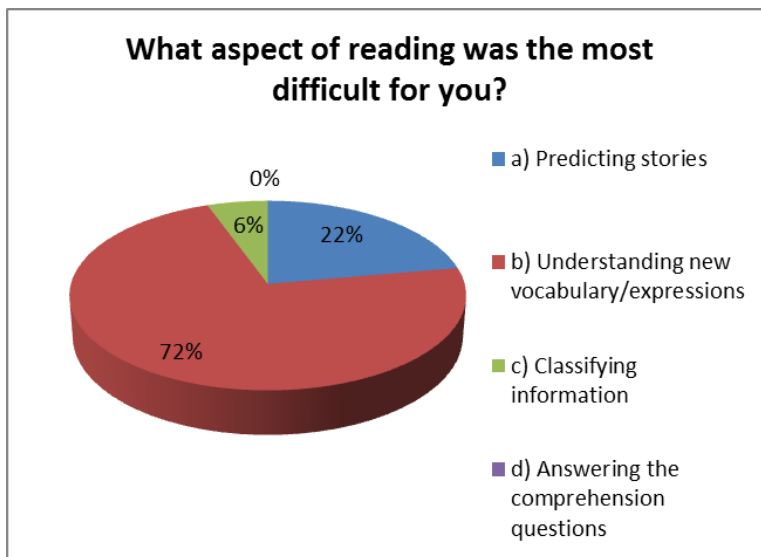


FIG. 54. Participants' answers to Item 11

Source: Questionnaire Section II

When the students were asked which aspect of reading they found the most difficult, four students (22%) reported that prediction was the hardest for them. Even though new vocabulary was presented to the students and texts were chosen according to the students' level of performance, the vast majority, 13 out of eighteen students (72%) found understanding new vocabulary the most difficult part. Only one student (6%) reported having difficulties with the classification or organization of information. Even though this student may have been struggling, it needs to be pointed out that one of the main benefits attributed to the use of Graphic Organizers is exactly the organization of information.

Treatment Group Comments

Finally, to complete the questionnaire, the students were given the option of including personal comments. Sixteen out of eighteen students (89%) included comments about the activities, two students (11.15%) did not write any; one of them (5.5%) wrote a comment about the teacher/researcher. The comments below are verbatim, i.e. they have not been edited.



Treatment Group students' comments

Using Gos I can learn more English and how to organize information			
The activities were interesting and important. I hope to use them very frequently.			
I loved all the stories, I hope Gos help me in the future. It was amazing.			
Sometimes I couldn't understand because of the vocabulary			
I loved all the stories, I hope Gos help me in the future. It was amazing.			
I would like to do more readings, it's interesting and I can learn more.			
I didn't like the activities because it's very boring.			
I would like other readings interesting for our age because in that way it will be easier to understand.			
I liked the activities but sometimes it was tiring.			
I liked the activities but sometimes it was boring and tiring.			
The readings were interesting and helped me to understand.			
Using Gos is a little boring to me.			
Using Gos is very interesting because they help us to understand the stories.			
The activities helped us a lot, we learned to use more Gos			
I didn't like much using Gos, they were a little bit boring.			
It was boring for me because many stories I didn't understand.			

TABLE 9. Participants' comments

Source: Questionnaire Section II

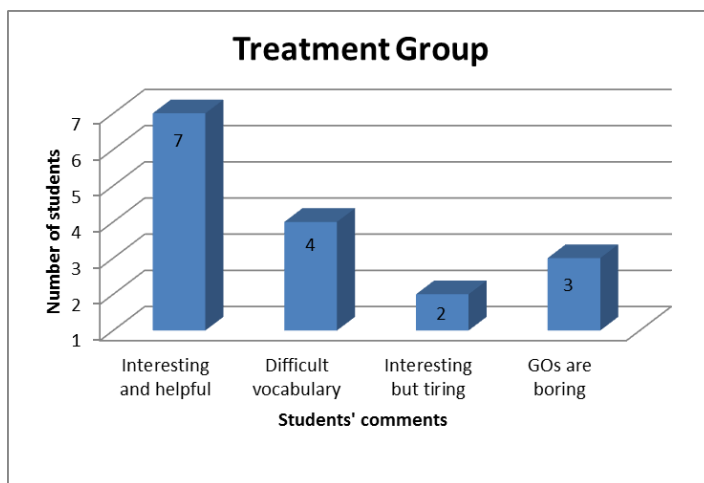


FIG. 55. Participants' comments

Source: Questionnaire Section II

Out of the 16 students (89%) who made comments, 7 students (38.8%) wrote positive comments about the activities, finding them interesting and helpful for improving their English comprehension. They said that GOs facilitated the organization of information and they hoped to use them in the future. Four students (22.2%) stated having difficulties understanding the vocabulary and did not like the chosen topics for



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the very same reason. Two students (11.1%) said they liked the activities but they found them tiring. 3 students (16.6%) did not like using GOs because they considered them boring. Finally, 1 student (5.5%) wrote a positive comment about the teacher/researcher instead of the treatment.



CHAPTER IV

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of the study was to explore the use of Graphic Organizers in order to contribute to the improvement of reading comprehension in a pre-intermediate EFL class at a private high school in Cuenca, Ecuador.

As previously mentioned in the Literature Review, reading is an essential tool for accessing information and learning, but it is also a skill that needs to be learned and developed in order to obtain the maximum benefit from a text. Having good reading skills is important in order to be able to enjoy reading and enhance comprehension. The close relationship between reading and comprehension implicates the involvement of the readers' mental structures called schemata. One of the main goals of education is to develop strategic readers; therefore, teaching learning and reading strategies is crucial for all learners. This is especially true for ESL/EFL learners because these skills will allow them to better comprehend and recall what they read and not lose the element of enjoyment in the process.

Previous research has shown that the use of GOs can influence the students' attitudes towards reading in a positive way.

The hypothesis for the study was:

The use of Graphic Organizers will improve the reading comprehension skills of pre-intermediate English learners.

The hypothesis was put to the test and the results seem to suggest that the use of GOs is effective for the purposes of improving reading comprehension. The pertaining results are summed up further below.

The objectives of the study were threefold:

a) To teach students to use Graphic Organizers as a reading strategy. This objective of the study was met only partially, since the students were not able to use as many different graphic organizers as it would have been ideal, but they were able to get



familiar with some of the most common ones as deemed appropriate for the types of texts chosen.

b) To instruct students on how to become strategic readers through the use of Graphic Organizers as a complementary strategy for reading. It could be said that this objective was met almost in full because most of the students declared that they would consider using GOs on their own for future reading.

c) To identify the benefits of the use of Graphic Organizers to improve reading comprehension of pre-intermediate English learners. It is possible that not all the positive results obtained at the end of the study could be attributed exclusively to the use of GOs; other additional factors, like the development of the students' reading habits through sequential reading activities could have also contributed to the. Nevertheless, the results of the study have helped to identify some characteristics of the use of GOs as beneficial for the improvement of reading comprehension by helping to organize, classify and summarize information.

Additionally, it is important to mention that there was a positive change regarding the students' attitude towards reading.

The present study does not contend that Graphic Organizers are the ultimate solution for improving reading comprehension; the aim was to introduce them as an effective optional strategy that the students could use at their own discretion.

This research study had the aim of exploring two aspects

a) To what extent can the use of Graphic Organizers improve the reading comprehension skills of pre-intermediate students?

b) To what extent can the use of Graphic Organizers help students become strategic readers?

The results of the study demonstrate that even though the intervention took place only over a short period of time, there was improvement in the students' reading comprehension skills both in the treatment and the control group and this could be associated with their exposure to the reading activities following the presentation of carefully selected pieces of texts. The gains were relatively small for both groups but,



undeniably, they were more significant for the students in the treatment group. These students did not just equal the level of comprehension of the students in the control group, who were doing better most of the time, but at the end the treatment group surpassed the performance of the control group (Figure 36).

The participants in the treatment group were able to learn how to use some GOs for reading and the majority (almost 80%) reported they intended to continue using these tools in the future while reading on their own. This information could be interpreted as the initial stage of strategic reading and, therefore, learning. Obviously, it would have been better if they had been exposed to GOs before the treatment so that they could have acquire some experience in the use of Graphic Organizers before their application for reading to eventually become better strategic readers.

Based on the results obtained in this study it can be said that the time spent on the treatment was beneficial for the students. The results were favorable, especially for the students in the treatment group; however, allowing longer time for the instruction and treatment could have been better. The students needed more time to learn about Graphic Organizers and acquire the skills involved in the strategy. One of the recommendations is to spend more time teaching Graphic Organizers as such, their use(s), purpose(s) and how to work with them and provide enough practice to the students so that they can become familiar with this strategy before it is applied to reading.

Introducing Graphic Organizers and simultaneously starting a new reading program with this EFL group proved to be challenging and time consuming for the students, who were not used to reading in their first language, let alone know how to work with GOs. Once the students got familiar with using these tools, they could focus their attention on the reading process itself.

Initially, the researcher's intention was to present a different Graphic Organizer for each reading activity so that at the end of the treatment the students could choose the one that proved to be convenient for the given piece of text or fitted their needs better. But during the process it became evident that the students needed more time for getting familiar with each type of Graphic Organizer. Therefore, one of the conclusions



is that a different project design that would have allowed two or three consecutive sessions using the same GO may have achieved better results. Had this approach been followed, the students could have become more confident using these tools as well as feel more comfortable and confident about their use for reading.

Graphic Organizers are relatively easy to understand and work with. Their individual designs can be chosen on the basis of how well they fit the specific kinds of texts presented to the students. They can be applied to different subjects and topics, and visually help the students when analyzing information. However, getting familiar with GOs requires practice and consistency. Consequently, another recommendation is that Graphic Organizers should be used in a cross-curricular manner so that the students can acquire the strategy in their native language and eventually develop it to support L2 learning.

Throughout the treatment, time was very limited and the explanation about the use of each Graphic Organizer had to be very concise in order to dedicate the maximum amount of time to reading itself. The reason for this is that when working with Graphic Organizers, the students in the treatment group tended to write down complete ideas instead of just the main pieces of information. This is because they did not know how to summarize ideas and select key information for filling the charts or graphics and, as a result, the process proved to be time-consuming and tiring. The explanation for this could be that at the initial stages of reading the readers are more attentive of separate words and expressions than the real message of the text, which makes summarizing difficult.

Thus, it could have been better to teach the students how to summarize ideas and take notes prior to the use of Graphic Organizers to make a better use of time and these tools. Graphic Organizers can be very helpful for taking notes in an intelligent fashion and for summarizing information. Therefore, it might be useful to start working with these specific Graphic Organizers before presenting other types.

The students' demographic information obtained from the questionnaire administered showed that the groups were very similar in many respects, which proved to be favorable for the validity of this piece of research.



The pre-test results showed that both groups got lower grades than the minimum requirement passing grade (70%) with a difference of only 2.12% among them. The control group performed better in this test, they were probably more exposed to the language, since they reported having additional practice of English outside school. Both groups obtained fairly similar results, which is understandable, since their main characteristics were also similar.

The level of performance was very close for both groups during the treatment. The control group performed better for the most part (in the majority of the activities). By the end of the treatment, both groups have improved their performance in reading, which was not surprising after the systematic reading practice provided. The methodology used helped both groups, but the higher rate of improvement was observed in the case of the students who were trained to use Graphic Organizers – the treatment group.

These students reached a performance increment of 21.43% while the control group's improvement was 16.45%; it is evident that the treatment group's reading comprehension increment was higher than that of the control group.

By reviewing the students' answers corresponding to the first section of the questionnaire (see Annexes 120), it can be deduced that:

1) Having had the opportunity to stay abroad does not necessarily mean taking advantage of the situation for practicing or improving foreign language skills. Most students actually did not speak the foreign language with their English speaking relatives even while in the foreign country.

2) Having relatives or friends who speak English could be interpreted as providing an advantage through the input the students may receive in the language, but this does not necessarily mean automatic improvement in the foreign language if the students do not take advantage of the opportunities to practice it: more than half of the students in both groups did not practice the foreign language with their English speaking relatives or friends.

3) In the control group, more students took advantage of the situation to practice English with their friends. This could have helped them with the understanding of



vocabulary, which was one of the most difficult parts for the students in the treatment group.

Some of the results obtained from the second section of the questionnaire administered only to the students in the treatment group were very positive, especially if we acknowledge the fact that at the beginning the students were reluctant to read, but as they got used to the activities and were able to participate more actively in the reading, their attitude towards reading started to gradually improve. The results clearly support the statement that Graphic Organizers can influence the students' attitudes towards reading in a positive manner.

The results also showed that from the group of students who received the treatment, 89% of students agreed with the statement that GOs helped them to improve their reading comprehension. This makes sense considering that GOs require the students' analysis of information, which in turn enhances comprehension. During the initial stages of learning how to use GOs, the process may require additional time and may prove to be challenging as well as tiresome for the students, so practice and consistency could be the key to success with groups of students sharing a similar profile.

Eighty-three percent of the students reported a positive experience when using GOs. This is a welcome result that shows that the students were carrying out fun activities that were also helping them to process the information contained in the texts presented to them.

Ninety-four percent of the participants in the treatment group reported that they liked the texts chosen – at least to some degree. It could be argued that a reader can only enjoy a piece of text if he/she is able to understand it, so this result could be interpreted as a fairly high level of comprehension. Needless to say, it is difficult to please each and every student. Even so, it is important to carefully consider the students' interests, likes and previous knowledge when choosing the reading material in order to put together a compendium of readings that are both enjoyable and informative.

As regards Item 4 from Section II of the questionnaire, 72% of the students agreed that GOs helped them to stay focused on the topic but 28% declared that this



was not the case. An explanation for this result might be that the students had to carry out two tasks simultaneously: they were learning how to use the GOs as well as had to acquire new skills in reading comprehension. It appears that multi-tasking might not have been easy and, on occasion, was found to be distracting.

Learning the use of GOs is a step-by-step process, the students need to get familiar with them gradually, starting from the simpler ones and leading to the more complex ones before being able to obtain the maximum benefit from the strategy. That is why the researcher recommends first introducing those Graphic Organizers that help students with notes taking and the identification of main ideas.

Seventy-seven percent of the students said that they were willing to use GOs for future readings done on their own, which could be interpreted as a positive development, especially if this is seen as the initial stage of what could eventually lead them to become strategic readers and learners.

Every student agreed that she benefitted in some way from the use of these graphic tools and felt that they had improved their reading comprehension skills.

When the students were asked about the Graphic Organizer of their preference, 33% of the students preferred the sequence of events charts. This result is certainly welcome considering that organizing information was one of the greatest difficulties they faced.

When asked to explain the reason why they preferred a certain Graphic Organizer, most students reported that they felt comfortable and relaxed working with the GO of their choice. This seems to suggest that even though GOs are relatively easy to work with, providing ample practice may make the process more agreeable and, therefore, probably more effective.

A lower percentage of students reported feeling, bored, anxious or unfocused during reading; this could be explained by the lack of knowledge or expertise while working with these visual devices or simply that, as with many other skills, the use of GOs does not necessarily suit everybody's needs and preferences.

The students were also given the opportunity to comment on their experience and a fairly high proportion 38.8% of their observations can be interpreted as positive



remarks. They found GOs interesting and helpful to improve comprehension; they also said that GOs facilitated organization. It was particularly interesting to learn that many students planned to continue using this strategy in the future. Other students (11.1%) found the strategy tiring, probably because in addition to reading, they had to make sure on how to utilize the GOs appropriately and make the extra effort to analyze information. 16.6% considered GOs boring. Finally one student (5.5%) made a positive comment about the researcher and one more student (5.5%) did not write any comments.

As for the learning involved for the researcher herself, it was felt that irrespective of the method or strategy we are using in class, a key element that should be considered is motivation. There are other very important aspects like the students' active participation before reading since it is essential to activate the learners' previous knowledge and build enthusiasm about reading. Equally important is the ability to select the appropriate material like choosing the appropriate text according to the student's level of proficiency and interests and choosing the right Graphic Organizer for the purpose.

Finally, it is necessary to provide enough time and practice to the students so they can acquire the strategy and use it on their own in the future.

Suggestions/Recommendations:

- It is advisable to help students to activate their prior knowledge. Many times, when reading in a second language, the reader tends to ignore previous knowledge that he/she would normally use when reading in the first language. Considering this fact, it was necessary to help the EFL students during this process by using different guided pre-reading strategies like pre-viewing and predicting.
- Graphic Organizers could be used for any phase in the reading process, including pre-reading.
- Teaching the corresponding vocabulary and providing enough practice using the new words and expressions previous to reading is essential to help the students



understand the texts. This way they will feel more confident and relaxed during reading. This is something that could have been done in the present research, namely more time should have been spent on working with the new vocabulary involved in the reading to be introduced.

- It is extremely important to choose the texts in a manner that takes into account the students' age, interests, level of performance, likes or preferences in order to motivate reading.

Further research would be required over a longer period of time to allow gradual familiarity of the students with the strategy and obtain the maximum benefit from Graphic Organizers in EFL/ESL reading comprehension and learning.

It would be interesting to continue doing more research studies with different EFL proficiency level students as well as of different ages and find out what types of GOs could work better for EFL students according to the students' age and language proficiency level.

Considering that one of education's main goals is to develop strategic readers, our students need to improve their attitude towards reading by learning different reading strategies from which they could choose the one that appears to work best for their comprehension improvement and be able to obtain the maximum benefit from the information they gather with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Investing time and effort in educating the youth of today is to secure a better future for our society as a whole.



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ANNEXES

Reading Comprehension Pre-Test Activity

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In
a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class
at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Robots

Key words

robot
intelligent machine
program

a machine
work automatically
industrial robots

factory
put cars together
produce

1 What is a robot?

All robots are intelligent machines. They are made up of two elements:

- 1 They have a body.
- 2 When you program them, they work automatically.



2 Read the text.

ROBOT FACTS

Most robots today are industrial robots. Humans use them to make work easier and quicker. You often see them in car factories where they put the cars together. They are useful for this kind of work as it is "dull, dirty, and dangerous" (DDD). Robots are often used for DDD jobs and where a specific action needs to be repeated. It is very difficult for humans to do this.



There are many different kinds of robots. Some robots travel through space, work on the bottom of the ocean, or go inside volcanoes. They do the work of people, but for a different reason this time: these are places that are very dangerous for people, or impossible for people to go to.



Robots are everywhere. Most people don't know that robots help us every day and in many different ways. In most houses there are robots. For example, many washing machines are robots. People can program them and then they wash clothes automatically.

Some scientists make robots for fun. For example, the dogs in the photograph to the right.



Japan produces the most robots. Every year in Japan's capital, Tokyo, there is a robot exhibition called Robodex. It is the largest robot exhibition in the world.

Lesson Plan 1

Reading Comprehension Introductory Activity



To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Introducing Graphic Organizers.

Objectives: To introduce general information about Graphic organizers and get familiar with the different kinds of Graphic Organizers.

Activities:

Introduction

Graphic Organizers are tools we can use to improve reading comprehension.

There are different kinds of graphic organizers that can be used according to the topic.

Once the students get familiar with the use of GOs, they can use graphic organizers depending on what works best for them. They can even design Graphic Organizers to suit their needs.

There are many different kinds of graphic organizers. Some examples are:

Cause and Effect

Details Chart

Bubble Maps or semantic webs

Venn diagrams

Comparison charts

Main Ideas and details chart

Spider chart maps

KWL chart

SQ3R

(The class will be presented with some graphic organizers patterns. At this point no further explanation on Graphic Organizers will be provided).



Reading Comprehension Activity 1 Lesson Plan 2

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Untitled. The Title of the text will be suggested by the students as a concluding activity.
Identifying Cause and Effect

Objective(s): To identify cause(s) and effect(s).

Activities:

Brief explanation about the use of Graphic organizers to help identifying cause and effect

- * Cause and effect charts illustrate the relationship between cause and effect.
- * In the cause and effect relationship the cause comes first.
- * Cause: Is what makes something else happen. You can identify it by asking: Why..?
- * Effect: Is what happens as a result of consequence of the cause.

Before Reading

Predicting: What is the reading going to be about?

Connecting to previous knowledge: What do you know about cats? Complete the bubble map about cats. Part of it on the wall, and students complete individually.

During Reading

Read the text individually and complete the chart on cause and effect. (The GOs will be provided on a separated page).

After Reading

Students will individually answer the following questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class and the students will be encouraged to think on a good tittle for the story.



NAME: _____

DATE: _____

First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 1

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Before Reading

- Predict: Look at the picture. What do you think the reading is going to be about?
- Complete the bubble map about your prior knowledge.

3 An old man from Hanover, Germany, had had enough of his cat. He was fed up with her scratching all the furniture and making a mess. So he gave her to a friend, who lived on the other side of town. He told his friend that he was getting too old to look after her. A week later, on a very cold winter day, the old man returned home from shopping and was surprised to see the cat shivering on his doorstep. The man was moved by the fact that his pet had found her way back from the other side of town in such cold weather. He took the cat inside and gave her lots of loving attention.



The next day, however, the old man met another friend, who asked him if he had found his cat. The old man said he had found her on his doorstep. His friend told him, ‘Oh, well, I was on the other side of town when I saw your cat in the road. Although she hissed and struggled all the way, I drove her home and left her outside your door.’

Adapted from Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004.



During Reading

- c) Read and listen.
- d) Read the text again and complete the chart on Cause and Effects.

After Reading. Answer the Following questions.

1. Was the man happy with his pet?
_____.
2. What did he decide to do to solve the situation?
_____.
3. Why was the old man surprised when he returned home after shopping?
_____.
4. What was his reaction about that?
_____.
5. How did the cat return home?
_____.
6. Was it easy for his friend to take the cat back home?
_____.
7. How do you think the old man feels at the end of the story?
_____.



Reading Comprehension Activity 2 Lesson Plan 3

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Write around the world.

Objective(s): Reading for specific information and details.

Activities:

Before Reading

Predicting: Look at the pictures: What is the reading going to be about?

Connecting to previous knowledge: What do you know about key-pals? Complete the bubble map about key-pals.

During Reading

Listen and read. Then check key vocabulary about the text together.

Answer to general comprehension questions: (The same information provided previously on the chart applied to the experiment group)

Read the text individually and complete the chart. (The GOs will be provided on a separated page).

After Reading

Students will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

First Bachillerato Class “ “

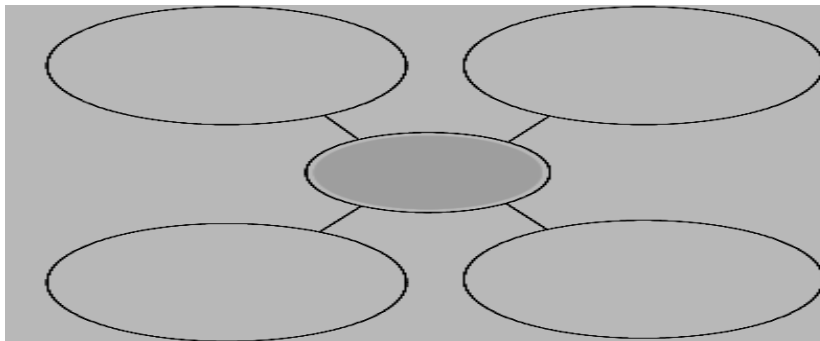
Level I

READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 2

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Before reading

- a) Read the title and pictures: What do you think the reading is going to be about?
- b) What do you know about key-pals?



During reading

- c) Read and listen. Then check new vocabulary together.

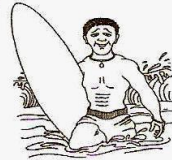
Write around the world

Do you want to practise your English? Do you want to make friends around the world! Then read about the keypals below and start writing!

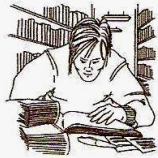
Hello! My name is Belén Lopez and I'm looking for a keypal. I'm twenty-two years old and I'm from Madrid in Spain. I'm a nurse. I work long hours, but in my free time I do a lot of sport. And I like eating out with my friends. In Spain we eat very late in the evening. Write to me at Box 001.



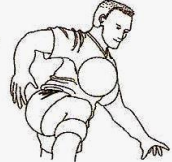
Hi! My name is Paulo Dias and I'm Brazilian. I live in Rio de Janeiro near the sea – I love water sports! I teach music in a school. I love music too! What else? I'm twenty-four years of age and I'm single. My box number is 002.



Hello. I'm a 20-year-old Russian university student (engineering). I live with my family in Moscow. I want to write to other people around the world. My hobbies are computer games and the Internet. Please write to Box 003 to find out more. I nearly forgot – my name is Mikhael Pavlov.



I'm Stefan Zilliken and I work in a travel agent's in Munich in the south of Germany. I was 23 on January 1st. My hobbies are football – I play and I watch – and walking in the mountains. I also get some free holidays with my job! Perhaps I can come to your country! I'm at Box 004.



Hi! My name's Claudette Romand and I'm French. My home is in Lyons, but I work in Meribel – I'm a ski instructor there. I work in the winter – but in the summer I like to travel. (I went to Russia last summer.) I like photography too – so I always have a camera with me! Oh yes, I'm 25 years old. Contact me at Box 005.



I'm Maria Szopen, twenty-one years old, and I'm from Warsaw, the capital of Poland. I'm a computer programmer. In the evenings I go to the cinema – but English films are difficult for me! I also like running – I'm a member of a big athletics club. You will find me at Box 006.



From Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004. Photocopiable.

d) Read the text again individually and complete the following chart.



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name						
age	24					
nationality		Polish				
home city			Lyons			
job				travel agent		
hobbies					computer games, Internet	

Adapted from Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004. Photocopiable.

After reading: Circle the correct answer.

- If you want to write to the youngest person of this group, you'll have to write to...
a. María Szopen b. Belén Lopez c. Mikhael Pavlov
- The oldest person in the group is a...
a. a student b. a ski instructor c. a teacher
- To contact a person whose job is related to tourism you need to contact to...
a. Stefan Zilliken b. Claudette Romand c. Belén López
- The only person who doesn't practice sports is...
a. Belén Lopez b. Mikhael Pavlov c. Maria Szopen
- If you like the mountains, it could be a good idea to contact to...
a. Paulo Dias b. Claudette Romand c. Stefan Zilliken



Reading Comprehension Activity 3 Lesson Plan 4

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: The famous mathematician David Hilbert.

Objective(s): To identify the sequence of events.

Activities:

Before starting the reading activity the treatment group will be presented with the Sequence of Events chart and explained how to use it. I will draw the chart on the board and demonstrate the use of it when showing order of events in a story.

Before Reading

Read the title and look at the picture: What do you think the reading is going to be about?

What are your predictions about the text? (Both groups will be asked the same questions with the difference that the treatment group will record their answers on the pre-reading chart).

During Reading

Skim the text silently.

Both the control and treatment time will be asked to read the text a second time. Only the treatment group will complete the Sequence of Events chart at this point. (The GOs will be provided on a separated paper).

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

NAME: _____

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First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 3

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Before reading: Read the title and look at the picture: What do you think the reading is going to be about? What are your predictions about the text?

During reading: Read silently and complete the chart.

The famous mathematician David Hilbert (1862–1943)

was a genius, but often forgot simple things. He often forgot his keys or didn’t remember where his glasses were. One day, the Hilberts moved to another house on another street. In the morning his wife gave him a piece of paper and said, “David, we’re moving today, so I wrote the new address on this piece of paper.” Hilbert’s wife gave him the piece of paper, and he put it into his jacket pocket. At the university, he needed a piece of paper to make some notes. He remembered the piece of paper in his pocket. He took the paper out of his jacket. Then he wrote something on it and put it on



the desk in his office. Some hours later, he left his office, but he didn’t take the piece of paper with him.

Then he walked home. He went to the old address because he didn’t remember what his wife said in the morning. But in front of the door he suddenly remembered. “Ah yes, a new house, a new address. Where’s that piece of paper?” But of course he couldn’t find it. It was on his desk at the university. Then he looked around and saw a girl. “Excuse me,” he said. “Do you know where the Hilberts live now?” The girl answered, “Yes, Dad. Mom sent me to find you. I’ll take you home now.”

From American More 3 Six-Level Edition. Cambridge University Press 2011. (p.121).



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGHT SCHOOL

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First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 3

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Before reading: Read the tittle and look at the picture: What do you think the reading is going to be about? What are your predictions about the text? Complete the chart.

During Reading: Read silently and complete the Sequence of Events Chart.

Event from the Story	→	My Prediction about the Event
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____		_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

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READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 3

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Before reading: Read the title and look at the picture: What do you think the reading is going to be about? What are your predictions about the text?

During reading: Read silently.

After Reading: Answer the Questions:

- 1 Who was David Hilbert?
- 2 When did he live?
- 3 What was on the piece of paper that his wife gave him?
- 4 Why did she give him this?
- 5 What did Professor Hilbert do with the paper first?
- 6 What did he do with the paper later?
- 7 When he walked home from the university, where did he go?
- 8 Who was the little girl?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____



Reading Comprehension Activity 4 Lesson Plan 6

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Save the rain forest!

Objective(s): Using KWL chart for reading.

Activities:

Before starting the reading activity the teacher will ask students to recall information from a video they saw about natural wonders of the world. The students will brainstorm ideas on the board as a warm up activity. The students will also be asked to brainstorm vocabulary related to the topic. After this the teacher will introduce the KWL chart to the students and teach them how to use it.

Before Reading

a) Talk to a partner and answer: What do you know about the rainforest? Record your answers b) Write sentences individually answering: What would you like to know about it?

c) Look at the text illustration and describe it. Then read the title and predict: What information do you think you are going to find in the text?

What are your predictions about the text? (Both groups will be asked the same questions with the difference that the treatment group will record their answers on the Graphic Organizer provided).

During Reading

a) The teacher will read the text aloud while the students listen and read. Then the teacher will explain basic vocabulary

b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time and take notes on new information. The treatment group will complete the KWL chart which will be provided on a separate paper.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

The students will be motivated to discuss and share ideas about things they can do to help saving the rainforest. They can decide on a project in groups and then share their ideas with the class.



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 4

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

After reading the text on the course book text American More 3 Six-Level Edition, page 39: Safe the rain forest!

Answer the Questions about the text:

1. Find two reasons in the text why the Amazon rain forest is important.

a) _____

b) _____

2. Who lives in the Amazon rainforest?

3. Why are these people important?

4. Why is the rainforest threatened?

5. Why should people know more about the rainforest?

_____.



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READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 4

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”



Save the rain forest!

The Amazon rain forest is one of the most important places on Earth. It produces more than 20 percent of the world’s oxygen and is home to more than 2,000 medicinal plants, which help cure people who are sick. However, the rain forest is not safe. Every year people cut down many of the trees and the forest is getting smaller and smaller. About 500 years ago, more than

10 million native people lived in the Amazon rain forest. Today, there are fewer than 200,000. Native healers know all about the Amazon’s important plants, but many of them are very old, and their environment is under attack. It is important for the world to know about these plants and to protect the Amazon rain forest so that native people can continue to live there.

From American More 3 Six-Level Edition. Cambridge University Press 2011. (p.39).



Reading Comprehension Activity 5 Lesson Plan 7

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: The Tropical Rainforest

Objective(s): Using KWL chart for reading.

Activities:

Before starting the reading activity the teacher will ask students brainstorm vocabulary related to the topic. Key vocabulary will be introduced to the students in both groups. And the students will complete a matching activity using the new vocabulary. After this the teacher will introduce the KWL chart to the students in the treatment group and elicit to recall how to use it for reading.

Before Reading

- Talk to a partner and answer: What do you know about the rainforest? Record your answers
- Write sentences individually answering: What would you like to know about it?
- Look at the text illustration and describe it. Then read the title and predict: What information do you think you are going to find in the text?

What are your predictions about the text? (Both groups will be asked the same questions with the difference that the treatment group will record their answers on the Graphic Organizer provided).

During Reading

- The teacher will read the text aloud while the students listen and read. Then the teacher will explain additional vocabulary suggested by the students.
- The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time and take notes on new information. The treatment group will complete the KWL chart which will be provided on a separate paper.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback. - After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

The students will be motivated to talk and discuss about the expectations they had before reading and the information learned after reading.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 5

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The Tropical Rainforest

by Mikki Sadil

Match each vocabulary word on the left with its definition on the right.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| _____ 1. Giant | a. difficult to understand |
| _____ 2. Umbrella | b. adjusted to certain conditions |
| _____ 3. Canopy | c. covering |
| _____ 4. Decomposed | d. device for keeping rain or sun off of a person |
| _____ 5. Fahrenheit | e. decay; rot |
| _____ 6. Mysterious | f. huge |
| _____ 7. Adapted | g. scale for measuring temperature commonly used in the U.S.A. |

1. In a rainforest, the tallest trees can grow...

- a. almost 200 feet tall
- b. more than 200 yards tall
- c. **over** 270 feet tall
- d. almost 250 feet tall

2. The forest floor tends to be very dark. Why?

3. What is a biome?

4. Most animals that live in the rainforest live in the....

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| a. emergent layer | b. canopy |
| c. understory | d. forest floor |

5. Read the following sentence from the article and choose the best definition for the underlined word.

In most rainforests, the temperature ranges from 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit all year long, and the air is almost always humid.

The underlined word means...

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. difficult to breathe | b. containing lots of oxygen |
| c. warm and comfortable | d. containing lots of water vapor |

Adapted from Super Teacher Worksheets. www.superteacherworksheets.com



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Reading Comprehension Activity 5

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The Tropical Rainforest`
Rainforest Series, Part 1 - by Mikki Sadil



Tropical rainforests are among the most mysterious geographical biomes in the world. A biome is an area with different plants and animals adapted to the life in a particular environment.

Rainforests have covered large areas of the Earth for millions of years, and can have trees that are 1,000 years-old or more. They are called rainforests because they are among the wettest areas on Earth, receiving from about 80 to 100 inches of rain a year. In most rainforests, the temperature ranges from 70 to 85 degrees Fahrenheit all year long, and the air is almost always humid.

Rainforests have four different layers of trees. The first is the emergent layer which has giant trees growing from 100 to 240 feet tall. These trees have umbrella-shaped tops that grow high above the rest of the forest. They have their own diverse plant and animal life.

The next layer is called the canopy. These trees grow up to 130 feet tall, and they form a tight canopy, or covering, over the rest of the forest which permits very little sunlight to come down. The branches and trunks of these trees are covered with smaller plants and appear to be tied together with hundreds of lianas. About 90% of all rainforest animals live way up high in the canopy.

The third layer is the understory, and it's very shady. Only about 15% of the sunlight from the canopy falls, and is usually warm and humid. Trees and plants that require little sun grow here, with the trees growing to about 60 ft. This layer has many smaller trees and plants, but little air movement. There are many animals and insects living in this layer.

The final layer of the rainforest is the forest floor. It is surprisingly dark and less than 2% of the sun's light reaches this area. Because of this, there is very little plant life on the forest floor. It is an area covered with fallen leaves, seeds, dead flowers, and fruits and branches that decompose very quickly. It also has a unique variety of animals and plants that live here.

Rainforest Facts

- Rainforests produce about 40% of the world's oxygen.
- About 25% of all medicines come from rainforest plants.
- 1,400 plants in the rainforest are believed to offer cures for cancer.

Adapted from Super Teacher Worksheets. www.superteacherworksheets.com



Reading Comprehension Activity 6 Lesson Plan 8

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In
a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class
at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: The Tropical Rainforest

Objective(s): Using a categories chart for reading.

Activities:

Before starting the reading activity the teacher will ask students brainstorm vocabulary related to the topic. The teacher will introduce the categories chart to the students in the treatment group and explain how to use it.

Before Reading

- a) Talk to a partner and answer: What do you know about the rainforest?
- b) Brainstorm vocabulary about the rainforest and check with a partner. (Both groups will be asked the same questions with the difference that the treatment group will record the vocabulary on the Graphic Organizer provided).

During Reading

- a) The students will read the text aloud as a group.
- b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time. The treatment group will complete the categories chart which will be provided on a separate paper.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 6

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The Tropical Rainforest

Write down the words that were brainstormed and words that you already know

CATEGORIES (LAYERS)

Adapted from: *The Big Book of Graphic Organizers*. Graphic Organizers for Supporting Reading Comprehension (157).



Answer the questions:

Why are these large portions of Earth called rainforest?

_____.

Mention three characteristics of the rainforest.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Complete:

The different layers of trees are ...

_____.

Which layer of the rainforest receives most of the sunlight?

_____.

Where can we find the highest percentage of animal life?

_____.

Which is the darkest layer?

_____.

Why does the forest floor have very little plant life?

_____.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 6

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a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class

at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The Tropical Rainforest

Answer the questions:

Why are these large portions of Earth called rainforest?

_____.

Mention three characteristics of the rainforest.

a) _____

b) _____

c) _____

Complete:

The _____ different _____ layers _____ of _____ trees _____ are _____ ...

_____.

Which _____ layer _____ of _____ the _____ rainforest _____ receives _____ most _____ of _____ the _____ sunlight?

_____.

Where can we find the highest percentage of animal life?

_____.

Which is the darkest layer?

_____.

Why does the forest floor have very little plant life?

_____.



Reading Comprehension Activity 7 lesson Plan 9

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: The world of birds the biggest and the smallest

Objective(s): To compare and contrast: Identify similarities and differences.

Activities:

Before starting the reading activity the teacher will ask students to brainstorm vocabulary related to the topic: Birds, then the teacher will introduce a Venn diagram to the students in the treatment group and explain how to use it when identifying similarities and differences.

Before Reading

- Talk to a partner and answer: What do you know about birds?
- Brainstorm vocabulary about birds and check with a partner. Next the students will Read the text title and subtitles and predict on the information they will find in the text. After that the students will write down similarities or shared characteristics they can find about ostriches and hummingbirds. (Both groups will be asked the same questions with the difference that the treatment group will record the similarities on the diagram provided).
- The students will be provided with a key vocabulary list.

During Reading

- The students will read the text aloud by taking turns.
- The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time. The treatment group will complete the Venn diagram to record differences. The control group will be asked to pay attention to differences while they read.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class. Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading and comment about the information they found interesting. Additionally the students will work in groups choosing two animals from the same species and compare/contrast information they know about them, record that information and share with the class.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 7

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The world of birds the biggest and the smallest

Key vocabulary:

Weight	a little
Laid	one cent coin
Slightly	heaviness
Penny	set aside/keep
Save	placed

Answer the questions:

1. Where do ostriches come from?

2. What is interesting about their eggs?

3. How do male and females share sitting on the eggs?

4. How fast can ostriches run?

5. How long do they live?

6. Which is bigger, the male or female bee hummingbird?

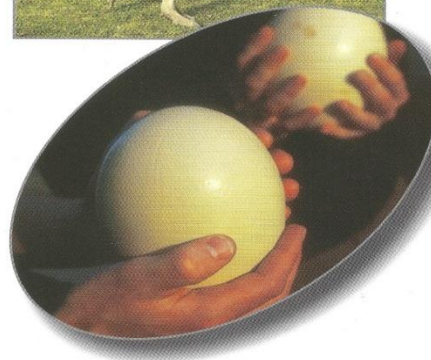
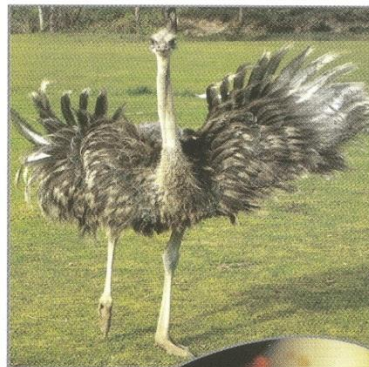
7. Why is the hummingbird’s body temperature lower at night?

The world of
birds
the biggest and the smallest

Ostriches

Ostriches are native to Africa, but they can live pretty much anywhere. They are the biggest birds in the world and normally are about 2.5 meters tall, so it isn't surprising that ostrich eggs are the biggest eggs in the world! An ostrich egg weighs about 1.6 kilograms, or about the same as 24 chicken eggs. In 1997, in Shanxi, China, an ostrich laid the heaviest egg in the world. It weighed 2.35 kilograms! The female ostrich sits on its egg in the daytime, and the male sits on it at night. The baby ostrich comes out of the egg after about 40 days.

Ostriches are also the fastest birds on land in the world. They can run at about 72 kilometers an hour. Ostriches are sometimes dangerous. They have very strong feet and can attack animals and people. Ostriches usually live between 50 and 75 years.



Bee hummingbirds

Bee hummingbirds live in Cuba. The males are the smallest birds in the world, while the female bee hummingbird is slightly bigger than the male. The male bee hummingbird weighs only 1.8 grams. That's lighter than a penny! The male is about five centimeters long.

When it is flying, the bee hummingbird moves its wings between 80 and 200 times every second. It has the highest body temperature of all birds in the world: about 40°C in the daytime, and about 20°C at night. Its body temperature goes down at night to save energy. Every day, a bee hummingbird eats about one gram of food (half its weight) and drinks about 15 grams of water (about eight times its weight!). Bee hummingbirds mostly eat insects and the nectar they get from flowers.



Puchta, Herbert, Jeff Stranks , et al. *American MORE 3 Six-Level Edition*. Student's Book. CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2011. 43. Print.



Reading Comprehension Activity 8 Lesson Plan 10

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: The Sky went green.

Objective(s): To identify and differentiate the order of events.

Activities:

Before Reading

The teacher will start the class telling the students they are going to listen to a story about a strange incident.

The teacher reads the text aloud to the students while they listen carefully. At this point the students in the treatment group will take notes on the first Graphic Organizer provided.

After listening to the story the students in both groups are presented with a text about some other people reports.

During Reading

a) The students read the text silently.

b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently after listening to the first part of the story. The students in the treatment group will complete the second chart.

After Reading

One of the people in the second text invented stories about the UFO. Who do you think was lying? The students in both groups will be asked to discuss in pairs and find out which speaker is lying and tell the reasons.

Following the students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading. And have a brief discussion about UFO stories they have heard.



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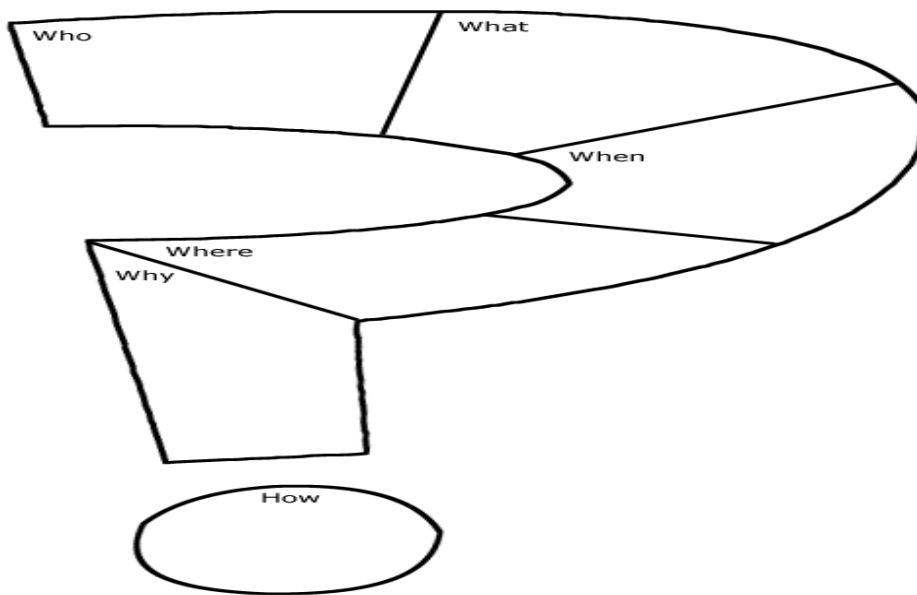
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Reading Comprehension Activity 8

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The sky went green



From: Freeology.com



UNIVERSIDAD DE CUENCA
FACULTAD DE FILOSOFÍA, LETRAS Y CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN

Event	Bill Jacobs	Jim Short	Pam Baker	Bob Robbins
1.				
2.	Saw a very bright light and heard a loud noise			
3.				
4.				



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Reading Comprehension Activity 8

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

The sky went green

Everyone thought that Gulf Breeze in the U.S.A. was a calm little town until November 1977 when a very strange event happened to two friends, Ed Walters and Charlie Bennett. This is part of the story Ed told during an interview for the Florida News.

It was seven o’ clock in the evening. My friend Charlie and I were walking in the park. We were going home talking and laughing when suddenly the sky went dark. Charlie thought it was going to rain, but then I heard a loud bang and the sky went bright green. There was an enormous shiny space ship above pulling us off the ground. Seconds later we were inside it. Twenty strange creatures were looking at us. They all had wrinkled skin and hands like pincers. They didn’t hurt us. They seemed very friendly. Suddenly the door opened underneath us. We fell out the spaceship onto the ground and were back in the park again, Charlie and I just looked at each other. We were shaking because we were scared. Then we ran home as fast as we could.

Some other people in Gulf Breeze said they have seen the UFO.

Bill Jacobs: I was working in the garden when I saw a very bright light. I heard a loud noise. I went inside and locked the door.

Jim Short: I was driving my car when suddenly I heard a loud bang. I thought someone had crashed into my car.

Pam Baker: I was at home watching TV. It was very late at night and I noticed that it was raining. Suddenly I heard a strange whistling noise. I looked out of the window and saw a huge object like an airplane flying in the sky.

Bob Robbins: I was walking with my dog in the fields when suddenly he started barking. It was getting dark but the sky was green. It was frightening. So we ran home.

Adapted from: Seidl, Jennifer. *Grammar Four*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. 8, 10.



The sky went green

- Answer the questions about the reading.

1. What was Bill doing when he saw the light?

_____.

2. What did Pam do when she heard the noise?

_____.

3. What did Bob and his dog do when the sky went green?

_____.

4. What was Jim doing when he heard the bang?

_____.

5. What was Pam doing when she heard the noise?

_____.

6. What did Bill do when he saw the light?

_____.

7. What did Jim do when he heard the bang?

_____.

8. What were Bob and his dog doing when the sky went green?

_____.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 8

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The sky went green

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Adapted from: Seidl, Jennifer. *Grammar Four*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. 8, 10.



Reading Comprehension Activity 9 Lesson Plan 11

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Looking for Keiko.

Objective(s): To identify the character and main plot of a story. To use a 5W’s Graphic Organizer to comprehend a text.

Activities:

Before Reading

a) The students will read the title of the text and look at the picture and predict the information they think will find in the text. The students will be encouraged to share their predictions with the class.

Before starting reading, the teacher will ask students the following questions? Have you ever been lost? What should a person do if he or she is lost in a new city? The students in the treatment group will fill a bubble graphic organizer to answer to the second question.

c) The students will be provided with a key vocabulary.

During Reading

a) The students will read the text aloud by taking turns.

b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time. The treatment group will complete the 5 W’s Graphic Organizer to record information.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading and discuss about what should be the best thing to do in that situation.

Students will work in pairs pretending they are one of the characters and try to find the best way to solve the situation explaining why.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 9

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Looking for Keiko

Answer the following questions.

1. Who is telling the story?
_____.

2. Why did his dad take Keiko everywhere in the car?
_____.

3. Why didn’t George meet her at the bus stop?
_____.

4. What was his punishment going to be?
_____.

5. Where was the sign for the name of the street?
_____.

6. How long did he ride around to try to find her?
_____.

7. Where did he finally find Keiko?
_____.

8. Is Keiko still living with them?
_____.



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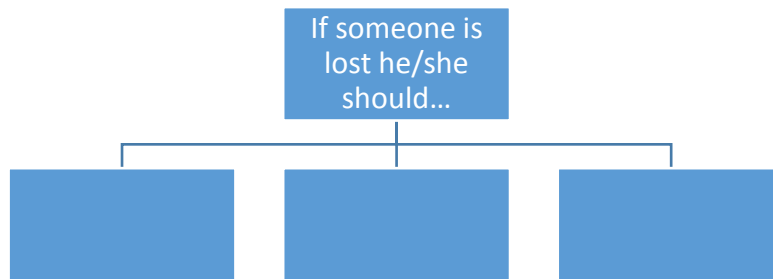
First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

Reading Comprehension Activity 9

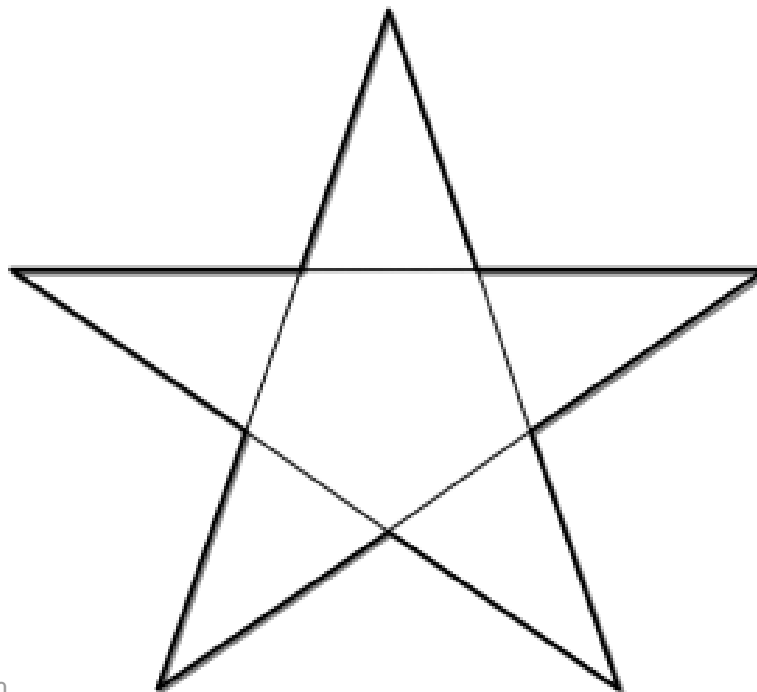
To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Looking for Keiko



5W's Graphic Organizer.

Identify the five W's (What, when, where, who, why) in the five points of the star. Illustrate the story in the space inside.





Reading Comprehension Activity 10 Lesson Plan 12

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: A New Home.

Objective(s): To complete a sequence of events Graphic Organizer while reading to recall information and improve reading comprehension.

Activities:

Before Reading

Warm Up. Lots of people move from one place to another very frequently. Why do people move? How is it like moving to a new home or place?

a) The students will Read the title of the text and look at the picture and predict what the story is going to be about. The students will be encouraged to share their predictions with the class.

During Reading

a) One student will read aloud the first part of the story while the rest of the class listens and read.

b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will read the text silently a second time. The students will be encouraged to ask or explain to each other any difficult or unknown vocabulary. The treatment group will complete the Graphic Organizer to organize information by events.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading. Following they will discuss their opinions about what they think could happen on Earth when the Trojans land?

Students will work in pairs to continue the story from the point of view of the people who were living on Earth when the Trojans landed. Finally volunteers will share the stories with the class.



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

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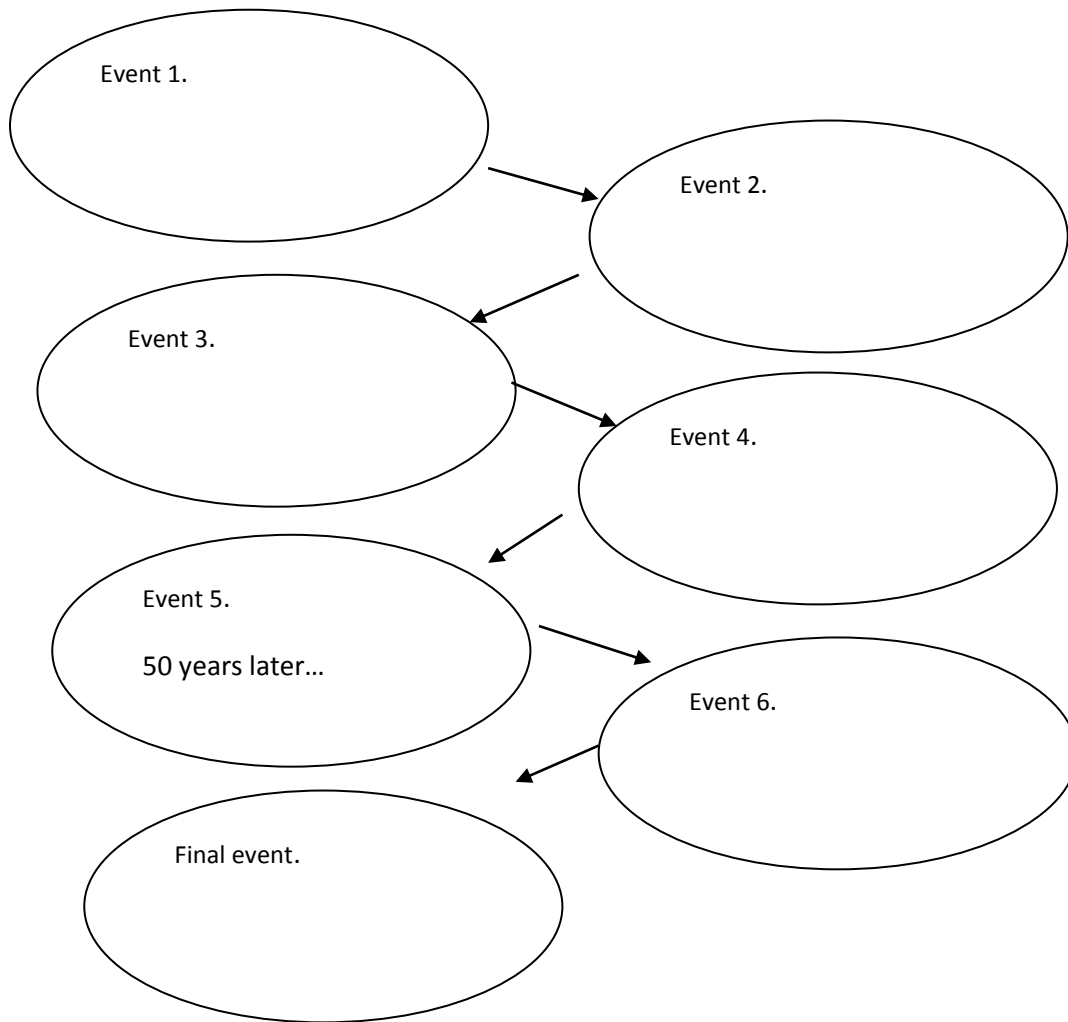
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Reading Comprehension Activity 10

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Use this Graphic Organizer to organize the events that take place in the story.

A NEW HOME
Who?
What?.....



Adapted from The Teacher’s Big Book of Graphic Organizers. What Happens? (p.201)



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

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Reading Comprehension Activity 10

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

A NEW HOME

Answer the questions about the story.

1. Why did the president of Trojan speak to the people?
.....
2. How many years would it take before another planet hit the planet Trojan?
.....
3. Why did the president of Trojan think of a plan to escape?
.....
4. What was the Trojan’s plan to escape the disaster?
.....
5. Where were the Trojans going to go?
.....
6. Why did the Trojan’s choose Earth?
.....
7. How long did it take them to build 5000 spaceships?
.....
8. How many Trojans were moving to Earth?
a. 20.000 b. 10.000 c. 200’000’000
9. How long was the journey to Earth?
.....



Reading Comprehension Activity 11 Lesson Plan 13

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In
a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class
at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Fiancée loses her ring in Easter egg swap

Objective(s): To identify cause(s) and consequences

Activities:

Before Reading

a) The students will Read the title of the text and look at the picture and predict what the story is going to be about. The students will be encouraged to share their predictions with the class.
Key vocabulary list will be provided.

During Reading

a) One student will read aloud the first part of the story while the rest of the class listens and read.
b) The students in both groups (control and treatment) will continue reading the text aloud by taking turns. The students will be encouraged to ask or explain to each other any difficult or unknown vocabulary. The treatment group will complete the Graphic Organizer to organize information by categories.
Both groups will read the text a second time individually. (The students in the treatment group will fill a 5ws chart.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.
Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading. Following the students will answer to the following question in pairs: a) How would you have felt and what would you have done if you had been the young man or woman. b) What would you have done if you had found the ring when the egg was resold?

Finally volunteers will share their answers with the class.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 11

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

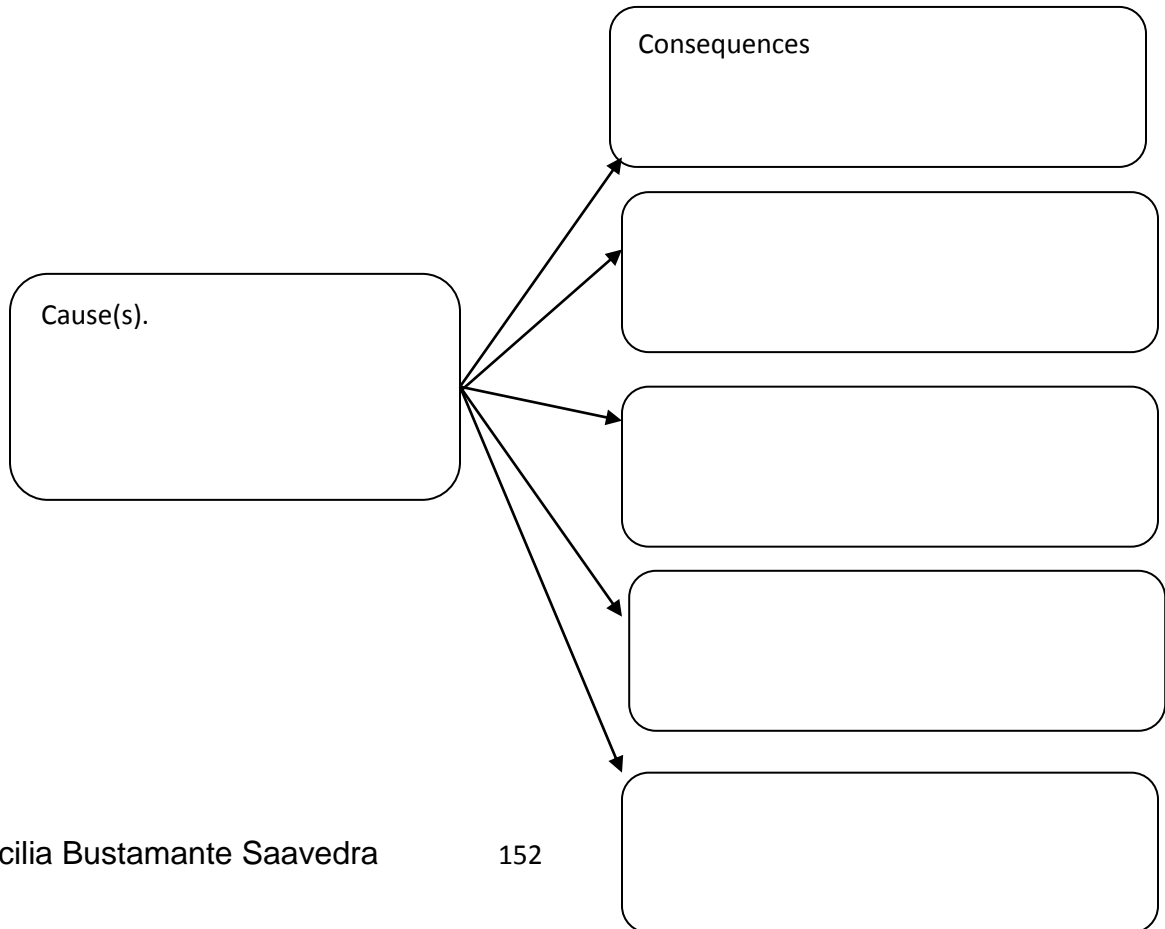
Fiancee loses her ring in Eastern egg swap

A. Read the article. Put the words and phrases under the correct category.

Fiancée	26-year-old law graduate	husband to be	30-year-old plumber	donor	unlucky
recipient	prospective bride	fiancé	boyfriend		

Male	Female

B. Complete the Graphic Organizer with the cause(s) and consequences you find in the story.





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Reading Comprehension Activity 11

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Fiancee loses her ring in Eastern egg swap

A. Key vocabulary:

(Prospective) bride
Donor
Easter
Engaged
Fiancé (e)

Graduate
Husband-to-be
Plumber
Recipient

C. Number the sentences in the order in which they happened.

- a. Put the ring inside the egg
- b. Saw that the egg was plain chocolate and decided to exchange it
- c. Went to the shop, but someone else had bought the egg
- d. gave the other person the egg as an Easter present
- e. Took the egg back to the shop and got a milk chocolate one.
- f. Discovered that the other person had exchanged the egg
- g. Didn’t know that there was a ring inside the egg
- h. Bought a plain chocolate egg and an engagement ring.

D. Answer the questions.

- 1. What happened when the couple discovered that the ring had been taken back to the shop?
.....
- 2. How did the young woman get her minor injuries?
.....
- 3. Who did she go and see?
.....
- 4. Why have legal papers been prepared?
.....
- 5. What does Luca Maori think will happen to the ring?
.....
- 6. What does he think will happen to the young couple’s relationship?
.....

From Reading Extra. A resource book of multi-level skills activities by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004 (p. 69)



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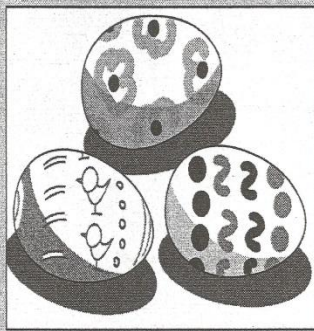
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Reading Comprehension Activity 11

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Fiancée loses her ring in Easter egg swap

by Philip Willan
 Rome



An expensive engagement ring hidden as a surprise in a chocolate Easter egg has given enormous pre-marital tension to a young Italian couple.

The £1,300 ring has gone missing after the fiancée, a 26-year-old law graduate, decided to exchange the plain chocolate egg for a milk chocolate equivalent.

When he discovered what had happened, her husband-to-be, a

30-year-old plumber, rushed back to the shop where he had purchased the egg, only to find that it had already been resold.

The missing ring has put the relationship under considerable stress, with angry words from the donor and tears from the unlucky recipient.

‘The episode has caused a lot of tension, even resulting in a very strong slap in the face for the prospective bride,’ Luca Maori, a Perugia lawyer said yesterday. ‘She contacted me, because she was thinking about taking legal action against her fiancé for her minor physical injuries.’

Maori yesterday made an appeal on television to whoever

found a gold ring with a heart-shaped diamond and three rubies in a plain chocolate Easter egg to return it to the shop. There is a handsome reward, he said. ‘I have all the legal papers ready to claim damages from the boyfriend, but we will wait for the moment.’

Maori said he was now more optimistic that the couple would stop arguing and get back together again than that they would recover the ring. ‘For one thing, the fiancée has promised she will learn to like plain chocolate,’ he said.

So far the costly surprise has caused much more disappointment than the plastic toys usually found in chocolate eggs.



Reading Comprehension Activity 12 Lesson Plan 14

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Talking About Penguins by Guy Belleranti

Objective(s): To classify and categorize information using a double bubble map.

Activities:

Before Reading

Students will be asked to read the title of the text and predict what kind of information they think will find in the text.

Then the students will be asked to share ideas on previous knowledge they have on penguins (the experimental group will be asked to complete bubble map to record the information).

During Reading

One student can volunteer to read the first paragraph aloud while the rest of the class listen and read, then the students will be asked to predict again what information they think will be provided in the rest of the text.

After this the teacher will continue reading the rest of the text aloud while the class listens and reads. Following students will be allowed to ask questions on vocabulary or new expressions (students will be encouraged to help each other explaining vocabulary)

Students will read the text a second time individually. (Treatment group will fill a double bubble chart).

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading.

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class.

Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading. And share information they found interesting about penguins.

Work in pairs to write a summary including all the information you know about penguins.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 12

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Talking About Penguins by Guy Belleranti

Penguins are one of the world’s most interesting birds. They swing back and forth when they walk, and have flippers instead of wings. The bones in a penguin’s flippers are heavier and more solid than those in the wings of a flying bird. This helps the penguin “fly” through the water.

The penguin’s black back and white front has an important function, to camouflage in the water. Penguins assimilate with the sea from above and with the sky from below. This makes it harder for predatory birds, leopard seals, sea lions, orcas and sharks to see them. Many people think all penguins live in the cold and ice of Antarctica. However, only 6 of the 17 species or types of penguins live in Antarctica. The others live in parts of New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and South America and on the Falkland and Galapagos Islands.

We will focus on two of the penguin species – the Emperor penguin of Antarctica and the Galapagos penguin of the Galapagos Islands.

The Emperor penguin is the world’s largest penguin. Its oily external feathers help keep it dry. It’s dense internal down feathers and thick fat layer helps keep it warm. Emperor penguins also often move close together to stay warm. A mother Emperor penguin lays only one egg at a time. After the mother Emperor penguin lays the egg she travels to open sea to feed on fish, squid and krill (shrimp-like ocean crustaceans). The father stays behind with the egg. He keeps it warm and protected by balancing it on his feet and covering it with feathered skin called a brood pouch. The mother returns two months later, regurgitates food for the chick, then stays with it while the father goes out to sea to feed.

The Galapagos penguin lives in an area much warmer than Antarctica. The Galapagos Islands are on the Equator, 600 miles west of the South American country of Ecuador. This is as far north as any penguin lives in the wild. The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest and also one of the most endangered of all penguins. It shares the Galapagos Islands with many other unusual animals including the giant Galapagos tortoise and the blue-footed booby. Instead of having to stay warm the Galapagos penguin must find ways to stay cool. The best way is to spend the heat of day in cool water currents hunting small fish and krill. When a Galapagos penguin does get out of the water it often spreads its flippers to cool off. It might also pant like a dog. And it shades its feet by standing with its body bent forward.

Adapted from: Super Teacher Worksheets - www.superteacherworksheets.com



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Reading Comprehension Activity 12

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Talking About Penguins by Guy Belleranti

1. Most wild penguins live...

- a. in South Africa
- b. near the North Pole
- c. in the Southern Hemisphere
- d. near the Equator

2. The father Emperor penguin keeps the egg warm and protected. Where is the mother penguin during this time?

_____.

3. How are a penguin's flipper bones different from the bones in other birds' wings?

_____.

4. A sea lion might have a hard time seeing a penguin swimming in the water. Why?

- a. Sea lions cannot see the color black very well because it blends in with the snow and ice.
- b. When the sea lion looks up, the penguin's white belly blends in with the bright colors of the sky.
- c. Penguins swim very fast and they look like a streak zooming through the water.
- d. A penguin becomes invisible when it swims in cold water.

5. According to the information in the article, what three things does a Galapagos penguin do to cool off when it is too warm?

_____.

Adapted from: Super Teacher Worksheets www.superteacherworksheets.com



Reading Comprehension Activity 13 Lesson Plan 15

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage.
Objective(s): To identify the sequence of events and summarize.

Activities:

Before Reading

You are going to read a text which includes the key words provided. The students will be asked to order the vocabulary according to the stages of life. (The students in the treatment group will fill a chart) The students will Read the title of the text look at the picture and predict what the story is going to be about (Someone’s life). The students will be encouraged to share their predictions with the class. Look at the text for one minute. Then answer. Where is the text from? What is it about? Who is in the photos? Explanation will be provided on how to complete the sequence of events chart.

During Reading

Students read the first paragraph. (Newspaper articles often give the main points of the story in the first paragraph and then return to them later in the article) What information do you think comes next in the text?

Students continue reading the article individually by taking turns. Then the students will read the text a second time individually. (Treatment group will fill the chart) and then complete the practices.

After Reading

Students in both groups will individually answer the questions about the reading. What information helped you to decide if the sentences were true or false in exercise A?

Feedback

After collecting the worksheets, the teacher will check answers orally with the class. Then the students will be encouraged to share opinions about the reading. And finally write a short story about a special couple.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 13

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Longest married couple celebrate 77 years of marriage

Fred and Olive Hodges, who have been married for 77 years in April, are about to enter the Guinness Book of Records as the UK’s longest married couple. The couple first met in 1915, then were separated by the First World War. They met again in 1919 and fell in love. They got engaged and married – but only after six years, when they had saved £600 to buy their first house.

The couple, who are both 102, met in their teens as they skated on a frozen river in Northampton in 1915. Fred had left school at 15 and started work for the local gas company; Olive had left at 14 and worked in a leather factory.

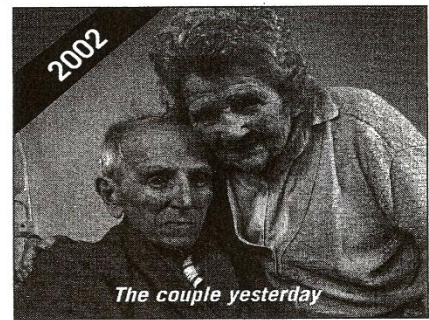
‘I wasn’t really interested at the time, I just wanted to have fun on the ice,’ said Olive. ‘Fred came up behind me and knocked me down. He told me years later that he did it because he wanted to pick me up.’

But, three years later, when he was 18, Fred joined the army and was soon fighting in France. Many of his comrades were killed. Fred published a book of his memories, *Men of 18 in 1918*, in 1988. In his book he described how a sudden silence signalled that war was over. ‘Now I knew I was going to have a life after all.’

Back home in Northampton, Fred renewed his friendship with Olive. The couple had a six-year engagement before their marriage. They had two children, John and Brenda. Fred became chief cashier at the gas company. Olive stayed at home while the children grew up. The couple now have 11 grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren – the latest just two years old. Two years ago they had to leave their own home because of Fred’s poor health. They now live together in an old people’s home in Wellsborough, Leicestershire.

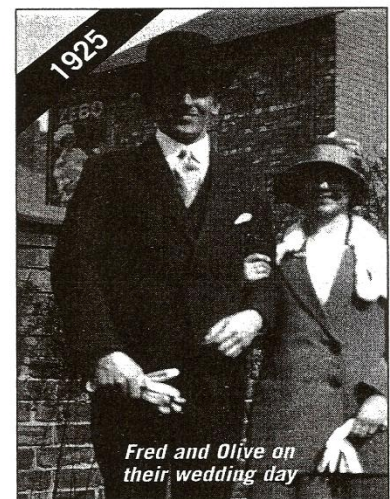
‘We have lots of lovely memories but the birth of our two children is the most special,’ said Olive. And the best decade for me was when Fred retired in the 1960s. His retirement just meant we could spend more time together. I love Fred so much. I don’t know what I would do without him.’

Their son, John, 73, a retired professor of genetics who lives in Austria, is full of praise for his parents. ‘They are completely devoted to each other,’ he said. ‘And my sister and I could not have more loving parents.’



© Caters News

‘My mother gave up her life for her family and home. Our parents opened doors of opportunity for us which they never had themselves and encouraged us to go through them.’



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Adapted from: Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004. (pag.17)



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Reading Comprehension Activity 13

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Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage

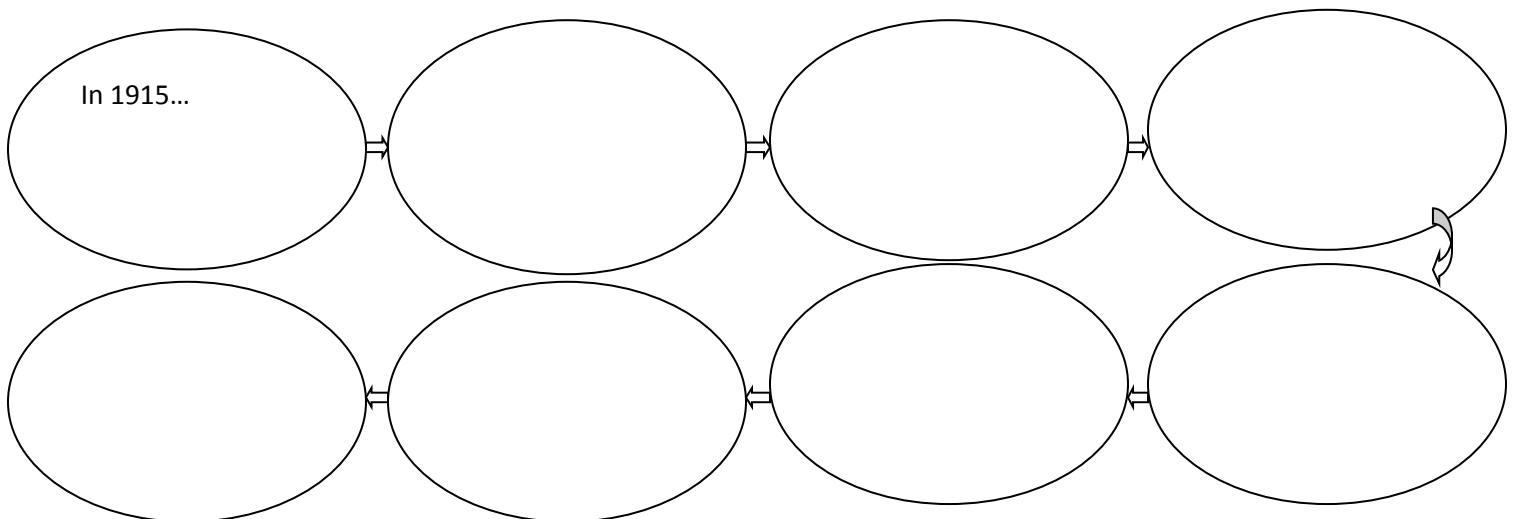
Order the vocabulary according to the stages of life:

Leave school
 Start work
 Meet (someone)
 Fall in love

Get engaged
 Get married
 Have children
 Retire

Stage	Description
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	

Complete following chart as you read.



Adapted from: Freeology.com - Free Teaching Resources



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Reading Comprehension Activity 13

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Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage

Order the vocabulary according to the stages of life:

Leave school
 Start work
 Meet (someone)
 Fall in love

Get engaged
 Get married
 Have children
 Retire

Exercise A:

Decide if the following sentences are true or false.

1. Fred and Olive first met in winter.....
2. They were from Northampton.....
3. Fred joined the army in 1915.....
4. They got married in 1925.....
5. They bought a house in Northampton.....
6. John and Brenda didn’t have children.....

Exercise B.

Complete the sentences and write a summary of the newspaper article.

Fred and Olive first (1).....in 1915. They met again in (2)....., they fell (3)..... and (4)..... after 6 years of engagement. In 1925 they bought (5) Fred and Olive (6)..... children. Fred (7) 1960s.

The couple (8).....102 have (9).....great-grandchildren. They live (10)..... home. They have been (11)in April. They are (12) longest married couple.

Adapted from: Reading Extra by Liz Driscoll. Cambridge University Press 2004. (pag.17)



Reading Comprehension Activity 14 Lesson Plan 16

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: World's Largest Marsupial. By Guy Belleranti
Objective(s): To identify characteristics.

Activities:

Before Reading We are going to read a text which includes the key words provided. The students read the words on the board.

Guess: what is the reading going to be about?

Following the students will look at the topic and the picture provided. (The students in the treatment group will be reminded on how to use a single bubble map and then they will fill the center bubble with the topic and use one or two bubbles to fill with their previous knowledge about kangaroos). The students will share their previous knowledge about the topic with the class.

During Reading

The teacher will ask the class to read the first paragraph aloud. Then the students will be asked to work in pairs to predict the information that comes next in the text and then volunteers will be asked to share their predictions with the class.

Following students will volunteer or take turns to read the following paragraphs, the rest of the class listen and read silently.

The students will be asked to read a second time silently trying to find out the meaning of words by the context. The treatment group will fill the bubble map.

After Reading

The students in both groups will work independently to complete the activities provided and answer the comprehension questions.

Feedback

After answering the questions the class will check answers together. The class will be encouraged to share their opinions about the text, and then the students will work in pairs to make a summary. Finally some volunteers will read their summary to the class.



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Reading Comprehension Activity 14

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

World's Largest Marsupial

by Guy Belleranti

Vocabulary: Match the words with the corresponding meanings.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. dingo_____ | a. breathing heavily to cool off |
| 2. marsupial_____ | b. power over others controlling |
| 3. vegetation_____ | c. long, high jump |
| 4. panting_____ | d. place that is dry most of the time |
| 5. desert_____ | e. type of wild dog in Australia |
| 6. dominance_____ | f. plant |
| 7. leap_____ | g. type of mammal in which the mother has a pouch for carrying her young |

1. Red kangaroos are...

- a. omnivores b. carnivores c. herbivores d. insectivores

2. How do you know that?

3. Mention three ways a Kangaroo keeps cool.

- a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____

4. When does a baby kangaroo come out of its mother's pouch for the first time?

- a. about a month after it is born
 b. a few months after it is born
 c. about 8 months after it is born
 d. when it is a year old

5. A group of kangaroos is called a _____.

6. A baby kangaroo is called a _____.

Adapted from: www.superteacherworksheets.com



World's Largest Marsupial by Guy Belleranti



What Australian mammal can leap 25 feet in one hop and move for short periods at 35 miles an hour? The red kangaroo. A full grown male stands as tall as a six foot person and weighs 200 pounds. This is slightly bigger than the grey kangaroo, making it the world's largest marsupial.

What's a marsupial? A mammal where the mother has a pouch for carrying, feeding and protecting her young.

While a red kangaroo may be the largest marsupial, the newborn baby is tiny, under an inch long. After a few months of sleeping, nursing and growing in mom's stomach pouch the young kangaroo (joey) begins to come out. But it hurries back to the pouch fast when frightened, hungry or cold. Eventually, the joey gets so big it hangs out of the pouch. Then, at eight months old, it stays out. But the joey remains close to mom until ready to live on its own.

Red kangaroos are good swimmers. However, they are best known for their hopping abilities. Their long, powerful hind legs have big feet. Hopping moves them quickly over their grassy, shrubby and desert habitats. Meanwhile, a thick tail helps them balance and steer.

Red kangaroos eat Grass, leaves and other vegetation and they often regurgitate food and chew their cud just like a cow.

The red kangaroo's vegetarian diet provides much of its water. It can also go long periods without drinking. Staying in the shade, panting and limiting most activity to nighttime helps the red kangaroo conserve water and stay cool.

Red kangaroos travel together in groups called mobs. Mobs include both males and females, with one male being dominant.

Males show their dominance by "boxing" with other males. They balance on their tails and try pushing each other off balance with their forearms or by kicking their hind legs. This kicking ability, along with their sharp claws, can also be used by kangaroos to defend against Australia's wild dog, the dingo.

Adapted from: www.superteacherworksheets.com

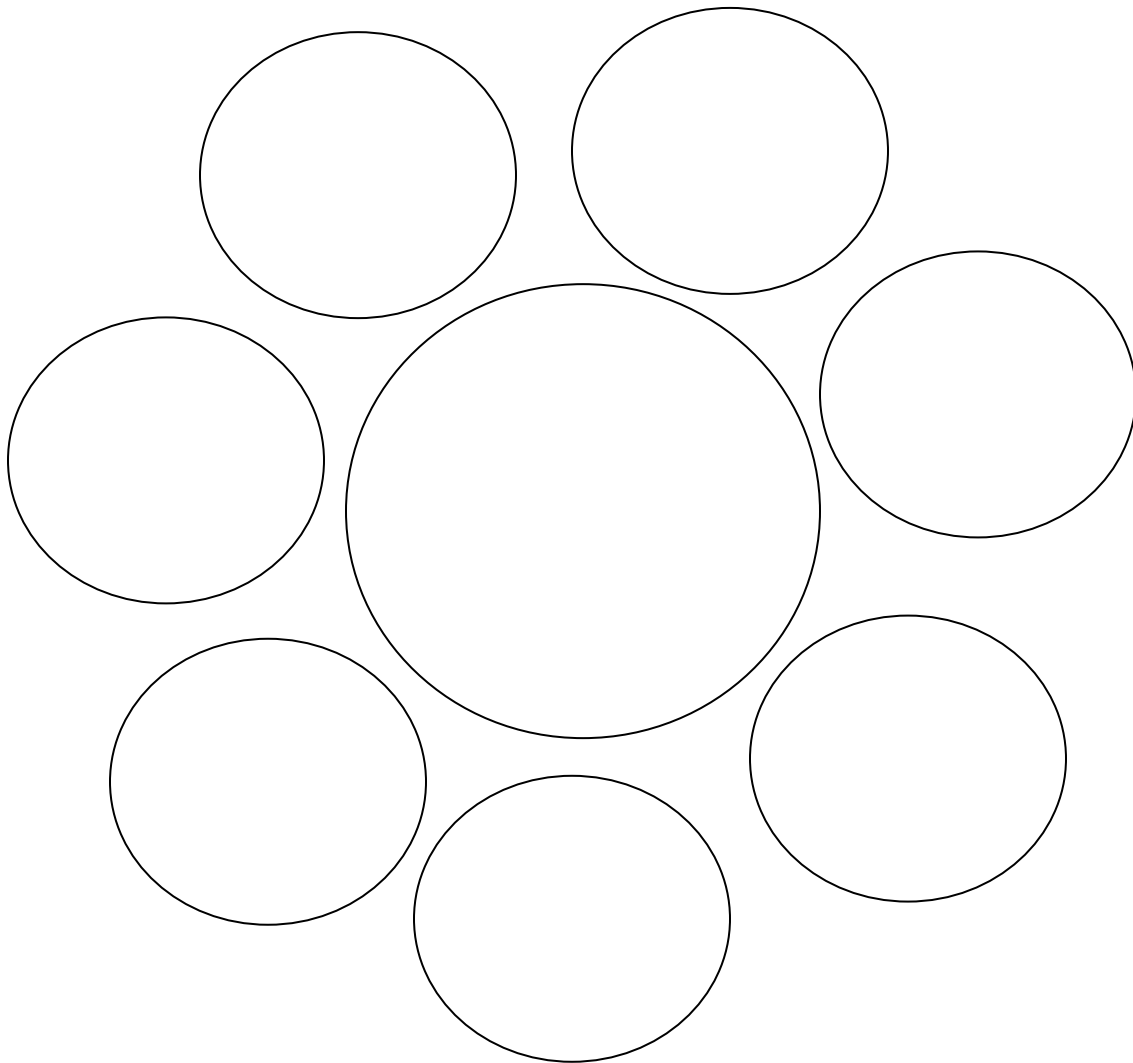


Reading Comprehension Activity 14

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In
a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class
at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

World's Largest Marsupial

By Guy Belleranti



An Atom Apart

by Leslie Cargile

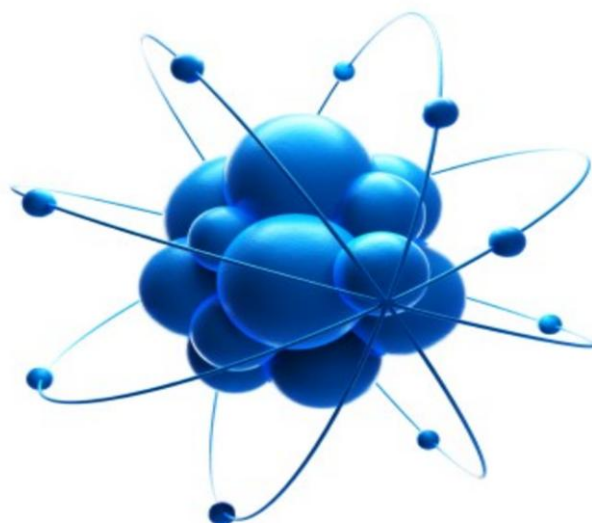
Have you ever walked through a cloud of gnats on a hot summer, only to have them follow you? No matter how you swat at them, or even if you run, they won't leave you alone. If so, then you have something in common with an atom.

Atoms are the building blocks of molecules, which when combined, make up everything. From the smallest one-celled amoeba, to every person who has ever lived, to the largest and brightest stars in the sky, atoms are everywhere.

Even way back in the time of ancient Greece, they wondered about atoms. That's where the word comes from, ancient Greece. The word *A'tomos*, when translated into English, means: *something that cannot be divided any further*. So what's an atom look like? Up until very recently no one could say one way or another.

Technically we can't see individual atoms, since there are no microscopes powerful enough. Since technology improves all the time, it may not be long before we can actually see a whole atom through a special microscope. Even though scientists cannot see atoms with microscopes, they have developed ways to detect them and learn about them.

Atoms are made up of three basic parts; protons, neutrons, and electrons. There is a core, or *nucleus*, and an electron cloud. The nucleus is made up of positively charged protons and neutral neutrons. The nucleus is held closely together by *electromagnetic force*.



Protons and neutrons make up the nucleus of the atom.

A cloud of electrons orbits the nucleus.

The negatively charged electrons are bound to the nucleus, and zap around it in a cloud. Do you remember the cloud of gnats? The gnats would be the electrons zipping around you, the nucleus.

There are different ways atoms are classified. They can be classified into elements, like oxygen, carbon, or hydrogen. All of the elements known to man so far can be found on the periodic table. The number of protons an atom has decides the chemical element. The number of electrons defines the atom's chemical properties, like its melting temperature and boiling point.

The study of atoms and tiny particles that are even smaller is called quantum mechanics. Scientists still have much to learn about atoms. Maybe you will enter the study of quantum mechanics and find a brand new element. Maybe they'll even name it after you!

Taken from: *Super Teacher Worksheets* - www.superteacherworksheets.com



Reading Comprehension Post-Test Activity

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a _____ Pre-Intermediate _____ EFL _____ Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

First Bachillerato Class “ “

Level I

An Atom Apart by Leslie Cargile

1. Circle the correct answer. What are atoms?

- a. tiny particles that make up all matter
- b. tiny particles that can only be seen with a microscope
- c. tiny particles that look like gnats
- d. particles that are so large they cannot be seen

2. What does the word *A'tomos* mean in ancient Greece?

3. Complete: The basic parts of an atom are...

4. What is quantum mechanics?

5. If you wanted to find the chemical element of an atom, you would need to...

- a. know how many electrons it has
- b. know how many protons it has
- c. know its melting temperature
- d. see it with a microscope

6. The author begins this article by comparing a cloud of gnats to an atom. In this scenario,

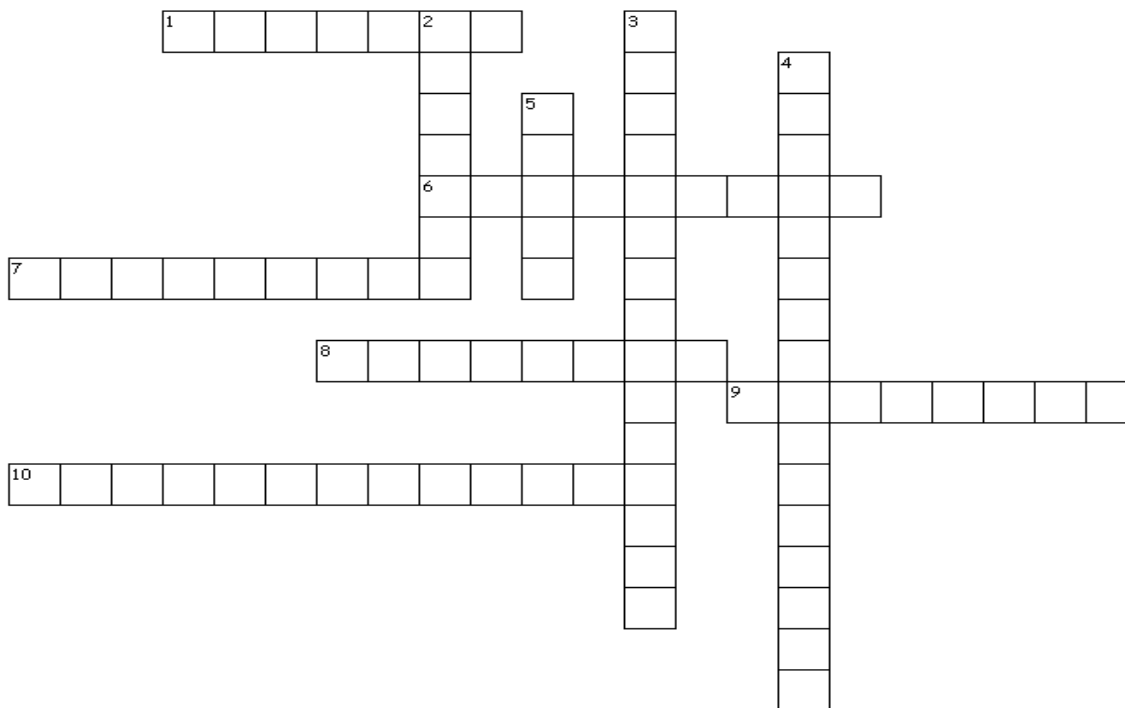
a) What do the gnats represent? _____

b) What does the person walking through the gnats represent? _____

Adapted from: *Super Teacher Worksheets* - www.superteacherworksheets.com



An Atom Apart
Vocabulary Crossword



electromagnetic, Greek, protons, nucleus, molecules, quantum mechanics, electrons, chemical, neutrons, periodic table

Across

1. positively charged parts of an atom
6. negatively charged parts of an atom
7. atoms are the building blocks for...
8. the number of electrons in atoms determine an element's ___properties
9. neutrally charged parts of an atom
10. a chart which lists all of the known elements

Down

2. protons and neutrons are found in this part of an atom
3. type of force that holds the nucleus of an atom together
4. area of science that studies tiny particles like atoms
5. the word a'tomos comes from this language

Adapted from: *Super Teacher Worksheets* - www.superteacherworksheets.com



“SAGRADOS CORAZONES” HIGH SCHOOL

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First Bachillerato Class “ “

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Level I

Reading Comprehension Post-Test Activity Lesson Plan

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Topic: An Atom Apart by Leslie Cargile
Objective(s): To Evaluate Reading Comprehension.

Activities:
Before Reading

Key Vocabulary will be provided on the board for the students to check and use that as a clue to predict or guess the topic.

Guess: what is the reading going to be about?

Following the students will be asked to share previous knowledge about atoms in pairs and then with the class.

During Reading

The teacher will start reading the first paragraph aloud. Then the students will be asked to work in pairs to predict the information that comes next in the text, following volunteers will be asked to share their predictions with the class.

The teacher will continue reading the text while the class listen and read silently.

After this, the students will complete a vocabulary puzzle which includes key vocabulary. (5 minutes will be provided)

The students will be asked to read a second time individually.

After Reading

The students in both groups will work independently to complete the activities provided and answer the comprehension questions.

Feedback

After answering the questions the class will check answers together. (Vocabulary puzzle and comprehension questions) The class will be encouraged to share their opinions about the text.



SOLICITUD DE CONSENTIMIENTO AL PADRE Y/O MADRE DE FAMILIA, O REPRESENTANTE LEGAL.

Considerando que la lectura es la fuente principal de información y parte esencial en el aprendizaje de una lengua como lo es el Inglés y con el fin de contribuir a los requerimientos de mejoras en la educación, así como alcanzar los objetivos propuestos en el proceso enseñanza aprendizaje del idioma Inglés, se ha considerado la implementación de nuevas estrategias como el uso de organizadores gráficos para mejorar la comprensión lectora de los alumnos en este idioma. Esta estrategia ha demostrado ser de gran beneficio y utilidad. Por tal motivo, Tania Cecilia Bustamante Saavedra, docente de la asignatura de Inglés en la Unidad Educativa “Sagrados Corazones”, como parte de su tesis de Maestría en Lengua Inglesa y Lingüística Aplicada, titulada: “The Use of Graphic Organizers to Improve Reading Comprehension in a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class At Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”, contando con la previa autorización de la Institución, se propone investigar el beneficio y la efectividad de esta estrategia metodológica la misma que será aplicada a las estudiantes durante el curso regular con el fin de mejorar la lectura comprensiva a través del uso de esta estrategia y facilitar el aprendizaje.

Para el efecto solicito su consentimiento para proceder a la aplicación de la mencionada estrategia metodológica en las clases de Inglés de su representada, hecho que ayudará a mejorar la capacidad lectora redundando en el eficaz aprendizaje de las alumnas, quienes asistirán normalmente a sus clases de inglés y realizarán actividades de lectura que no afectarán de manera alguna el desarrollo normal de las clases de inglés ni sus calificaciones, pues los resultados serán utilizados únicamente con fines relacionados a la investigación.

El estudio se llevará a cabo durante 64 periodos de clase. La información obtenida será totalmente confidencial, es decir será registrada de manera anónima y los resultados se presentarán en términos generales.

Yo, _____ representante de la estudiante _____

Expreso mi consentimiento para que mi hija participe en este proyecto.

Firma:

C.I.:



Reading Comprehension Questionnaire

To develop a research project on “The Use Of Graphic Organizers To Improve Reading Comprehension In a Pre-Intermediate EFL Class at Sagrados Corazones High School, Cuenca, Ecuador”

Date: ___/___/2013.

Class: 1st “_____”

Age: _____

Month of birth: _____.

Section I. Please complete the following items by filling in the blanks or checking one of the choices provided.

1. Have you ever been to any English speaking country? Yes____ No____
2. If yes, how long did you stay there? _____.
3. Do you have English speaking relatives? Yes____ No ____
4. If yes, do you practice English with them? Yes____ No____
5. Do you have English speaking friends? Yes____ No ____
6. If yes, do you practice English with them? Yes____ No ____
7. Do you practice English outside school? Yes____ No ____
8. If yes, how many hours of extra English practice do you get every week?
1 to 4____ 5 to 10____ more than 10____
9. In what ways do you practice English outside school? You can choose more than one answer.
a. Listening to music____ b. Speaking____ c. Chatting____ d.
Writing____ e. Watching TV____ f. Watching movies____
10. Do you like reading in English? Yes____ No____
11. Please explain your answer:
_____.
12. Do you read English outside school? Yes____ No____
13. If yes, what do you usually read outside school?
a. Magazines____ b. Internet articles____ c. On-line news____
d. books____ e. Other_____.

Thank you



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Section II. Please rate the following statements choosing from 1 to 6 (1= strongly agree; 2= Agree; 3= somewhat agree; 4= somewhat disagree; 5= Disagree; 6= strongly disagree).

1	The use of graphic tools helped me to improve my reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6
2	I enjoyed using graphic tools when reading						
3	I liked the stories or texts chosen						
4.	The use of graphic organizers helped to stay focused and pay attention						
5.	I think I will continue to use graphic tools for future readings on my own						

6. Circle your option. Choose only one answer. I think the use of graphics for reading helped me especially ...

- a. To list ideas or words about my previous knowledge
- b. To identify cause and effect
- c. To identify specific information or details
- d. To sequence events
- e. To differentiate between What I Know, What I want to know and what I have learnt about a text.
- f. To categorize or classify information
- g. To compare and contrast/ identify similarities and differences
- h. To identify information on Who, What, When, Where, and Why in a story or text
- i. To summarize information
- j. To identify main ideas or characteristics about a topic
- k. To recall information
- l. Other _____.

7. The graphic organizer I liked the most is:

- a. ___ Causes and Effects / Consequences charts.
- b. ___ Sequence of Events
- c. ___ Single Bubble maps
- d. ___ KWL chart (What I know, What I want to know, What I learned)
- e. ___ Categorization charts
- f. ___ Venn diagrams
- g. ___ 5 Ws. Charts (who, what, when, where, why)
- h. ___ Double Bubble maps

Explain your choice.

_____.



8. Which story or text did you like best?

1. ___ The story about the lost cat
2. ___ Key Pals
3. ___ The famous mathematician David Hilbert
4. ___ Save the rainforest
5. ___ The tropical rainforest
6. ___ The world of birds, the biggest and the smallest
7. ___ The sky went green
8. ___ Looking for Keiko
9. ___ A new home
10. ___ Fiancée loses her ring in an Easter egg swap
11. ___ Talking about penguins
12. ___ Longest married couple celebrates 77 years of marriage
13. ___ World's Largest Marsupial
14. ___ An Atom Apart

Explain your choice.

_____.

9. How did you feel using graphics for reading?

- Anxious _____
- Relaxed _____
- Comfortable _____
- Bored _____
- Unfocussed _____
- Other (you can mention more than one): _____.

10. How often do you think you will use Graphic Organizers for reading?

Very frequently _____ Frequently _____ Sometimes _____ Seldom _____

11. What aspect of reading was the most difficult for you? Mark (X)

- a) Predicting stories _____
- b) Understanding new vocabulary/expressions _____
- c) Classifying/organizing information _____
- d) Answering the comprehension questions _____

12. Any

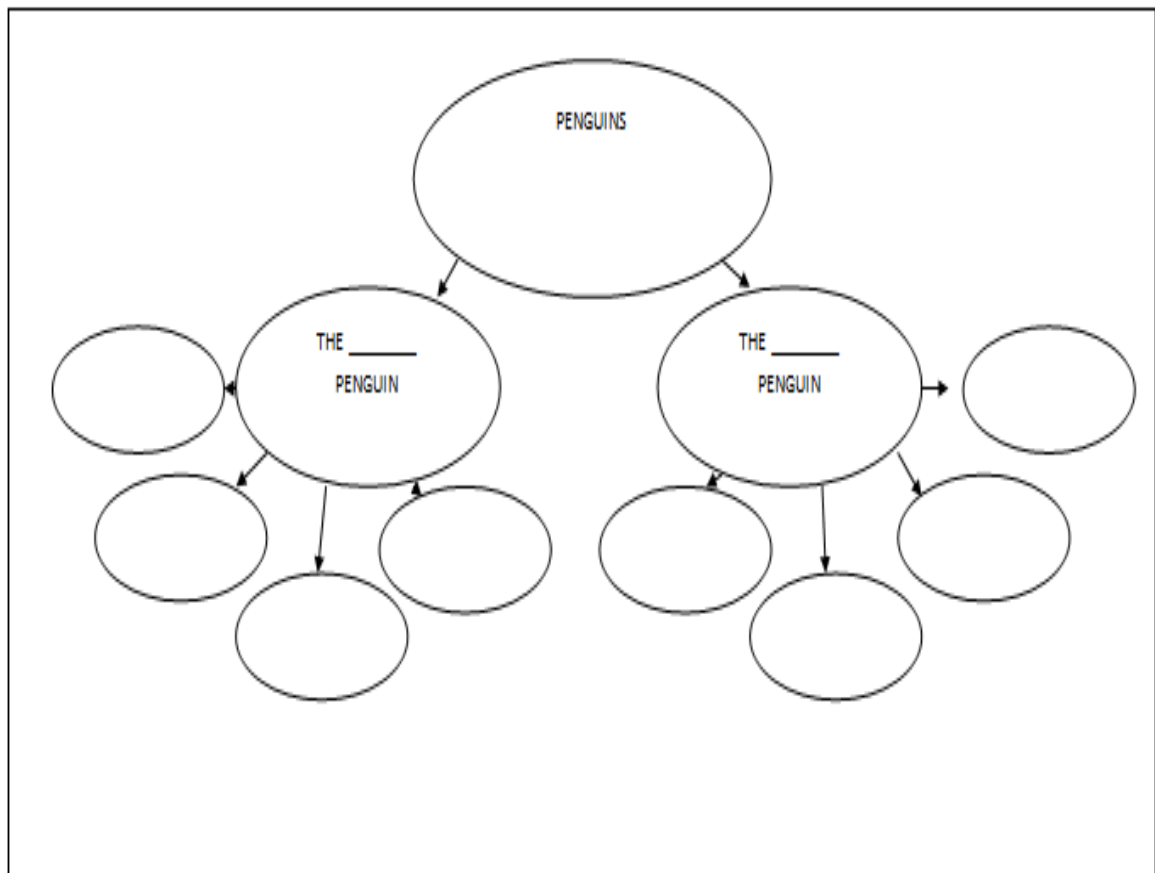
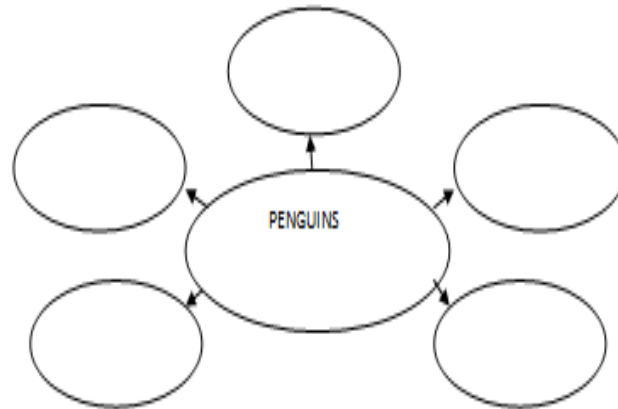
other

comments:

THANK YOU VERY MUCH



SAMPLES OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS USED DURING THE TREATMENT
SINGLE BUBBLE AND DOUBLE BUBBLE MAPS.





8 Events

Directions: Draw pictures to represent 8 main events. Make sure they are in chronological order.

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Nombre _____

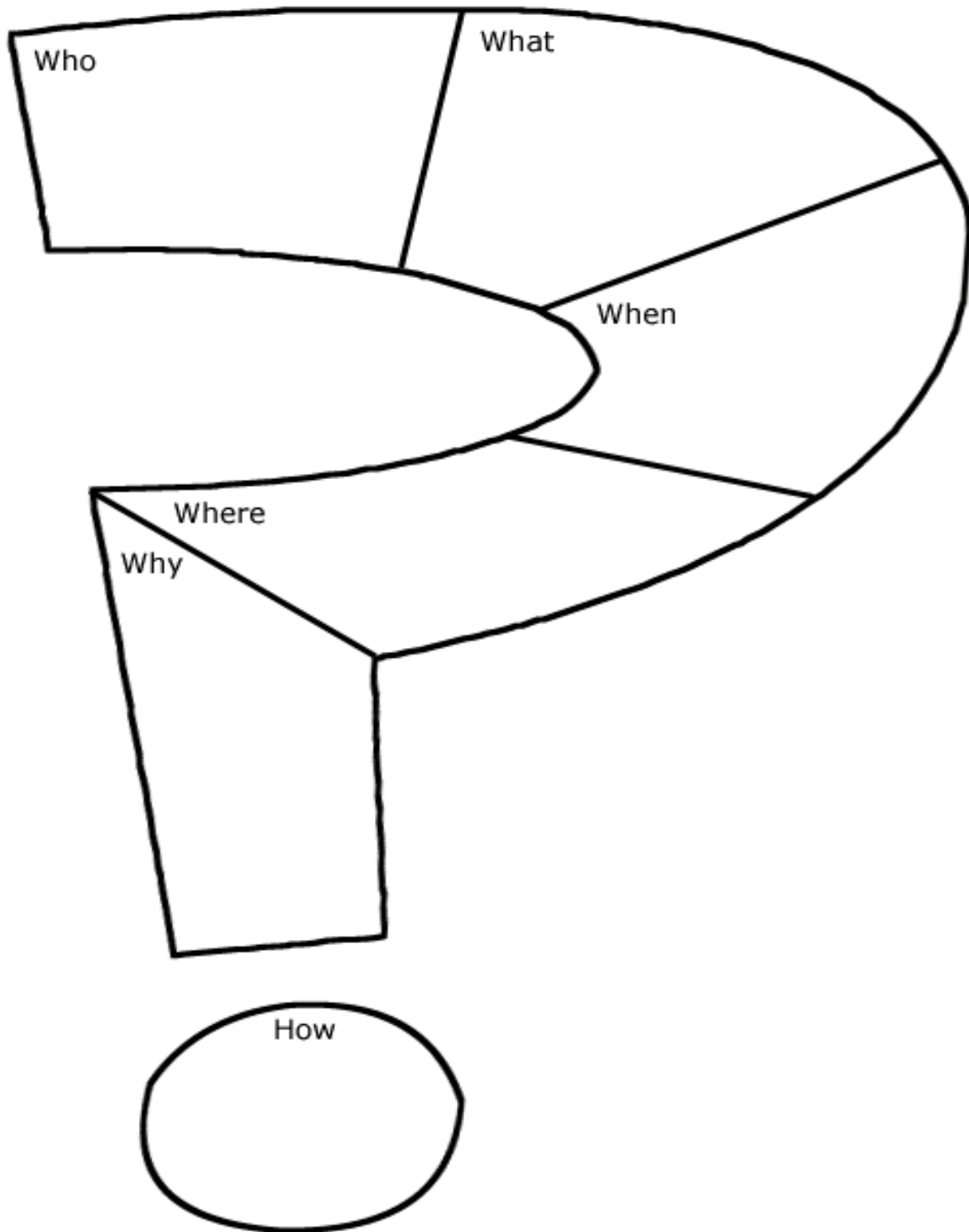
Fecha _____

KWL

Topic

K	W	L
<p>What I know.</p>	<p>What I want to know.</p>	<p>What I learned.</p>

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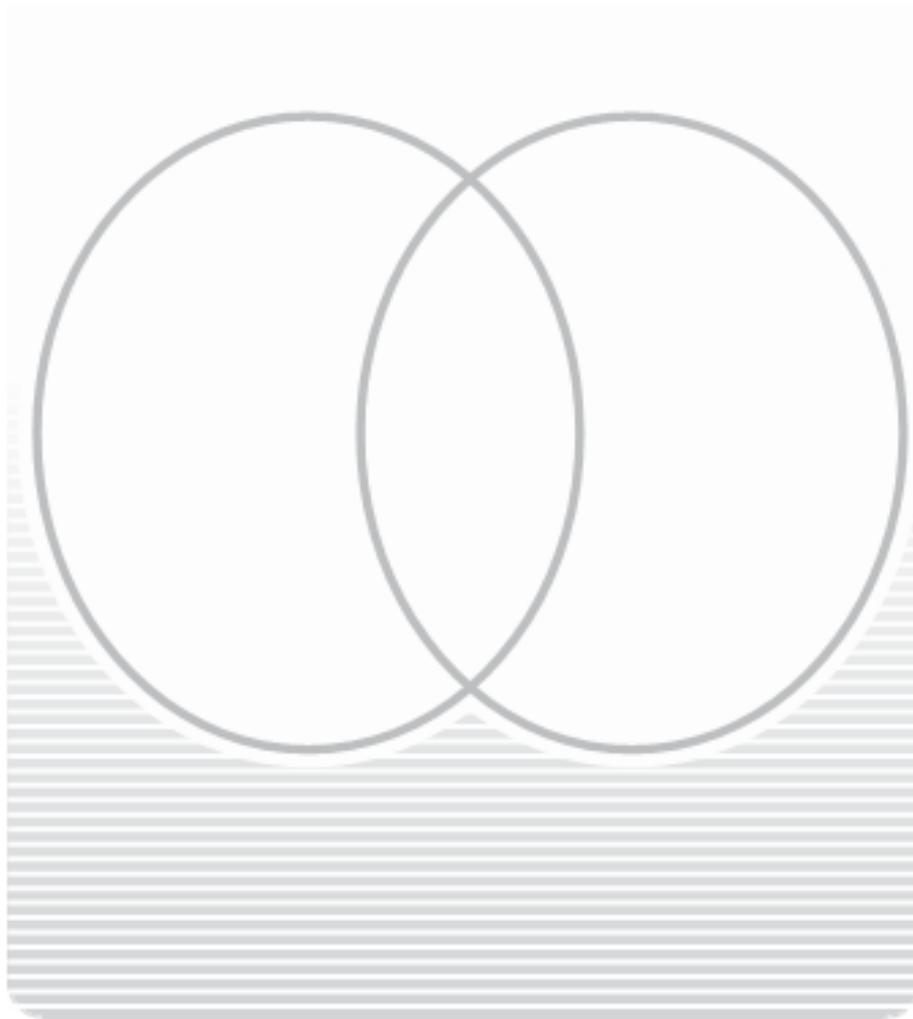


Name _____

Date _____

VENN DIAGRAM

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Graphic Organizer for Brainstorming and Idea Generation

13

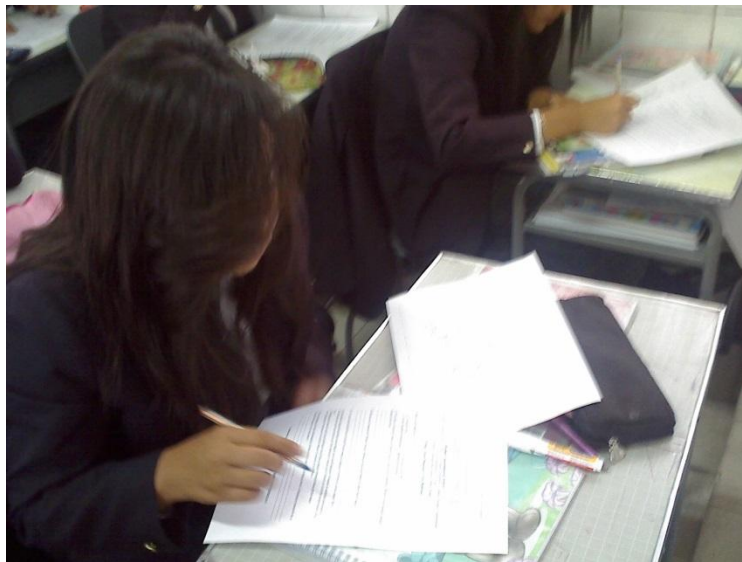


Treatment Group Participants' pictures





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