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| TITULO | The Impact of Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Skills and autonomy in | | |
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| PALABRAS CLAVE (Mínimo 3 y máximo 6) | Reciprocal Teaching | | Skills |
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| RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO (Mínimo 80 máximo 120 palabras) | <p>This qualitative report is based on an action research project conducted in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia with seventh grade students. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of reciprocal teaching with regards to learner autonomy and reading skills being Reciprocal teaching an instructional technique aimed at promoting reading comprehension abilities in struggling students through the practice of four strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing) in students' table groups. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, students' logs, and journals for teacher's reflection. The results showed that these learners acquired some autonomy in certain activities inside the classroom. Additionally, the training on teaching strategies allowed them to succeed in their reading comprehension. The results permitted the researcher to observe and collect more specific information for this study and for further research on this topic.</p> | | |

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Running head: RECIPROCAL TEACHING TO FOSTER READING COMPREHENSION
SKILLS AND AUTONOMY

The Impact of Implementing Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Skills
and Autonomy in EFL Learners

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Universidad de La Sabana

Chía, 2013

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and Autonomy in EFL Learners

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Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in English Language
Teaching –Autonomous Learning Environments

Directed by: Betsy Otálora

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative report is based on an action research project conducted in a public school in Bogotá, Colombia with seventh grade students. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of reciprocal teaching with regards to learner autonomy and reading skills being Reciprocal teaching an instructional technique aimed at promoting reading comprehension abilities in struggling students through the practice of four strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing) in students' table groups. Data collection techniques included questionnaires, interviews, students' logs, and journals for teacher's reflection. The results showed that these learners acquired some autonomy in certain activities inside the classroom. Additionally, the training on teaching strategies allowed them to succeed in their reading comprehension. The results permitted the researcher to observe and collect more specific information for this study and for further research on this topic.

Key words: Reciprocal teaching, autonomy, reading strategies, skills.

RESUMEN

Este reporte cualitativo está basado en un proyecto de investigación-acción llevado a cabo en un colegio público de Bogotá, Colombia, con estudiantes de séptimo grado. El propósito de este estudio fue determinar el impacto de Reciprocal teaching en relación a la autonomía y habilidades lectoras del aprendiz, siendo Reciprocal teaching una técnica instructiva que tiene como objetivo promover habilidades de comprensión lectora en estudiantes con más dificultad a través de la práctica de cuatro estrategias (predicción, pregunta, aclaración y resumen) en grupos de trabajo. La recolección de datos incluyó el uso de cuestionarios, entrevistas, logs para estudiantes y diarios para la reflexión del docente. Los resultados mostraron autonomía en los estudiantes en ciertas actividades dentro del aula. Adicionalmente, el uso de las estrategias evidenció el mejoramiento de su comprensión lectora. Los resultados permitieron observar y recolectar información más específica para éste y futuros estudios.

Palabras clave: Reciprocal teaching, autonomía, estrategias de lectura, habilidades.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“Learning to read is one of the most important things children accomplish in school because it is their foundation for most of their future academic endeavors”(Farnish, Slavin & Stevens, 1991, p. 8). This introduction intends to present a research based on the impact of implementing the use of reciprocal teaching strategies in the classroom in order to enhance students’ reading comprehension and to foster autonomy. Reading, as a receptive skill, is important for understanding the language. It requires the teacher’s guidance, the student’s expertise, and the study of different approaches in order to follow the most appropriate techniques for being successful during the reading process. According to Nuttall (1996), reading is a highly effective means of extending our command of language and it has an important place in classrooms where language learning is the central purpose. On the other hand, Snow (2002) states that teaching children to comprehend is challenging because reading is complex. Wallace (1992) discusses that the use of strategies involves diverse ways of processing a text, which will vary with different factors such as its nature, the reader’s purpose and the context or situation; elements that the researcher must consider in advance. Additionally, autonomy, which is also object of this research, has been mentioned considering the implications it has in the student’s learning process when he acquires the capacity to be in charge of his own learning (Holec, 1981).

This first chapter outlines the general idea of what the research project is about and the reasons that the researcher chose to work on reading strategies with public school students. It also presents the objectives which are expected to be achieved taking into account the

learners' progress to be autonomous, and the implications that this research will have on future learners of English as a foreign language.

In the second chapter, the researcher provides the reader with the theory that will enrich this proposal bearing in mind the constructs that have emerged from the research problem. Additionally, the author presents the state of the art, which includes other works and sources, relevant to the development of the research question.

The third chapter provides a thorough description of the research design. Furthermore, there is a description of the participants, the ethical considerations involved, and the instruments designed to collect data in order to carry out the validation and triangulation process.

In the fourth chapter, the researcher presents the pedagogical intervention with the action plan that will allow her to explain the methodology, materials and strategies required to carry out her proposal.

Fifth chapter is dedicated to data collection and the analysis of categories and sub categories through a conscious open, axial and selective coding process. Finally, in sixth chapter the researcher presents the conclusions, pedagogical implications, and limitations found during the study and also includes further research thus building a bridge for future investigation.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The 20 learners that participated in this study were students of third cycle (seventh graders) who attend a state school called Villa Elisa, which is located in Suba, Bogotá D.C. They attend three hours of English per week and they are between 13 and 14 years old.

According to the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFL), the group has been placed at an elementary level or A1. A student at this level of reading can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices, posters or in catalogues. These learners were working primarily on improving reading and speaking because those skills are an important part of the school's curriculum and its communicative project called PILEO (Proyecto Institucional de Lectura y Oralidad) whose main objective is to make students competent in every area of knowledge bearing in mind reading, writing and speaking processes. In addition, it aims to raise awareness in reading as an entertaining activity to access information.

After almost a year of observation and teaching practice, the researcher identified several problems that affected students' learning process:

- most of those students never had real exposure to the foreign language. Hall and Strangman (2004) state that “students who lack sufficient background knowledge or are unable to activate this knowledge may struggle to access, participate, and progress throughout the general curriculum, where reading to learn is a prerequisite for success”. Additionally, Snow (2002, p.7) argues that children's outcomes are related to the

quality of the instruction they receive, which in turn reflects teacher's preparation and ongoing teacher professional development. Moreover, it is also reflected in the students' success when using strategies to learn.

- The English lessons were usually taught in Spanish, and the students were limited just to translate and to learn vocabulary. Additionally, these learners manifested weak guidance in strategy use, and they did not believe that the implemented strategies were meaningful for them, making the reading process a boring and complex activity.
- Even though teachers were free to use different materials in order to carry out the classes, some of them did not take into account the students' needs. Most of the time, the chosen texts were difficult to understand by the students. Snow (2002, p.5) affirms that there are students with the ability to comprehend a text easily because they use the appropriate strategies to learn new words or are involved in what they are reading, but there are others that fail in this attempt.
- Students attend three hours of English class per week, and taking into account that there is a bilingualism policy in place called "*Bogotá bilingüe en diez años*"; the researcher believes that this time is not enough in order to acquire a second language effectively.
- Many learners declared that English globalization was not relevant for them. They did not see the use of English in their adult life, so it was of no interest to them nor did they

consider learning it a life goal. This fact would have consequences such as fewer opportunities to access technology or better jobs.

- These students were not autonomous learners since this was neither the expectation set for them by the institution nor was it part of the teacher's pedagogy, being dependent on the teacher most of the time to develop the activities proposed. Autonomy requires understanding one's own strengths and weaknesses and accumulating a diverse set of resources that will maximize exposure and improvements in different skills (Nowlan, 2008).

Overall, these learners demonstrated low academic development, specifically a low level of reading comprehension. In particular, one of the most important reading skills they lacked was getting the main idea through skimming, scanning, questioning, and/or summarizing.

The researcher of this study considered the implementation of reciprocal teaching in her proposal taking into account that it focuses on four basic strategies aimed at overcoming the reading comprehension problems that learners demonstrated in addition to their lack of autonomy in language learning. Reading involves many skills that have to come together in order for the reader to be successful. In that sense, the questions and objectives posed are:

1.2. Research Questions

- What is the possible impact of implementing reciprocal teaching strategies on the fosterage of EFL learners' autonomy?
- What is the impact of implementing reading strategies on the improvement of reading skills?

It was observed that learners had difficulty with reading texts because they did not apply the appropriate strategies to understand them, which made them lose motivation towards learning English. The only tool they had was the dictionary and they used it to translate all new vocabulary. In addition, they did not show autonomy in their learning because they were always dependant on the teacher's guidance.

Bearing in mind the profile of these learners, the researcher decided to implement Reciprocal teaching in her classroom because according to Cooper et al. (1999, as cited in Oczkus, 2003) it is considered an effective technique to help struggling readers and low performing students to improve reading comprehension and encourage them to play the teacher's role while using the strategies. According to Oczkus (2003), this teaching model allows the teacher and the students to scaffold and construct meaning in a social setting by using modeling, think-alouds and discussion.

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1. General Objectives

- To determine the impact of implementing Reciprocal teaching to foster reading comprehension strategies and autonomy in young learners.
- To analyze the impact of strategies in the improvement of reading skills.

1.4. Rationale (Justification)

Two projects provided the legal framework to establish the significance of learning a second language: The General Educational law and “Bogotá Bilingüe Project”. The former states in articles 20 and 21 as one of its objectives the acquisition, comprehension and capacity to express oneself in a foreign language. The latter was created to raise awareness in terms of relevance of the acquisition of a second language and to improve the levels of the foreign language in public schools. This project is trying to generate more opportunities to access knowledge in terms of quality for all citizens through English and it has been carried out taking into account the common European Framework of Languages (CEFL). These projects provide support for carrying out this research.

This research has been designed to generate an impact on the socio-educational sector because through the proposed strategies most students will be able to acquire overall reading comprehension skills, which will contribute to their academic development. In addition, it is expected that this research contributes to foster autonomy in language learners.

Chapter2

Theoretical Framework

2.1. Introduction

The theoretical framework in this paper will outline the constructs which support this research. Taking into account the research objectives mentioned in the preliminary chapter, the author considered different writers' findings to guide her investigation process. Thus, the constructs are explained based on the literature read and on other research studies. They are related to reading and the reading process itself, Reciprocal teaching, reading strategies, the role of the reader, and autonomy. Finally, the chapter is devoted to presenting the state of the art where the researcher shows similar studies which supported this project.

2.2. What is Reading?

For many students, reading is by far the most important of the four skills, particularly in English as a second or foreign language, (Carrell, Devine & Eskey, 2000). Participants considered reading as a challenging skill because it involved many elements that the reader had to take into consideration in order to develop strategies to improve knowledge and comprehension. This was one of the constructs suggested for this research proposal which has been defined by different authors as follows:

According to Nuttall (1986, p.4), reading is known as “the process of decoding the written text encoded by the writer”. People recognize reading as a necessary skill to access different purposes (better jobs, technology, literature, reading a magazine, etc.), but several strategies to achieve them have to be applied.

According to Hedge (2003), reading involves cognitive strategies which are processes used directly in learning. They enable learners to deal with the information presented in tasks and materials by working on them in different ways. On the other hand, Grabe and Stoller (2002, p. 17) discuss reading as “the ability to understand information and interpret it appropriately”. Taking into account what reading implies, they propose a set of comprehension processes, which involve ten characteristics labeled as rapid, efficient, interactive, strategic, flexible, evaluative, purposeful, comprehensible, learning and linguistic. According to the authors these processes can work in isolation, but, together they provide better results.

Nunan (1989, p. 33) describes reading as “a process of decoding written symbols, which are built from smaller units to larger ones to create a written text”. He explains that it is the similar process that teachers follow in their classrooms to construct meaning. On the other hand, Harmer (1991, p.190) defines reading as “an exercise dominated by the eyes and the brain, where the eyes receive messages and the brain has to work out the significance of these messages”. He also elaborates on the reasons why reading should be important for people. He states that reading is a useful tool for academic purposes, for pleasure and it is an important part of language acquisition. Additionally, reading helps learners to study the language improving vocabulary, grammar, sentences and paragraphs, which are usually familiar to the students’ interests and situations.

Based on the previously mentioned definitions of Reading, the researcher has identified the following principles to take into consideration when defining reading:

1. Reading is not a passive skill.
2. Students need to be engaged in what they are reading.
3. Students should be encouraged to respond to the content of a reading text, not just to the language.
4. Prediction is a major factor in reading.
5. Match the task to the topic.
6. Good teachers exploit reading texts to the full.

These principles should be implemented in the classroom as Reading strategies in order to foster learners' autonomy and a more effective reading process which allows them to improve in their reading skills.

Bearing in mind these definitions of reading, it is pertinent to highlight that this process which is individual and takes place inside the readers' minds (Aebersold and Field, 1997, p. 95), involves decoding as one of its main elements. For these learners facing a reading text could be satisfactory or worthless, depending on the connection between the reader and what is read.

2.3. The Role of the Reader

There are different aspects that can immerse a learner into a reading process. According to Aebersold and Field (1997, p6), a reader can be influenced by his family members, the school, his community, a given cultural group, or his own characteristics. Regarding their background, the participants of this study presented a variety of experiences that could influence or affect their reading process. The purpose of each reader is different and in this regard, some students manifested reading a pleasant activity because they observed their parents reading or because they know how useful it is for obtaining information or learning, while for others reading was something mandatory that they had to do only in the school context or for specific situations.

Alderson (2000, p.28) defines reading as “an enjoyable, intense, private activity, from which much pleasure can be derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed”. Putting this into the participants’ context, they are the ones who are constantly in contact with the text. Depending on the type of text and the readers’ attitude, the reading process could be a successful activity or a waste of time. Additionally, “reading comprehension differs from one reader to another” (Aebersold and Field, p15) because each one of them gets his own interpretation according to what they read. On the other hand, Nuttall (1996, p.33) outlines some *responsibilities* that a reader must take into account when initiating a reading process. For instance, a good reader must take an active part in the process because he is the person who is learning. Moreover, the reader needs to understand how the texts work, monitor his own comprehension and mistakes, discuss the content and finally, learning to read means being conscious of the purpose of reading. These participants did

not consider themselves as good readers because they had not been instructed in the use of strategies. Consequently, they evidenced low performance and a lack of interest for the activities.

2.4.The Text

There are different types of texts that a reader has to identify, such as newspapers, magazines, instructive brochures, academic papers among others. When the teacher provides the readers with different texts, it is expected that they first identify the type of text; then the purpose, and finally the readers have to know how that information is organized in order to be understood. According to Nuttall (1996, p.171) “a text will not be useful if it is not exploited by the teacher first, even if the learners enjoy it”. She also argues that when a text is exploited, students develop their competences as readers. . During this study it was challenging to familiarize students with different kind of texts. The teacher established a conscious development of reading skills taking into account that when choosing a text many factors must be considered such as the participants’ interests and the text difficulty. Reading can be a meaningful experience for students if they are trained in the correct way, implementing appropriate strategies. Thus, they will be able to work with any text in a future.

Some of the suggestions given by Soule-Susbielles (1987) are related to the students’ preparation before reading a text through giving them short problem solving exercises, and giving them other assignments after that. She also suggests that for a

monolingual class, the problems could be given in the learners' first language and then in the foreign language, and as a suggestion the teacher should give the class initially in the mother tongue because students have not yet developed the metalanguage that allows them to communicate appropriately.

Williams (1986) mentions that learners should be encouraged also to listen to texts on cds of the readers books, or with the teacher reading to the class, older students reading to the younger ones or the strongest readers reading to the weakest ones in the class. He also states that a text can be used for many different purposes not only for teaching reading. He establishes a distinction between what Johns and Davies (1983 as cited in Williams, 1986) call TALO (text as linguistic object), where the text is a carrier for the teaching of language (vocabulary, grammar, etc.) and the teacher is an important guide in that process, and TAVI (text as vehicle for information) which can be chosen because they are motivating or are the ones the teacher would hope the students would like to read anyway.

2.5. Extensive Reading

With the group of learners who are participants of this research it is relevant to identify their interests towards reading in order to achieve a successful process. An extensive reading approach according to Day and Bamford (1998, p. 6), "aims to get students reading and liking it". It has been observed that when students enjoy what they are reading, they do it faster and show a better understanding of the topics. Day and Bamford (1998, p.7-8) propose some principles which could be applicable to these learners

considering their needs. For instance, the teacher has to provide students with easy materials on a variety of available topics and then the learners have the possibility to choose what to read, the amount of time they will spend while reading, or the purpose of their reading. The writers also explain that reading is individual and silent but the teacher has an important role as a guide and a model for the reader as well because he has to take into account the students' pace while reading and the rewards those students will obtain through the development of this exercise. If a tutor applies these principles, it is expected to result in a successful reading process.

Grabe and Stoller (2002, p.259) define extensive reading as “an approach to the teaching and learning of reading in which learners read large quantities of material that are within their linguistic competence” . Some of the characteristics listed by Hedge (2003, p. 202), include reading large quantities of materials, such as novels, newspaper articles or graded readers, and reading for pleasure, curiosity or professional interest during class time or at home. With this type of reading, students have the opportunity to practice and develop different types of knowledge to increase their abilities. Grabe and Stoller (2002) propose extensive reading because it offers the learner the opportunity to work independently and to be autonomous, enhancing students' awareness about their learning process. An example of the effectiveness of this approach is outlined in Mason and Krashen (1997), who describe a study they conducted in Japan with a group of reluctant EFL students who followed traditional classes and then, with the development of extensive reading activities through graded readers showed relevant results in terms of comprehension, attitude and motivation towards the reading practice.

Considering the learners' context, extensive reading is an appropriate tool for this research because "it is used to accomplish something else" (Aebersonld and Field, 1997, p.43). Extensive reading is relevant for this research considering that if the learners have the possibility to choose materials and texts of their interest, they will challenge themselves in terms of proficiency and additionally, there will be an evidence of autonomy.

2.6. Reading Strategies

Strategies represents according to Grabe and Stroller (2000, P. 15) "a set of abilities under conscious control of the reader" They establish a difference with the term skill because it is an automatic process. Strategies can be defined as "deliberate actions that learners select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives" Winograd and Hare (1988 as cited in Hartman, 2001 p. 123). In this project the researcher intends to work with cognitive strategies which are the ones that learners use in order to learn more successfully. They are defined by Almasi (2003) "as actions an individual selects deliberately to attain a particular goal". According to Carrell, Gajdusek & Wise (1998), cognitive reading strategies are of interest not only for what they reveal about the ways readers manage interactions with written text but also for how the use of strategies is related to effective reading comprehension. Hence, a good reader has to be aware of the strategies he uses and also he has to take into account their effectiveness because they can have different purposes according to his intention. Chamot, Meloni, Gonglewski, Bartoshesky & Keatley (2009) state that "students who have learned how and when to use learning strategies become more

self reliant and better able to learn independently”. Besides, with appropriate management of strategies and choices, readers can develop and comprehend better what they intend to read.

The use of strategies in this study is relevant because the researcher proposes activities and exercises which will help the learner to be more conscious of their reading process. Additionally, their implementation allows participants to comprehend the texts and monitor their own progress.

2.7. Reciprocal Teaching

This instructional technique designed by Palincsar and Brown (1984 cited in Oczkus, 2003), is aimed at promoting reading comprehension abilities in students. On the other hand, Rosenshine & Meister (1994) describe it as an instructional procedure designed to teach students cognitive strategies that might lead to improved reading comprehension. Palincsar’s and Brown’s studies in 1984 selected four strategies (predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing) to activate reading comprehension.

2.7.1. Predicting: This strategy is defined as: to declare what might occur in the next session of the text (Barnhardt, Chamot, El-Dinary and Robbins, 1999, p106). Predicting also creates an opportunity for students to link the new knowledge they will acquire in the text with the knowledge they already have.

2.7.2. Questioning: This strategy is defined as: asking questions that can be answered in the text. Students cannot always relate their experiences to a topic before reading but their background must be considered for all phases of the reading process through effective teacher questioning (Cecil 1995).

2.7.3. Clarifying: This strategy is defined as: defining significant words, explaining key ideas, referencing something you do not know or understand. Clarifying helps the students monitor their own comprehension (Oczkus, 2003, p. 17), and think about their reading to comprehend.

2.7.4. Summarizing: This strategy is defined as: putting information into the students' own words. It involves mental, oral and written processes. To summarize effectively, students must recall and arrange in order only the most important events in a text (Oczkus, 2003, p.18).

Considering a previous observation process in the institution, many teachers' concerns when teaching reading were related to the students' unwillingness to participate of the activities because they were something mandatory. It is also difficult for teachers to create the right environment for developing these activities. Bearing in mind that one of the objectives of the research project is focused on the learners' autonomy, reciprocal teaching is a pertinent methodology to apply.

2.8. Autonomy

Benson (2001: 47) describes learner autonomy as “a multidimensional capacity that will take different forms for different individuals and even for the same individual in different contexts or at different times”. The participants were not autonomous because they depended a lot on the teacher and the activities she proposed. Their lack of interest towards the language in terms of reading skills made this process slower and sometimes frustrating. Little (2007, p.17) affirms that “learners are reluctant to take charge of their learning being accustomed to the passive role that is traditionally assigned by the school”. One of the main objectives of this research is to achieve what Holec (1981) defines as “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning”; considering that these learners were in seventh grade, it was necessary to prompt autonomy within them because they are still young learners who depend on the teachers. Hedge (2003, p76) outlines the following characteristics that a self directed learner must have:

- he has to know his needs and work productively in regards of the achievements.
- he is the one who learns inside and outside the classroom.
- he knows how to use resources independently.
- he adjusts his learning strategies when necessary to improve learning.
- manage the time properly.
- do not think the teacher is a god who can give him the ability to master the language.

These characteristics provided the researcher with insights to decide what objectives to achieve, the materials to use, the organization of the time and the strategies to implement with the participants while the project was carried out.

When autonomous learners reflect on their own learning and show motivation, the knowledge they acquire can be implemented in and outside the classroom bearing in mind real and specific situations. Any learner can become autonomous if the suitable input and confidence is given. Autonomy should not be only for a selected group or cultural context (Cotterall 2000). Instead, every learner can take part and can be immersed in the process with appropriate activities taking advantage of the good rapport that the teacher has built, in order to motivate him/her and help them learn how to take responsibility of their own learning. It is relevant to highlight that the concept of learner autonomy is often applied to the process and content of language learning but not specifically to its intended outcome, the development of proficiency in a second or foreign language (Little, 2007:14).

Benson (2001, p. 47) mentions that control over learning takes different forms at different levels of the learning process. However, he considers that any adequate description of autonomy in language learning should recognize three levels at which control may be exercised: learning management, cognitive processes and learning content. Matsubara and Lehtinen (2007) outline that in the school context the first level would refer to the way students read. For instance their reading pace or when they make the decision to choose which activities to develop first. The second level would be related to how the learners recognize their own reading process and in the third one the way students control what they would read in regards of the topics and the text. Benson (2001, p.50) mentions that these levels are interdependent because one depends on the control of the others and should involve decisions concerning the content of learning.

2.9. State of the Art

There a number of studies in regards with reciprocal teaching strategies which have been carried out. The author cites the following articles because they provide insights for her research. The first one is an article called *Reading Comprehension: A Viable Challenge for Public Schools Students* by Correales, Mendivelso and Santacruz (2009) who carried out their investigation at Diana Turbay State School with a group of eighty eighth graders who showed a sort of interest towards reading in L2. They used different instruments of research and the results were pertinent because they demonstrated that students from state schools, considering their English language pitfalls, were able to improve their reading skills with adequate training and implementation of reading strategies. The results also showed how important motivation was in the process of teaching new strategies and how the learners' needs were relevant to the design of new material and lessons.

That study had an important impact on the design of this research, which also took place in a public school. Taking into account the students' context, the amount of English language input and the misconception about reading in English as a difficult skill to develop for some of them, it was possible to implement reading strategies to demonstrate improvement in the development of reading skills through students' work, participation of the activities and interest in the language use. The researcher agrees with the authors of the aforementioned article who state that it is possible to foster public students' English learning with adequate training.

The second article is '*Strategies to Support High School Students' Reading Comprehension in the English Language*' in which Zabala (2004) presents his research about the strategies he applied during his teaching practice with eleventh graders also in a

public school. The author mentions teachers' general concerns about English and Spanish reading comprehension and he proposes some strategies taking into consideration the book *Task for Teacher Education* by Rosie Tanner and Catherine Green and the strategies and competences proposed by Ramón de Zubiría. The main objective was to support the development of reading comprehension of the learners and to raise the academic level in the institution through active participation. The researcher used some data techniques such as questionnaires, recordings, diaries and interviews to apply the strategies he proposed, finding as a result that the learners were able to incorporate the techniques appropriately to comprehend a text. The author also affirms that the role of the teacher in this process and the student's previous knowledge were very relevant to his research.

The relevance of this article for the research project is that the author had the same interest in working with reading strategies considering relevant the learner's role in the process because he is the one who uses his previous knowledge in order to apply the most suitable strategy. Further relevance is found since the article gave insights on the kind of instruments the researcher could use to collect data in order to classify the development of those students while reading taking into consideration their previous knowledge, their weaknesses and their progress.

The study conducted by Doolittle, Hicks, Nichols, Triplett, and Young (2006) called *Reciprocal Teaching for Comprehension in Higher Education: A Strategy for Fostering the deeper Understanding of texts*, presents different points of view about the application of this technique in the classroom. The authors agree in saying that reciprocal

teaching provides the higher education instructor with a useful tool for engaging students, individually and socially, in the exploration and critical evaluation of texts. In addition, they state that this instructional technique provides learners with the appropriate tools for fostering the deeper understanding of texts. This paper gives the author of this research insights for the design of activities and provides me with ideas in order to obtain better results during my implementation.

Finally there was a fourth article written by Hewitt (1995), in which she outlines Reciprocal teaching techniques and explains the model it follows. Additionally, she analyzes the benefits and opportunities for learners who are in a reading process. She states that Reciprocal teaching increases the readers' independence and encourages them to be more autonomous to make decisions and change roles.

This article benefited this research because the author mentioned the pros and cons of the technique, and therefore the researcher could design an appropriate action plan to overcome possible pitfalls during the implementation. Additionally, it was challenging and interesting to apply this model in order to analyze the whole process and the learners' impact in regards of the use of reading strategies following a different approach.

Taking into account the concepts reported in this chapter, the researcher found that reading comprehension abilities are complex and can vary considering students' goals and type of tasks. However, the literature review brings to light the fact that encouraging the

learners to read provides them with benefits when practicing this skill. Finally, the information cited in this chapter lead the researcher to consider different aspects of the learners' development as the base to foster his autonomy.

Chapter 3

Research Design

3.1 Introduction

This chapter briefly presents the study that the researcher carried out in her chosen institution, taking into consideration what action research was and all the stages to develop that process. It includes the description of the research, the objectives, relevant information about the school settings, as well as the participants' and the researchers' role in the project. Additionally, the researcher outlined the methodology she used and a description of the instruments proposed to collect data, highlighting the ethical considerations. This qualitative research project draws on action research that respects the humanity of the participants in the study, focusing on context and taking into account the researcher's view of the world (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Finally, there is an explanation about how the project achieved validity and reliability.

3.2 What is Action Research?

“Action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical, and systematic approach to explore your own teaching contexts” (Burns 2010, p.2). An important fact of this action research is that it emerged from a problem that the researcher, in this case the teacher, identified during her daily practice, which she believed could be improved, proposing alternatives to be applied in her teaching context. This project was considered action research because the negative experiences that the researcher faced during the development of her work could be turned into challenging situations to help other people. Nunan and

Bailey (2009) agree that action research is an interactive and cyclical process rather than a onetime event. They also describe the action research cycle as follows:

- Identification of a problem that conducts a preliminary investigation to obtain data. (observation)
- Research questions emerge and the researcher plans the intervention. (planning)
- The researcher takes action observing the outcomes collecting data. (acting)
- Reflection on the outcomes analyzing and interpreting data. (reflecting)

It is important to highlight that the researcher's goals might change during the process because new questions can emerge. Thus, it is the researcher's decision to continue developing the same research or start a new one. Wallace (1998, p.13) with his reflective cycle intends to show how professional practice (the strategies you have used) through action (the activities which make you think about a certain fact), enhances your professional development to succeed. According to Ferrance (2000), Action Research involves people working to improve their skills, techniques, and strategies. It is *not* about learning why we do certain things, but rather how we can do things better. It is about how we can change our instruction to impact students.

The researcher of this project was an individual teacher researcher, who focused her study on the use of strategies to foster autonomy and to improve reading skills in her learners. She was looking for solutions through different instruments to collect data

involving her students as participants. According to Ferrance (2000) the researcher is in charge of presenting the project by means of an informal discussion, poster session (Grabe and Stoller, 2002), conference or academic written material in a journal.

3.3 The present study

This project intended to reflect upon the improvement of the reading process through the use of strategies, and to analyze students' autonomy while reading to solve possible pitfalls. The study was carried out to respond to the following research questions:

- What is the possible impact of implementing reciprocal teaching strategies on the fosterage of EFL learners' autonomy?
- What is the impact of implementing reading strategies on the improvement of reading skills?

Bearing in mind these questions, the researcher expected to respond to them through the following objectives:

- To determine the impact of implementing reciprocal teaching strategies in young learners' autonomy.
- To analyze the impact of reciprocal strategies on the improvement of reading skills.

Nunan and Baley (2009) outline that there are some questions that can be only solved through qualitative data to make sense of the research, and that it is an interactive process of finding, thinking, rereading, posing questions, searching through records, and trying to

find constructs. “The more the teachers know about the classroom complexities and the children they are working with, the better their chance for success” (Pinter 2006, p.152).

3.4 Instructional Setting

The study was carried out at a public school called Villa Elisa, which is divided into five branches located in the urban area of Suba, Bogotá D.C. The school’s mission is attached to the PEI (Institutional Project) and it intends to develop students’ communicative and thinking abilities to produce business leaders, based on values, which will contribute to a better quality of life. The school’s vision plans to have students who will be recognized for their academic excellence and their values to empower the corporate leadership of their graduates and to strengthen their social development.

In regards to the IC, the entire school is starting the implementation of cycles modeling after the studies done by Institute Alberto Merani. The cycles are divided this way:

Cycle 1 First, second and third grades.

Cycle 2 Fourth and fifth grades.

Cycle 3 Sixth and seventh grades.

Cycle 4 Eighth and ninth grades.

Cycle 5 tenth and eleventh grades.

Cycles are defined as the group of conditions, strategies, resources and pedagogical and administrative actions that are established with the aim of being more flexible to promote students' cognitive, social-affective, communicative, physical, and esthetic competences with a clear articulation. This type of education plans to set the objectives for every cycle where the base (called floor) of one is the support (called roof) of the next one, and to have a sequence in topics and qualitative activities where the learner is the center and has the opportunity to work at his own pace.

Villa Elisa students only attend three hours of English per week, which the researcher considers insufficient to complete the syllabus in order to achieve the standards proposed by the CEFL. However, the humanities program (composed of English and Spanish) is in charge of a communicative project called PILEO (Proyecto Institucional de Lectura y Escritura) which has been carried out through the implementation of sub-projects including the school radio, the institutional newspaper and a reading plan in Spanish. The methodology used was eclectic due the fact that these learners did not follow a formal book. Teachers are free to design, adapt and use a variety of materials or activities in their classes, but there is limited access to audiovisual resources.

3.5 Participants

This research project was initially carried out with a group of 30 voluntary seventh grade students (cycle 3) who were between the ages of 12 to 15, but due to institutional changes, ten of them left the research. The practitioner decided to choose a non-probability

sampling technique called convenience sampling considering the proximity and accessibility she had with this group of students. During observation made in her classes, the researcher noticed that it was a heterogeneous group in which the differences of learning styles and affective factors were evident, which could be an advantage when using materials. Their level of English was placed in A1 because of the background they had received in previous courses. Additionally, their weaknesses in regards to reading comprehension were evident; being the researcher's decision to work with this group because she wanted to prove that through the implementation of strategies and an appropriate training, students would achieve the objectives stated on this research study. Nevertheless, some students were placed into other classrooms because that was part of the institution's organization and the group was reduced to 20 students. It was necessary to implement a convenience sample because the researcher was working in the second section of her intervention.

3.5.1 Linguistic needs

These learners used some expressions in L2 but their lacking vocabulary resulted in them using L1 most of the time. However, they were able to write short sentences with basic vocabulary and grammar. These learners used extensive reading, but for some of them it was difficult to carry on skimming and scanning procedures or extract meaning from context. to comprehend a text. They easily understood some instructions and expressions the teacher used.

3.5.2 Affective needs

For many learners reading in English was not relevant or interesting because they did not understand it due to the lack of background they had had. Many of them had a good rapport with the teacher, but some others were introverted and needed some coaxing to participate in class. They were not willing to work in groups unless the teacher organized them. Another important fact was that these learners were not autonomous; they were always depending on the teacher's instruction, which meant that the class was often teacher-centered.

3.5.3 Cognitive needs

Reading exercises were difficult to develop because students' learning and understanding was limited to vocabulary and translation activities. As a result, their language level was low. Taking into consideration these weaknesses the teacher implemented strategies to exploit students' strengths through participation. With this group it was possible to see that cognitive strategies helped learners make and strengthen associations between new and already known information and enabled the learner to manipulate the language material in direct ways (Oxford 2003). However, the most common pitfalls these learners came across were related to guessing from context, analyzing, reorganizing information, giving reasons and summarizing.

3.6 The Researcher's role

Roles according to Richards and Lockhart (1994) involve different kinds of work, levels of responsibility, relationships, patterns of interaction and communication. Likewise, the researcher must be involved in many steps of the project because every consideration and decision will have to be based on personal grounds (Fink 2000). The teacher's role during the whole process was of an observer and an active participant, because she designed and implemented the instruments taking into account the needs she observed in her students, and the most suitable ways to collect and analyze data.

Grabe and Stoller (2002, p.156) list some of the responsibilities of the teacher as a researcher for the reading process:

- Assess students' reading needs.
- Define meaningful instructional goals and objectives.
- Design (and redesign) courses.
- Plan purposeful reading lessons.
- Adopt, adapt and develop instructional materials and assessment instruments.
- Provide feedback to students on various aspects of reading.
- Adjust daily lessons in response to students' immediate needs, responses and attitudes.
- Redefine and adjust curricular priorities to meet students' evolving needs.

The teacher and the students being aware of their roles not only as observers but also as participants were actively involved in the process and they contributed with the research project giving insights and suggestions to achieve successful findings.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Participants in this study were volunteers. The main objectives and the activities were explained to parents and the school principal and coordinators through the respective consent letters (see annexes 1, 2 and 3) which were written in Spanish for better understanding. Informed consent is one of three applications of the principle of respect for persons in the planning and execution of research projects (Nolen & Vander, 2007). The participants were told about the implications and impact that the research project could have in their academic development. Additionally, the researcher manifested respect in all the decisions made during the process and that she was prepared for the eventuality that some of the participants might decide to give up at any stage of the research.

During the process it was pertinent to take into account that all the decisions made about the research project and probable outcomes were collective and that the researcher would accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality (O'Brien, 1998). In that sense, as a mutual agreement it was established to change the participants' names.

3.8 Instruments for data collection

For this qualitative research, the researcher designed a pre- and post-questionnaire (see Annexes 4 and 5), which was applied at the beginning and at the end of the implementation, a learning log (see Annex 6) adapted from Oczkus' (2003) reciprocal teaching strategies to collect data, a journal for the teacher's reflection (see Annex 7)

adapted from the ICELT post evaluation format, and an audio recorded interview (see annex 8). Additionally, the researcher implemented an action plan (see annex 9) for the project taking into account twelve sessions which helped to organize the application of instruments, activities, and strategies.

3.8.1 Questionnaires

These instruments (see annexes 4 and 5) provided a systematic way of collecting information on the strategies students used (Barnhardt et al.1999: 71). According to Burns (2003) questionnaires are easier and less time consuming to administer but the researcher has to be careful using the appropriate questions and piloting it first to identify ambiguities. Likewise, they are useful ways to gather information about student's affective dimensions of learning and teaching (Richards and Lockhart, 1994, p. 10). These questionnaires intended to obtain information about the impact of implementing strategies when they were reading and students' process of becoming autonomous.

The researcher wrote these questionnaires, taking into account an observation process of the students' common problems related to reading skills in her institution. The questions were written in the learners' mother tongue and in an easy language for them to understand because it was relevant to consider the participants' level of the language. Pinter (2006) outlines that the language used in questionnaires must be revised carefully because children may easily misunderstand the questions even if they are made in the learners' first language. Thus, the data collected gained more reliability and validity, which helped to improve the quality of the study.

3.8.2 Students' Learning Log

A learning log (see appendix 6) is an individual student's summary of what has been learned over a given period of time (Barnhardt et al. 1999, p.123). With the log students were able to evaluate their activities and reflect about the application of the strategies they chose. In addition, they were free to write their insights about the class and how much they had learnt referring to the second research question.

3.8.3 Teacher's journal

According to Richards and Lockhart (1994), a journal is a student's or teacher's written response to teaching events. The practitioner used a journal for this research (see annex 7) because she wanted to reflect on her teaching practice and to explore different topics from her classroom experience as stated by the authors:

1. Personal reactions to things that happened in the classroom.
2. Questions or observations about problems that occurred during the implementation.
3. Description of significant aspects of the implementation.
4. Ideas for future analysis or reminders to take action on.

3.9 Validation and Triangulation Process

Validity, according to Burns (2003), is an essential criterion for evaluating the quality and acceptability of research. On the other hand, Richards and Lockhart (1994) argue that validity has to do with the truth or value of our claims and that without validity

there is no reliability, which has to do with consistency. If the results vary in every applied instrument we can say that they are not reliable. Patton (2002, p. 247) states that “validity and reliability are two factors which any qualitative researcher should be concerned about while designing a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study”. In that sense, the triangulation process will be evident.

The analyses of data were carried out following the principles of Grounded Theory as developed by Strauss (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) and which are detailed in chapter five. The instruments were designed and piloted with other colleagues in order to receive their feedback, being provided with important insights about the way she had to design the instruments, analyzing the possible constraints that she would face during the implementation. Considering her peers' comments, the researcher decided to include an interview (see annex 8) in order to gather additional data related to autonomy which provides her with more reliable results. Pinter (2006) explains that to consider the triangulation process it is relevant to deepen on the exploration of the same question or issue by different instruments which can be presented as convincing evidence. She also states that the more we know about our learners and their reactions in different situations, the more we will be able to base our teaching decisions on realistic needs.

To conclude, action research is a reflective process which considers different aspects that have to be analyzed such as the setting, participants, the ethical considerations involved, including the role of the researcher as facilitator, planner and leader. The

researcher designed the instruments taking into account the questions she established for her project and finally the validation process to verify if the findings were reliable or not.

Chapter 4

Pedagogical Intervention

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the pedagogical intervention of the research project, including the stages the researcher followed to carry out her project (design, methodology, materials and strategies). This intervention proposed some objectives which had to be achieved in order to improve the students' reading skills and encourage them to be more autonomous learners when using the strategies. The general objectives of the activities were:

1. To apply the four Reciprocal strategies to achieve a successful reading process.
2. To encourage students' use of activities which evaluate autonomy.

The researcher worked with 20 seventh graders, conducting 12 sessions of two hours, delivered in the months of February, March, April and May. In the first two sessions the researcher presented a brief introduction about the research objectives, methodology, and strategies to follow.

The researcher had the freedom to choose the materials she wanted to use considering that the students do not follow a course book. Additionally, the activities were planned taking into consideration formative assessment and the development of four reading strategies: Predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing adapted to the school's topics. For this purpose, the researcher followed what Oczkus (2003) proposes as

a reciprocal teaching team called the fabulous four: characters which represent each strategy. The last sessions were devoted to feedback, comments and suggestions provided by the students.

4.2. Methodology

The methodology used in these sections was taken from Palincsar's Reciprocal teaching model that Oczkus (2003, p.3) outlines as "an instructional procedure designed to enhance students' comprehension of text". This methodology encourages students to assume different roles and make spontaneous decisions according to the chosen strategy (predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing). Despite being a cooperative method it can also be used individually and the strategies can be randomly taught. Rosenshine and Meister (1994, as cited in Hartman, 200, p. 48) outline five stages when implementing Reciprocal teaching:

- a. Teacher demonstration.
- b. Student learning and guided practice in using the four strategies.
- c. Coordinated practice using the strategies with segments of text in small groups led by the teacher.
- d. Practice using strategies in small groups with the teacher acting only as an observer.
- e. Student competence and self-regulation.

This methodology makes more reflective students who monitor and self-regulate their learning process to be successful readers and more autonomous.

Reciprocal teaching was implemented as follows involving the following four strategies according to Oczkus (2003):

4.2.1. Predicting

By using this strategy, it was expected that students activated their background knowledge in order to have a purpose while reading. Prediction implied hypothesizing about what would be discussed in the text. During the implementation, the teacher presented some pictures in the first stage of the reading and students were asked to guess. Then, they took into account some clues provided by the reading and focused on aspects such as headings, pictures or subheadings. One person within the group assumed the role of *the predictor*.

4.2.1. Questioning

Students had the freedom to choose the information considered relevant for making questions. Working within the table groups allowed students to take the risk of asking questions and with the help of a graphic organizer any question could be formulated after the prediction in order stage. However, the teacher's role here was to model how to make questions to guide students in their own training, using appropriate questions based on inferences and main points in a text. The person in charge of this strategy was called *the questioner*.

4.2.2. Clarifying

This strategy helped those students who had trouble with comprehension in terms of vocabulary, or difficult concepts that sometimes made the text too complex to understand. The role of *the clarifier* was relevant because his main function was to help others finding the answers to those questions generated in the previous stages, encouraging participation and using the graphic organizer as a guide to open a discussion around the possible answers to the questions which emerged from the reading exercise.

4.2.3. Summarizing

Summarizing is an intricate process that involves the other strategies. Participants wrote summaries within their groups to make the process less difficult for them. They considered all the information obtained from the graphic organizers and previous strategies. The student had the opportunity to identify and integrate the most important information in the text. The process started by summarizing sentences and then it progressed to summarizing paragraphs and passages. This strategy helped students to become more effective readers because they were the ones who contribute to establish main ideas through their interaction and participation. Students acted as teachers assuming the role of *summarizer*.

These strategies both improve comprehension and permit students to monitor their own understanding (Palincsar and Brown, 1984).

Bearing in mind the objectives of this research project in regards to Reciprocal teaching, each session was developed during the implementation considering the following techniques with the aim of complementing and developing the four strategies to obtain better results in the process of students' autonomy:

Think-Alouds

Think-Alouds is defined as a technique in which a person verbalizes his or her processes while working on a task (Barnhardt et al. 1999: 768). It can be applied for any skill working in pairs or groups. It was useful in the process of predicting and clarifying when the person in charge (the predictor or the clarifier) opened the discussion in order to obtain information from the people of his group.

Guessing meaning from context

Aebersold and Field (1997), outline the following procedure if a learner encounters an unknown word:

- a. Decide which part of speech it is (noun, verb, adjective, or adverb).
- b. Think about what they mean or the grammar function they have.
- c. Check if the meaning you have come up with fits the context.

These steps were very useful to avoid the use of the dictionary, especially when clarifying because students answered the questions and decided the correct meaning through discussions inside their groups.

Monitoring text comprehension

“It occurs when the readers are constantly checking to see if the strategies they are using are effective” (Aebersold and Field1997, p104). This technique was used mainly by the participants at the end of each strategy session when they had to complete the material-basic comprehension chart (see annex 13).

Reviewing information from the text

It occurs when students think about the text, react, and comment it (Aebersold and Field1997:116). Students used this activity especially when they had to reread some parts of the text in order to check or compare information for clarification and at the final stage of the reading activity when they had to provide ideas and write about what they had understood.

Highlighting

The clarifier asked the group to apply this activity which consisted of putting emphasis on a word that could help them to understand the text. They could highlight, underline, or just circle the word in the text. This technique was useful for finding new vocabulary.

Guided reading groups

The aim of this technique was to increase students’ participation and to have the opportunity to observe them in action with different types of texts. Each group received the texts, but initially the teacher was the one who guided the reading. The process continued

allowing the students to assume this role voluntarily; at first with the whole class and then within their table groups.

Cooperative table groups

This activity consists of working on the strategies in small groups, sharing information about a selected text, which demonstrates the importance of cooperation in the process of developing autonomy because students integrate their knowledge, learning and strategies in order to support and guide the other assuming a new role each time, before becoming more proficient. Students were organized into five groups of four people and they assumed different roles inside the group while completing the reading activities. Likewise, they were expected to become more autonomous learners because they had the freedom to choose and exchange these roles. Cooperative learning is evident when students participate in the discussions and engage themselves in the learning practice.

4.3. Materials

The researcher was free to choose the materials considered relevant for the implementation. She adapted them bearing in mind her learners' needs and the purpose of each lesson. The researcher implemented the use of flash cards and photocopies of the bookmarks (see annex 12), which helped students remember the strategies and the use of four worksheets, which included readings and graphic organizers taken or adapted from books and websites (see annex 14). Graphic organizers are one of the most common techniques for facilitating comprehension and memory. Additionally, they allow learners to establish the relationship between headings, sub headings and chapters. Willis (2008)

states that “graphic organizers develop the skill of predicting or previewing by looking at parts of a reading”.

These materials were chosen and adapted considering the interests and needs that participants mentioned before the implementation (animal world, hobbies, and values). According to Tomlinson (1998), we have to take into account our learners’ attitudes and styles and what is being taught should be perceived by learners as relevant and useful. And if in this case the material is not attractive for them, it will not be possible to raise motivation or interest. Additionally, the ICELT lesson plan format (see annex 11), used in the Master in English Language Teaching program helped to plan each session considering the following stages:

- **Warming up:** A motivating activity that a teacher uses at the beginning of a lesson to raise the energy levels. Flash cards and pictures were useful in this stage which involved prediction.
- **Target language input:** The way the teacher sets the topic and introduces new information. The teacher took advantage of the students’ prior knowledge in order to make questions and answer them (questioning and clarifying).
- **Guided practice:** The teacher checks learners’ comprehension of the new material, and models the tasks for the learners to practice. The teacher can use strategies such as drilling or eliciting. Summarizing will be involved in this stage.
- **Independent practice:** It provides the opportunity to practice and apply the new language or information and the autonomous work. For instance, when using the

bookmark (see annex 12) for asking questions, or the graphic organizers to obtain new information.

- **Closure:** Handout or worksheet that the teacher gives to the participants during the lesson.
- **Evaluation:** It enables the learners to assess how well they have grasped the language introduced. The participants evaluated themselves through the learning log (see annex 16) at the end of each strategy. Additionally, there was final session aimed at assessing the use and learning of strategies and to provide feedback regarding this issue.

To have an organized plan about each one of the twelve sessions, the researcher designed a timeline (see annex 10), where she established the dates when the activities would be carried out. These activities were designed taking into account the changes on the topics that the school established for the English program.

Chapter 5

Data analysis and findings

5.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in the pre- and post-questionnaires, student's logs, interviews and teacher's journal, instruments applied during her pedagogical intervention and which were intended to respond the following research questions:

- *What is the impact of implementing Reciprocal teaching strategies on the fosterage of EFL learners' autonomy?*
- *What is the impact of implementing reading strategies on the improvement of reading skills?*

The findings of this research were elucidated taking into account categories and subcategories based on Grounded Theory which establishes a coding process.

5.2. Instruments design and validation process

In this section the researcher presents the instruments she applied during the implementation sessions aimed to determine the impact of implementing Reciprocal teaching to foster autonomy in young learners and to analyze the impact of strategies in the improvement of reading skills. The data collection process took approximately three months and the instruments of this research were applied during the pedagogical intervention to a group of 20 participants in seventh grade. All of the instruments were

piloted in advance by the researcher's colleagues and her teacher, who made appropriate comments which helped her to establish the questions and possible constraints that could be present during the implementation. The researcher designed these instruments taking into account a triangulation process aimed to obtain reliable data.

Instruments were applied during the entire process; the pre-questionnaire was administered before starting this implementation. The second instrument was a student's learning log which was initially applied after each session to find out the students' opinion about each strategy presented by the teacher, but it was found as a repetitive process by students. Thus, she decided to apply it at the end of each learnt strategy which was every two weeks (four hours). The third instrument was a post-questionnaire designed to establish a comparison with the information collected from the first one.

Considering that this was a qualitative investigation and that the triangulation process had to be evident, the researcher made the decision to interview her learners to gather data with regard to autonomy. These interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed by the researcher. Finally, the researcher decided to take a teacher's journal after each session to get more insights on the development of activities and to monitor the students' performance during the implementation. These instruments allowed the researcher to gather relevant data regarding the use of strategies and the insights on students' autonomy. Likewise, storing and classifying data for initiating the coding process.

5.3. Data management

The data, which was collected from February to May, required organization and classification. All the data collected were stored in digital files. The first folder was labeled *instruments*, which included folders classified this way: *pre-questionnaires*, *teacher's journals*, *learning logs*, *post questionnaires*, and *interviews*. The second folder was labeled *documents*, which included two folders: *consent letters* and *worksheets*. The interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. All the instruments were organized chronologically, including a hard copy stored in a folder. The researcher decided to provide each participant with a number. Thus, they were numbered from S1 to S20 to facilitate the classification and analysis of data collected in twelve sessions (24 hours) of implementation. The first sessions were assigned to collect the consent letters and to apply the first instrument. Additionally, during subsequent sessions each participant had a folder where they had to organize all the worksheets and materials produced during the implementation. They were asked to take them to each one of the sessions of this study.

5.4.Procedures for data analysis

Considering the significant amount of existing data, the researcher used the grounded theory approach, defined by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007, p.491), as “an important method of theory generation which is characterized by being inductive in which everything is integrated”. Corbin and Strauss (1990, p.23) refer to grounded theory as “inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents”, being the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research by Glasser and Strauss

(2009, p.2). The authors outline the following steps to analyze data considering grounded theory:

5.4.1. Research questions

In previous chapters the researcher explained that the questions emerged from the needs she observed in the social context of her institution. These questions were attached to the objectives of the project and allowed the researcher to start and focus throughout the study (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p.40). Nevertheless, questions might change or be modified during the development of the study if new situations emerge, but it would be the researcher's decision.

5.4.2. Data collection

To initiate the analysis of the data collected, the practitioner started a coding process using the *Grounded Theory* approach defined by Corbin and Strauss (1990) as a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived phenomenon. The concept of *coding* is relevant to the data collection process in this approach because data are classified taking into account the purpose of the project. Saldaña (2009) describes coding as “a method that enables the researcher to organize or group similar coded data into families taking into account that they share related characteristics”. Additionally, Cohen et al. (2007:493) define coding as “the process of disassembling and reassembling the data”.

Coding can present challenges since the researcher needs to code before topics begin to emerge, then the analysis becomes easier and more organized. There are three types of coding processes:

5.4.3. Open coding

Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 62) define open coding as the part of analysis that pertains specifically to the naming and categorizing of phenomena through close examination of data. Open coding involves exploring the data and identifying units of analysis to code for meanings, feelings, actions, events and so on (Cohen et al. 2007, p.493). In this categorization process the researcher established some groups of concepts addressed to find similar patterns and commonalities which were related to the research questions.

All the instruments were transcribed with the aim of discovering the learners' opinions and perceptions of the research questions to initiate the open coding. However, the following concern emerged during this process: Considering the relevance of the information collected, how could the researcher choose patterns which helped her to identify categories and subcategories? The researcher solved this problem by using color coding that will be explained later.

5.4.4. Axial coding

In this stage, the researcher establishes some connections among the emerging categories. It was the researcher's decision to use color coding to classify patterns and find the categories. The units were identified in advance, and in order to start with the analysis the researcher chose two colors: green, which was to identify the patterns related to the first research question associated with 'Reciprocal teaching and autonomy' and pink, which was used to identify aspects related to 'reading skills improvement' corresponding to the second research question. In this regard the axial coding process took place. The following excerpt presents two examples of how color coding was used during this research study leading to the emerging of two possible categories: reciprocal teaching strategies foster learners' autonomy and reciprocal teaching strategies help learners to improve on reading skills.

Excerpt N° 1 Post questionnaire, questions 1 (S9) and 7 (S12)

¿Consideras que ahora eres más autónomo al tomar decisiones?

SI

NO

Explica porque ya no tengo que esperar a que la profesora me diga q' aser. [sic]

¿Las cuatro estrategias presentadas te ayudaron a mejorar tu comprensión lectora?

SI

NO

Explica porque he aprendido a comprender mas lo que leo y escribo. [sic]

5.4.5. Selective Coding

It is defined according to Corbin and Strauss (1990) as the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, and considering the ones which need further development. This procedure involves identifying a core code and its relation with other codes (Cohen et al, 2007, p.493). During this process a core category emerged: *Reciprocal teaching strategies help learners to improve their reading skills and foster autonomy.*

5.5. Categories

The core of this research project was to use Reciprocal Teaching to foster students' autonomy. Additionally, the researcher wanted to analyze the impact of this technique on the improvement of reading skills.

In order to guide this research and as a result of a reflective and analytical process of implementation and data collection, the researcher established the following categories which responded to the research questions taking into account a color coding process.

| <i>RESEARCH QUESTIONS</i> | <i>CORE CATEGORY</i> | <i>CATEGORIES</i> |
|--|--|---|
| 1. What is the impact of implementing Reciprocal teaching strategies on the fosterage of EFL learners' autonomy? | 1. Reciprocal teaching strategies help learners to improve their reading skills and foster autonomy. | 1a.The impact of Reciprocal teaching on students' autonomy. |
| 2. What is the impact of implementing reading strategies on the improvement of reading skills? | | 1b.Reading skills improvement through the development of four basic strategies. |
| | | 1c.Students' perceptions about the use of Reciprocal teaching strategies. |

Table 1. Categories

The core category, *Reciprocal teaching strategies help learners to improve their reading skills and foster autonomy*, encompassed the categories of *the impact of Reciprocal teaching on students' autonomy*, *reading skills through the development of four basic strategies*, and *students' perceptions about the use of Reciprocal teaching strategies*.

This core category was related to how learners assumed their functions during the presentation of each strategy, how they worked inside the guided groups and how autonomous they were in terms of risk taking and decision making during their learning process using Reciprocal teaching. Additionally, it pinpointed whether the use of the four Reciprocal teaching strategies helped learners to develop and improve their reading skills as well as the students' thoughts on the use of this technique, the four strategies and their complexity, and the usefulness they could have on different texts.

5.5.1. Core category: Reciprocal teaching strategies help learners to improve their reading skills and foster autonomy

5.5.1.1. Category 1: The impact of Reciprocal teaching on students' autonomy

This category emerged because the data taken from the recorded interviews supported the fact that with the use of reciprocal teaching most students demonstrated their autonomy when they were allowed to organize their groups, assume the tasks and change roles clearly identifying the function of each one of the four strategies. It is relevant to consider that these learners, who at the beginning of the implementation were absolutely dependant on the teacher's guidance and were accustomed to the passive role that school

traditionally assigns (Little, 2007, p.17), strengthened their autonomy in certain situations.

This is supported in excerpts 2 and 3:

Journal 7

“Before starting the class, they had organized themselves in their table groups and each student had chosen a role considering the three strategies they had learnt (predicting, questioning and clarifying). S10 took the reading text and started to guide the reading inside her table group. March 29th^h.”

Interview S2 question 5

¿Crees que eres más autónomo? ¿Cómo?

“Si porque es mejor no depender del profesor. Yo me paro y hago los grupos sin que el profesor me diga dónde”.

Additionally, the researcher considered it important to highlight the benefits of improving reading skills during the sessions, creating awareness in her learners, which is one of the steps to become autonomous. Regarding this point the researcher provides evidence taken for the interview.

Excerpt N.4 Interview. Questions 3 and 5.

¿Ahora que conoces las cuatro estrategias, necesitas de tu profesor constantemente para que te explique en qué consiste cada una o como usarla?

S2 *No porque ya ya sé como como predecir y eso. Sé cuál es la función de cada estrategia.*

¿Crees que eres más autónomo? ¿Cómo?

S5 *Sí porque ya entiendo mejor las cuatro estrategias y ya no necesito al profesor a todo momento al lado mío.*

Excerpt N.5 Post questionnaire-question 11

¿Consideras que las actividades mencionadas anteriormente te ayudaron a aumentar tu autonomía?

| | |
|-----|--|
| S11 | <i>Hago mas cosas por mi. [sic]</i> |
| S12 | <i>Porque aprendi a tomar mis decisiones por si mismo. [sic]</i> |
| S18 | <i>Puedo aserlo yo sola.[sic]</i> |

Students' answers considered in the pre-questionnaire revealed their dependency at the beginning of the study in regards to problem solving and decision making. Hence, during the interview and post-questionnaires they demonstrated to be more self-directed learners. Benson (2001: 76) states that control over learning management can be described as what learners employ in order to manage their learning (planning, organization, and evaluation), being important to success in learning a language.

These students were more reflective about their learning process (Hedge 2003) when starting their reading activities, adjusting their learning strategies when necessary and knowing how to use them independently without thinking that the teacher is the only one who can master the language.

Excerpt N.6 Teacher's journal 11

Considering that the implementation of the project is finishing and that the strategies have been taught, the teacher decides to open this session for getting some feedback from students and to collect their impressions about their feelings and development during the previous sessions. They did it on a piece of paper.

S4 said: "cuando yo era clarifaier le pude ayudar a mis compañeros para que no usaran el diccionario y sacaran los significados solo de la lectura". [sic] May 3rd

Excerpt N.7 Pre questionnaire, question 7 and post questionnaire question 8

Cuando no entiendo una palabra...

| | Le pregunto a mi profesor | Me quedo callado (a) | Le pido ayuda a un amigo | Utilizo el diccionario | La busco considerando el contexto | La ignoro y continúo la lectura | Otro |
|-----|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------|
| S7 | | | | ✓ | | | |
| S20 | ✓ | | | | | | |

¿Ahora cuando lees y realmente no comprendes, buscas ayuda de algo o de alguien? Explica.

| | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| S7 | No, Porque comprendo las cosas. |
| S20 | Busco las estrategias para mejorar. |

In these excerpts, the researcher showed evidence of students' first choices when they had to face unknown vocabulary, and they mentioned their teachers, their friends or the dictionary. With the post questionnaire the researcher could establish comparative data between these learners, showing that the students were more autonomous and less dependent on the teacher considering their comments.

The researcher gave students the freedom to organize groups of four people in order to work on the strategies. At the beginning the participants worked with their peers following the teacher's instructions. However, during further sessions as soon as they received the readings, they were in charge of their roles and the teacher became just a facilitator and a guide in the process. Benson (2001) states that control over cognitive processes is mainly concerned with three aspects: attention, reflection and metacognitive knowledge and these aspects guided learners in the process of becoming more autonomous.

Excerpt N° 8 Teacher's journals 3 and 7

Inside the table groups, it is difficult for some students to follow the activities because they do not understand some of their functions and others are shy to participate. March 1

I am glad to see that learners have demonstrated more interest and improvement while doing the activities and most importantly they give their opinions about different aspects of the reading finding mistakes and possible solutions. March 29

Excerpt N° 9 Audio recorded interview question 7

| | |
|----------|--|
| QUESTION | ¿Cuándo te asignaron un rol diferente tuviste alguna dificultad al asumirlo? |
| S1 | <i>No porque ya entendíamos la función de cada uno entonces ya era fácil asumirlos.</i> |
| S6 | <i>No porque ambos se me facilitan, porque ya los he visto, ya los conozco, sé de qué se tratan ¿si?</i> |

The extract above outlines how students had the opportunity to exchange roles inside the groups being able to assume different tasks.

Excerpt N° 10 Post questionnaire. Question 1

| | |
|----------|--|
| QUESTION | ¿Consideras que ahora eres más autónomo al tomar decisiones? |
| S9 | <i>Si porque ya no tengo que esperar a que la profesora me diga q' aser. [sic]</i> |
| S16 | <i>Soy autónomo porque hago mis cosas sin ayuda de nadie.</i> |
| S20 | <i>Si porque yo antes hacia lo que los demás me decían. [sic]</i> |

Another aspect to highlight was responsibility inside the table groups. The researcher asked the students to use a folder to keep the worksheets and activities provided during the implementation. The researcher took the risk to allow students to be in charge of

that material to generate responsibility. One person in each group was responsible to guide their peers' work during the sessions giving suggestions and helping them to understand the activities.

The following extract taken from the teacher's journal evidenced the students' responsibility and autonomy enhancement taking into account a specific situation.

Excerpt N° 11 Teacher's journal 3.

"Students in charge of the folders today feel very comfortable about helping the others. They say that they are the teachers today and that they are there to solve questions and help with the activities. However, sometimes it is necessary to go where the teacher-researcher is to ask for clarification in order to do a better role with their friends". March 1st

Excerpt N° 12 Audio recorded interview S13 question 5

T: ¿Crees que eres más autónomo?¿Cómo?

S13: *Si. Cuando nosotros mismos nos organizamos. Por ejemplo, yo tenía mi folder completo, porque yo se que si no llevo el folder me pierdo la actividad.*

In this excerpt the student manifested responsibility as part of her autonomy.

5.5.1.2. Category 2. Reading skills improvement through the development of four basic strategies.

The learners began this implementation being trained on the four strategies suggested by Palincsar and Brown (1986) and then developed by Oczkus (2003) improving in comprehension when exposed to a reading text in the second language. The first strategy was Predicting. It allowed students to use their prior knowledge to guess and think about the content of the text. Additionally, the use of graphic organizers was helpful to classify the text information and the students' knowledge. The data found here coincide with what

Barnhardt et al. (1999) say: “Predicting creates an opportunity for students to link the new knowledge they will acquire in the text with the knowledge they already have” (p. 106).

In the students’ logs they evidenced that the first stage they applied when predicting was looking at the images and headings in order to anticipate the main idea. After that, they used clues from the readings to make more predictions or to change the previous ones and finally, they checked to see if their predictions came true in the text.

In the following extract, students were asked to say why predicting helped to read better and their answers confirmed their previous insights. It agrees with Oczkus’ (2003) opinion about predicting as a strategy. She believes that it assists students in setting a purpose for reading and in monitoring their reading comprehension, allowing students to interact more with the text.

Excerpt N°13 Student’s learning log 1 (Predicting)

Predecir me ayuda a leer porque...

| | |
|-----|--|
| S1 | <i>Porque para predecir cosas o lo que va a pasar.</i> |
| S2 | <i>Me ayuda a tener una idea.</i> |
| S4 | <i>Digamos como todo esta en ingles asta el titulo lo intento de leer y pienso de que se ba a tratar mas adelante. [sic]</i> |
| S5 | <i>Me ayuda a tener una idea de lo que se trata.</i> |
| S7 | <i>Porque con las ilustraciones se sabe sobre que vamos a leer y predicimos lo que sucederá. [sic]</i> |
| S12 | <i>Pues porque se de que se va atratar el texto y aunque algunas palabras no las entiendo trato de sacar conclusiones. [sic]</i> |
| S13 | <i>Porque si me anticipo a los hechos y cuando leo entiendo mas. [sic]</i> |
| S14 | <i>Puedo tratar dentender las imágenes paraber si lo que predigue es verdad. [sic]</i> |
| S18 | <i>Porque debo intentar saber de que se trata la lectura y luego leo. [sic]</i> |

In order to triangulate this information the researcher presents the following excerpts taken from the post questionnaire and the interview.

Excerpt N. 14. Post questionnaire. Question 2

¿Consideras que ahora entiendes mejor los textos que lees?

S13 *Si. Al utilizar las estrategias entiendo más los textos. [sic]*

S16 *Si. Hago mejor analisis al leer. [sic]*

The second strategy was questioning, which consisted of asking questions that could be answered in the text. Formulating questions was a difficult task for students because of their low level of English. However, the students learnt to use the language of questioning included in the bookmarks (*what, where, why, who, when and how*) (see annex12), making this strategy easier for them to obtain information. As Oczkus (2003) states, students learn to generate questions about the text's main idea and important details, thereby improving their reading comprehension skills.

During the development of this strategy, most of the students asked questions after observing titles and headings about what they wondered or wanted to know. Subsequently, they tried to find answers to their questions. According to Lubliner (2001, as cited in Oczkus, 2003) when students are aware of the text's important ideas, they automatically increase their reading comprehension because they read the text, process the meaning, make inferences and connections to prior knowledge, and, finally, generate a question.

In the following extract, students were asked to say why questioning helped them to improve their reading skills.

Excerpt N° 15 Student's learning log 2 (Questioning)

Cuestionar me ayuda a leer porque...

| | |
|-----|---|
| S2 | <i>Porque resuelvo mis preguntas e inquietudes.</i> |
| S7 | <i>Si porque Hay respuestas que encuentro cuando leo y encuentro preguntas que puedo hacer. [sic]</i> |
| S10 | <i>Si me hago preguntas a mi misma entiendo el texto.</i> |
| S11 | <i>Aprende a aser preguntas y como responderlas. [sic]</i> |
| S13 | <i>Hago preguntas para poder aclarar mis dudas más adelante.</i> |

In the following example, the researcher could observe that students developed the activities because they understood how to ask questions. Additionally, the function of the questioner was vital in the process of guiding them.

Excerpt 16 Teacher's journal 6, questioning

"Using the graphic organizer allowed students to write the questions they considered important in the reading text. Students needed to apply the questions of the bookmark (what where, why, when, how, and who). In the case of table group #2 it was possible for the questioner to allow participation because students understood the way to ask and the topic allowed many questions to emerge". March 22nd

During the implementation of the third strategy which was clarifying, only some of the students understood its use. However, the researcher observed that many others still used the dictionary for this purpose. Oczkus (2003) states that for some students it is difficult to recognize unclear sentences because sometimes they read them in a portion of text but they still do not understand the passage main idea.

In the following extract, students were asked to say why clarifying helped them to improve their reading skills.

Excerpt N° 17 Student's learning log 3 (Clarifying)

Clarificar me ayuda a leer porque...

S5 *Si para entender mejor el texto.[sic]*

S10 *Si clarifico voy a entender mejor la lectura.*

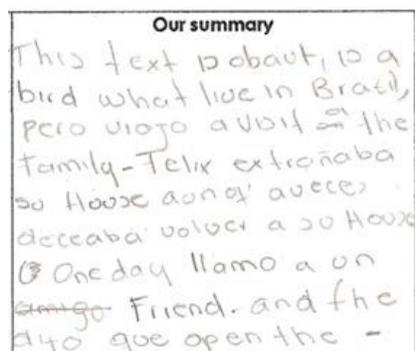
S13 *Porque cuando respondo las preguntas aclaro mis dudas.*

S14 *porque es cuando yo resuelvo todas las preguntas*

S15 *Me ayuda para entender las palabras que no entiendo y resolver.*

The last strategy of this study refers to summarizing, which according to Oczkus (2003) consists of putting information into the students' own words. It involves mental, oral and written processes. After this study the researcher found that this strategy was the hardest for students to learn because their difficulty to express their ideas about the reading texts using L2 was evident. Instead, they mixed L1 and L2. They also declared in their learning logs that first they thought about the text organization and then of what had happened so far in the reading. Finally, they reread and reviewed the illustrations to keep the reading fresh in their minds. In the following extract taken from a comprehension chart, which is part of the material used during the implementation, the researcher shows evidence about the students' difficulty in the use of their writing skills when summarizing but it was not an impediment to be understood by the reader. Writing is not the object of this study but it is attached to the reading process.

Excerpt N° 18 Part of basic comprehension chart. S13



In the following extract, students were asked to say why summarizing helped them to improve their reading skills.

Excerpt N° 19 Student's learning log 4 (Summarizing)

Resumir me ayuda a leer porque...

| | |
|-----|---|
| S5 | <i>Asi puedo hacer bien el trabajo, y aprendo mas. [sic]</i> |
| S6 | <i>Resumir me ayuda porque resumiendo entiendo mejor.</i> |
| S7 | <i>Me ayuda a comprender mejor lo que leo.</i> |
| S11 | <i>Entiendo mas lo que leo. [sic]</i> |
| S12 | <i>Porque puedo tener buena comprension y coordinación al leer un texto. [sic]</i> |
| S13 | <i>Saca las partes mas importantes de un texto y entiendo mas. [sic]</i> |
| S14 | <i>Puedo fucionar todas las estrateguias para profundizarme mas en una lectura. [sic]</i> |
| S15 | <i>Resumo todo lo que entendí y a comprender muchas mas cosas o palabras. [sic]</i> |
| S16 | <i>Podemos escribir lo que aprendimos en la lectura.</i> |
| S20 | <i>Saco lo mas importante de la lectura. [sic]</i> |

After this implementation the researcher reaffirmed that reading is not a passive skill (Harmer, 1991) because students showed understanding and obtained new knowledge through the development of different activities revealing that the implementation of the four

strategies was successful in their reading process and most of the learners agreed on using the strategies for reading revealing that they clearly understood their functions.

The following excerpts provide evidence of this:

Excerpt N° 20 Post questionnaire. Question 7

¿Las cuatro estrategias presentadas te ayudaron a mejorar tu comprensión lectora? Explica

| | STUDENTS' RESPONSE |
|-----|---|
| S2 | <i>Si Porque antes entendía pero no tanto.</i> |
| S4 | <i>Si por todo lo que hemos aprendido a mejorar nuestros lenguages. [sic]</i> |
| S5 | <i>Si porque ahora le pongo mas atención a los textos. [sic]</i> |
| S9 | <i>Si Porque antes no mirava títulos ni imágenes y no cuestionaba y haora si. [sic]</i> |
| S11 | <i>Si Porque puedo entender mas. [sic]</i> |
| S12 | <i>Si Porque he aprendido a comprender mas lo que leo y escribo. [sic]</i> |
| S16 | <i>Si Porque cada estrategia mejora mi aprendizaje.</i> |
| S17 | <i>Si Porque e aprendido cosas. [sic]</i> |
| S18 | <i>Si Porque las pongo prueba. [sic]</i> |
| S20 | <i>Si porque ya entiendo mas y no me equiboco.</i> |

Excerpt N° 21 Audio recorded interview. Question 1

| |
|---|
| S5 |
| ¿Te sirvieron las cuatro estrategias que te enseñó tu profesora? <i>Sí, pues porque una sabe ya como utilizarlas para leer los textos y lecturas que nos ponen los profesores.</i> |

5.5.1.3. Category 3: Students' perceptions about the use of Reciprocal teaching strategies

According to Snow (2002, p.11), “a good reader has to include the capacities, abilities, knowledge and experiences to the reading process in order to succeed”, and the use of strategies as reading tools helped the participants to improve not only reading skills but autonomy as well. Before the implementation, students considered reading as a difficult skill to develop, because they did not have the appropriate tools for understanding or just because they did not like to read even in their mother tongue. Regarding this point the researcher presented the following excerpts:

Excerpt N° 22 Journal 1

“Today students are initiating their implementation process and the teacher is presenting the fabulous four in order to introduce the four strategies they are going to learn. When some of the characters ask them if they like to read, students manifest that they are not interested in reading because that is very difficult for them even in Spanish, and they have to translate a lot”. Feb. 16th

Excerpt N° 23 Audio recorded interview Question 6

¿Te sientes mejor ahora al leer un texto en inglés? ¿Más cómodo?

S2 *Si porque ya no me estreso tanto por no entender. Como antes.*

S10 *Sí, porque ya entiendo mejor lo que tengo que hacer y antes yo no quería leer.*

Most students agreed on revealing the level of difficulty of each strategy and their choices when reading a text. In the following excerpts the participants' opinions are presented regarding the four strategies and their perceptions about their use when reading.

Excerpt N° 24 Audio recorded interview

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Participant | ¿Qué estrategia te pareció más útil? |
| S10 | <i>Predicting, porque si uno por lo menos no entendía muy bien lo que leía, entonces miraba como el título y el dibujo y ahí como predecía lo que iba a pasar y eso.</i> |
| S6 | <i>Me gustó es....predictor, predicting. ¿Qué haces cuando utilizas la estrategia de predicting? Ahí...o sea, nos daban la lectura uno tenía que o sea... mirar el título y o sea como le explico...adivinaba de que se iba a tratar el texto.</i> |

Excerpt N° 25 Student's log 1.

Predecir me ayuda a leer porque...

| | |
|----|--|
| S3 | <i>Entiendo mas y comprendo mejor. [sic]</i> |
|----|--|

In conclusion, after the analysis of the data collected to cope with autonomy and the improvement of reading skills, the researcher found that Reciprocal Teaching is a pertinent methodology to follow. The students understood the four strategies presented and they are able to work autonomously. Additionally, this technique provided students with the necessary support to become more autonomous learners in regards of decision making and risk taking, helping them to develop their reading comprehension skills.

Reciprocal teaching actively engaged students in learning (Hartman (1991). This instructional technique integrated coordinated activities and a meaningful context. Through this study the researcher can state that students enjoyed “being the teacher” and changing roles, being responsible for their own learning (Holec, 1981). Taking into account these

learners' level of the language, the researcher can affirm that during this study they improved their reading skills because of the input the teacher gave and the implementation of reciprocal strategies.

This chapter outlined Grounded theory and the process of open and axial coding required for analyzing the data collected during this study considering the implementation process and the application of instruments. The findings of the study of autonomy and improvement of reading skills were followed using the technique Reciprocal teaching proposed by Palicsar and Brown (1984) and developed later by Oczkus (2003). The next chapter will be dedicated to the final conclusions, limitations, pedagogical implications and further research.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Pedagogical Implications

6.1. Conclusions

In this chapter, the researcher presents the conclusions and the pedagogical implications that emerged as a result of analyzing the data collected in this qualitative study, which had two main objectives: analyzing the impact of Reciprocal Teaching in the students' autonomy and secondly, evaluating if these learners improved in their reading skills or not.

After the analysis, some commonalities were discovered, which led the researcher to organize one main category regarding the two research questions mentioned during the whole work. The category was further divided into two sub categories, which allowed the practitioner to answer the research questions of this study and made it possible for her to conclude that students who received training in the four strategies took advantage of those strategies, understanding their role within the table groups and being aware of their use in other subjects.

Reciprocal teaching allowed students to be more autonomous in some processes inside the classroom, such as decision making and risk taking, because they demonstrated autonomy to give opinions about the reading topics, and through simple activities which were developed during this study.

The participants considered the use of Reciprocal teaching strategies, predicting being the most used and summarizing the most difficult to acquire according to them.

Additionally, they became skillful at finding specific information, main ideas, asking questions and summarizing, as this is an interesting process in the development of writing skills although this was not the object of this study.

Reciprocal teaching provided the learners with strategies which allowed them to organize and evaluate themselves and promoting learning management. For example in the reading guided groups and when they assumed the teacher's role while working inside the table groups exchanging roles and then sharing their experiences. It can encourage students to practice not only reading but also writing and other skills which could improve students' performance in English and their academic level, raising their awareness about the learning of a second language.

The general conclusions above are supported by the following facts:

Bearing in mind that this is a public school, where the level of English is not strong due to different factors previously mentioned, these learners were willing to participate in this study acting as volunteers and showing interest in the project because the teacher encouraged them to work by designing several activities and attractive materials that motivated the students and allowed participation. Each session of this project was planned considering the students' needs, learning styles and opinions about the topics. Chamot, Meloni, Gonglewski, Bartoszesky & Keatley (2009) state that students who have learned how and when to use learning strategies become more self reliant and better able to learn

independently. In addition, with appropriate training of strategies, readers can develop and comprehend better what they intend to read.

The researcher could confirm through the students' comments that working inside the table groups and exchanging their ideas contributed to their learning process not only in reading, but also in other language skills. They also manifested having felt comfortable with the activities because they allowed participation, evaluation, and learning. The following chart outlines the conclusions and establishes a comparison before and after this study.

| Before the implementation | After the implementation |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students were not interested in reading. ✓ Students' English background was not appropriate. ✓ Translation and wrong use of the dictionary. ✓ Students' lack of reading strategies. ✓ Students' dependency on the teacher. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Students raised their interest in reading activities. ✓ Students' improvement in other skills, because of reading activities. ✓ Applicability of Reciprocal teaching strategies during reading activities in class and in other subjects. ✓ They increased some autonomy levels. ✓ Reciprocal teaching is attractive for students. |

Table2 Comparative implementation chart

In summary, reading comprehension in English as a foreign language is a process where students need specific purposes to ferret out the information they require (Correales et al. 2009, p.38). Implementing an instructional technique such as Reciprocal teaching was a challenging but enriching experience during the whole process, which allowed the researcher to analyze aspects related to autonomy and reading skills in students of a public school. The study demonstrated that with the adequate input and training, it is possible to

overcome some of the pitfalls they came across when facing reading activities. Moreover, considering that autonomy is beneficial for learners, fostering it in this context was a difficult task for the researcher because she had to struggle with the change of the preconceived beliefs about the traditional learning process. However, due to the flexibility of the school curriculum and the activities proposed it was possible to achieve the objectives of this study.

6.2. Pedagogical Implications

Reading is a skill many students struggle with. Children who read very little usually have poor reading skills avoiding it whenever possible. Considering this idea, this work should be taken into account because it can be a useful tool for those teachers and students who are interested in improving reading comprehension. However, there are some aspects to bear in mind during its implementation process:

- a. It is very common to find different types of learners and the teacher should identify them because in that way activities can be organized to obtain better results. Additionally, it is relevant to consider students' point of view about the topics to be developed in the class considering that they could be more willing to participate in the activities.
- b. Students manifested that their reading skills were low even in their mother tongue, which could make their reading process harder in a second language. But, it could be interesting to experience the four Reciprocal teaching strategies in other subjects where reading is constant.

- c. During this study it was boring for students to work in the same groups for 8 sessions, so the researcher recommends allowing students to freely exchange groups at the end of each strategy (four times) in order to foster autonomy.
- d. Bearing in mind that this study was held with EFL learners who belong to a public setting, it is very relevant to provide them with confidence and establish an appropriate rapport with them. For those learners who do not feel comfortable with the language, this factor is vital to succeed.
- e. Finally, teachers should remember that an activity for these students could take more time due to their English level, and as Cotteral (1995: 224) asserts, a course which fosters autonomy “must incorporate frank discussions of objectives, methodology, roles, and expectations”. In this way learners will be able to think about the application of classroom tasks to their future needs.

6.3. Limitations of the study

The following are some limitations related to the development of this action research project:

First of all, one of the biggest constraints for the researcher was the insufficient time because Villa Elisa is a public school with three hours of English per week, sometimes being reduced to two hours because of institutional or extracurricular activities. For her implementation, the researcher had to ask other teachers to hand over some of their classes to complete the amount of hours established in her project time table. This situation had a

positive impact because teachers showed interest in Reciprocal teaching methodology to be used in their classes.

Another constraint was that the practitioner started the implementation with 30 voluntary students but then, she had to apply convenience sampling in order to work with only twenty of them having attendance as her main criterion because this aspect would interfere with the data collection.

One of the instruments the researcher decided to use was an audio-recorded interview which was done in her school because students were there and because of some ethic considerations. However, when the researcher began to transcribe the information for storing data, she realized that the level of noise had been very high during the recording process which made it difficult to comprehend some parts of the recordings. She had to repeat some of the interviews but this time students' voices were recorded in the schoolyard which is next to the school building and she used a microphone.

The use of the dictionary as a word attack strategy brings benefits to a reader who is in the process of becoming autonomous and to those who have already acquired independency because it is a useful tool to expand knowledge or to solve some content or pronunciation problems. However, if the reader does not establish a well-constructed work this source could affect the reading process. The last limitation was related to this regard and the level of English because there were three participants who tended to speak in Spanish most of the time and additionally, their use of the dictionary during the activities

was constant, which was affecting their progress. Nevertheless, with the organization of table groups and the support of their peers during the activities, they were able to overcome these pitfalls.

6.4. Further research

For further research, there are some aspects that could be explored. First, throughout this research study it was possible to use four simple reading strategies that could be implemented in the students' mother tongue to analyze the impact of this technique in the improvement of comprehension and interpretation in Spanish. Future researchers could establish a comparison between the same technique in the learning and improvement of both languages. Second, bearing in mind that this study was based on table groups and considering the population (a public school), there are other possibilities to work on: whole class lessons and literature circles. It would be interesting to analyze how collaborative work and reciprocal skills are developed using one of these techniques. Third, at the initial stage of the implementation, the researcher used "the fabulous four" proposed by Oczkus (2003) in order to introduce the four strategies to the students. It was interesting to notice that for these learners who attended to secondary school the idea of using characters was dynamic and allowed them to activate their prior knowledge. A possible future study could be carried out using puppets or the teacher's characterization for initiating young learners in the reading process to investigate what could be revealed in terms of motivation and learning using reciprocal strategies. Fourth, it would be advisable to address the research questions into an online learning environment, through the use of technological tools. Finally, considering autonomy it would be interesting to know how this

research could help in the development of other classes, or how autonomy is implemented by the participants outside the classroom through an appropriate monitoring process.

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List of Annexes

Annex 1 (Consent letters- Principal)

Bogotá, D. C. 13 de Febrero de 2012

Señora:
LUZ HELENA MIRANDA RIVAS
Rectora
Colegio Villa Elisa

Respetada Señora:

Actualmente me encuentro en la estructuración del trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés con Énfasis en Ambientes de Aprendizaje Autónomo que curso en la Universidad de la Sabana. El proyecto de investigación se titula “Impact of Implementing Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Strategies and Autonomy on EFL Learners ”.

El objetivo primordial del proyecto es enriquecer y mejorar la habilidad lectora a través de la implementación de estrategias que permita a los estudiantes ser autónomos, para de esa manera contribuir y fortalecer los procesos de lectura en la lengua extranjera, mejorando así su nivel académico.

Con el fin de validar la investigación mencionada es importante llevar al aula de clase las estrategias propuestas; por tanto, solicito comedidamente la colaboración y consentimiento para llevar a cabo dicha aplicación durante el segundo semestre académico del año 2012 en el Colegio.

La investigación se desarrollaría con los estudiantes de grado 702, aplicando instrumentos para recolectar datos, permitiendo así analizar los procesos y resultados de los estudiantes tras las estrategias propuestas con respecto a la habilidad lectora. Es de anotar que durante dicho proceso posiblemente se tomen fotografías o graben videos para documentar la investigación. Las actividades realizadas no harán parte del seguimiento, planeación o evaluación del área de inglés durante el periodo y la intervención de los participantes será voluntaria.

Será garantizada la confidencialidad de la información recolectada y de la identidad de los participantes en el proyecto.

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término esta investigación.

Atentamente,

Docente de Humanidades

Annex 2 (Consent letters- Parents)

Bogotá, D. C. 13 de Febrero de 2012

Señores

Padres de familia

Colegio Villa Elisa

Bogotá

Respetados Padres de Familia:

Actualmente estoy llevando a cabo mi proyecto de investigación titulado “Impact of Implementing Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Strategies and Autonomy on EFL Learners”, dirigida a estudiantes de grado 702 de esta institución. Estudio que será realizado a través de la Universidad de la Sabana.

El objetivo primordial es enriquecer y mejorar la habilidad lectora a través de la implementación de algunas estrategias permitiendo así que los estudiantes sean más autónomos y de esa manera contribuir y fortalecer los procesos de lectura en la lengua extranjera para mejorar el nivel académico.

La validación se desarrollaría con los estudiantes de grado séptimo en el primer semestre académico en el colegio, aplicando instrumentos para recolectar datos, permitiendo así analizar los procesos y resultados de los estudiantes tras las estrategias propuestas con

respecto a la habilidad lectora. Es de anotar, que durante dicho proceso posiblemente se tomen fotografías o graben videos para documentar la investigación. Las actividades realizadas no harán parte del seguimiento, planeación o evaluación del área de inglés durante el periodo y la intervención de los participantes será voluntaria. De igual manera, será garantizada la confidencialidad de la información recolectada, así como la identidad de los participantes en el proyecto.

Para que quede constancia que conocen esta información y aprueban la participación de su hijo (a), por favor firmar el presente consentimiento.

Nombre Estudiante :

Firma padre

SI

Firma madre

NO

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término esta investigación.

Atentamente,

Docente de Humanidades

Annex 3 (Consent letters- Students)

Bogotá, D. C. 13 de Febrero de 2012

Colegio Villa Elisa

Bogotá

Respetados estudiantes,

Como es de su conocimiento, en el área de Inglés pretendo desarrollar mi proyecto de investigación llamado “Impact of Implementing Reciprocal Teaching to Foster Reading Comprehension Strategies and Autonomy on EFL Learners”, dirigida a los estudiantes de grados séptimos de esta institución. Estudio que será realizado a través de la Universidad de la Sabana.

El objetivo primordial es enriquecer y mejorar su habilidad lectora a través de la implementación de algunas estrategias generando autonomía y de esa manera contribuir y fortalecer los procesos de lectura en la lengua extranjera para mejorar el nivel académico.

La validación se desarrollaría con los estudiantes de grado 702 en el primer semestre académico en el colegio, aplicando instrumentos para recolectar datos, permitiendo así analizar los procesos y resultados de los estudiantes tras las estrategias propuestas con respecto a la habilidad lectora. . Es de anotar, que durante dicho proceso posiblemente se

tomen fotografías o graben videos para documentar la investigación. Las actividades realizadas no harán parte del seguimiento, planeación o evaluación del área de inglés durante el periodo y la intervención de los participantes será voluntaria. De igual manera, será garantizada la confidencialidad de la información recolectada, así como la identidad de los participantes en el proyecto.

Como constancia que conocen esta información y la aprueban, por favor firmar el presente consentimiento.

Nombre _____

Agradezco de antemano su valioso aporte para llevar a buen término esta investigación.

Atentamente,

Docente de Inglés

Annex 4 (Pre questionnaire)

IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTING RECIPROCAL TEACHING TO FOSTER READING STRATEGIES AND AUTONOMY ON EFL LEARNERS.

Estimado estudiante:

Este cuestionario tiene la intención conocer las estrategias que utilizas con respecto a la habilidad lectora, al igual que tu nivel de autonomía. Debes tener en cuenta que tu participación es muy importante para el desarrollo de este proyecto. Además, es voluntaria y tu identidad será confidencial.

Objetivos

- ✓ Determinar el impacto que tienen las estrategias de lectura en la autonomía de los aprendices de una lengua extranjera.
- ✓ Analizar el impacto y la implementación de estrategias en el mejoramiento de las habilidades de lectura.

Las siguientes definiciones te ayudarán a comprender mejor algunas preguntas.

Estrategia: Técnica y conjunto de actividades destinadas a conseguir un objetivo.

Autonomía: Condición de la persona o del grupo de personas que no dependen de otros en determinados aspectos.

1. ¿Generas tus propias actividades de aprendizaje al leer?

SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, indica
¿cuáles? _____

2. ¿Tienes en cuenta tus debilidades al momento de leer un texto en inglés?

SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, indica
¿cómo? _____

3. ¿Tienes en cuenta tus fortalezas al momento de leer un texto en inglés?

SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, indica

¿cómo? _____

4. Al leer textos en otro idioma ¿Te interesas por conocer su contenido?

SI NO

¿Por qué?

5. ¿Cuando lees para comprender mejor utilizas diferentes estrategias? ¿Cuáles?

SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, indica

¿cuáles? _____

6. ¿Cuándo no alcanzas a terminar tu lectura en el colegio, lo haces en casa?

SI NO

Si tu respuesta es negativa, indica ¿por qué? _____

7. Marca con una X las opciones para el siguiente enunciado:

Cuando no entiendo una palabra...

Le pregunto a mi profesor.

Me quedo callado(a).

Le pido ayuda a un amigo.

Utilizo el diccionario.

- La busco considerando el contexto.
- La ignoro y continúo la lectura.
- ¿Otro? ¿Cuál? _____

8. ¿Cuando lees y realmente no comprendes, solicitas ayuda?

- SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa indica a quién.

Marca con una X las opciones para el siguiente enunciado:

Cuando leo y quiero comprender mejor...

- Leo en voz alta.
- Leo mentalmente.
- Encierro o subrayo lo que no entiendo.
- Hago un resumen.
- Elaboro preguntas sobre el texto.
- Traduzco
- Otro. ¿Cuál? _____

9. ¿Cuándo lees por tu cuenta o con tus compañeros asumes diferentes roles?

- SI NO

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, indica

¿Cuáles? _____

Gracias por tu colaboración. 😊👍

Nombre _____ Fecha: _____

Annex 5 (Post questionnaire)

IMPACT OF IMPLEMENTING RECIPROCAL TEACHING TO FOSTER READING SKILLS AND AUTONOMY ON EFL LEARNERS.

Estimado estudiante:

Este cuestionario tiene la intención conocer si las estrategias que utilizaste mejoraron tu habilidad lectora y te ayudaron a ser más autónomo. Debes tener en cuenta que tu participación es muy importante para el desarrollo de este proyecto. Además, es voluntaria y tu identidad será confidencial.

Objetivos

- ✓ Determinar el impacto que tuvieron las estrategias de lectura en la autonomía en los aprendices de una lengua extranjera.
- ✓ Analizar el impacto y la implementación de estrategias en el mejoramiento de las habilidades de lectura.

1. ¿Consideras que ahora eres más autónomo al tomar decisiones?

SI NO

Explica _____

2. ¿Consideras que ahora entiendes mejor los textos que lees?

SI NO

¿Por qué? _____

3. ¿Tuviste en cuenta tus debilidades al momento de leer los textos en inglés?

SI NO

¿cómo? _____

4. ¿Tuviste en cuenta tus fortalezas al momento de leer los textos en inglés?

SI NO

¿cómo? _____

5. ¿Después de haber implementado las cuatro estrategias de lectura, tu interés por la lectura en inglés ha aumentado?

SI NO

¿Por qué? _____

6. ¿Después de las actividades desarrolladas este semestre consideras que cuando lees utilizas las estrategias vistas?

SI NO

¿cuáles? _____
 cómo? _____

7. ¿Las cuatro estrategias presentadas te ayudaron a mejorar tu comprensión lectora?

SI NO

Explique _____

8. ¿Cuál de las siguientes estrategias consideras te ayudó más en el proceso de comprensión lectora? Puedes marcar varias opciones.

- Predicting.
 Clarifying.
 Questioning.
 Summarizing.
 Todas las anteriores

¿Por qué? _____

9. ¿Ahora cuando lees y realmente no comprendes, buscas ayuda de algo o de alguien?

SI

NO

Explique _____

10. ¿Cuál de las siguientes actividades te gustó más? Puedes escoger varias opciones.

Trabajo individual.

Trabajo en grupo.

Cambio de roles.

Todas las anteriores.

¿Por qué? _____

11. ¿Consideras que las actividades mencionadas anteriormente te ayudaron a mejorar tu habilidad lectora?

SI

NO

Explique _____

12. ¿Consideras que las actividades mencionadas anteriormente te ayudaron a aumentar tu autonomía?

SI

NO

Explique _____

Gracias por tu colaboración. 😊👉

Nombre _____ **Fecha:** _____

Annex 6 (Learning log for students)

Por favor completa el formato (marca ✓) teniendo en cuenta el uso que haces de las siguientes estrategias cuando lees.

| | |
|--|---|
| <p style="text-align: center;">¿Cómo estoy prediciendo?</p> <p>Antes de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Estudio las ilustraciones y títulos. <input type="checkbox"/> Hago predicciones utilizando claves del texto. <input type="checkbox"/> Me anticipo a lo que sucederá.</p> <p>Durante la lectura <input type="checkbox"/> Me detengo a usar las claves de la lectura para hacer más predicciones o para cambiar mis predicciones.</p> <p>Después de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Reviso mis predicciones para ver si estas surgen del texto.</p> <p>Predecir me ayuda a leer porque _____ _____ _____ _____ _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">¿Cómo estoy cuestionando?</p> <p>Antes de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Después de revisar las, ilustraciones y títulos, hago preguntas acerca de la lectura con las expresiones. "Me pregunto si... / Quisiera saber..."</p> <p>Durante la lectura <input type="checkbox"/> A medida que leo busco respuestas para mis preguntas. <input type="checkbox"/> A medida que leo busco posibles preguntas que mi profesora me pudiera hacer.</p> <p>Después de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Reviso para ver si respondí mis preguntas. <input type="checkbox"/> Tengo preguntas que empiezan con: <i>quién, cuándo, dónde, qué, por qué, cómo o qué tal si.</i></p> <p>Cuestionar me ayuda a leer porque _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">¿Cómo estoy clarificando?</p> <p>Antes de Leer <input type="checkbox"/> Puedo decir lo que es confuso en la lectura. <input type="checkbox"/> Identifico algunas que palabras en el texto que son difíciles o me confunden.</p> <p>Durante la lectura <input type="checkbox"/> Me detengo a pensar acerca de las palabras que son difíciles. <input type="checkbox"/> Trato de sondear, analizar y releer las palabras. <input type="checkbox"/> Trato de aclarar las ideas confusas releyendo o preguntándole a un amigo.</p> <p>Después de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Pienso en las palabras e ideas confusas o difíciles, retomándolas en la lectura o discutiéndolas con un amigo.</p> <p>Clarificar me ayuda a leer porque _____ _____ _____</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">¿Cómo estoy resumiendo?</p> <p>Antes de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Pienso cómo está organizado el texto.</p> <p>Durante la lectura <input type="checkbox"/> Me detengo a pensar sobre lo que ha sucedido en la lectura.</p> <p>Después de leer <input type="checkbox"/> Vuelvo a leer y reviso las ilustraciones para mantener la lectura fresca en mi mente. <input type="checkbox"/> Escojo solo las ideas principales para resumir. <input type="checkbox"/> Relato los eventos principales en orden.</p> <p>Resumir me ayuda a leer porque _____ _____ _____ _____</p> |

Adapted from Reciprocal Teaching at Work: *Strategies for improving Reading Comprehension* By Lory D. Oczkus 2003. Newark, DE: International Reading Association.

Annex 7 (Teacher's journal)

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of teacher: _____ | |
| Institution: Colegio Villa Elisa Sede E (Nueva Estrada) | |
| Date of Observation: | Time of observation Length of class 2 hours |
| Class/grade: Seventh | Room: 702 |
| Number of students: | Average age of Students: 13-15 |
| Session | Level of students Elementary |

1. What went well?

The first aspect to consider in this intervention was that I presented a complete and sequenced lesson plan with clear objectives, meaningful activities and nice pictures which allowed prediction, participation and different patterns of interaction. This class was a student-centered class based on making predictions. I was constantly monitoring the activities providing students with examples about what prediction was to have a better understanding of the reading. I fostered them to participate. The good rapport with these learners evidenced that most of them enjoyed the class and were willing to participate. Many of them used the structures of the bookmark to predict. In general they showed appropriacy of the language using correct sentences to show their predictions about the text. In addition, they were familiar with the predictor's functions, the bookmark, and the topic which was about spiders.

The learners were motivated by the images, and they felt comfortable with the vocabulary presented. Most of them took the risk of reading in L1 all the time even if their pronunciation was incorrect. I have told them that at this stage the most important thing is to understand. In general, there was a good atmosphere.

2. What didn't go so well?

I had some constraints related to assistance and time. First of all, there are some students who constantly miss classes interrupting the process because they do not know what to do next. Another weakness is that because of their level of English and the group I have, some activities had to be assigned as homework. The available time was not enough. In addition, the classroom is not

spacious enough for the quantity of students I have, factor that interrupts the process, especially during group organization.

For some students the use of the bookmark was difficult because they were not familiar with the future tense. Some of them did not want to work with the graphic organizer.

3. Were your lesson objectives achieved?

I think that the main objective which was to make predictions was achieved because the students evidenced interaction, participation and knowledge. However, the aim related to instructions will demand more reflection.

4. How did you foster student autonomy in your lesson? Give evidence.

Autonomy was fostered when students used the language freely without the teacher's guidance to express their own needs but they are still dependent on the teacher when following instructions.

5. What would you do differently, if anything at all, if you to teach this lesson again?

Based on my weaknesses during the lesson, I would like to establish strategies for helping students to moderate their voice, taking turns to participate, and a better group work organization, considering that the group consists of 35 learners and sometimes all of them want to speak at the same time. I think if I could achieve this, discipline would be better and in that sense the class would be more successful.

6. Action Plan

I would say that if I am able to carry on the class entirely in English students will be aware of the importance of practicing in the classroom. I have used special codes for checking understanding (predict, stop, silence)

Annex 8 (Audio recorded interview sample)

| |
|--|
| S1 |
| <p>1. ¿Te sirvieron las cuatro estrategias que te enseñó tu profesora? <i>Sí, porque me han ayudado más a entender más el inglés.</i></p> |
| <p>2. ¿Cuál te pareció más útil? ¿Por qué? <i>Predictor? Porque más o menos uno predice de lo que se trata la historia y pues así uno aprende más inglés.</i></p> |
| <p>3. ¿Ahora que conoces las cuatro estrategias necesitas de tu profesor constantemente para que te explique en qué consiste cada una o como usarla? <i>A veces, algunas veces.</i> ¿Para que te explique cómo debes utilizar cada estrategia? <i>Ah no como usarla no porque yo ya las sé.</i></p> |
| <p>4. ¿Has implementado estas estrategias en otras materias o actividades? <i>En español?</i> <i>En cualquier materia.</i> <i>No las uso porque es español.</i> <i>Si pero para entender español tienes utilizar estrategias.</i> <i>Ah sí de vez en cuando predecir de lo que va a pasar y también necesita preguntas.</i></p> |
| <p>5. ¿Crees que eres más autónomo? ¿Cómo? <i>Si porque ya digamos con esas estrategias no ando preguntándole a todo el mundo ni con el diccionario, a veces</i></p> |
| <p>6. ¿Te sientes mejor ahora al leer un texto en inglés? ¿más cómodo? <i>Si porque ya más o menos entiendo.</i></p> |
| <p>7. ¿Cuándo te asignaron un rol diferente tuviste alguna dificultad al asumirlo? <i>No porque ya entendíamos la función de cada uno entonces ya era fácil asumirlos.</i></p> |

Annex 9 (Action plan)

| Activity/Date | February/March | | | | March/April | | | | April/ May | | | |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|--------|--------|--------|------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 |
| Step 1: Participants Introducing the Project and consent letters | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Step 2: Pre questionnaire | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 1 Introducing the fantastic 4 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 2 and 3 Predicting | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session4 and 5 Questioning | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 6 and 7 Claryfying | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 8 and 9 Summarizing | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Post questionnaire | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Session 10 | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Interview and Feedback | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Annex 10 (Research timeline)

| DATE | ACTIVITY – OBJECTIVE | Data collection instrument and materials |
|--|---|--|
| January 2 nd - 31 st | Lesson plan designing from February to May | ICELT format lesson plan |
| February 16 th | Introductory session (Introducing the reciprocal team- The Fabulous four) (session 1) | Teacher's journal |
| February 23 rd | Consent letters - Session 2 | Pre questionnaire Teacher's journal. |
| March 1 | Wonderful spider webs – The student will be able to identify actions in the simple present tense. Session 3 | Teacher's journal. |
| March 8 th | Wonderful spider webs- Session 4 | Teacher's journal. Student's learning log |
| March 15 th | Flying home: The student will be able to identify s-forms. Session 5 | Teacher's journal. |
| March 22 nd | Flying home: Ss will be able to use the simple present tense in all forms. Session 6 | Teacher's journal |

| | | |
|------------------------|--|--|
| | | Student's learning log |
| March 29 th | Martin's activities Ss will be able to talk about their routines and the frequency which they do several activities. Ss will be able to describe themselves and their peers. Session 7 | Teacher's journal. |
| April 12th | Martin's activities –. Ss will be able to discuss their free time activities. Session 8 | Teacher's journal. Student's learning log |
| April 19th | Who's the worst (the best)? –Ss will be able to understand a reading text by identifying superlatives. Session 9 | Teacher's journal. |
| April 26th | Who's the worst (the best)? - Ss will be able to use superlatives to open a discussion from written text. Session 10 | Teacher's journal. Student's learning log |
| May 3rd | Time for feedback Ss will be able to express their impressions of the intervention giving suggestions. Session 11 | Post questionnaire, Teacher's journal, |
| May 10th | Collecting and analyzing data Session 12 | Teacher's journal, Interviews |

Annex 11 (Sample of lesson plan)

LESSON PLAN FORM

| | |
|--|--|
| Name of teacher: _____ | |
| Institution: Colegio Villa Elisa Sede E (Nueva Estrada) | |
| Date of Observation: | Time of observation From 7:10 to 8:10 a.m. Length of class 1 hour |
| Class/grade: Seventh grade | Room: 702 |
| Number of students: 30 | Average age of Students: Between 13 and 15 years old |
| Number of years of English study: Three years | Level of students Elementary |

Main Aim(s):

The students will be able to talk about how often they perform activities related to their routines or leisure time, showing understanding by means of reciprocal strategies.

Subsidiary Aims:

- The students will be able to use predictions to guess the content of a reading.
- They will ask for clarification when they not understand a word.
- They will respond to questions by giving the required information.
- The students will be able to complete a graphic organizer..
- The students will use strategies in order to model the new vocabulary through the material presented.
- The students will create communicative language with their peers.

Personal aims:

- To give appropriate and clear instructions.
- To build a good rapport with the students.
- To foster communicative skills in the activities students develop in class
- To implement appropriate material to be carried out with the different tasks.
- To encourage students in the practice of reciprocal strategies.
- To enhance participation through student's autonomy.

Assumed knowledge:

The learners of this group should be able to use the vocabulary they already know to develop one of the four reciprocal strategies (prediction). They should use the language in order to ask simple questions and to produce classroom expressions. They should be familiar with simple instructions and classroom arrangements. Finally, these learners have to work in pairs or groups fostering freer or controlled practice.

| Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher's and students' activity | Time and interaction |
|---|--|--|---|
| Setting the stage Warming up | To use students' background in order to set the topic with a meaningful activity | The teacher will tape different pictures (see annex 11) around the classroom related to spiders. Students will mingle trying to look at them and then, they will organize groups of four people. | 10 min Ss-Ss |
| Target language input | To use direct input strategies in order to model the new vocabulary through the material presented | The groups are encouraged to talk about their predictions of the topic and then, the teacher does the general brainstorming. Then, drawing on the board ☺ and ☹ to introduce the structure I like / I don't like, she elicits some questions and drills vocabulary about spiders. | 20min T-Ss S-S |
| Guided practice | Students will read a text, understanding the structure presented to clarify content and vocabulary. Students will practice the structure learnt using the foreign language. | Pre-reading: Each group receives a text called "wonderful spiders web" (see Annex 14) Additionally they will receive a comprehension chart (see annex 13) where they will predict about the text just by looking at the pictures While-reading: Students will have a few minutes to read and then they have to complete the missing information with the word bank. Then students will write the sentences on the board by taking turns. After that they will receive 10 scrambled sentences that they will have to organize taking into account the structure learnt (simple present). The students will rotate the sentences every three minutes. | 10 min T-S Ss-T 15 min S-T S-S 30 min |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|
| Independent practice | The students will complete a graphic organizer about their predictions | Post- reading: The teacher provides students with a graphic organizer with the aim of completing it with the possible questions for the next class about the reading. | 15 min T-Ss S-Ss Ss-Ss S-T |
| Evaluation / Closure | The students will show what they have learnt | Students will complete the learning log. | 10 min S-S T-Ss Ss-T |

Annex 12 (Bookmark)

Be the Teacher Bookmark



Predict

Use clues from the text or illustrations to predict what will happen next.

I think...because...
I'll bet...because...
I suppose...because...
I think I will learn...because...



Question

Ask questions as you read.
 Ask some questions that have answers in the text.

Use the question words *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, *how*, and *what if*.

Try asking some questions that can be inferred. Use clues from the text plus your experiences.



Clarify

How can you figure out a difficult word or idea in the text?

Reread, reread, reread!
 Think about word chunks you know.
 Try sounding it out.
 Read on.
 Ask, Does it make sense?
 Talk to a friend.



Summarize

Using your own words, tell the main ideas from the text in order.

This text is about...
This part is about...

Annex 13 (Basic comprehension chart)

| |
|--|
| <p>What We Know (Our experiences, background knowledge, and/or connections with the text)</p> |
|--|

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Our Predictions (make predictions before reading and check their accuracy after reading)</p> | <p>Our Questions (who, when, what, where, why, how and what if)</p> |
|--|--|

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <p>Our Words or Ideas to Clarify</p> | <p>How We Clarified</p> | <p>Our summary</p> |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|

Annex 14 (Worksheet1 and graphic organizer)



Source: [www.google](http://www.google.com) images.com

I.E.D. VILLA ELISA - SEDE E



Name _____ Date _____

Wonderful Spider Webs

Written by Rebecca bond

Many kinds of spiders are wonderful web weavers. The web they build can make beautiful patterns and can be lovely to look at. But that is not why spiders build them.

A spider builds its web for two important reasons. The first reason is that a web helps it to catch its food. The webs are strong, sticky traps. When an insect flies into the spider's web the insect gets tangled and stuck and the spider gets its dinner!

The second reason a spider builds a web is to protect itself from danger. Spiders that build webs cannot see very well, but they have a very good sense of touch. When a snake or a lizard bumps into the spider's web the web shakes. The spider feels movement and quickly runs and hides so it won't be eaten itself!

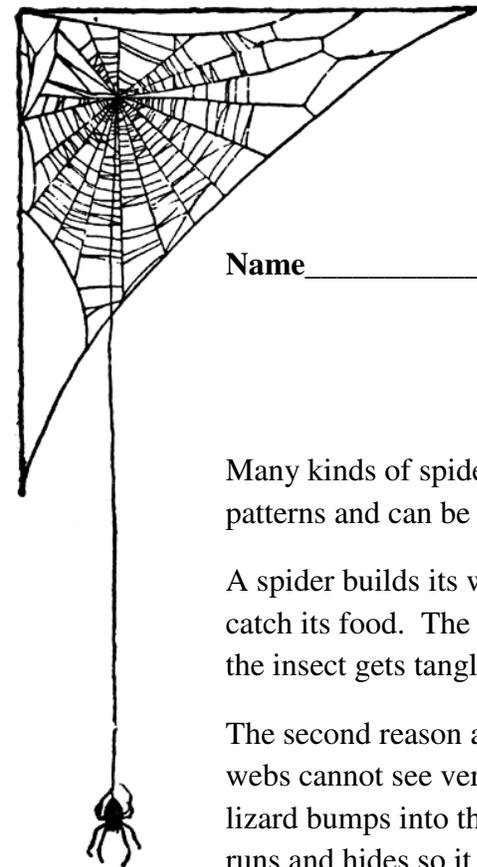
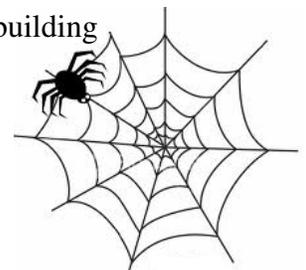
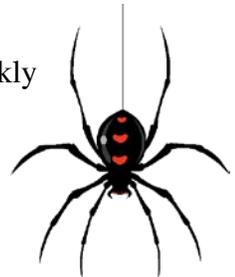
So, how do spiders build their webs? A spider spins its web from silk that comes out its own body. Inside the body, the liquid silk hardens into a strong, hard thread.

When a spider is ready to begin it attaches the first silk threads of its web to whatever is near it – maybe some tree branches, tall grasses or leaves, or maybe even a porch railing. It builds the outside edges of the web first, like the ring of a wheel. Then it puts the wheel's spokes building up to the center with threads from the outside in. Finally, it lies down at the connecting spiral threads on the inside. Spiders can choose to make their silk thread sticky or not sticky. These inside threads are all sticky. A spider has to be careful not to get stuck!! A web may take the spider about an hour to build.

Once the web is built, the spider sits back out of sight and waits. It sits very quietly and waits for the trap to work. When an insect gets caught, the spider feels the web bounce as the insect tries to get free. But the spider races out quickly to get its dinner. Web building makes a spider very hungry!

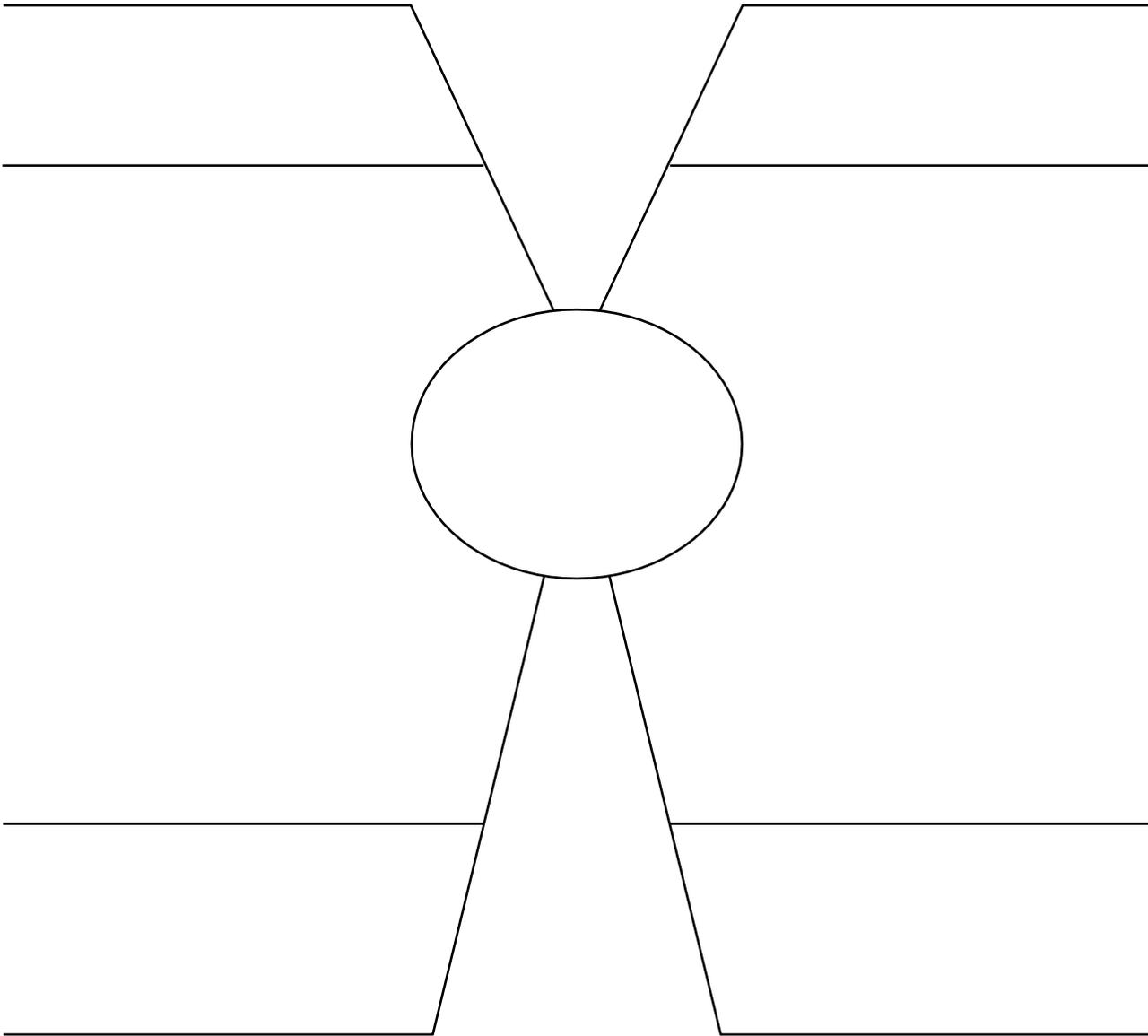
Sources: (2005). *Selections. A primary reading anthology*. Thailand: Macmillan Education.

www.google images.c



Spider Map

Write some questions you consider will be important to understand the text about spiders.



Source adapted from: <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/>

Annex 15 (Worksheet N.2 and graphic organizer)



Source: Rabley, S. (2008). *Flying Home*. China: Pearson Longman.



Name _____ Date _____

Flying Home

Written by Stephen Rabley

Felix is a blue and yellow bird from Brazil. He lives with the Baxter family in New York. His home is a big cage. It is on the fortieth floor of a tall building. Felix likes the Baxters, and the Baxters like him. They give him food. They talk to him and show him to all their friends. But Felix is not happy. He wants to go home to Brazil.

Every night Felix looks up at the sky. He can see the whole city. It is big and exciting. It is home for the Baxters, but not for Felix. He remembers the big, yellow moon in Brazil, then he remembers his last day in the jungle. The two men with white hats. The big box. The long plane journey. The shop - "Beautiful Birds" - in New York.

Felix closes his eyes. Now he cannot see the city and the snow. He can see other things ; he can see the life he loves. "I want to be with my family again," he thinks. "I want to fly home to the jungle. It's warm there and the trees are always green." He puts his head under one wing. "One day," he says.

"One day."

"One day" comes two weeks later. Mr Baxter opens Felix's cage to give him some food. Then he hears the telephone. "Can you answer that, George?" asks Mrs Baxter. "I'm in the bath." "OK," says Mr Baxter. He goes to the phone, but forgets to shut Felix's cage. Felix can see an open window. "This is it!" he thinks.

He flies out of his cage and out of the -window. The air under his wings is very cold. Behind him he hears, "Hey! Felix!!" but he does not go back. He looks down at the streets and buildings and flies through the city. A girl in a cafe with her mother sees him. "Look!" she says. Her mother does not hear. She is reading her newspaper.

After an hour Felix stops. He stands on the head of the Statue of Liberty. "Where are you from?" asks a small, gray and white bird beside him. "I'm from Brazil," answers Felix. "And where are you going?" asks the bird, Felix flies up into the cold, blue sky again. "I'm going home," he says, "Goodbye.

Source: Rabley, S. (2008). *Flying Home*. China: Pearson Longman.

Name _____  Date _____

Put the subject in the center box. Answer the six questions.

Who

What

Where

When

Why

How

Annex 16 (Worksheet N.3 and graphic organizer)







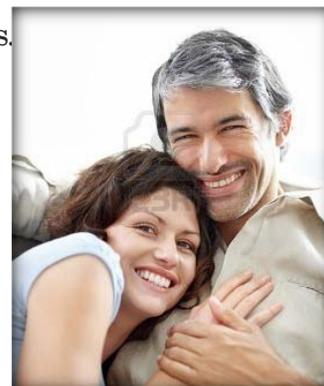
Name _____ Date _____

READING COMPREHENSION EXERCISE

Read the following text about Martin.



Martin has a lot of hobbies and interests. He always gets up early to run before going to work. He doesn't often have time to have breakfast, so he usually goes to the cafeteria for coffee and donuts. Martin sometimes rides his bike to work because he is a planet friend. He loves music and when there is a good concert he always goes with her girlfriend Lily. They usually do things together but Lily never visits the stadium because she doesn't like soccer. Martin has a guitar, but he rarely plays it because he is a busy person. On weekends he usually watches TV, goes to the movies with Lily and reads the newspaper. He never visits facebook because he considers it a waste of time. But he has a lot of friends.



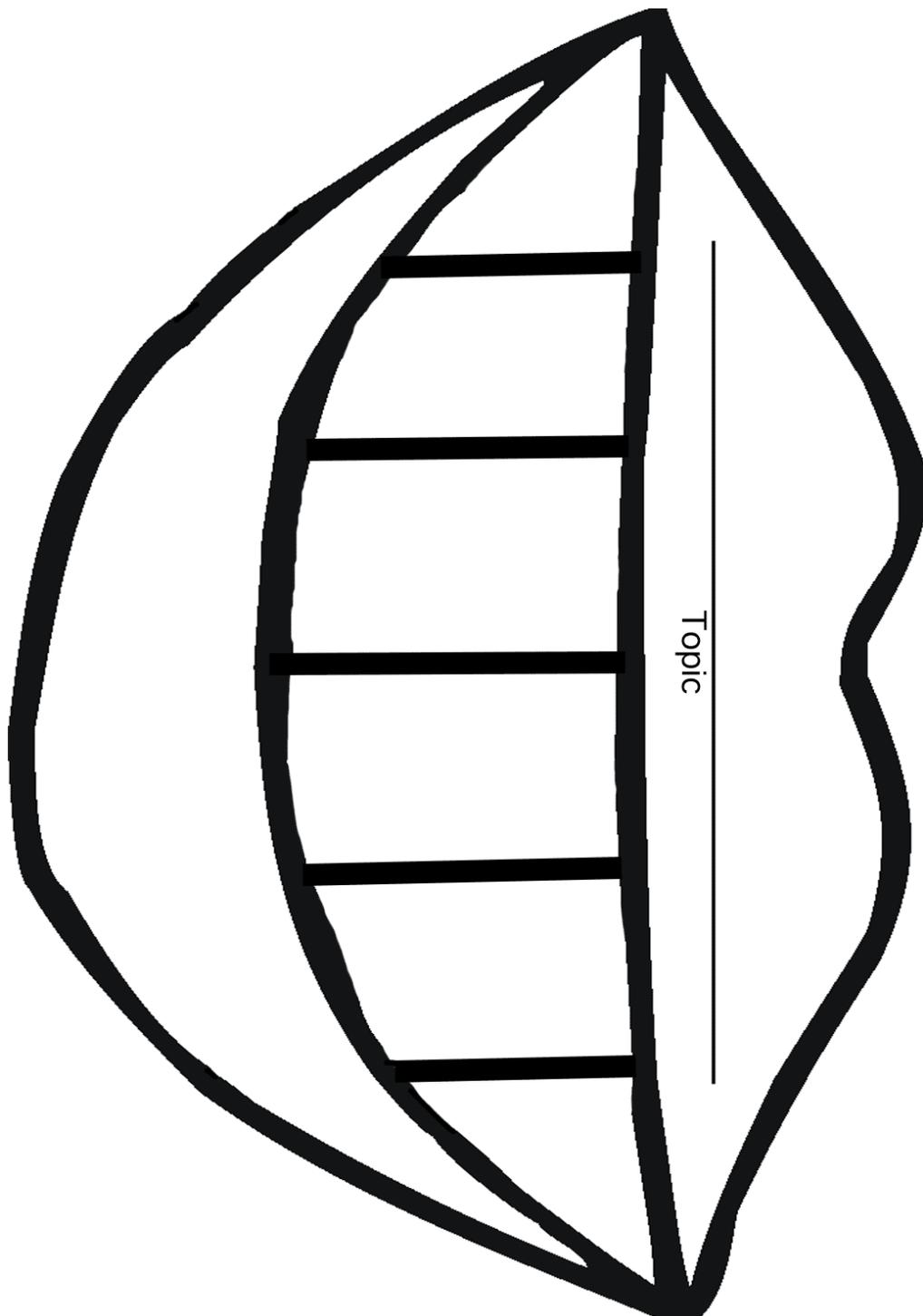
Pictures taken from www.flickr.com

Topic: Martin's activities

Name _____



Date _____



Annex 17 (worksheet N.4 and graphic organizer)





Name _____ Date _____

WHO'S THE WORST (BEST)?

Rate the characters from 1 to 4, with 4 being the worst person in the story.

Maria, Sachie, Toshie, and Ana shared an apartment near the college that they attended. Maria needed to buy a book for her history class, but she didn't have enough money. She had a test in three days, and she needed the book to study. Maria knew that Sachie always kept quite a bit of money in an envelope in her desk drawer. Maria decided to take enough money from Sachie's desk to buy the book. Maria told herself that she would return the money before Sachie noticed it was missing.

The next day, Sachie discovered that some money was missing from her desk. None of her roommates was home, so she looked around the apartment. On Toshie's bed, she found a bag from a clothing store. Inside the bag was a new blouse with a sales receipt. The price of the blouse was only slightly less than the amount of the missing money. Sachie assumed that Toshie had taken her money to buy the new blouse. Sachie decided to teach Toshie a lesson, and she poured catsup all over Toshie's new blouse. When Toshie returned home, she found her ruined blouse. When she asked Sachie what had happened, Sachie asked her about the missing money. Toshie told Sachie that she had not taken her money, but Sachie didn't believe her.

Ana returned home, and Toshie told her that Sachie had ruined all her clothes by putting catsup on them. Ana decided that Sachie was a troublemaker and that she didn't want her living in the apartment anymore.

Ana decided to call the apartment manager and tell him Sachie was keeping stolen goods at the apartment for her boyfriend so that she would have to move out.

Source Fun with Grammar (1997) Prentice Hall Regents. Duplication for classroom use is permitted.

María _____

Sachie _____

Toshie _____

Ana _____

Use the graphic organizer for making questions or to clarify some girls' characteristics.

Annex 18 (Data storage process)