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**RESUMEN DEL CONTENIDO** (Mínimo 80 máximo 120 palabras)

El objetivo fue determinar como la aplicación de estrategias de lectura podría influenciar el desarrollo de la autonomía de los estudiantes. Este proyecto fue implementado en el Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci, colegio privado-bilingüe en Bogotá, Colombia; en un grupo conformado por diecinueve estudiantes de noveno grado, entre los 15 y 16 años. El investigador implementó tres estrategias de lectura con el fin de ayudar a los estudiantes a ser autónomos, estas estrategias fueron seleccionadas ya que podrían tener un rol positivo en los procesos académicos de los estudiantes. El estudio reveló que el aprendizaje y desarrollo de estrategias de lectura generó altos niveles de motivación considerando que ellos reconocieron que las cosas aprendidas podrían ayudarlos a ser más autónomos

**Developing Reading Strategies to Foster Autonomy**

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Master in English Language Teaching, Autonomous Learning Environments

**January 14th 2013**

Developing Reading Strategies to Foster Autonomy

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A research report submitted for the degree of Master in English Language Teaching-

Autonomous Learning Environments**.**

Directed by: Jenny Mendieta

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This research report is the result of my own work.

*Elizabeth Correa Morales*

Acknowledgments:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my director Jenny Mendieta for her support, knowledge and encouragement throughout my thesis. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my husband and my lovely daughter for their love and patience, they are the most important people of my life who have always believed in me and encouraged me to continue my learning.

**Abstract**

The aim of this research study was to determine how the application of reading strategies might influence the development of students' autonomy. This project was applied at The Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci, a private-bilingual school in Bogotá, Colombia; the group in which the study was implemented was composed of nineteen students between 15 and 16 years old, who belong to 9th grade. The researcher implemented three different reading strategies in order to help students become autonomous learners, these strategies were chosen because they might play a positive role in students' academic processes. The study revealed that the learning and development of reading strategies generated high levels of motivation since they were able to acknowledge the fact that all the things they learned during the implementation of the research study could help them to be more autonomous.

Key words: learners' autonomy, motivation and reading

**Resumen**

El objetivo de este estudio de investigación fue determinar como la aplicación de estrategias de lectura podría influenciar el desarrollo de la autonomía de los estudiantes. Este proyecto fue implementado en el Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci, un colegio privado-bilingüe en Bogotá, Colombia. El grupo en el cual el estudio fue implementado está conformado por diecinueve estudiantes, entre los 15 y 16 años quienes pertenecen a noveno grado. El investigador implementó tres estrategias de lectura con el fin de ayudar a los estudiantes a ser autónomos, estas estrategias fueron seleccionadas ya que podrían tener un rol positivo en los procesos académicos de los estudiantes. El estudio reveló que el aprendizaje y desarrollo de estrategias de lectura generó altos niveles de motivación considerando que ellos fueron capaces de reconocer que todas las cosas aprendidas durante la implementación del estudio de investigación podrían ayudarlos a ser más autónomos.

Palabras clave: Autonomía en los estudiantes, motivación y lectura.

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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

*Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.*
*Paulo Freire,1968*

This project was applied at Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci, a private school whose mission is to educate active and autonomous students who are aware of and responsible for their own learning process. The school's learning approach is student-centered; that is, focused on students' needs, abilities and interests. Although there are different pedagogically successful activities, the school's community deals with on daily basis, high school English teachers are concerned about students' reading performance, and about the fact that they do not want to get involved in their own learning process. With this aim in mind and in addition to the school's mission, this action research project focused on helping high schoolers, specifically $9^{th}$ graders, to become autonomous learners by promoting active learning and by teaching and encouraging them to use reading strategies that could be helpful, not only in their high school studies, but also in their university lives.

This research study is divided into six main chapters. The first chapter includes a general overview of the elements that motivated the study, the research question and objectives in addition to the project's pedagogical value. The second chapter includes the state of art; an exploration of the existing studies and theory related to the constructs. Chapter three describes the type of study, the characteristics of the context and the

participants, the researcher role, the data collection instruments and the data collection procedures. Chapter four includes a description of the pedagogical intervention and implementation. Chapter five is related to the data analysis and findings. Finally, chapter six includes the conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations and recommendations for further research.

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Various reasons motivated the implementation of this project, the most important of these, are, however, related to students' low performance in reading and their lack of autonomy. Reading is an essential skill at Leonardo Da Vinci school; as a matter of fact high school students have to read two books per year in more than one language – Spanish, Italian, English - which implies a large amount of comprehension activities, time, and academic pressure. The researcher identified reading comprehension problems among 9th graders at the school when, during the English lessons, most of them did not understand the main idea of the book they were reading, they could not identify the plot, and in some cases, they read just when the teacher was around. They belonged to one specific type of readers called *word callers* who, according to Tovani (2000, p. 14), "can decode the words but don't understand or remember what they have read".

No more than a small number of students enjoyed this activity, while the others preferred watching movies to reading the printed version of the books, as an easy way out to know about what the books were about. At school they read because it was their assignment for the class, but during the reading comprehension activities, as mentioned above, they could not summarize or analyze any text in depth. They could not express their

understanding of the texts, not because they did not know the language, but because they could not understand what the texts said; they just did not know how to read efficiently. In consequence, they often obtained poor results in reading comprehension tests.

An additional situation that triggered the development of this project was students' lack of autonomy. Students relied on the teacher all the time; they did reading and other language learning– related activities because they had to and not because they understood their importance or value. They were not aware of their own reading and overall language learning process. Furthermore, students did not feel they liked what they were learning in the English class and for that reason they were not receptive to some of the lessons and there was a lack of interest towards the subject.

All in all, some of the issues that my students were facing prior the creation of this study were: lack of motivation, poor reading skills and lack of autonomy. As noted above, students preferred a teacher-centered classroom rather than an independent learning environment; that is, they did not seem to know how to learn the language on their own and often sought support from the teacher.

With these aims in mind, the researcher believed it to be decisive to examine the extent to which students' autonomy and reading performance could be enhanced by knowing about and making use of reading strategies. The current research study thus aimed at answering the following research question and objectives:

**1.2 Research Question**

What is the possible effect of the use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy?

**1.3 General Objective**

To determine how the application of reading strategies might influence the development of students' autonomy.

**1.4 Specific Objectives**

➢ To identify the possible benefits that the use of reading strategies brings to students' autonomy development process.

➢ To establish the extent to which ninth grade students become motivated through the use of reading strategies.

**1.5 Rationale**

This research study was aimed at determining how the application of reading strategies affected the development of students' autonomy. The different reading strategies that were implemented during the project in order to help students become autonomous learners were:  a) scanning, b) skimming, c) visualizing. These strategies were chosen because they might play a positive role in students' academic processes and in their future professional lives.

Teaching students important aspects about reading comprehension strategies was taken as an opportunity to promote autonomy and enhance motivation, given that, by making use of strategies, students can learn how to start taking control of their own reading and language learning process and how to make use of the knowledge they gain in class in other academic and personal contexts. As Holec (1981) and Benson (2001) argue,

autonomy is the capacity of taking control of one's own learning, as well as the ability to reflect critically on one's own learning processes. A responsible learner is a learner who accepts the idea that his/her own efforts are crucial to progress in learning and who behaves accordingly (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). As implied by Benson and Voller (1997), autonomous learning is more or less equivalent to effective learning.

Learner independence is a complex construct, however; a cluster of dispositions and abilities to undertake certain activities (Benson & Voller, 1997). Students must have the disposition of working on their own and in order to do that they should have the knowledge and the skills to analyze their own weaknesses and strengths, to set achievable objectives and to work without supervision. Hence, to learn how to make use of strategies may definitely help language learners as they might be able to transfer that knowledge to the learning of other areas of the language and to other academic-related tasks.

With these aims in mind, I could argue that this research project can benefit different contexts and people in various ways. First, it can benefit the teacher-researcher considering that creating an autonomous classroom is an opportunity for students to work independently without continuous teacher control. When this takes place, it is possible for the teacher to monitor effectively those students who require more help. Second, if this project were implemented or replicated with other high schoolchildren, it could also benefit the school considering that results in international exams might improve and in that way Leonardo Da Vinci school could continue fulfilling the academic goals stated in the mission and vision. Fellow teachers could also feel more at ease when working with students who are willing to learn and to participate actively in their classes by showing a

high level of autonomy and motivation. Finally, and most importantly, this project can benefit students considering that they might be able to obtain high and better grades in their reading comprehension lessons. They might be able to do so by knowing how to properly select the reading strategies to be used during their evaluations and during the reading assignments they have throughout the academic year. They might also feel enthusiastic about knowing how to access and deal with new knowledge on their own and how to make optimal use of the time. When learners are able to handle things, they have control over their learning process and they can perform better and show more engagement.

In this introductory chapter the researcher mentioned what the project was about, and what motivated her to do it. She also explained what the problem was, the research question and objectives and the value it had for her community and her students. In the following chapter the researcher will explain the theory and research that supports the project and she will also describe and discuss the research design and the pedagogical intervention that was carried out with the students.

# CHAPTER 2

## Theoretical Framework

The current research study involved three main constructs: *learner's autonomy, motivation and reading*. This chapter will illustrate these three constructs and the relationship among them. It will also describe and discuss previous research studies carried out locally and internationally in order to establish what other researchers have studied and found when examining these topics or areas.

### 2.1 Autonomy

According to Benson (2001) the concept of autonomy first entered the field on language teaching through the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Project established in 1971. Autonomy was seen as a natural product of the practice of self-directed learning, or learning in which the objectives, progress and evaluation of learning are determined by the learners themselves.

Autonomy does not mean isolated work; Little and Dam (1998) emphasize that humans are social beings that learn from one another. Group tasks help students to build independence since they are working together without continuous teacher control, they make some learning decisions and they are working without the pressure of all the class listening to them (Harmer, 1998, as cited in Murphey & Jacobs, 2000).

Holec (1995) (as cited in Dickinson, 1995) sees autonomy as a capacity and critical ability to reflect on one's experience and to take charge of one's own learning. This implies

that students have to be aware of their own learning process and have to be capable of creating new objectives while teachers, as Voller avers (1997), are seen as facilitators, counselors and resources.

Learners who are involved in making choices and decisions feel more secure in their learning (Joiner, cited in McCafferty, 1981). Teachers should therefore teach students to: a) take responsibility for their own learning, b) set personal as well as academic goals, c) participate actively in their learning process, d) make good use of study environments and e) evaluate and assess their own learning process (Naizhao and Yanling, n.d). The autonomous learners therefore have the capacity to monitor their learning processes. To achieve this, they can determine their own goals, define and follow the path toward them (Dickinson, 1992; Holec, 1985; Little, 1995).

In their research study, Naizhao and Yanling (n.d) consider that learner autonomy should involve learners, teachers, teaching content and resources. To explain the interrelationship among these aspects, they created a visual model of autonomous classroom teaching.
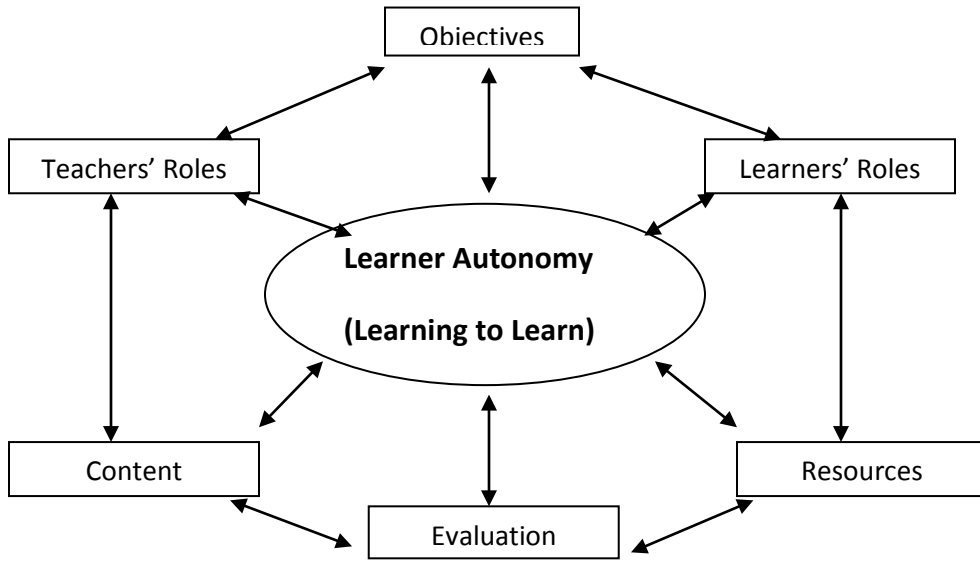
(Fig. 1. Learner Autonomy.Naizhao and Yanling )

According to Naizhao's and Yanling's model, teachers are organizers of the teaching process and they act as instructors and facilitators for improving learner autonomy; through their guidance students become more active constructors of knowledge. This model was created to emphasize the importance of a clear focus for teaching and learning and the factors *objectives, evaluation, resources* and *content* have been included as tools to provide students with feedback. *Learner autonomy* has been placed as the core of the model because the product and source of actual learning occur within the classroom as students learn to learn.

Another element that plays a role in the process of autonomy is responsibility; autonomy and responsibility are related and both require active involvement. According to Scharle and Szabó (2000), responsibility may be understood as being in charge of something, but with the implication that one has to deal with the consequences of one's

own actions. The main characteristic of autonomy as an approach to learning is that students take some significant responsibility for their own learning (Boud, 1988).

Given the arguments by a number of authors, described above, the present researcher decided to conduct the study under focus in order to help EFL students learn how to take responsibility for their own learning process. This was done through the setting of realistic and personal learning goals and effective use of strategies; knowledge which can also be transferred to the learning of other aspects of the language and to the learning of other subject-areas. Another important construct from this project is *motivation,* as autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners.

## 2.2 Motivation

According to Walker and Symons (1997), human motivation occurs when people are competent, have sufficient autonomy, set goals, get feedback and are affirmed by others. Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985) talks about different types of motivation based on the different reasons or goals that give rise to an action. Intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable; it comes from within and is considered more durable and self-enhancing (Kohn, 1993); and extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome.

Intrinsic motivation is motivation that is animated by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure. As Deci (1999) argues, "intrinsic motivation energizes and sustains activities through the spontaneous satisfactions inherent in effective volitional action, this is manifest in behaviors such as play, exploration, and challenge" (p.658).

Heightened self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations raise intrinsic motivation and lead to further learning (Bandura, 1986, 1993). When intrinsically motivated, students tend to employ strategies that demand more effort and that enable them to process information more deeply (Lepper, 1988) and they are able to identify goals of learning, which makes them more willing to take responsibility for their outcomes (Scharle & Szabó, 2000). Educators consider intrinsic motivation to be more desirable and to result in better learning outcomes than extrinsic motivation (Deci, 1999).

According to Lowman (1984) and Lucas (1990), in order to encourage students to become self-motivated independent learners, teachers can create a positive atmosphere by giving frequent and positive feedback that supports students' beliefs that they can do well. The ways that teachers support students' autonomy and provide useful feedback about students' learning progress, are related to students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Noels, 1997).

There are two factors that are also essential when talking about motivation: engagement and the identification of individual or personal goals. Engagement is a significant characteristic of motivation, when students feel that the topics from the class are important for their lives and when they like what they are learning, they are receptive to the lesson. According to Schlecty (1994), students who are engaged exhibit specific characteristics: a) they are attracted to their work, b) they persist in their work despite challenges and obstacles, c) they take visible delight in accomplishing their work and d) they are driven by goals, success, curiosity, originality and relationships.

Establishing individual goals is related to the learners´ own reasons for engaging with tasks. Goals can be subdivided into mastery goals, which can be compared with intrinsic values, and performance goals, which can be compared with extrinsic motivation (Broussard & Garrison, 2004). Mastery goals focus on learning for the sake of learning, whereas performance goals emphasize high achievement. Mastery goals are associated with high perceived ability, task analysis and planning, and the belief that effort improves one's ability. On the other hand, performance goals are associated with judgments about achieving, grades, or external rewards.

In addition to what authors contend, one could state that classroom motivation has to do with students' desire to participate in their own learning process. Most students, however, seem to be motivated by no more than grades and what teachers really expect from them is to feel enthusiastic about gaining new knowledge. Thus, to enhance students' motivation, it is necessary for teachers to generate authentic engagement and to promote the identification of personal goals, taking into account that not all students are motivated by the same needs or things. To do so, students can definitely make use of strategies. In the particular case of this study, the use of strategies helped students increase their motivation as there was a positive atmosphere in the classroom that helped them identify personal reading goals, feel they could well,  and understand that topics of each of the lessons are important, not only for the learning of the language but for their lives. A third important construct for this project is *reading*, which is the skill whereby students were having most problems.

**2.3 Reading**

This session will illustrate several important theoretical elements, including reading and cognition, effective readers and teaching reading effectively.

**2.3.1 Reading and Cognition**

Reading is one of the most significant skills for the school where this research study was carried out. Reading is a process that requires an active participation from the reader where students should link the words together into meaningful ideas; reading comprehension refers to the ability to go beyond the words, to understand ideas and the relationships between them (McNamara, 2007).

Carrell (1998) argued that reading as a cognitive process is related to other processes such as thinking, reasoning, studying or motivational strategies, considering that it is a process that involves many actions that the reader needs to perform in order to have an improved comprehension of the text. A reading strategy is a tool selected flexibly by the reader; because the readers have the ability to select the correct strategy, learners improved their attention, memory, communication and learning, which are key elements for meta-cognition and motivation (Carrell, 1998). Some students, however, believe that reading is a mechanical and passive process that is not meaningful for their lives, this implies that the teachers should try to find a solution that helps them understand that reading is an essential aspect of their academic and personal life.

**2.3.2 Effective Readers**

Brown (1982) referred to effective readers as those students who have some awareness of and control over their cognitive reading skills. According to Grabe (1991) effective reading is rapid, purposeful, comprehending, flexible and gradually developing.

Effective readers monitor their understanding, improve their comprehension by trying to read faster and interact actively with the text. They also consider comprehension and learning to be satisfying and productive experiences and at the same time they use some strategies to understand a text, setting clear goals for the reading and activating prior knowledge. In addition, successful readers have a healthy knowledge of structural elements of text and therefore have more accurate recall of the main ideas in the text (Commander & Stanwyck, 1997).

According to Brown and Briggs (1989), strategic readers have the following four characteristics: a) they establish goals for reading, b) they select reading strategies appropriate for the text, c) they monitor their reading to determine whether comprehension is occurring and, d) they have a positive attitude toward reading. Finally, it is also important to mention that good readers use multiple strategies constantly (Duke and Pearson, 2002).

### 2.3.3 Teaching Reading Effectively

One possibly successful way to help learners to improve the comprehension from any text is by teaching them some reading strategies and at the same time how to use them effectively and efficiently. According to Forget and Bottoms (2000), most students have difficulty in comprehending and retaining information when simply reading a text because they do not know how to read effectively. Thus, the main idea of teaching strategies is that students may then learn how to comprehend what they are reading so that way they will be able to read more effectively for their academic studies regardless of the type of text they encounter (Grabe, 1991).

Chamot and O'Malley (1996) distinguish between cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies. Cognitive reading strategies are those strategies that enable students to accomplish the reading task. And, metacognitive strategies are those which involve self-reflection (Lawrence, 2007); in other words strategies which help students to think about the process they follow before, during and after they read. Teaching cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies help students to become increasingly skillful at interpreting, understanding and analyzing. During the present research implementation cognitive strategies were employed in the hope that learners might use these kinds of techniques in order to learn and read more successfully. William and Burden (1997) argue that cognitive strategies are seen as mental processes directly concerned with the processing of information in order to learn; that is, with the obtaining, storage, retrieval or use of information (p.148).

Chamot, Barnhardt, El-Dinary & Robbins (1999) recommend the explicit teaching of cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies since they believe these might aid teachers in helping students attain their goals. Teaching learning strategies may help students to consciously control how they learn so that they can be efficient, motivated, and independent language learners. Teaching strategies explicitly should therefore include opportunities for students to reflect on the effectiveness of the strategy. Students who analyze and reflect on their learning are more effective learners; that is, they are more able to acquire, retain, and apply new information and skills ( retrieved from http://www.nclrc.org/sailing/index.html)

Explicit learning strategy instruction essentially involves a) the development of students' awareness of the strategies they use, b) teacher modeling of strategic thinking, c) student practice with new strategies, d) student self-evaluation of the strategies used, and d) practice in transferring strategies to new tasks (Chamot et al., 1999; Grenfell & Harris, 1999; Harris, 2003; Oxford, 1990).

### 2.3.4 Reading Strategies, Motivation and Autonomy

The importance of reading strategies has become increasingly recognized in the educational landscape, considering there is abundant evidence that the use of reading strategies improve reading comprehension (Bereiter & Bird, 1985; Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L., 2005; King & Rosenshine, 1993; McNamara, 2007; Ozgungor & Guthrie, 2004; Palincsar & Brown, 1984). Nevertheless, the main objective with the correct use of reading strategies is not only that students perform better but that they become interested in reading different types of books or articles.

As argued by Robb and Susser (1989), students' motivation to learn is likely to increase if students read what they choose or the books they prefer. Students who are motivated to read for knowledge and enjoyment are therefore known as engaged readers. Cambourne (1995) argues that engagement is a merger of multiple qualities that entails holding a purpose, seeking to understand, believing in one's own capability, and taking responsibility for learning. Motivation is thus key to learning, as Oldfather (1993) averred, motivation frequently makes the difference between learning that is temporary and superficial and learning that is permanent and internalized.

In sum, becoming an excellent and an active reader involves the attunement of motivational processes with cognitive and language processes in reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000, p. 408)

The following section will illustrate some of the international and local research studies that have been conducted on autonomy and reading in the EFL context.

## 2.4 Research on Autonomy and Reading in the EFL Context

### 2.4.1 Research on Autonomy

Below I will discuss various international and local studies which are focused on autonomous language learning, its benefits and its implications for students and teachers, and on the development of effective reading processes. These studies were selected considering that all of them examine phenomena similar to those included in the current study.

Xiaoxia (2005) conducted a research study in China at Zhejiang Gongshang University; where reading is a major source of input, either for academic purposes or for language and culture immersion. This study discusses how language teachers can foster learner autonomy and prepare students for self-access learning through the use of a metacognitive strategic approach in the EFL reading classroom. At the beginning of spring semester, 2004, some students from the university were asked to write a report where they reflected on the different strategies they had been using in their EFL reading lessons. The results of the study indicate that students need to be aware of their own beliefs and goals in order to become autonomous and that it is important for them to select their own strategies in order to evaluate the productivity of their own thinking. The author suggests that

effective language learning should be learner-centered, moving from teacher dependence towards learner autonomy, and that teachers can foster learner autonomy by involving students in the learning of metacognitive strategies.

The researcher concludes that taking into account student's needs and goals fosters students' intrinsic motivation to learn and that their intrinsic motivation is closely related to the perception of being able to make choices and of being somehow in control of their own learning. Xiaoxia (2005) also concludes that strategy instruction should be explicit; that is, with direct explanation, in order to help students be conscious of their purpose for reading and reading processing.

A similar study was conducted by Kocak (2003) at the English Language Preparatory School at Baskent University, Turkey. The study intended to establish whether students were ready to be involved in autonomous language learning. Questionnaires were administered to 186 students attending preparatory school and data analysis was carried out through quantitative analysis techniques. This study aimed to explore whether students learning English were ready to be involved in autonomous learning regarding three areas: motivation level in learning English, use of metacognitive strategies in learning English, and perceptions of their and their teachers' responsibilities in learning English.

The author argues that it is necessary to explore students' readiness for the changes which autonomy implies. He concludes that the majority of students perceived the role of the teacher as that of a helper who creates learning opportunities for them and who involves them in the tasks. At the same time, students indicated a strong desire not only to learn English but also to improve it as much as they could.

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Naizhao and Yanling (n.d) conducted a research study in China at Shanxi University of Finance and Economics. According to the authors, the learning of English as a foreign language in China is gaining importance and this has resulted in a flood of Chinese students enrolling in EFL courses at universities across the country. This study therefore argues that traditional Chinese teaching methods requiring passive learning are not sufficient to meet this demand, and that encouraging greater learner autonomy greatly assists students to learn efficiently and effectively. This study explores understandings of learner autonomy and the implications of teaching for learning autonomy; two teachers and 220 students were involved in this investigation over a two-year period and qualitative observations were used as part of the data.

This investigation compares the scores obtained using either traditional or autonomous teaching approaches with four groups of non-English major undergraduate tertiary students studying EFL at the University. The researchers found that as a result of the process of cultivating learner autonomy, students became more autonomous learners, and that their self-confidence in conversing in English Language had improved. Furthermore, students recognized that in order to be autonomous learners they needed to learn how to collaborate with others. The researcher concluded that students become more aware of pedagogical goals, content and strategies and that they become much more actively involved in their learning process.

In terms of local research on autonomy and language learning, different research efforts have been made. Cortés and Sanchez (2005), for instance, conducted a research study on the autonomy profiles future language teachers evidenced in a pre-service

language teaching program. This study was undertaken by the Grupo Interinstitucional de Evaluación e Investigación (GIEI), which consisted of six teachers from various universities in Colombia. For this study a group of four students was selected. During a period of nine weeks data were collected through structured observations, questionnaires and individual interviews in Spanish. During data analysis the researchers searched for specific behaviors and characteristics oriented towards the analysis of autonomy in the classroom with future teachers of foreign languages.

Four different profiles emerged: *the searcher,* who has a high level of interest in learning and prefers discussions that generate opportunities for social interaction; *the motivated but unreliable,* who shows a preference for individual work and is easily distracted, her/his concept of autonomy lies in initiative, research and the establishment of challenge; *the wind up doll,* who is conscious of his/her weaknesses in interactive processes and believes that the teacher must promote interactive processes and serve as a guide;  *and the brain,* who has a personal confidence that helps her/him to transfer what has been learnt to new contexts.

The study showed that the majority of students fall into the profile of "The Wind up Doll"; that is, the group of participants followed established rules and procedures, they depended on those around them and believed that teacher autonomy is a necessary condition for the development of learner autonomy.

The above described studies contributed to increase the researcher's knowledge on autonomy and reading processes, taking into account that each one of them provided her with meaningful insights that were taken into consideration in the current study. Elements

including the implications of teaching for autonomy, the role of collaboration in autonomy development, goal awareness, among others, were taken into account during the design of the implementation of the present action research.

Next I will discuss three international and local research studies which focus on the reading process and how to become an efficient reader.

### 2.4.2 Research on Reading

Shen and Huang (2007) conducted a collaborative action research for reading strategy instruction. As noted by the authors, EFL learners' low engagement in reading class and poor reading proficiency have been long-lasting and widespread problems challenging English teachers in Taiwan. This report involved the teacher-researcher, a teacher assistant and 46 first-year students from a technical university in Taiwan, who were enrolled in a reading class in the second semester of academic year 2006. This report focused on how action research helps teacher-researchers to seek solutions to their research problem and how it facilitates the learning of reading strategies by students. The goal was to provide a collaborative classroom environment in which teacher and students, as well as students and students, could work together and support each other, while remaining aware of their individual differences.

Data were collected through a number of instruments: pre and post assessment of reading comprehension and strategies, classroom observation field notes written by the assistant, reflective learning journal entries and semi structured interviews. This study suggests that collaborative action research can bring about change in the classroom by giving teachers a greater breadth and depth in understanding their own pedagogical practice and can lead to a more meaningful learning environment for learners. The author

concluded that although they were frustrated at the beginning of the semester, the teacher-researcher managed to modify and improve her teaching methods. Towards the end of the semester, she began to achieve some success in making her students more aware of their reading process as well as the reading strategies taught.

Perdomo (2001) conducted a research study on autonomous readers and the importance of developing thinking skills among students. The purpose of this research was to underline the need to make students autonomous readers. This same research also argued that successful mother tongue readers possess skills previously acquired which can be transferred when learning a new language. The research revealed that reading topics should not always be imposed by the teacher, but be chosen by the students based on what matters to them. The researcher concludes that taking advantage from students' interests, skills and motivation is one possible way of promoting their development as autonomous learners.

Gaona, Suarez and Gonzalez (2001) conducted a research study at Fundación Gimnasio Los Portales, an institution that promotes English in a bilingual environment, and which has three educational levels: beginners (pre-school), intermediate (primary) and advanced (high school). The authors noticed that beginner students could not read fluently nor understand what they read; intermediate students had problems understanding a text because of their lack of background knowledge and interest in the reading texts themselves; and advanced students experienced problems understanding what they read. The researchers administered a questionnaire for each level and then they worked on classroom observations to detect students' interests and difficulties. In order to help students develop reading skills, they implemented activities which were consistent with their interests in regards to the themes, the length and the reading target.

According to the authors, the effectiveness of the process was evident in that they could observe students' willingness to develop reading as part of their learning process and to improve their reading skill. The researchers also found out that in order to help students become efficient readers, teachers should make reading a stimulating activity, where students understand by analyzing, inferring, comparing and selecting what is meaningful, avoiding, in that way, reading word by word.

Thus, by looking at the different concepts and ideas expressed above, it may be observed that a research action study, similar to that carried out at the Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci, has attempted to include several important elements which should arguably be taken into account when making use of reading strategies to foster autonomy.

In this chapter, the researcher has illustrated the three main constructs that support this research project: *learner's autonomy, motivation and reading*, and at the same time she has talked about the relationship among them. The chapter also described and discussed previous research studies carried out locally and internationally in order to establish what other researchers have studied and found. In the following chapter, she will present an introduction of what action research is, what it implies and the advantages of applying it. She will also explain the general and specific objectives of the study, the description of the participants, the educational philosophy of the institution where this research was carried out (mission – vision), the institutional educational project (PEI) and the English program followed by the institution. Furthermore, she will talk about ethical considerations, data collection instruments and of how triangulation and validity was achieved.

**CHAPTER 3**

**Research Design**

This chapter will present an introduction of what action research is, what it implies and the advantages of applying it. It will also explain the general and specific objectives, the description of the participants, the educational philosophy of the institution where this research was carried out (mission – vision), the institutional educational project (PEI) and the English program followed by the institution. Furthermore, it will also describe ethical considerations, the data collected instruments and an approximation of how triangulation and validity was achieved.

**3.1 Type of Study**

This study follows an Action Research format, based on the understanding that Action Research may be included within qualitative research methodologies which emphasize collaboration between researchers and practitioners; its main purpose is to contribute both to the practical concerns of people in an immediate problematic situation, and to the goals of social science, by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework (Rapoport, 1970).

"Action research is a name given to a particular way of researching our own learning; it is a form of research that can be undertaken by people in any context. The term always implies a process of people interacting with one another" (McNiff, 2002, p.15). As defined by Burns (2010), action research involves taking a self-reflective, critical and systematic approach to exploring people's own teaching contexts. Action Research is thus

used in real contexts taking into account that the main focus is to solve real problems. According to Carr and Kemmis (1986) action research is the improvement of practice and the improvement of the situation in which the practice takes place.

Action research in education is "a process in which participants examine their own educational practice systematically and carefully, using techniques of research, this research is carried out within the context of the teachers' environment" Ferrance (2000, p.7).  In action research a teacher becomes an investigator or explorer of his or her personal teaching context (Burns 2010).  Research can involve one teacher or a group of teachers working for a common goal. It emphasizes the involvement of teachers in problems within their own classrooms and has as its primary goal the development of the teacher rather than the acquisition of general knowledge in the field of education (Oja & Smulyan, 1989).

Lewin is considered the Father of Action Research. His approach (1946) to Action Research involves a spiral of steps; the basic cycle involves the following:
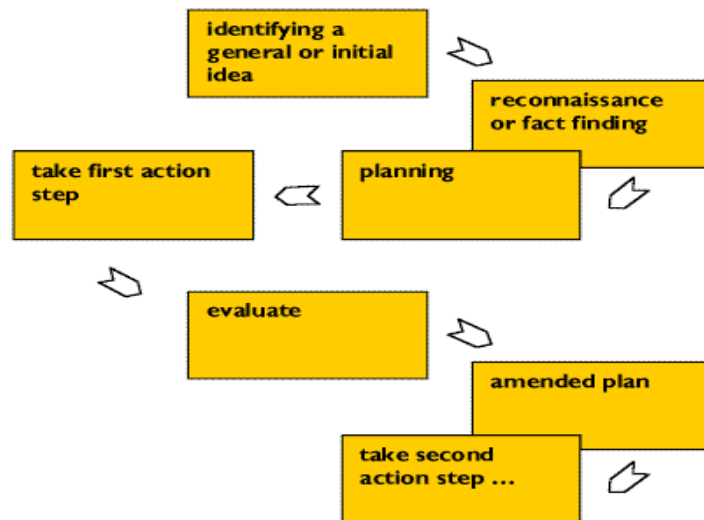


Fig.1 (Action Research approach)

According to Lewin (1946), the first step is to examine the idea carefully in the light of the means available. Frequently, more fact-finding about the situation is required. If this first period of planning is successful, two items emerge: namely, "an overall plan" of how to reach the objective and secondly, a decision in regard to the first step of action. Usually this planning has also somewhat modified the original idea. Lewin (1946) believed that if all members of a workforce were involved collaboratively in implementing and testing strategy, the organization itself would grow. Ferrance (2000, p.15) also describes five phases of inquiry in the Action Research cycle: "identification of problem area, collection and organization of data, interpretation of data, action based on data and reflection".

One of the advantages that Action Research has is that it involves researcher and participants' points of view. Action Research allows teachers to grow and gain confidence in their work: "Action research projects influence thinking skills, sense of efficacy, willingness to share and communicate, and attitudes toward the process of change. Through action research, teachers learn about themselves, their students, their colleagues, and can determine ways to continually improve" (Anonymous, n.d).

### 3.2 Context

The current study was carried out at the Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci with the principal's consent. The school is located in the neighborhood La Calleja in Bogotá, it is a private institution that was founded in 1958. The school's mission is to educate active, responsible and autonomous students who are aware of and responsible for their own learning process. Our learning approach is student-centered; focused on students' needs, abilities and interests. As a teacher I was in charge of teaching three hours of English per

week in ninth grade, which was the target population selected for the study. English classes at the school are focused on the learning of historical and cultural changes in England through different periods of time (middle-ages, The Renaissance, and so on), for that reason English teachers in upper grades (8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade) do not teach grammar per se.

### 3.3 Educational Philosophy (Mission and Vision)

The educational purpose at the school where the research was carried out is the education of man as a free and responsible human being:

"Creativity is the hallmark of our species which differentiates us from all the other animals, enabling us to produce new guidelines rather than being forced to follow given ones. Only unmistakably can the creative being reach freedom, as not only is this being not forced by nature to abide by certain rules of behavior; he or she also produces his/her own regulations by creating and recreating culture. Educating the people, hence, is to educate for creativity and freedom. This does not mean doing without rules, as no coexistence would be possible without them, but improving ever more so as to achieve human and critical formation of one's personality and serene, authentic democratic life.

(Taken from the Educational Philosophy from Leonardo Da Vinci Italian School)

### 3.4 Institutional Educational Project (PEI)

The Leonardo Da Vinci Italian High School, in accordance with the constitutions of the two governments whereupon it depends, regards the following as cornerstones in each and every educational level:

- Ensuring freedom of expression without impairing respect for others.

- Seeking and fostering plurality in all realms of knowledge.

- Promoting cultural growth.

- Creating awareness among students, as to personal responsibility in the process of human education.

The ultimate objective of the educational and formative process is the attainment, on the students' part, of a satisfactory level of autonomy which enables them to develop their capacity to think and act independently and critically in the realms of school study, their process of personal growth and their social and cultural context. (Taken from the Educational Philosophy from Leonardo Da Vinci Italian School).

**3.5 Language Learning**

The study of English, French, German and Italian languages allows students to gain more awareness of the flexibility of the different expressive and cognitive structures, akin to each of these linguistic systems, as each of them has a peculiar way of organizing reality. Comparative analysis between different languages allows, on the one hand, further insight on one's own language and culture, and on the other hand, to approach cultural realities different than one's own. Furthermore, the study of foreign literature favors in-depth analysis on cultural, social and historical issues. (Taken from the Educational Philosophy from Leonardo Da Vinci Italian School).

**3.6 Learner's Profile**

The group in which the study was implemented was made up by 19 students, 10 boys and 9 girls, between 15 and 16 years old, and who belonged to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Their language level was B2 according to the Common European Framework - intermediate level -. They had English class twice a week, one class of 60 minutes and the other of 120 minutes. The methodology for all learners in the school is based on implicit language, which means that students acquire the language while receiving input through different activities.

They were experiencing lots of changes not only physically but also emotionally because of their age. Friendship and peer pressure was an important matter to them. Although this was a heterogeneous group where the girls seemed to be more mature than the boys, there was a positive and polite relationship between them; they respected and tolerated each other. They behaved according to their age; that is, they seemed to need a guardian next to them in order to tell them what they needed to do and not to do. They did not seem to know how to make individual decisions.

During this study these students acted as participants. They were chosen because they belonged to a heterogeneous group that had never used reading strategies in their learning process. Although they did not seem to be completely autonomous learners, it was a group of students who was willing to work hard on their weaknesses.

**3.7 Researcher's role**

During this study the researcher was an observer of her own teaching process; the disposition to study the consequences of our own teaching is more likely to change and improve our practices (Corey, 1953). The researcher took on various roles. She was in charge of implementing the set of reading strategies selected for the research and training students in their use. She also administered questionnaires and checklists and at the same time asked students to complete logs after each session. The researcher was also a facilitator by giving and explaining to students the instructions they needed to follow with each one of the instruments, helping them to clear all their doubts and difficulties, and encouraging and guiding them in the use of reading strategies.

**3.8 Data Collection Instruments**

This research attempted to collect written data by administering questionnaires and checklists as well as learning logs. The researcher selected these three instruments so as to gather information that could expose different points of view – students' and teacher's – and to see the results of the implementation. In order to pilot the research instruments, the researcher designed and socialized different models for each one of the instruments; they were checked by academic peers who came up with some useful observations. In addition to that, the researcher also presented the research instruments to her school colleagues who gave her some new ideas and advice.

### 3.8.1 Questionnaire

The first instrument that was used in this research study was a questionnaire (Appendix 1). It was used in order to collect information (students' insights) about the use of reading strategies. Questionnaires are employed as devices to gather information about people's opinions by posing questions and giving respondents space in which to formulate their own replies (Hannan, 2007). According to Milne (1999), every questionnaire must have a clear purpose. Some of the advantages of questionnaires are:

- ✓ The responses are gathered in a standardized way so questionnaires are more objective.
- ✓ It is quick to collect information.
- ✓ Potentially information can be collected from a large portion of a group
- ✓ The major advantage is that their coding and tabulation is straightforward and leaves no room for rater subjectivity (Dornyei, 2002).

Students' questionnaires in this study involved nine open-ended questions in order to facilitate students' expression since, as stated by (Fowler, 2002, cited in Dornyei, 2010), respondents often like to have an opportunity to express their opinions more freely.

### 3.8.2 Checklist – Rating Scale

The second instrument that was used in this research was the checklist (Appendix 2). It was used in order to collect information about students' perceptions of autonomy and motivation as they used reading strategies. Rating scales use flexible descriptive terms

pertaining to the factor in question (Dornyei, 2001, p 201). For the purpose of this study, students had to read each one of the statements and tick one of the four response options, ranging from "always" to "never". Nunnally (1978) states that the most important consideration regarding rating scales is that the layout is clear and orderly with instructions to guide the respondents.

### 3.8.3 Log

The third instrument that was used in the research study was the log (Appendix 3). Students completed their logs with their insights after each session. Rubin (2003) suggests using logs or academic diaries for instructional purposes as a way to help students develop metacognitive awareness of their own learning process and strategies.

### 3.8.4 Researcher Journal

During the development of this current study, the researcher used a journal to write about students' behaviors, attitudes, and class environment while the lesson was taking place or sometimes as soon as the lesson had finished. The journal was used to record successful or unsuccessful activities, lesson plans or individual notes about students. The researcher selected a notebook especially chosen for keeping records of the information generated through the study.

**3.9 Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher selected three reading strategies to work on with the participants, one strategy per module (3 sessions/modules of 2 hours each). And three stages were developed throughout the research study:

The **pre-stage** was a phase where the researcher analyzed the different factors that affected ninth grade students. In order to analyze students' level of autonomy and motivation, the first checklist was applied.

During the **while stage** the researcher continued administering the checklists and questionnaires in order to get information about the use students made of the different reading strategies learned in class, and about their behaviors, reactions and perceptions. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher at the end of each module in order to have students express their points of view about a specific strategy. Similarly, students completed their logs after each module by talking about the reading strategy they had used and the things they liked or not about the class. The researcher also completed her journal after each session with information about participants and the strategy used.

Furthermore, the researcher kept a digital file with a chart with dates, the numbers assigned to the participants and with their answers, which were transcribed chronologically. The teacher's journal was also stored in a digital file. All these procedures were followed in order to keep the information digitized and organized.

During the **post-stage** the researcher did a thorough analysis of the impact of the implementation and she had a dialogue with the students about the project and its benefits.

**3.10 Validity and Triangulation**

Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as "real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest" (Patton, 2001, p. 39). A well-designed qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing (Eisner, 1991, p. 58). Engaging multiple methods, such as, observation, interviews and questionnaires will lead to more valid, reliable and diverse construction of realities. Although some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research, at the same time, they have realized the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research (Golafshani, 2003).

To improve the analysis and understanding of construction of others, triangulation is a step taken by researchers to involve several interpretations of the data at different times or locations (Golafshani, 2003). Patton (2001) believes that triangulation strengthens a study by combining methods and, according to O'Donoghue and Punch (2003), triangulation is a method of cross-checking data from multiple sources to search for regularities in the research data.

Moreover, triangulation is defined to be "a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study" (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). For the purposes of this study, triangulation, and in turn validity, was reached through the use of different data collection instruments.

**3.11 Ethical Considerations**

Taking into consideration that the research study was carried out in real circumstances and that it also involved the participation of students, it was essential that the researcher paid attention to ethical considerations.

The researcher provided a complete description of the research objectives and benefits to the participants, clarifying their right to participate or not in the research study. The researcher also explained how she would handle identity confidentiality; that is, that she was going to use numbers instead of their real names for the project and that the research study was not going to have any impact on their grades.

To obtain permission to conduct the project, the researcher asked the Coordinator from High School to sign the consent letter (Appendix 4). Informed Consent has been defined by Diener and Crandall (1978), as the procedure in which individuals choose whether to participate in an investigation or not after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions.

According to Richard Winter (1996), there are a number of ethical principles (which were considered in this research study) that researches must take into account:

✓ Make sure that the relevant persons, committees and authorities have been consulted, and that the principles guiding the work are accepted in advance by all.

✓ All participants must be allowed to influence the work, and the wishes of those who do not wish to participate must be respected.

✓ The development of the work must remain visible and open to suggestions from others.

✓ Permission must be obtained before making observations or examining documents
   produced for other purposes.

✓ Accept responsibility for maintaining confidentiality.

## 3.12 Action Plan

A systematic action plan (timeline) was followed during this research study. To know the main steps that were taken, see Appendix 5.

In this chapter the researcher explained the general and specific objectives underlying this study, and described the participants, the educational philosophy of the institution where this research was carried out ( mission – vision), the institutional educational project (PEI) and the English program followed by the institution. Furthermore, the data collected instruments used were described in detail, in addition to an approximation of how triangulation and validity was achieved, and ethical considerations.

In the following chapter, the researcher will present the pedagogical intervention.

# CHAPTER 4

## Pedagogical Intervention

This research study will attempt to determine the possible effect of the use of reading strategies to foster autonomy. This chapter will therefore describe the steps and processes that this study followed in order to try and solve the research problem. It also includes a description of the reading strategies, the lessons and the materials that were used.

### 4.1 Research Question

The research study sought to respond the following research question:

*What is the effect of the use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy?*

Students can become easily frustrated when they do not understand what they are reading and as a result, they become unmotivated. A teacher needs to teach different reading strategies and to design activities in order to help students close the gaps in their understanding. Presentation of learning strategies whether of language or other types of learning, is most effective when it is explicit, that is, when strategies taught are given names and students are told the reason for using the strategies (Chamot, 1999).

**4.2 Strategies and Activities**

In this research study, the researcher selected three different reading strategies: skimming, scanning and visualizing. Participants worked with one strategy per module and they learned how and when they had to use each one of the strategies without relying on the teacher's help. This pedagogical intervention was designed to lead them to increase their autonomy and their understanding and comprehension of different types of texts. The implementation took 20 hours and it was divided into 3 modules of 3 weeks each. Each module lasted 6 hours, 2 hours each week. There was one extra module that lasted 2 hours.

According to Anderson (1991) reading strategies can be classified into five categories: a) *supervising strategies,* b) *supporting strategies* such as skimming, scanning and visualizing c) *paraphrasing strategies*, d) *strategies for establishing coherence in text* and e) *test-taking strategies.* This study concentrated on supporting strategies because that is something that would help students in their academic lives.

The first of these supporting strategies is skimming, which is a speed-reading technique which enables learners to cover a vast amount of material rapidly. Skimming helps the readers to understand what the text is about and to activate their schemata (Anderson, 1991; Barnett, 1988). This strategy is useful for getting a more accurate picture of the text to be read or for reviewing a text already read. In addition, skimming allows the subconscious the chance to absorb the main ideas of a text. As contended by Grabe (1991), some of the strategies adopted by fluent readers include varying the reading speed,

skimming ahead, taking into account titles, headings, pictures and text structure information (p. 377).

The second supporting strategy is scanning, which means reading quickly to locate specific information; it is very useful for finding a specific name, date, statistic or fact without reading the entire article. Brown (1994) suggested that "perhaps the two most valuable reading strategies for learners as well as native speakers are skimming and scanning" (p.283). Finally, the third supporting strategy is visualizing, which is a strategy that encourages students to use mental images that emerge from reading the text. Students then draw or write what they see and justify how the text supports their image.

These three reading strategies were selected taking into account the learners' needs and the requirements from the school where this research took place. The Leonardo Da Vinci Italian High School Students (8th, 9th, 10th, 11th graders) have to read different types of extensive readings in three different languages and for that reason the purpose of this research study was to give students useful and practical tools for their academic life and to build a learner-centered classroom where they could learn to become autonomous learners. A learner-centered classroom is an environment that creates and fosters independent students who are aware of their learning processes and who, through this awareness, are able to take control of their learning (Chamot, 1999).

All the activities were chosen taking into account the learners' profile, their needs and the objectives of the research study. If teachers aim for a productive and meaningful reading lesson, it is also necessary to look at reading materials in terms of exploitability in

benefit of the students (Nuttall, 2005). According to this latter author, the criteria when choosing texts should be:

➢ Suitability of Content: The reading material should interest students and should motivate them as well.

➢ Exploitability: This refers to how the text can be used to develop students' competence as readers.

➢ Variety: A lesson can be made more interesting if a variety of texts is used.

➢ Authenticity: This refers to the importance that the learner is exposed to the same language as a native speaker, real words in a real world.

## 4.3 Timeline

During the first week participants had an introductory session with detailed information about reading strategies, their definition and the steps to use them, and their importance in the learning process. At the same time the researcher talked about the research study, its objectives and its benefits, in order that students could decide if they wanted to be part of the study or not. From the second week on, participants received input on a specific strategy, they developed practical activities in class, and an independent activity was assigned to each student so they could practice at home. In the last module (Module 4), both researcher and students concluded the reading sessions by talking about their feelings and the pros and cons of the implementation. The next chart shows how implementation was carried out:

| MODULE 1 6 hours | WEEK 1 (2 hours) | Introduction to the Reading Strategies, definitions, steps, and benefits. |
|---|---|---|
| 2 hours per week | | The teacher-researcher told students about the objectives for the study and the benefits. |
| In this module students learned about the importance of reading strategies in their learning process, and about *Skimming*. | | The teacher-researcher asked them whether they wanted to be part of the research study or not. The teacher-researcher explained the methodology that was going to be used. |
| | WEEK 2 (2 hours) | The teacher-researcher gave input to the participants and explained the reading strategy that was going to be used (skimming). The teacher-researcher showed them an example. (Appendix 6) |
| | WEEK 3 (2 hours) | The participants worked with the exercise: "Pulp Friction" (Appendix 7) The participants were assigned homework in order to practice the reading strategy studied in the class (*skimming)*. (Appendix 8) |
| MODULE 2 6 hours | WEEK 1 ( 2 hours) | In the second module participants worked on *scanning*. |
| 2 hours per week | | The teacher-researcher gave input to the participants and explained the reading strategy for the session. |
| In this module students learned about *Scanning*. | | The teacher-researcher showed them some examples (Appendix 9) |
| | WEEK 2 ( 2 hours) | The participants worked with the exercise: "Pulp Friction" (Appendix 10) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **WEEK 3 (2 hours)** | Participants worked during the session with the exercise: "A modern look at Monsters' " by Daniel Cohen (Appendix 11) |
| **MODULE 3** **6 hours** 2 hours per week In this module students learned about *Visualizing* | **WEEK 1 (2 hours)** | In the third module participants worked on *visualizing.* The teacher-researcher gave input to the participants and explained the reading strategy for the session. The teacher-researcher showed them the poem "Stopping by woods on a Snowy evening" by Robert Frost (Appendix 12) The teacher-researcher asked them to visualize the scene, creating mental images in order to understand what the poet wanted to express. |
| | **WEEK 2 ( 2 hours)** | The participants worked with some visualizing exercises. (Appendix 13) Students had to work in an exercise as homework. |
| | **WEEK 3 (2 hours)** | The participants were assigned homework in order to develop different types of exercises.(Appendix 14) |
| **MODULE 4** **2 hours** | | The teacher-researcher and students talked about the three reading strategies they learned during the last modules. |

### 4.4 Methodology

The next section will show the methodology followed by the researcher during the implementation. The three stages, as noted in the previous chapter, were followed during the process of the implementation of the modules:

*Pre-Stage*

➢ During the first session participants were told about the characteristics of the research study, the different instruments that the teacher researcher was going to use and the way they were going to develop the sessions.

➢ The teacher-researcher piloted the questionnaire and checklists with her school colleagues to verify whether the questions and/or statements were clear enough for the participants.

➢ During the second session, the first checklist was applied to determine students' initial perceptions about reading strategies, goals and autonomy among others.

*While- stage*

➢ The teacher-researcher continued the process of applying different instruments to have valuable information for the analysis. Questionnaires were administered at the end of each module in order to have students express their points of view about a specific strategy.

➢ Permanent observation was developed by the teacher-researcher to verify students' behaviors, attitudes and levels of motivation.

*Post-stage*

➢ At this stage students continued working with the reading strategies.

➢ The final checklist was applied to identify and analyze students' final perceptions about reading strategies, levels of motivation, goals and autonomy among others.

➢ In the last module (2 hours) the teacher-researcher and the students talked about the three reading strategies learned during all the sessions, and their advantages and benefits for their academic and personal lives.

The following lesson plan (SESSION 1) will show the methodology that was followed during each of the lessons of the implementation.

In the first stage of each lesson plan, *warming up*, students brainstormed ideas about the importance of reading strategies and about the specific strategy for the module. The teacher explored those ideas with them in order to engage students with the topic.

| Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher and student activity | Time and interaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Warming – Up** | To explore students' ideas related to this particular strategy – skimming - <br><br> To engage students with the reading strategies topic | The teacher elicited from students what they knew about skimming. <br><br> Students brainstormed ideas about the importance of using reading strategies in the school and how this could help them in their learning process. | 5 min <br> T-Ss <br> Ss-T <br><br><br> 5 min. <br> Ss-T |

In the second stage, which was *strategy presentation*, the teacher presented the definition of the strategy, its importance and the steps they need to follow when using it.

| Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher and students activity | Time and Interaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategy Presentation** | To familiarize students with the strategy skimming. | The teacher presented the skimming strategy to the students, and its definition, benefits and use. | 45 min <br> T-Ss |

In the third stage, *activity practice,* the teacher showed students a reading text where they had to use the strategy by following the instructions they had been given previously.

After completing this stage, students sat together in order to compare general and specific ideas about the text, and then, they shared their ideas with the group and with the teacher, who took a few minutes in order to clarify ideas and to let them express their feelings about the reading exercise.

| Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher and students activity | Time and interaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Activity Practice** | To introduce skimming strategy among students. | The teacher showed students a text called "Body Language" and they had to read the first sentence of each paragraph in order to get the general idea from the text. | 30 min. GW |
| **Practice** | To build collaborative work among students. | Students got in pairs in order to share ideas about the text and its general meaning. | 15 min Ss-Ss |
| **Practice** | To encourage students to give general ideas from the text without reading the whole text. | Students expressed their ideas about the meaning of the text with the class. | 10 min GW |

In the final stage, *wrap up*, the teacher talked about the activity and the strategy used that day and asked students about their points of view.

| Stage | Aim | Procedure Teacher and students activity | Time and interaction |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Wrap - up** | To have students express their feelings about the strategy used | Students closed the activity by giving a general impression of what skimming is and how it can be useful in their academic and personal life. | 10 min |

This chapter presented the steps and processes that the researcher followed in order to solve the research problem. It also included a description of the reading strategies, and a description of the methodology and materials that were used. In the following chapter the researcher will present the findings from this research study.

# CHAPTER 5

## Data Analysis

This chapter will present the findings and the interpretation of the data gathered

through the different instruments used in the research study. It will also explain the type of

approach to data analysis used in this study.

### 5.1 Grounded Approach

Grounded Theory is a data analysis approach developed by Glaser and Strauss

(1967) which provides a methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data

systematically gathered and analyzed (Strauss and Corbin 1994). Grounded Theory is a

theory which is inductively derived from the phenomenon it represents and meets four

central criteria: fit, understanding, generality and control (Strauss and Corbin 1990). Fit

entails that the theory fits the substantive data. Understanding entails that the theory is

comprehensible to all involved in the area of study. Generality requires that the theory is

applicable in a variety of contexts. Control implies that the theory should provide control

with regard to action toward the phenomenon.

Grounded theory provides a number of stages to analyze data: data collection,

coding, naming categories and subcategories and theory development. An important feature

of grounded theory is theoretical sensitivity, which refers to the ability of the researcher to

understand the meaning and subtlety of data. Theoretical sensitivity has been described by

Glaser (1978) as the process of developing the insight with which a researcher comes to the research situation. This sensitivity represents an ability not only to use personal and professional experience imaginatively, but also literature (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). These authors state that a qualitative researcher requires theoretical and social sensitivity, the ability to maintain analytical distance while at the same time drawing upon past experience and theoretical knowledge to interpret what is seen, astute powers of observation, and good interactional skills (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 18).

In grounded theory the analysis begins as soon as the first piece of data is collected and the researcher's role is to analyze it carefully. The research process itself guides the researcher to examine all of the possible rewarding avenues towards understanding; this is precisely why the research method is one of discovery (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The purpose of grounded theory is to build theory that illuminates the area under study (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used grounded theory because it is a suitable approach for making sense of qualitative data; it can be used to understand what lies behind any phenomenon about which little is yet known (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

## 5.2 Data Management

Once the pedagogical implementation started in March 2012, it was necessary to organize the information that was being collected through the different instruments so as to facilitate its identification and retrieval. Due to the amount of data gathered, the following procedures were established:  Students' questionnaires were saved in a digital file. In this file the researcher had a chart with dates, numbers of the participants with each one of the

answers transcribed chronologically. Students' responses to the logs and the checklists were also organized in a second digital file. Finally, the teacher completed her journal after each session and stored it in a third digital file. A physical copy of the teacher's journals and students' questionnaires, logs and checklist were stored in a folder. In order to protect students' identity, the researcher decided to code the documents and digital files from student 1 to student 16 to identify the sixteen students who took part in the research project. This data collection period, as previously noted, took three months from March 12th to May 8th; 20 hours and ten sessions which were divided into three modules from six hours each and one module of two hours.

## 5.3 Data Analysis

The main objective of this section of the document is to reveal the findings that emerged after analyzing the information collected through the students' questionnaires, checklists, logs and teacher's journals. The questionnaires, which had nine open ended questions in English, were answered by students at the end of each one of the modules (March 26th, April 17th and May 8th). They enabled the researcher to identify students' insights – positive and negative - about the use of different reading strategies and their implications on their autonomy and motivation. The students' logs were completed at the end of each of the modules and the checklists were answered in the second and final session of the implementation (March 20th and May 8th). Both of them were examined to reach the same objective. The teacher's journal was written down immediately after each one of the ten sessions in order to record essential information from the class and to reflect upon students' behaviors during class and their attitudes towards the implementation.

**5.4 Data Reduction**

In order to establish the units of analysis and define the categories and subcategories that would answer the research question, the researcher followed various coding procedures, which represent the operations by which data were broken down, conceptualized, and put back together in new ways. As argued by Corbin & Strauss (1990), coding is the central process by which theories are built from data. Analysis in grounded theory is composed of three major types of coding: open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

The researcher started the analysis of the data (open coding) by analyzing the information students had written in the questionnaires, checklist, logs, and what she had reported in her journal, identifying similar comments or patterns that could help her to come up with an initial set of codes or key concepts. During the analysis of each instrument the research question and the research objective established at the beginning of the study were taken into consideration. The researcher also identified those elements that seemed not to be directly related to the research question and classified them as outliers which were to be analyzed again in further stages of the data analysis process. The researcher used a different color for each instrument to discriminate data easily. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990, p. 62), during open coding the data are broken down into discrete parts, closely examined, compared for similarities and differences, and questions are asked about the phenomena as reflected in the data.

During this open coding procedure, the researcher created an information table where she was able to write the name of the strategy students used and students' behaviors,

attitudes and general comments about the session. When she analyzed all that information key words such as goals, motivation, independence, participation and responsibility came up. These words, when put together, guided the researcher in the identification of the unit of analysis: use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy. This unit of analysis was then used by the researcher to focus her analysis during subsequent coding stages.

In the second part of the analysis, the researcher conducted axial coding, where data were put together in new ways by making connections between categories and sub-categories (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 97). Once the researcher had identified common information in the data, she reduced the number of codes and began to group the concepts into sub-categories**.** Finally, the properties and dimensions that composed or constituted each of these sub- categories were established and data were subsumed into one core category. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) the process of grouping concepts that seem to pertain to the same phenomena is called categorizing; the name of the categories is usually the one that seems most logically related to the data it represents, and should be graphic enough to remind the research quickly of its referent (Corbin and Strauss, 1990, p. 67).

Based on the interpretation of the findings and the analysis the researcher did during open and axial coding, one core category emerged: **Becoming an autonomous learner** and three subcategories or specifying features: **motivation, self-direction** and **becoming a strategic reader.** These three subcategories correspond to the elements that helped students to become more autonomous learners.

The following diagram represents the core category and subcategories emerging from data analysis:

| RESEARCH QUESTION: *What is the possible effect of the use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy?* | |
| --- | --- |
| **Core Category:** | **Sub-categories:** |
| Becoming an Autonomous Learner. | <ul><li>Strategic Reading</li><li>Motivation</li><li>Self – Direction</li></ul> |

*Diagram 1: Core category and subcategories emerging from data analysis.*

Lastly, during selective coding, the researcher started to: a) systematically relate the central category to the sub-categories, b) validate those relationships, and c) do further refinement. As a result of the process, she started to create the storyline; that is, to develop a theory or an explanation that could help her answer the research question as it will be evinced below.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define selective coding as "the process of selecting the central or core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development" (p.116). Through selective coding the categories are integrated and developed into the theory. Creating relationships among the categories is an important step to developing theory; selective coding is one means through which this is accomplished (Stamp, 1999).

**5.4.1.Core Category: Becoming an Autonomous Learner**

This core category makes reference to the learners ' increasing level of commitment to their own learning as they became aware of how they could take control of their own learning through the use of reading strategies and it incorporates three subcategories: **motivation**, **self-direction** and **strategic reading**. The researcher was able to establish that students became autonomous learners through the analysis of the different instruments that were used during the data collection stage, and which were applied in different stages of the implementation.

Data obtained from the different instruments suggested that students started to become autonomous as they learnt how to select and use the best reading strategy in order to understand different types of readings. In addition, students understood the characteristics and purpose of each strategy and in that way they knew which one was more effective and how to use it without relying on the teacher's opinion. Furthermore, they were also able to identify that they could transfer the knowledge they had gained about strategies to the learning of other areas of the target language as well as use it to enhance their academic life at school. Lastly, students identified the importance of their active participation in all learning activities.

The teacher's journal and students' logs showed that most of the students became more engaged in their learning process as a result of their participation in the implementation. They also showed that they are now more aware of the fact that they need to take initiatives in learning activities to become not only effective readers but efficient

learners. The answers in the questionnaires and checklists also provided evidence of how students' perceptions changed from the beginning to the end of the implementation.

The researcher will now proceed to explain and support in detail the above described findings. It is important to note that for the sake of triangulation the researcher took data from each one of the instruments in order to illustrate the subcategories.

### 5.4.2 Sub-category 1: Strategic reading

Strategic reading is the first subcategory that is part of the core category of becoming an autonomous learner**.** This was an important element that was taken into account during data analysis, by considering reading as one of the most significant skills for the school where the research study was carried out, as well as the skill in which students were having more problems. For that reason the researcher decided to work with three different reading strategies that might help students to comprehend what they were reading in an effective way.

A strategic reader is a person who applies effective methods throughout the process of reading (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991). Becoming a strategic reader is believed to be an essential factor in the development of students' autonomy. When students are able to select and use a specific strategy they are in the process of becoming autonomous readers, and this was revealed in several of the answers from the students' logs and questionnaires:

> "I now understood when and how I have to use scanning, skimming and visualizing; I am able to use them in different types of readings" (Student 9, may 8th).

> "After know about scanning I can use it in a specific situation because I know its characteristics and when I have to apply it" (student 5, April 17th).

"Reading strategies helped me to develop my autonomy as an English student because I know how to use the strategies depending on the readings" (student 10, May 8th).

During the implementation, students understood that effective readers monitor their understanding, improve their comprehension by trying to read faster, interact actively with the text and at the same time make use of strategies. The researcher reported some of these aspects in her journal:

"Today students worked with different types of exercises where they had to select the suitable strategy to be used. It was great to see how they decided and selected the appropriate strategy and how they improved their comprehension of the text. At the end of each activity there was feedback to know if they had used the strategies properly (session 9, may 8th).

Furthermore, the students' questionnaires demonstrated changes in students' perceptions about their autonomy as English students from the initial stages of the implementation to the final ones. This excerpt was taken from the answers they provided at the beginning of the implementation.

"I don't think the reading strategies will help me to develop my autonomy as student because the teacher helps me to understand when I have to use them and how" (student number 2, March 26th)

The following excerpts show, however, how at the end of the implementation their answers changed in an interesting way:

"The reading strategies will help me to develop my autonomy as an English student because I can select which I can use considering its characteristics" (student 10, may 8th).

" After using the reading strategies, I consider myself an autonomous learner because I have tools that help me in my studies and I know how to use them" (student 9, may 8th).

Additionally, the following graphic comes from the analysis of one the answers students wrote in the checklist that was applied in the last session of the implementation. It shows how reading strategies develop students' autonomy as English students.

*Learning about reading strategies helps me to improve my autonomy*
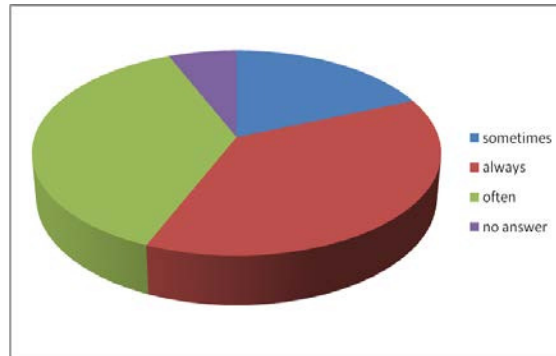


**Checklist, session number ten, May**

As a result of the implementation process, students realized that in order to comprehend texts easily they need to become strategic readers. Learning to become strategic readers, however, not only helped them to read better but also increased their motivation during the implementation as well as in other aspects of their learning language process.

**5.4.3 Sub- Category 2: Motivation**

This subcategory emerged as a response to the second objective of the project, which was related to the possible benefits that the use of reading strategies has on motivation. Ushioda (1996) explicitly states that autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners. Students' motivation has to do with students' desire to participate in

their learning process. Most of my students, however, were initially motivated by no more than the grades obtained, as noted in the statement of the problem. For that reason it was important for the researcher to motivate learners and to help them keep their interest not only in reading but in language learning in general; motivation to learn is characterized by long-term, quality involvement in learning and commitment to the process of learning (Ames, 1990).

Notes taken from the teacher's journal indicated how learning about reading strategies motivated students in their learning process. In different sessions she wrote:

> "I consider today was a productive session, my students were motivated with the new topics. They worked in all the activities, their participation and attitude was fantastic, they followed the instructions properly". (Session number 03, March 27th)

> "Before we started the exercises, students were talking about reading strategies and they expressed their interest in the topic and showed enthusiasm for the activities where they were learning new and different things" (Session number 07, April 23rd)

> "Although there are many aspects that have to be improved, today they worked with a good attitude, they participated and I heard some positive comments about the benefits in the use of reading strategies" (session number 6, April 17th)

Additionally, the students' questionnaires revealed changes in students' perceptions about reading and their language learning process from the initial stages of the implementation to the final ones. This first excerpts were written at the end of the first module when students had just learnt about one strategy:

> "The reading strategy used in class didn't help me to read texts of my own interest. I can read without them" (student number 14, March 26th).

> "Reading strategies haven't increased my motivation as an English student, I don't like reading" (student number 3, March 26th)

"After using reading strategies, my reading skills haven't improved in nothing" (student number 7, March 26th)

The following excerpts show, however, how after no more than one month of the implementation their answers changed in an interesting way:

"I believe this strategies are useful for my life especially in the school and that motivate me to continue learning more about them" (student 2, may 8th)

"After using reading strategies my reading skills have improved because I can read faster and better" (student 1, April 17th)

"The reading strategy used in class helped me to read texts of my own interest, I like novels" (student 5, April 17th)

When analyzing the students' logs, the researcher also noticed how their opinions varied from the first log to the last:

"When I use reading strategies I feel unmotivated because I don't believe these strategies will help me in my studies" (student 8, march 26th).

"When I used reading strategies I feel good because I understand all the paragraphs and before I could not" (student 16, april 17th)

"I would like to know more about reading strategies because they are easy and I can use them." (Student 3, april 17th)

"I would like to know more about reading strategies because I will use them in my exams to understand and get god grades" (student 10, May 8th)

McCombs & Pope (1994) have found motivation to be an important element which deserves consideration within the reading process; when students are interested in the topic or in the story itself they would enjoy reading and would read more frequently with complete satisfaction of the things they are learning; Watkins & Coffey (2004) note that

without motivation even the advanced level readers can hardly be effective readers. Motivation is what makes us do something or not (Day & Bamford, 1998).

The following graph resulted from, and illustrates, the analysis of the answers students wrote in the checklist that was applied in the last session of the implementation. It shows how reading strategies increased students' motivation. Answers related to the descriptor *motivation* were indicators that their motivation had increased as a result of the implementation, considering that they realized that the use of reading strategies helps them in their learning process.

***Reading strategies increases my motivation as an English student…***
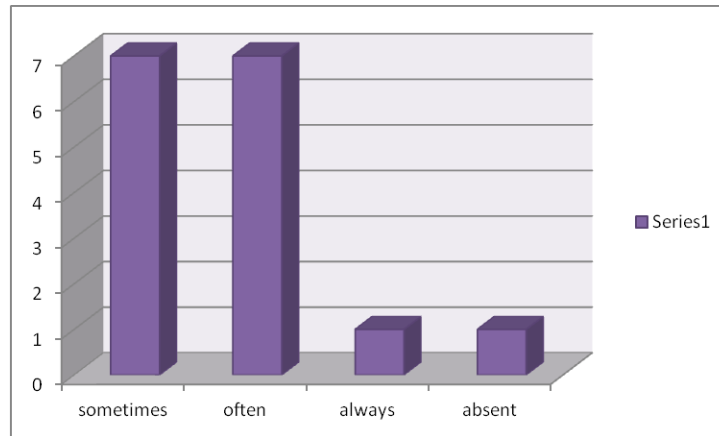


**Checklist, session number ten, May 8th**

The answers students wrote in the questionnaires, logs and checklists reveal how the use of reading strategies helped them feel more motivated towards the reading activities done inside and outside the classroom as they were able to understand texts easily. According to the students who participated in the research study, the use of reading

strategies had multiple benefits on their motivation since they had the possibility of reading and understanding academic texts and texts of their own interest.

Students' reported that their reading skills had improved after learning and using all of the reading strategies; therefore, their participation during the lesson increased in a positive way. Furthermore, students were motivated to continue working actively on their reading process, but most importantly, they were able to identify that they could transfer the knowledge they had gained about strategies to the learning of other areas of the target language as well as use it to enhance their academic life at school. That is they started to learn how to become self-directed learners and were motivated to do so.

### 5.4.4 Sub-Category 3: Self- Direction

The third sub-category identified was: *self-direction*. This last subcategory was identified as a response to the first objective of the project related to the development of students' autonomy through the use of reading strategies. Self-direction takes place when students take responsibility for their own learning process; people who take initiative in their learning, learn more and learn better (Knowles, 1975). The majority of self-directed learners have become aware that teachers are not wholly responsible for what and how the learners should be taught (Knowles, 1975). Both the researcher and students experienced this phenomenon as the implementation was taking place. However, it was progressive and was not clearly present before and at the beginning of the implementation.

The following excerpts were written at the beginning of the implementation, yet they provide evidence of the students' lack of initiative and responsibility:

"The things I learned today won't help me to be more autonomous in my studies because I need someone to tell me what I have to do and when" (student 14, March 26th)

"Using the skimming strategy wasn't positive because I think won't be helpful in my future" ( student 3, March 26th)

When students were working on the first strategy – skimming – on March 26th; the researcher also observed a lack of interest in the activity; there were some negative comments about reading and the methodology. Their lack of responsibility and their lack of interest in getting new knowledge were reflected in the researcher's journal:

"Students don't want to work; they don't understand how important this topic is for their lives, they just want me to tell them everything they have to do" (session number 3, March 26th)

The researcher noticed, however, that the answers students wrote in their logs in terms of responsibility for their own learning were different towards the middle and the end of the implementation:

"Scanning will help me to be more autonomous in my studies because I can work without help, by doing things by myself" (student 6, April 17th).

"The reading strategies I have used will help me to be more autonomous in my learning process because I can use them in my exams and I can understand more easy" (student 11, April 17th)

"What I like the most is that after knowing about the reading strategies I finally understand the importance of being autonomous and that I have to pay attention in my learning process that is something important for me and I need to take things with responsibility" (student 7, may 8th)

Students identified responsibility as an important factor that takes part in their process of becoming independent learners. As Boud (1988) argues, the main characteristic

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of autonomy is that students take certain significant responsibility for their own learning.

These findings were also revealed in a number of the answers written in the questionnaires:

> "After learning about reading strategies I have realize that responsibility is an important factor in my learning process" (student 12, may 8th).

> "Now I understand that I have to be responsible for my things because I want to be autonomous" (student 9, march 26th)

The researcher also identified students' positive attitudes through the use of reading strategies and those thoughts were reflected in her journal:

> "In today's session I saw that my students already knew what they have to do, they realized they had to follow the same instructions as last session and they started working by themselves" (session number 8, April 24th)

> "I really liked the things I've done with this group of students, they finally understood the importance of autonomy and responsibility not just in term of reading and language studies but in their daily life" (session number 9,May 7th)

> "Today is the final session, students will reflect on the things we have done. One of them mentioned the importance of strategies and how they will help them in their exams and another one highlighted responsibility as a key factor in school" (session 10, May 8th).

Moreover, the researcher noticed in the data the importance that students gave to their independent work and to their ability to work without the help of the teacher or without direct supervision. According to Voller (1997), students have to be capable of creating new objectives while teachers are seen as facilitators, counselors and resources. The researcher identified students' awareness and perceptions towards this topic and it was revealed in a number of the answers from their logs and questionnaires:

"What I like about this class was that I can read the text all by myself and without asking for help" (student 4, student's log, April 17th)

"The reading strategy used in the class today helped me to read texts of my own interest because I can understand the books fast and alone" ( student 6, student's questionnaire, April 17th)

During the session on April 24th, when students were working on the last strategy – visualizing - , the researcher noticed that students were working independently while the teacher was walking around the class monitoring the activity. This situation shows major attitude changes towards responsibility and autonomy. The feeling of satisfaction was recorded in her journal:

"Students were quiet and relaxed, there wasn't any problem with the activity, just one student asked me something but there was a feeling of "mission accomplished" " (session number 08, April 24th)

It is important to mention that the group of learners who participated in the research study increased their level of self-direction after the implementation as a result of the knowledge they had gained about the use of strategies. During the implementation, they learnt not only about reading strategies, but also about how to work independently and its benefits. The researcher played an important role during the implementation by teaching students the meaning and importance of the use of reading strategies and about the concept of autonomy and the relationship between these two areas.

As a result, they  started to take more responsibility for their own learning process, taking into account that they knew what they needed to do and how to do it; they also took initiative in their learning by searching new strategies and methodologies that could be

helpful in their lives with the desire of learning more and different things. As argued by Knowles (1975), they were able to understand that a learner has to be responsible for their own learning process and that the teacher is mainly a facilitator; that is, they realized the teacher does not have all the responsibility about what and how they should be taught.

To conclude, I can argue that the students who participated in the research project became strategic readers considering they are now able to select and use a specific reading strategy depending on the type of text they are to read. Furthermore, their motivation as English students increased because they are now able to understand different types of readings and other language learning tasks easily. They also progressively understood the importance of taking responsibility for their own learning process, and even though the instructional design was focused on reading, students had the opportunity to reflect on their language learning process in general and their role in that process.

## CHAPTER 6

### Concluding Thoughts

This chapter will present the conclusions, pedagogical implications, limitations, further research that emerged as a result of the analysis of the data. For the current study, the research question posed was: *What is the possible effect of the use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy?* And the collected data let the researcher identify three categories that allowed her to answer this core question.

This research project was aimed at guiding students to make proper use of three different reading strategies in order to analyze their effect in the development of their autonomy. This was the first time that the participants had the opportunity to use, reflect and analyze how the use of reading strategies could be helpful for their future and how their use would help them to become autonomous learners. The objective of this research project was to establish the effects that the teaching of reading strategies had in the development of students' autonomy.

The study concluded that *becoming a strategic reader* is an important part in the development of students' autonomy considering that as students become more strategic readers, they will need less support from their teacher to comprehend what they are reading. Strategic readers use a variety of strategies and skills as they construct meaning (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991); when students are able to select and use a strategy, they have achieved independence in using the strategy. Readers who are not strategic often encounter difficulties in their reading (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991). During the implementation, students realized that strategies are useful not only for reading and understanding texts, but for the learning of other language skills and for the development of other academic tasks. It

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is also important to mention that thanks to the meaningful and important role that the teacher-researcher had during the implementation as she explicitly discussed with students the value of the use of strategies as well as the concept of autonomy, students had the possibility to learn how to be more independent.

In addition, the study showed that students were highly *motivated* in the learning of reading strategies, showing their desire to participate in their own learning process. Students' behavior and answers in the different instruments were indicators that their motivation had increased as a result of the implementation. The learning and developing of reading strategies generated high levels of motivation as it was evidenced by the teacher-researcher. Students showed states of satisfaction and conviction about the importance of the things they were learning.

The researcher also noticed that learning about reading strategies in combination with students' interest in fostering their own autonomy increased their levels of interest. Motivation explains why people decide to do something, how hard they are going to pursue it and how long they are willing to sustain the activity (Dörnyei, 2001). Motivation has enormous power on the learners´ approach to school subjects and on their willingness to participate in their learning process.

When students are motivated to read a text of their own interest, they decide to employ strategies to help them comprehend what they are reading: "Motivational practices are likely to have positive effects on students' conceptual knowledge acquisition and strategic development as well as on their motivational dispositions and behaviors" (Guthrie, Wigfield, Barbosa, Perencevich, Taboada, Davis, Scafiddi, & Tonks, 2004, p. 416).

In the present study, students were motivated to continue working on their reading process considering that they were able to: read and comprehend different types of texts and continue working on the development of other aspects related to their academic lives. As highlighted by Robb and Susser (1989), the main objective with the correct use of reading strategies is that students be interested in reading different types of books, articles or things they are interested in; by reading what they choose, students' motivation to learn is likely to increase.

Similarly, *self- direction* took place when students took responsibility for their own learning process, when they took initiative, selected, managed and evaluated their own learning activities; self-directed learners demonstrate a greater awareness of their responsibility in making learning meaningful and by monitoring themselves (Garrison, 1997). These characteristics were not evidenced at the beginning of the implementation, but students experienced these changes as the implementation was taking place.

At the beginning of the implementation, students felt uncomfortable and uninterested in the different activities, but the current study shows that students' attitudes and perceptions about reading activities changed progressively thanks to the activities developed during the implementation and to the knowledge they gained about the value of strategy use. The teacher researcher identified states of comfort and pleasure when students were developing their activities; these positive reactions influenced them to increase their autonomy and allow them to learn, understand and participate actively in all the activities. As Lyman (1997) avers, learners were curious and willing to try new things.

The researcher also observed that, by the end of the implementation, students were able to acknowledge the fact that all the things they had learned during the sessions could help them to be more autonomous, as they might be able to complete a specific task or to answer an exam without any help by making use of strategies. Hence, it could be stated that students were able to identify that they could transfer the knowledge they had gained about reading strategies to the learning of other language areas.

From these findings the researcher can conclude that the use of reading strategies permitted students not only to comprehend the meaning of a text, but also fostered their autonomy, since they were able to select and use the best reading strategy to understand different types of readings without depending on the teacher's opinion. Ariza (2004) believes that autonomy refers to the exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning as well as their right to determine the direction and means of their own learning. The researcher also realized that teaching students how to use reading strategies has a positive effect in the development of students' autonomy, considering that autonomy has to do with all decisions that the learners make in order to accomplish their own goals (Dickinson, 1987).

## 6.1 Pedagogical Implications

Reading is a process that involves many actions that are performed to have improved comprehension of the text. Carrell (1998) explains that reading is a cognitive process that must be related to other processes such as thinking, reasoning, studying or motivational strategies. Therefore, using reading strategies may potentially benefit readers in different settings, especially those who have problems to understand or comprehend

textbooks or any type of text. Yet, readers should not only know about strategies but how to use them effectively and efficiently as this information is key to their success in learning.

Evidence that reading strategies improve reading comprehension has been cited by Bereiter & Bird (1985). Reading successfully goes beyond word recognition and relies upon comprehension of a text; effective readers might use strategies to understand what they read and they also monitor their understanding. Hence, one of the pedagogical implications of this study is related to the need for EFL teachers and institutions of identifying the value and importance of using and teaching students about reading strategies so as to help them become strategic and efficient readers.

In common with the researcher in this study, who decided to teach students explicitly about three reading strategies (skimming, scanning and visualizing), other EFL teachers  can make use of these pedagogical tools in an effort to help language learners to a) read effectively and comprehend the meaning of different texts, b) learn to use the best strategy in specific reading situations, c) become better readers not just for her class but for their entire academic and personal lives, and d) learn how to take control of their own language learning process. By knowing how to be in charge of their own reading and overall language learning process, students may well become more motivated and show more engagement in the language classroom.

## 6.2 Limitations

The present project has enriched ninth grade students' reading skills through the teaching of effective reading strategies that at the same time increased their motivation and autonomy.  Nevertheless, a certain number of limitations were evidenced during the process:

The first limitation was the time taking into account that in March – when the implementation was taking place - there were many activities taking place at the school and students had to go to the auditorium to attend lectures about different topics, which affected the normal development of classes. Bearing in mind that students had English class twice a week, there were a couple of days when the teacher researcher decided to work on the implementation and not on the program, which generated a delay in the development of the school's syllabus.

Another limitation that was reflected during the first sessions of the implementation had to with students' attitudes as these were not always positive. They did not know what they had to do, they did not follow instructions, they did not understand the idea of the lessons, and they did not want to work. In the following sessions, however, they realized and understood the importance of the project and their behavior changed. This change was an indicator that their motivation had increased and it was reflected in their positive attitude during subsequent sessions; however as stated above, it was a progressive attitudinal change.

Another limitation was observed within the data collection instruments, specifically in Questions 5,6 and 7 from the questionnaire and in Questions 5 and 6 from the students' checklist; the present format of the rubric of the questions might well encourage respondents to opt for a specific answer with medial or other biased answers, and will be rewritten in an attempt to avoid these flaws in future research.

**6.3 Further Research**

  The current study might be the starting point for future research on various areas. Research related to the *effects of using reading strategies with primary students* is a further step that can be taken. A project like this could help young learners to avoid possible reading problems and could teach them how to become better readers from the very beginning of their language learning process. Future research studies can also focus on: a) teaching other reading strategies to $10^{th}$ or $11^{th}$ graders, b) offering language teachers the necessary tools, knowledge and guidance to know how to appropriately teach reading strategies, and c) examining the impact of such training or professional development program in students' performance. When the teacher is trained, he or she is able to appropriately teach about reading strategies and the students would benefit from that.

  Nowadays, there is an important topic for teenagers which is the use of technology. Research related to the teaching of reading strategies in online environments can also prove useful as technology offers students new possibilities for learning. Even though the use of technology is not related to the present study, the researcher deems necessary to suggest it for further research considering that technology has changed the pace of life and in the same way has changed the way people communicate and learn. Technology is a reality among our students and for that reason it should be taken into consideration when addressing reading practices in and outside the classroom.

  In a nutshell, the goals and findings of this study allow the researcher to suggest further researcher on topics such as the use of reading strategies with primary students, teacher training and the teaching of reading strategies online, fields that would allow

students and teachers to be in contact with the real world and experience important benefits

that might be extended to other members of the educational community as well.

As argued by The British Columbia Ministry of Education Project (2006, p.17):

> "Students who can monitor their learning, assess their strengths and weaknesses,
> and set goals for improvement become independent, lifelong learners. By thinking
> about how they think and learn, they gain personal control over the strategies they
> use when engaged in literacy activities"

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire

1. After using reading strategies, have your reading skills improved?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ In what sense?_____

No _____ Why? _____

2. Has the reading strategy used in class helped you to read texts of your own interest?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ Why? _____

No \_\_\_\_\_ Why not? _____

3. Have reading strategies increased your motivation as an English student?

Yes \_\_\_\_ How? _____

No \_\_\_\_ Why not? _____

4. Have you set your own academic goals after this session?

Yes \_\_\_\_ Why? _____

No_____ Why? _____

5. Will reading strategies help you to develop your autonomy as an English student?

Yes _____ How? _____

No _____ Why? _____

6. Do you participate actively during the lessons?

Yes \_\_\_\_ How?_____

No \_\_\_\_\_ why not? _____

7. Do you do your homework or your tasks with responsibility and dedication?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_why? _____

No \_\_\_\_ why not ? _____

**Appendix 2: Students Checklist**

| CHECKLIST | Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Reading strategies motivates me to read texts of my own interest** | | | | |
| **I set academic and personal goals** | | | | |
| **Reading strategies increases my motivation as an English student**. | | | | |
| **I read texts in English**. | | | | |
| **Learning about reading strategies helps me to improve my autonomy** | | | | |
| **Reading strategies are useful resources for my academic life**. | | | | |
| **I participate actively during my English lessons** | | | | |
| **I do my homework or tasks with responsibility and dedication** | | | | |
| **My reading skills have improved with the use of reading strategies** | | | | |
| **I practice English in different contexts outside the classroom.** | | | | |

## Appendix 3: Students' Log

1. What I liked about this class was…

2. What I don't like about this class was…

3. Using the <u>skimming</u> strategy was: Positive _____ Negative        Explain:

4. When I use reading strategies I feel   MOTIVATED _____        UNMOTIVATED _____

Explain

5. The reading strategies  HELP ME _____    DON'T HELP ME _____ , to understand texts

of my own interest.

6. The reading strategies I have used will help me to be more autonomous in my learning

process? Yes _____    No _____    Why?

7. The things I learned today will help me to be more autonomous in my studies.

Yes _____            No _____ Why?

8.  I would like to know more about reading strategies.     Yes _____    No _____

Why?

## Appendix 4: Consent Letter

Bogotá, D.C. Febrero 14 de 2012

**Señora:**
**Maria Teresa Ambrosi**
**Preside Liceo Colegio Italiano Leonardo Da Vinci**
**Bogotá**

Respetada Señora:

Actualmente estoy realizando una investigación titulada "Effects of the use of reading strategies in the development of students' autonomy", dirigida a los estudiantes de seconda Liceo Scientifico B (2BSc). Dicha investigación hace parte de mi trabajo de grado de la Maestría en Didáctica del Inglés de la Universidad de la Sabana.

Por lo anterior, comedidamente me permito solicitar su consentimiento y colaboración para realizar mi investigación que se llevará a cabo durante el SEGUNDO trimestre académico del presente año escolar. Para este propósito se llevarán a cabo talleres de lectura en las horas de clase donde los estudiantes serán guiados por el docente para analizar la participación y desarrollo de la competencia de lectura de los estudiantes.

Igualmente, a los participantes se les garantizará el uso de nombres ficticios para mantener su identidad en el anonimato, así como estricta confidencialidad con la información que se recolecte. El proyecto no tendrá incidencia alguna en las evaluaciones del curso.

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

Atentamente,

ELIZABETH CORREA MORALES
Profesora Inglés Liceo

P.D No es necesario solicitar permiso por parte de los padres.

## Appendix 5: Action Plan

| Activity/Date | March – April - May | | | | June - July | | | | August | | | | September-October | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 1 - 2 | Week 3- 4 | Week 1 -2 | Week 3 -4 | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 1 -2 | Week 3-4 |
| Step 5: Implementation | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Step 6: monitoring data collection | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | | | | | | | | | | |
| Step 7: Analysis and of data | | | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | | | | | | | | | |
| Step 8: Sharing findings | | | | | ▨ | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter Improvement | | | | | | | | ▨ | | | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ |
| Work with thesis Director (April) | | | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | ▨ | | | | ▨ | | | | |
| Data analysis Improvement | | | | | | | | | | ▨ | ▨ | | | |
| Article Writing | | | | | | | | | | | | | ▨ | ▨ |
| Final Report | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

## Appendix 6

A. Read the first sentence of each paragraph in the following text.
B. Read the text and give a couple of main ideas about it.

### BODY LANGUAGE

What does scientific literature tell us about the idea that body language reflects our real feelings? One experiment carried out about 10 years ago by Ross Buck from Carnegie-Mellon University in Pennsylvania suggests that spontaneous facial expression is not a very good index of real emotional state. Buck and his colleagues tested the accuracy with which people could identify the emotions felt by another person. They presented one set of subjects with colour slides involving a variety of emotionally-loaded visual stimuli - such as "scenic" slides (landscapes, etc), "maternal" slides (mothers and young children), disgusting slides (severe facial injuries and burns) and unusual slides (art objects). Unknown to these subjects, they were being televised and viewed by another matched set of subjects, who were asked to decide, on the basis of the televised facial expressions, which of the four sets of slides had just been viewed. This experiment involved both male and female pairs, but no pairs comprising both men and women; that is men observed only men, and women observed women. Buck found that the female pairs correctly identified almost 40 per cent of the slides used - this was above the level which would be predicted by chance alone. (Chance level is 25 per cent here, as there were four classes of slide). But male pairs correctly identified only 28 per cent of slides - not significantly above chance level. In other words, this study suggests that facial expression is not a very good index of "real" feeling - and in the case of men watching and interpreting other men, is almost useless.

Paul Ekman from the University of California has conducted a long series of experiments on nonverbal leakage (or how nonverbal behaviour may reveal real inner states) which has yielded some more positive and counter-intuitive results. Ekman has suggested that nonverbal behaviour may indeed provide a clue to real feelings and has explored in some detail people actively involved in deception, where their verbal language is not a true indication of how they really feel.

Ekman here agrees with Sigmund Freud, who was also convinced of the importance of nonverbal behaviour in spotting deception when he wrote: "He that has eyes to see and ears to hear may convince himself that no mortal can keep a secret. If hislips are silent, he chatters with his finger-tips; betrayal oozes out of him at every pore."

Ekman predicted that the feet and legs would probably hold the best clue to deception because although the face sends out very quick instantaneous messages, people attend to and receive most feedback from the face and therefore try to control it most. In the case of the feet and legs the "transmission time" is much longer but we have little feedback from this part of the body. In other words, we are often unaware of what we are doing with our feet and legs. Ekman suggested that the face is equipped to lie the most (because we are often aware of our facial expression) and to "leak" the most (because it sends out many fast momentary messages) and is therefore going to be a very confusing source of information during deception. The legs and feet would be the primary source of nonverbal leakage and hold the main clue to deception. The form the leakage in the legs and feet would take would include "aggressive foot kicks, flirtatious leg displays, abortive restless flight movements". Clues to deception could be seen in "tense leg positions, frequent shifts of leg posture, and in restless or repetitive leg and foot movements."

Ekman conducted a series of experiments to test his speculations, some involving psychiatric patients who were engaging in deception, usually to obtain release from hospital. He made films of interviews involving the patients and showed these, without sound, to one of two groups of observers. One group viewed only the face and head, the other group, the body from the neck down. Each observer was given a list of 300 adjectives describing attitudes, emotional state, and so on, and had to say which adjectives best described the patients. The results indicated quite dramatically that individuals who utilized the face tended to be misled by the patients, whereas those who concentrated on the lower body were much more likely to detect the real state of the patients and not be misled by the attempted deception.

These studies thus suggest that some body language may indeed reflect our real feelings, even when we are trying to disguise them. Most people can, however, manage to control facial expression quite well and the face often seems to provide little information about real feeling.

Paul Ekman has more recently demonstrated that people can be trained to interpret facial expression more accurately but this, not surprisingly, is a slow laborious process.  Ekman's research, suggests that the feet and legs betray a great deal about real feelings and attitudes but the research is nowhere near identifying the meanings of particular foot movements. Ray Birdwhistell of the Eastern Pennsylvania Psychiatric Institute has gone some way towards identifying some of the basic nonverbal elements of the legs and feet, and as a first approximation has identified 58 separate elements. But the meaning of these particular elements is far from clear and neither are the rules for combining the elements into larger meaningful units. Perhaps in years to come we will have a "language" of the feet provided that we can successfully surmount the problems described earlier in identifying the basic forms of movement following Birdwhistell's pioneering efforts, of how they may combine into larger units, and in teaching people how they might make sense of apparently contradictory movements.

In the meantime, if you go to a party and find someone peering intently at your feet - beware.

*Notice how reading these sentences gives you a good idea about the meaning of the text.*

*If you need more details, read the text again.*

Taken from: www.uefap.com. Using English as academic purposes

**Appendix 7**

**Read the following text and select the best choice**

## Pulp Friction

Every second, 1 hectare of the world's rainforest is destroyed. That's equivalent to two football fields. An area the size of New York City is lost every day. In a year, that adds up to 31 million hectares -- more than the land area of Poland. This alarming rate of destruction has serious consequences for the environment; scientists estimate, for example, that 137 species of plant, insect or animal become extinct every day due to logging. In British Columbia, where, since 1990, thirteen rainforest valleys have been clearcut, 142 species of salmon have already become extinct, and the habitats of grizzly bears, wolves and many other creatures are threatened. Logging, however, provides jobs, profits, taxes for the govenment and cheap products of all kinds for consumers, so the government is reluctant to restrict or control it.

Much of Canada's forestry production goes towards making pulp and paper. According to the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Canada supplies 34% of the world's wood pulp and 49% of its newsprint paper. If these paper products could be produced in some other way, Canadian forests could be preserved. Recently, a possible alternative way of producing paper has been suggested by agriculturalists and environmentalists: a plant called hemp.

Hemp has been cultivated by many cultures for thousands of years. It produces fibre which can be made into paper, fuel, oils, textiles, food, and rope. For centuries, it was essential to the economies of many countries because it was used to make the ropes and cables used on sailing ships; colonial expansion and the establishment of a world-wide trading network would not have been feasible without hemp. Nowadays, ships' cables are usually made from wire or synthetic fibres, but scientists are now suggesting that the cultivation of hemp should be revived for the production of paper and pulp. According to its proponents, four times as much paper can be produced from land using hemp rather than trees, and many environmentalists believe that the large-scale cultivation of hemp could reduce the pressure on Canada's forests.

However, there is a problem: hemp is illegal in many countries of the world. This plant, so useful for fibre, rope, oil, fuel and textiles, is a species of cannabis, related to the plant from which marijuana is produced. In the late 1930s, a movement to ban the drug marijuana began to gather force, resulting in the eventual banning of the cultivation not only of the plant used to produce the drug, but also of the commercial fibre-producing hemp plant. Although both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew hemp in large quantities on their own land, any American growing the plant today would soon find himself in prison -- despite the fact that marijuana cannot be produced from the hemp plant, since it contains almost no THC (the active ingredient in the drug).

In recent years, two major movements for legalization have been gathering strength. One group of activists believes that ALL cannabis should be legal -- both the hemp plant and the marijuana plant -- and that the use of the drug marijuana should not be an offense. They argue that marijuana is not dangerous or addictive, and that it is used by large numbers of people who are not criminals but productive members of society. They also point out that marijuana is less toxic than alcohol or tobacco. The other legalization movement is concerned only with the hemp plant used to produce fibre; this group wants to make it legal to cultivate the plant and sell the fibre for paper and pulp production. This second group has had a major triumph recently: in 1997, Canada legalized the farming of hemp for fibre. For the first time since 1938, hundreds of farmers are planting this crop, and soon we can expect to see pulp and paper produced from this new source.

The main idea of paragraph one is:

- o  Scientists are worried about New York City
- o  Logging is destroying the rainforests
- o  Governments make money from logging

The main idea of paragraph two is:

- o  Canadian forests are especially under threat
- o  Hemp is a kind of plant
- o  Canada is a major supplier of paper and pulp
- o  Canada produces a lot of hemp

The main idea of paragraph three is:

- ▪  Paper could be made from hemp instead of trees
- ▪  Hemp is useful for fuel
- ▪  Hemp has been cultivated throughout history
- ▪  Hemp is essential for building large ships

The main idea of paragraph four is:

- o Hemp is used to produce drugs
- o Many famous people used to grow hemp
- o It is illegal to grow hemp
- o Hemp is useful for producing many things

The main idea of paragraph five is:

- o Hemp should be illegal because it is dangerous
- o Recently, many people have been working to legalize hemp
- o Hemp was made illegal in 1938
- o Marijuana is not a dangerous drug

*Taken from: http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/570/pulp/hemp1.htm*

**Appendix 8**

## <u>OILS</u>

There are three main groups of oils: animal, vegetable and mineral. Great quantities of animal oil come from whales, those enormous creatures of the sea which are the largest remaining animals in the world. To protect the whale from the cold of the Arctic seas, nature has provided it with a thick covering of fat called blubber. When the whale is killed, the blubber is stripped off and boiled down, either on board ship or on shore. It produces a great quantity of oil which can be made into food for human consumption. A few other creatures yield oil, but none so much as the whale. The livers of the cod and the halibut, two kinds of fish, yield nourishing oil. Both cod liver oil and halibut liver oil are given to sick children and other invalids who need certain vitamins. These oils may be bought at any chemist's.

Vegetable oil has been known from antiquity. No household can get on without it, for it is used in cooking. Perfumes may be made from the oils of certain flowers. Soaps are made from vegetable and animal oils.

To the ordinary man, one kind of oil may be as important as another. But when the politician or the engineer refers to oil, he almost always means mineral oil, the oil that drives tanks, airplanes and warships, motor-cars and diesel locomotives; the oil that is used to lubricate all kinds of machinery. This is the oil that has changed the life of the common man. When it is refined into petrol it is used to drive the internal combustion engine. To it we owe the existence of the motorcar, which has replaced the private carriage drawn by the horse. To it we owe the possibility of flying. It has changed the methods of warfare on land and sea. This kind of oil comes out of the earth. Because it burns well, it is used as fuel and in some ways it is superior to coal in this respect. Many big ships now burn oil instead of coal. Because it burns brightly, it is used for illumination; countless homes are still illuminated with oil-burning lamps. Because it is very slippery, it is used for lubrication. Two metal surfaces rubbing together cause friction and heat; but if they are separated by a thin film of oil, the friction and heat are reduced. No

machine would work for long if it were not properly lubricated. The oil used for this purpose must be of the correct thickness; if it is too thin it will not give sufficient lubrication, and if it is too thick it will not reach all parts that must be lubricated. The existence of oil wells has been known for a long time. Some of the Indians of North America used to collect and sell the oil from the wells of Pennsylvania. No one, however, seems to have realized the importance of this oil until it was found that paraffin-oil could be made from it; this led to the development of the wells and to the making of enormous profits. When the internal combustion engine was invented, oil became of worldwide importance.

What was the origin of the oil which now drives our motor-cars and air-craft? Scientists are confident about the formation of coal, but they do not seem so sure when asked about oil. They think that the oil under the surface of the earth originated in the distant past, and was formed from living things in the sea. Countless billions of minute sea creatures and plants lived and sank to the sea bed. They were covered with huge deposits of mud; and by processes of chemistry, pressure and temperature were changed through long ages into what we know as oil. For these creatures to become oil, it was necessary that they should be imprisoned between layers of rock for an enormous length of time. The statement that oil originated in the sea is confirmed by a glance at a map showing the chief oilfields of the world; very few of them are far distant from the oceans of today. In some places gas and oil come up to the surface of the sea from its bed. The rocks in which oil is found are of marine origin too. They are sedimentary rocks, rocks which were laid down by the action of water on the bed of the ocean. Almost always the remains of shells, and other proofs of sea life, are found close to the oil. A very common sedimentary rock is called shale, which is a soft rock and was obviously formed by being deposited on the sea bed. And where there is shale there is likely to be oil.

Geologists, scientists who study rocks, indicate the likely places to the oil drillers. In some cases oil comes out of the ground without any drilling at all and has been used for hundreds of years. In the island of Trinidad the oil is in the form of asphalt, a substance used for making roads. Sir Walter Raleigh visited the famous pitch lake of Trinidad in 1595; it is said to contain nine thousand million tons of asphalt. There are probably huge quantities of crude oil beneath the surface.

The king of the oilfield is the driller. He is a very skilled man. Sometimes he sends his drill more than a mile into the earth. During the process of drilling, gas and oil

at great pressure may suddenly be met, and if these rushes out and catches fire the oil well may never be brought into operation at all. This danger is well known and steps are always taken to prevent it.

There is a lot of luck in drilling for oil. The drill may just miss the oil although it is near; on the other hand, it may strike oil at a fairly high level. When the drill goes down, it brings up soil. The samples of soil from various depths are examined for traces of oil. If they are disappointed at one place, the drillers go to another. Great sums of money have been spent, for example in the deserts of Egypt, in 'prospecting' for oil. Sometimes little is found. When we buy a few gallons of petrol for our cars, we pay not only the cost of the petrol, but also part of the cost of the search that is always going on.

When the crude oil is obtained from the field, it is taken to the refineries to be treated. The commonest form of treatment is heating. When the oil is heated, the first vapours to rise are cooled and become the finest petrol. Petrol has a low boiling point; if a little is poured into the hand, it soon vaporizes. Gas that comes off the oil later is condensed into paraffin. Last of all the lubricating oils of various grades are produced. What remains is heavy oil that is used as fuel.

There are four main areas of the world where deposits of oil appear. The first is that of the Middle East, and includes the regions near the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Another is the area between North and South America, and the third, between Asia and Australia, includes the islands of Sumatra, Borneo and Java.

The fourth area is the part near the North Pole. When all the present oil-fields are exhausted, it is possible that this cold region may become the scene of oil activity. Yet the difficulties will be great, and the costs may be so high that no company will undertake the work. If progress in using atomic power to drive machines is fast enough, it is possible that oil-driven engines may give place to the new kind of engine. In that case the demand for oil will fall, the oilfields will gradually disappear, and the deposits at the North Pole may rest where they are forever.

*Notice how reading these sentences gives you a good idea about the meaning of the text. If you need more details, read the text again.*

Taken from: (*Power and Progress* by G. C. Thornley (Longman)

# Appendix 9

Read the following text quickly and answer the following questions.

1. When were X-rays discovered?
2. Who discovered them?
3. What are the four characteristics of X-rays?
4. What is an X-ray?
5. Make a brief summary about the text

### The Discovery of X-rays

Except for a brief description of the Compton Effect, and a few other remarks, we have postponed the discussion of X-rays until the present chapter because it is particularly convenient to treat X-ray spectra after treating optical spectra. Although this ordering may have given the reader a distorted impression of the historical importance of X-rays, this impression will be corrected shortly as we describe the crucial role played by X-rays in the development of modern physics. X-rays were discovered in 1895 by Roentgen while studying the phenomena of gaseous discharge. Using a cathode ray tube with a high voltage of several tens of kilovolts, he noticed that salts of barium would fluoresce when brought near the tube, although nothing visible was emitted by the tube. This effect persisted when the tube was wrapped with a layer of black cardboard. Roentgen soon established that the agency responsible for the fluorescence originated at the point at which the stream of energetic electrons struck the glass wall of the tube. Because of its unknown nature, he gave this agency the name *X-rays.* He found that X-rays could manifest themselves by darkening wrapped photographic plates, discharging charged electroscopes, as well as by causing fluorescence in a number of different substances. He also found that X-rays can penetrate considerable thicknesses of materials of low atomic number, whereas substances of high atomic number are relatively opaque. Roentgen took the first steps in identifying the nature of X-rays by using a system of slits to show that (1) *they travel in straight lines,* and that (2) *they are uncharged,* because they are not deflected by electric or magnetic fields.

The discovery of X-rays aroused the interest of all physicists, and many joined in the investigation of their properties. In 1899 Haga and Wind performed a single slit diffraction experiment with X-rays which showed that (3) *X-rays are a wave motion phenomenon,* and, from the size of the diffraction pattern, their wavelength could be estimated to be $10^{-8}$ cm. In 1906 Barkla proved that (4) *the waves are transverse* by showing that they can be polarized by scattering from many materialsThere is, of course, no longer anything unknown about the nature of X-rays.

They are electromagnetic radiation of exactly the same nature as visible light, except that their wavelength is several orders of magnitude shorter.

This conclusion follows from comparing properties 1 through 4 with the similar properties of visible light, but it was actually postulated by Thomson several years before all these properties were known. Thomson argued that X-rays are electromagnetic radiation because such radiation would be expected to be emitted from the point at which the electrons strike the wall of a cathode ray tube. At this point, the electrons suffer very violent accelerations in coming to a stop and, according to classical electromagnetic theory; all accelerated charged particles emit electromagnetic radiations. We shall see later that this explanation of the production of X-rays is at least partially correct.

In common with other electromagnetic radiations, X-rays exhibit particle-like aspects as well as wave-like aspects. The reader will recall that the Compton effect, which is one of the most convincing demonstrations of the existence of quanta, was originally observed with electromagnetic radiation in the X-ray region of wavelengths.

*Taken from: www.uefap.cpm*

**Appendix 10**

Read the following text and select the best answer.

# Pulp Friction

Every second, 1 hectare of the world's rainforest is destroyed. That's equivalent to two football fields. An area the size of New York City is lost every day. In a year, that adds up to 31 million hectares -- more than the land area of Poland. This alarming rate of destruction has serious consequences for the environment; scientists estimate, for example, that 137 species of plant, insect or animal become extinct every day due to logging. In British Columbia, where, since 1990, thirteen rainforest valleys have been clearcut, 142 species of salmon have already become extinct, and the habitats of grizzly bears, wolves and many other creatures are threatened. Logging, however, provides jobs, profits, taxes for the govenment and cheap products of all kinds for consumers, so the government is reluctant to restrict or control it.

Much of Canada's forestry production goes towards making pulp and paper. According to the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association, Canada supplies 34% of the world's wood pulp and 49% of its newsprint paper. If these paper products could be produced in some other way, Canadian forests could be preserved. Recently, a possible alternative way of producing paper has been suggested by agriculturalists and environmentalists: a plant called hemp.

Hemp has been cultivated by many cultures for thousands of years. It produces fibre which can be made into paper, fuel, oils, textiles, food, and rope. For centuries, it was essential to the economies of many countries because it was used to make the ropes and cables used on sailing ships; colonial expansion and the establishment of a world-wide trading network would not have been feasible without hemp. Nowadays, ships' cables are usually made from wire or synthetic fibres, but scientists are now suggesting that the cultivation of hemp should be revived for the production of paper and pulp. According to its proponents, four times as much paper can be produced from land using hemp rather than trees, and many environmentalists believe that the large-scale cultivation of hemp could reduce the pressure on Canada's forests.

However, there is a problem: hemp is illegal in many countries of the world. This plant, so useful for fibre, rope, oil, fuel and textiles, is a species of cannabis, related to the plant from which marijuana is produced. In the late 1930s, a movement to ban the drug marijuana began to gather force, resulting in the eventual banning of the cultivation not only of the plant used to produce the drug, but also of the commercial fibre-producing hemp plant. Although both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson grew hemp in large quantities on their own land, any American growing the plant today would soon find himself in prison -- despite the fact that marijuana cannot be produced from the hemp plant, since it contains almost no THC (the active ingredient in the drug).

In recent years, two major movements for legalization have been gathering strength. One group of activists believes that ALL cannabis should be legal -- both the hemp plant and the marijuana plant -- and that the use of the drug marijuana should not be an offense. They argue that marijuana is not dangerous or addictive, and that it is used by large numbers of people who are not criminals but productive members of society. They also point out that marijuana is less toxic than alcohol or tobacco. The other legalization movement is concerned only with the hemp plant used to produce fibre; this group wants to make it legal to cultivate the plant and sell the fibre for paper and pulp production. This second group has had a major triumph recently: in 1997, Canada legalized the farming of hemp for fibre. For the first time since 1938, hundreds of farmers are planting this crop, and soon we can expect to see pulp and paper produced from this new source.

### *Select the answer you think is correct.*

1. How many species of salmon have become extinct in BC?

   o  27
   o  31
   o  137
   o  142

2. How much of the world's newsprint paper is supplied by Canada?

   o  31 %
   o  49 %
   o  34%
   o  19 %

3. What equipment on a ship was made from hemp?

   o  Ropes
   o  Waterproof cloth
   o  Engine fuel
   o  Life rafts

4. What drug can be obtained from a relative of hemp?

- Cocaine

- Heroin

- Amphetamine

- Marijuana


5. Where was hemp farming recently legalized?

- The USA

- Canada

- Singapore

- The Netherlands

**Appendix 11**

Read the following text about the Loch Ness monster and fill in the table.

Does the Loch Ness monster exist?

| Type of evidence | Date | Source | Details/features of monster | Reliability/reasons for doubt |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |

**'A modern look at Monsters' by Daniel Cohen**

Each nation had its own conception of evil spirits or monsters that lived in deep lakes. In the Highlands of Scotland, the monstrous inhabitants of lakes (or lochs) were called 'water horses" or "water bulls." There was hardly a loch or bay which, according to local folklore, did not have some sort of monster in it.

But the Loch Ness monster has a better pedigree than most of the other Scottish lake monsters. While most were only known in oral tradition, the Loch Ness monster was mentioned in writing in AD. 565. The monster, it seems, ran afoul of the great Scottish holy man, Saint Columba. Adamnan, Saint Columba's biographer, tells of an incident where the saint saved a swimmer from the rampaging monster by saying, "Think not to go further, touch not thou that man. Quick! Go back! Then the beast, upon hearing the voice of the saint, was terrified and fled backwards more rapidly than he came."

It was traditional in pagan societies for heroes to slay dragons and other monsters. When the pagans became Christians these monster-fighting activities were often taken over by the saints. The story of Saint Columba and the Loch Ness monster would have remained nothing more than an obscure bit of folklore, to be treated no more seriously than the story of Saint George and the dragon, had it not been for the events of 1933-1934.

During those years a road was built around the once-isolated loch in the Highlands. The construction brought a large number of outsiders to Loch Ness, and clearing the shore of the loch for the road gave observers a better view of the water. In those years the Loch Ness monster appeared, or reappeared, if we are to accept the story of Saint Columba. The Loch Ness monster captured the public fancy as no creature real or imaginary has in a very long time.

It knocked the Great Sea Serpent right out of contention as the number one unknown animal in the world. To this day, despite years of disappointment, the Loch Ness monster remains the world's most popular monster, and the only one for which there is a regular and well-organized search.

So much has already been written on the Loch Ness monster that it seems unnecessary to give another detailed account of its history. A brief rundown of background information will be supplied but we will concentrate on developments in the story of the monster during the last few years.

Of the thousands who have reported seeing the monster since 1933 the vast majority have seen only its back or "humps". Most commonly what they have seen is a shape in the water that looks something like an upturned boat, or a string of them. This shape may be anywhere from a few inches to many feet above the water.

Only a small number have reported actually seeing the creature's head and neck. One of the first people to sight the creature's head, and indeed the man who claims to have coined the term Loch Ness monster, is Alex Campbell, a retired fisheries official at the loch. He saw the monster for the first time in 1934. 'It had a long tapering neck, about six feet long, and a smallish head, with a serpentine look about it, and a huge hump behind which I reckon was about thirty feet long. It was turning its head constantly.

In addition to his duty at the loch, Campbell was also a correspondent for the Inverness Courier, the local newspaper for the region. It was Campbell's reports that helped catapult the Loch Ness monster to world-wide fame. Why did he call it monster? "Not because there was anything horrible about it at all, but because of the great size of the creature."

The serpentine appearance of the monster's head and neck was firmly fixed in the public's consciousness by "the famous London surgeon's photograph." It was taken in 1934 by Kenneth Wilson, a surgeon on holiday in Scotland. The photo apparently shows the snakelike neck and tiny head of the monster sticking out of the waters of the loch.

In the 1930s most people agreed that the monster looked very much like an ancient marine reptile plesiosaur. At the time the plesiosaur was also a popular candidate for the Great Sea Serpent, and so was very much on every-one's mind. After the first sensational sightings there were no further important revelations about the monster. *Taken from: www.uefap.cpm*

**Appendix 12**

**Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening**
**By Robert Frost**

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;

He will not see me stopping here

To watch his woods fill up with snow.


My little horse must think it queer

To stop without a farmhouse near

Between the woods and frozen lake

The darkest evening of the year.


He gives his harness bells a shake

To ask if there is some mistake.

The only other sound's the sweep

Of easy wind and downy flake.


The woods are lovely, dark and deep.

But I have promises to keep,

And miles to go before I sleep,

And miles to go before I sleep.

**Appendix 13**

**A New Day**

(by: Bill Greer, Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul )

The sun has begun to set and I hang up the smile I've worn all day. Though I will make sure it is the first thing I put back on in the morning because just in case it is 'that day,' I want her to see me at my very best.   I do the normal routine, eat dinner, clean the house, write — the usual stuff.   And then I lay down hoping to fall asleep quickly so my new day will hurry up and arrive. A new day with a brand new sun.   But as I lay there and wait for the world to turn half way around, I think about her. And sometimes I smile, and sometimes that smile will turn into a snicker, and then often that snicker will turn into a burst of laughter.   And then there are times I get that lump in my throat and that tight feeling in my chest, and sometimes that feeling overwhelms me and begins to turn into a tear, and often that tear multiplies itself and I can no longer fight the feeling and I lose the battle.   Then somehow through either the joy or the sadness I drift and find myself asleep. Then the dreams begin and keep me company until my new day arrives.   When I awake it's with such excitement! Because I tell myself this could be the day that every other day has led up to and the first day of the rest of my life. I quickly dawn my smile, because I do so want her to see me at my very best. Then I look out the window even though I know it's dawn, but I still have to confirm I've been given another chance to find her.   And there it is … the sun, even when it's cloudy; somehow I still see it. And it smiles at me and I say "thank you" and I smile back.   Then I ask myself, "Is this the day?" And the excitement rushes over me again. And then I ask myself, "Where's it going to be?"   Maybe it'll be at the water fountain and unexpectedly there I'll find her and much more than my thirst will be quenched.   Maybe it'll be at the grocery store, and there she'll appear as I'm picking out fruit and she'll show me the difference between fresh and spoiled. Then from that moment, nothing that I will eat will ever taste the same. Because she'll bring out the simplest beauties in everything I see, taste, smell, hear, or touch.   Or maybe today will be the day when my Angel brings an item up to the cash register without its price tag. And as I wait behind this Angel with all the frustrated people who are in such a hurry about their busy lives, I will find myself with such blessed extra time.

Just enough time to start a conversation with this beautiful vision standing behind me that I might not otherwise would have noticed. But because of a "price check on register 5," I was able to find her.   So will today be the day I say, "THANK YOU GOD!" Thank you for the sun, which began my new day. Thank you for granting me the faith when I arose this morning that I would find her in this new day. But most of all, thank you for me not having to ever wait on another sunrise. Because whenever I want to see it, I will look at her and there it shall always be, in her eyes, she will forever hold it for me.   She is my sunrise, my dawn, my new day.

*Taken from: Make4fun. The space of fun*

## Appendix 14

*In this visualizing exercise the researcher will give the following instructions to the participants.*

1. Imagine a fiction story taking place as if it were a movie. Imagine the characters' features. Picture the plot in time and space.

2. Imagine processes and explanations happening visually. Use nouns, verbs, and adjectives to create pictures, diagrams, or other mental images.

3. Use graphic organizers to lay out information. Make sketches or diagrams on scrap paper.