

DEVELOPING A READING SKILLS UNIT FOR B1 LEVEL STUDENTS AT THE
CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO CARTAGENA

Presented to Harold Castañeda

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CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO CARTAGENA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Pages
INTRODUCTION	
1. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK	6
2. METHODOLOGY	9
2.1 ROLE OF THE TEACHERS	9
2.2 ROLE OF THE LEARNERS	9
2.3 ROLE OF THE MATERIALS	9
2.4 PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION	9
2.5 DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS USED	12
2.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	12
3. NEEDS ANALYSIS	13
3.1 OVERALL DATA COLLECTED	13
CONCLUSIONS	22
REFERENCES	26
APPENDIXES	27

INTRODUCTION

English has become an important universal language, it is a communication tool which opens many doors. Many people are learning English in order to become more competent professionals in this world. In addition to that, universities are also offering English classes to fulfill the high demand of people who are required to learn this language. The Centro Colombo Americano in Cartagena is a great influence in Colombia because it has been contributing to this purpose of teaching English as a second language for almost 50 years.

The Centro Colombo Americano in Cartagena is a non-formal educational English institution with a non-profit making objective, located in the north of Cartagena. This institution offers the opportunity of learning English for the general public. Approximately, five years ago, a new branch was opened in Los Cuatro Vientos neighborhood in order to contribute to improving the quality of life of Cartagena's society.

The Colombo in Cuatro Vientos is located half a block from Pedro de Heredia Avenue. This is a middle class neighborhood which is surrounded by some low class areas.

In this neighborhood, there is a well-known furniture store called "Muebles Jamar" and we can notice the different discourses in which the students are involved at this site in Los Cuatro Vientos, such as a great deal of restaurants, car-part stores, grocery stores, a bakery, just across from the Colombo; as well as some schools, a health center and other businesses. This area has heavy traffic almost all the time which might be a little dangerous for the students who frequently have to cross some streets and the main avenue to go home. Some of the students at the Colombo prefer to stay around Los Cuatro Vientos to have

lunch because they do not have time or money to go back home, as a result, most of them take “mototaxi” service to return home since it is fast and a little cheap for them.

The average Colombo students belong to the middle class society with some lacks and needs in common and a very popular culture. Their ages vary from fifteen to forty and their economical situation is mostly acceptable. Regarding the learners; the ages vary. There are young adults and adults. The aim of the English program is the development of the English language for general purposes. The course starts in a A1 level and intends to take the students to minimum a B2 level on the completion of the program according to The Common European Framework, Council of Europe (2001) .

This project is carried out in Cuatro Vientos in Cartagena, which is another Colombo branch surrounded by some poor neighborhoods from which many students come and most of them show reading difficulties. There are many signs that students have to read almost everyday and some of them are progressively becoming bilingual since we live in a tourist city, therefore, these bilingual literacy practices should be considered important by Colombo English students.

The main reason for choosing this institution for my project is because reading is an important skill in teaching and learning a second language and it has been observed that this skill is often neglected by some English teachers here.

Students appear to have limited or reading exposure in English classes. Therefore, most of them seem to have trouble understanding and discussing topics when they read different texts in English. Besides, it appears that they need to be encouraged to read more in order to increase their abilities.

The needs analysis carried out at this Colombo branch shows the immediate improvement of this skill. In a survey, A lot of the students claim that they do not feel

prepared to give their opinion after reading certain texts in English. In addition, All of them agree that reading is an important skill because they can learn and understand more, they say it is as necessary in english as it is in their mother tongue. In the survey, the students also state that vocabulary is the most complex section when reading an English text. Almost all the students are in favor of implementing this reading unit. As a result, developing this project could help students have a good command of their reading skills and become more competent English speakers at the Centro Colombo Americano.

Our research question is “What effects can developing a reading skills unit have on B1 students to improve reading comprehension at the Centro Colombo Americano in Cartagena?” This project will be done by designing this unit which will be offered to those students who need to develop communicative reading skills though contextualized topics of students` interests. According to the survey, students assert that they enjoy reading different types of texts, especially stories.

The main objective of this is to identify and describe the effects of this reading skills unit offered to thirty 17 - 45 year old people from two B1 level classes with which we work at the Centro Colombo Americano in Cartagena (Bolívar).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the most fascinating things in human history is the ability to read. Through reading, we have been able to learn, dream, create, and fantasize. When we read, we open a door to knowledge, which allows us to put our minds to work, and to do things. Nowadays, companies are looking for people with the ability to analyze, criticize and create, because we live in a more competitive world, where countries are creating more close relationship with each other through telecommunications and the Internet, which are making a great contribution to the relationship of countries in the world. Therefore, a learner's reading skill is something that should require special attention by teachers, and especially students.

“Reading is a process of communication from the writer to the reader. It involves the recognition of letters, words, phrases, and clauses, and in some respects, it can be considered a simpler process than comprehension. Comprehension, on the other hand, is a process of negotiating understanding between the reader and the writer” (Sheng, 2000, p. 12-15) .

Reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or too complex, and for some readers, comprehension might be very difficult. They may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often does not happen as it should (McNamara, 2007). This of course can change if we as teachers create meaningful reading activities for our students since they love to read interesting texts, which are designed or adapted to their English level.

Successful reading results from the understanding you bring to a text, which is often based on previous knowledge of a type of story or context (Ur, 1991). This is why it is

easier to understand a text when we have some kind of previous information about it. However, many students find that the texts teachers give them to read, are usually topics which they do not understand, have little background information of, or they are not interested in, making it difficult for the students to enjoy the reading.

When students read in a foreign language, there is often a tendency to focus more on new words or structures than on content or opinions (Freebody and Luke, 1990). This could happen because the learner very often does not know how to make reading more meaningful, but it is not due to the fact that they are unable to read for content because of their little knowledge of the target language. For example, teachers should not only give learners tools to make reading more meaningful, but also choose an appropriate approach to reading in order to make this practice a more interesting and rewarding endeavor with numerous strategies which are available to obtain information from the text as well as to get pleasure out of reading.

It might be true that we sometimes need to understand some words in order to understand the meaning of a text, but these words could be ‘skipped’ or misread in order to make sense of the whole information more quickly or conveniently. The implication of this for teaching is probably that we should not insist too strongly on our learners’ understanding every word, but rather encouraging them to go for the overall meaning of a text (Ur, 1991). Students might tend to become bored and frustrated when teachers focus too much on specific words or when they choose wrong texts with sophisticated vocabulary, which are too difficult for them to figure out because they sometimes do not know the instructions, the guidelines for assignments or the objectives of a reading activity.

The most useful thing we could do as teachers is to provide our students with opportunities to do as much reading as possible, including a varied diet of types of reading

(fast, slow, skimming, scanning, studying). The aim is to encourage ‘automatization’ of recognition of common words or word-combinations, this being in general the crucial contributory factor to reading speed (Ur, 1991). Unfortunately, this is something our students do not have. They perform some reading activities, but not as much as they need in order to develop good reading skills. (Gee, 1999) argues that the more we read, the more competent language learners we become, and the more we enjoy reading; the more we enjoy it, the more we read, and the more competent language learners we become.

In real life, our reading purposes constantly vary and therefore, when devising exercises, we should vary the questions and the activities according to the type of text studied and the purpose in reading it (Grellet, 1981). Sometimes our students complain that the reading sessions are not very creative, exciting or attractive to them, and when this happens, the reading process becomes drudgery for both teachers and students. However, we should consider that with a variation of questions, activities and different types of texts, reading classes could be more interesting and helpful for our students. In addition to that, students also have to do extra reading assignments in order to make this process more effective by integrating other skills: teacher should also know that after reading a text, students may discuss the topic in pairs or groups which makes them use other skills such as speaking and listening. Similarly, when they are performing some reading activities, they might be asked to write something before, during or after reading the text, which makes reading an integrated communication skill.

For this reason, after having analyzed situation with low reading skills in our intermediate students at Centro Colombo Americano, we designed a project to develop this reading unit in order to help our students achieve the skills required to read properly in English and through other skills described above, enhance their overall language ability.

METHODOLOGY

Methodology in language teaching has been characterized in a variety of ways. According to Rodgers (2001) “A more or less classical formulation suggests that methodology is what links theory and practice” (p. 1) . There are some features which are included in language instruction such as objectives, syllabus specifications, types of activities, roles of teachers, learners, materials and so forth. All these features should be considered when it comes to teaching a well-organized class.

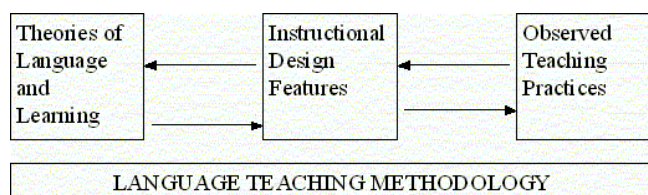


Figure: 1 Elements that define “**Language Teaching Methodology**”

(From: *Language Teaching Methodology* by Theodore S. Rodgers, Professor Emeritus, University of Hawaii)

Through the years, different methods have been proposed, such as Audio-Lingualism, Total Physical Response (TPR), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and so forth. However, one of the most accepted methods has been the Communicative Language Teaching where the teacher is seen as a task designer and needs analyst and the student as an improviser and negotiator. CLT has served as a major source of influence on language teaching practice around the world. Richards (2001) defines Communicative Language Teaching as “a set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kind of classroom activities that best facilitates learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classrooms.”

ROLE OF THE TEACHERS

In this project, the teacher has the role of a task designer and needs analyst who promotes interaction through the different tasks which he designs according to the learner's needs, and also provides a connection between the learner's prior knowledge and the reading activities. He creates a learning environment for the students to participate and interact with each other in a collaborative way.

ROLE OF THE LEARNER

The learners should be aware of their learning process, which means that they have to be responsible for the lessons and the activities which they do in class. They should also negotiate meaning and interact with other students.

ROLE OF THE MATERIALS

The creation or adaptation of new materials for the design of this unit was very important because we had to take into account the students' levels of English, interests, learning styles and contexts in order to provide the students with realistic and personalized settings which increase their motivation and enhance learning.

PEDAGOGICAL INTERVENTION

This reading-skills unit is divided in six lessons and the methodology which we implemented is based on interaction and cooperative learning. It is important to highlight the Zone of proximal development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) explained the ZPD as "the distance between the actual developmental level, as determined by independent problem

solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86) .

The objective of this project is for the learner to develop communicative reading skills through a contextualized topic-based syllabus of students` interest when reading a variety of texts. They should be aware of different reading strategies, which are essential to develop understanding of texts and improve reading skills. According to Farris, Fuhler, and Walther (2004), reading strategies fall into two main categories:

1.Comprehension strategies help students better appreciate the text. Some of these strategies include brainstorming, skimming for general meaning, scanning for special details, asking others for help, stopping to summarize, taking notes, making outlines, and engaging in self-reflection and peer review. These comprehension strategies help readers activate background information, predict upcoming events, visualize scenes, summarize the story, compare and contrast ideas, monitor understanding, analyze and synthesize information, and express valid opinions.

2. Vocabulary strategies help students deal with unknown words. Students practicing extensive reading learn to skip unknown words and continue to read; however, on occasion it is helpful for students to attempt to guess a word by looking at the surrounding context.

English teachers should stimulate learners to acquire higher reading comprehension skills, help them develop imagination and thinking in L2, taking into account their prior knowledge and experience in order to increase their interest.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INSTRUMENTS USED.

Questionnaires and video interviews and surveys, were the instruments which we chose to carry out this needs analysis. It included ten questions in English and all the students have B1 levels of English. Most of them were closed questions and some of them were open-ended questions, which required a brief explanation, therefore, the questionnaire provided spaces for the name of the person, date and the personal comments and opinions.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

We worked with different students whose ages, religions and political beliefs were respected and did not interfere with our project. The participants were old enough to understand the decision they were making. In addition, they all agreed to participate in this reading-skills unit by giving their names, being interviewed, videotaped and photographed. Throughout the process, they were not forced or given any incentives to encourage their participation in this project.

NEEDS ANALYSIS

In this section, we will describe the interpretation of the needs analysis results. These results come from the needs collected from the instruments applied in this project which are the questionnaires, diagnostic tests, a class video , video group interviews, surveys, and class transcripts. The following are the results which were organized in four different folders.

OVERALL DATA COLLECTED

Table: 1. Types of qualitative and quantitative data collected, and described below.

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEMES EXPLORED	DATA ANSWERS THE QUESTION
<i>What effects can developing a reading- skills unit have on B1 level students at the Centro Colombo Americano?</i>	Students' reading skills before and after the intervention	Video Diagnostic test Questionnaire
<i>What effects can developing a reading- skills unit have on B1 level students at the Centro Colombo Americano?</i>	The role of interesting and familiar topics to engage students in tasks and discussions to improve their own performance and learning processes	Videotaped data Group interviews Survey
<i>What effects can developing a reading- skills unit have on B 1 level students at the Centro Colombo Americano?</i>	Whether or not cooperative learning and interaction would improve students' comprehension and understanding of texts	Videotaped data Survey

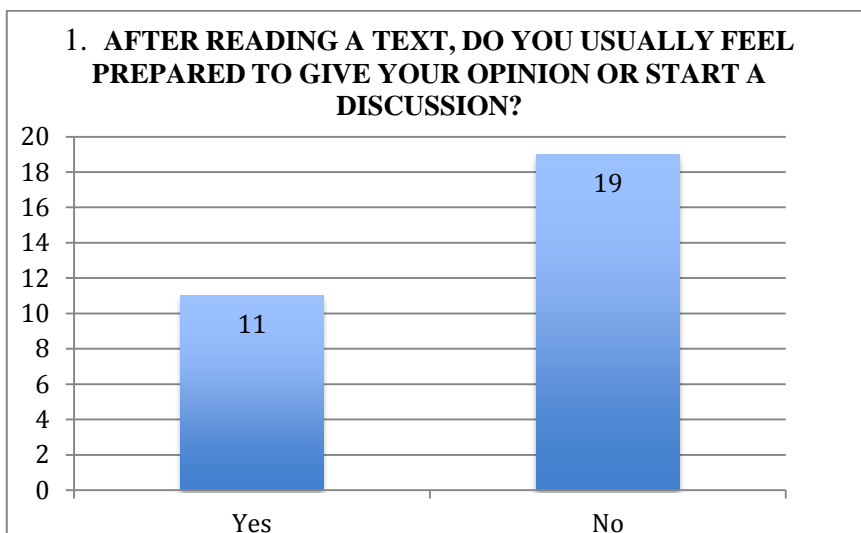
We conducted two diagnostic reading tests, which we put in folder 1. Both had 10 questions each, which the same students took before the intervention in order to check whether or not they had good reading comprehension skills. We observed that most of the students had reading difficulties because they stated it in the survey and they all had wrong answers in the diagnostic test. They took two reading tests, which were suitable for their B1 level. They were given 10 minutes for each activity, and they had 10 questions each, however, some of them took about 17 minutes to finish each test. Then, they read the instructions aloud and they were invited to ask questions if they had any difficulty with the instructions. The results of the diagnostic test was then analysed. Below, you can see a description of the students' test results.

Table: 2 Diagnostic test results. (See Diagnostic test 1)

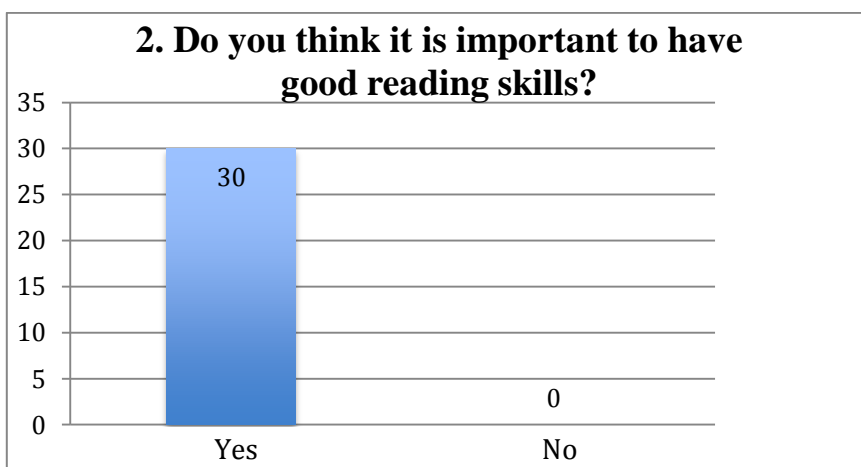
NUMBER OF STUDENTS	RIGHT ANSWERS
Two	5
One	3
Four	9
Ten	8
Five	7
Five	6

There are also surveys or questionnaires, which were given to the participants in order to introduce them to the objectives of this reading-skills project. This questionnaire was designed and applied to thirty students to obtain their opinions about the importance of having this ability and the implementation of this reading-skills unit. The questionnaire

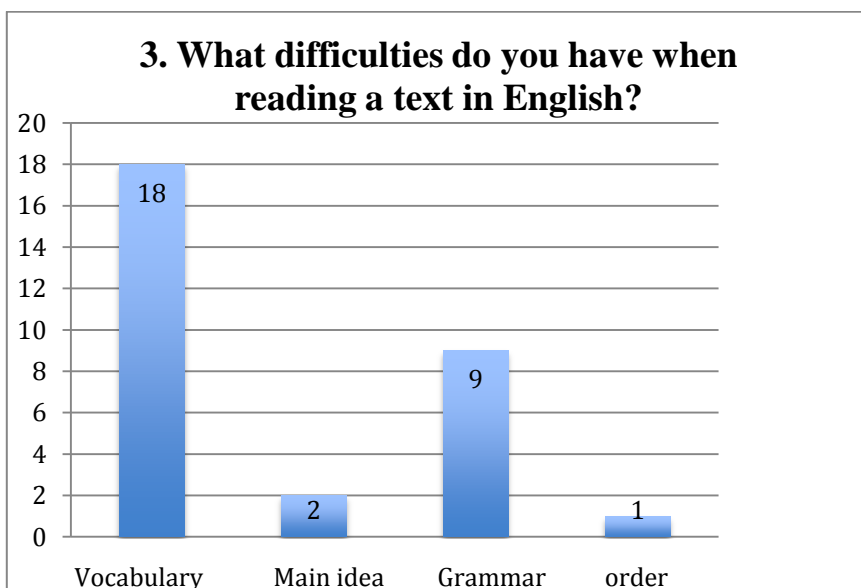
included nine questions in English, which were given to thirty B1 level students. Most of them were closed questions and some of them required a brief explanation, therefore, the questionnaire provided spaces for the name of the person, date and the personal comments and opinions. (see survey 1)



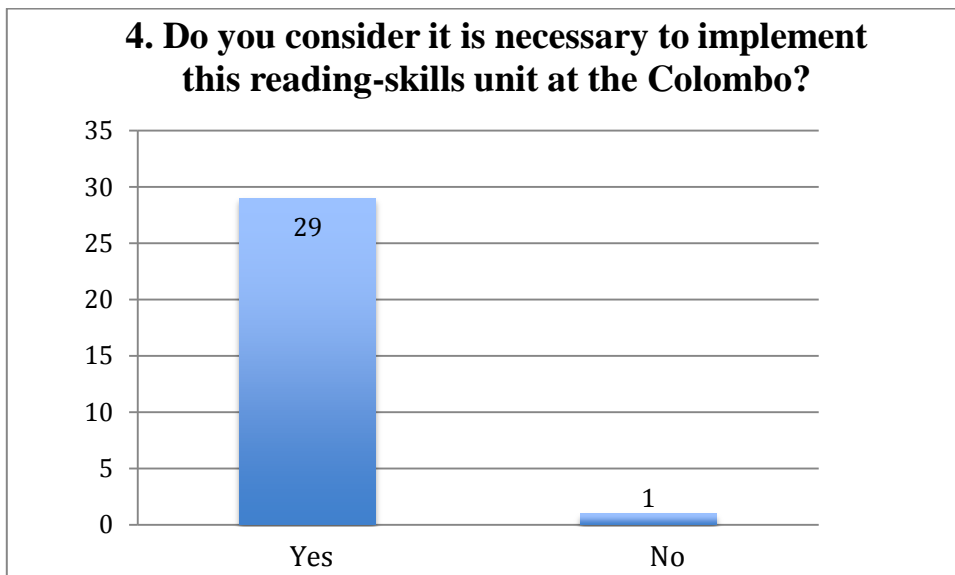
This question shows that many of the students, or at least nineteen students agreed that they do not feel ready to talk or give their opinion after reading a text in English because of the vocabulary and because they need to practice this skill. However, Eleven students stated that they feel prepared to express their opinion after reading English texts. They said, “If we understand the text, we can give our opinion about it”



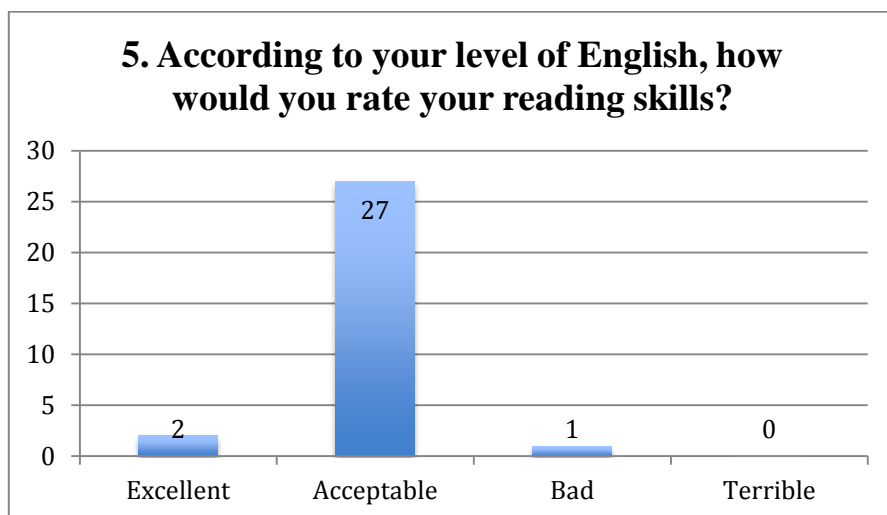
All the students (30 in total) agreed that it is essential to have good reading skills, and they also commented that it is important because they can understand and learn more about the text or whatever they read.



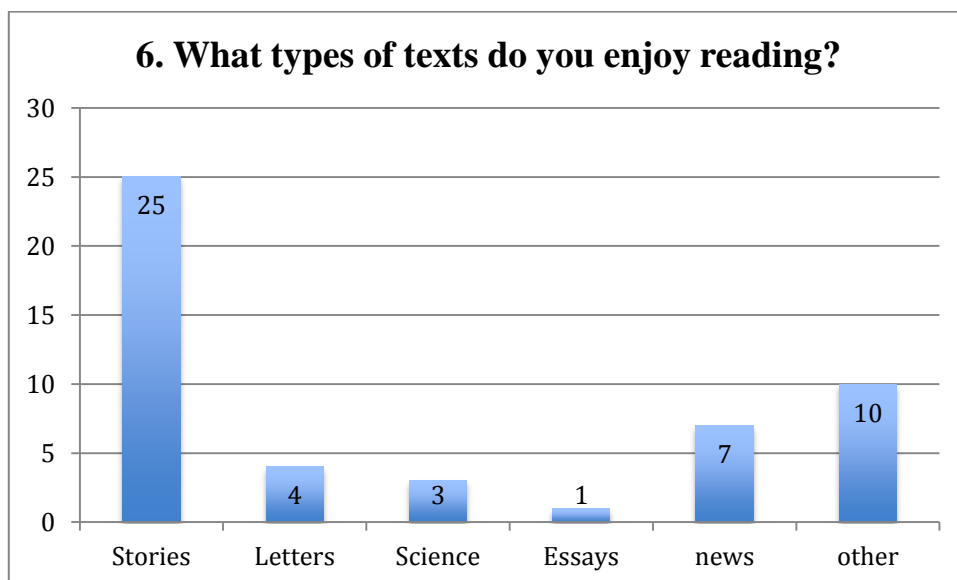
Eighteen coincided exactly with the “**vocabulary**” response. They stated that it is the difficulty which they usually encounter when reading a text. Nine students chose grammar, two students selected “the main idea” and just one student said that the order was a difficult thing.



In this question, twenty-nine students agreed to this answer positively since it helps them improve their reading skills. Only one student disagreed to the implementation of this reading-skills unit.

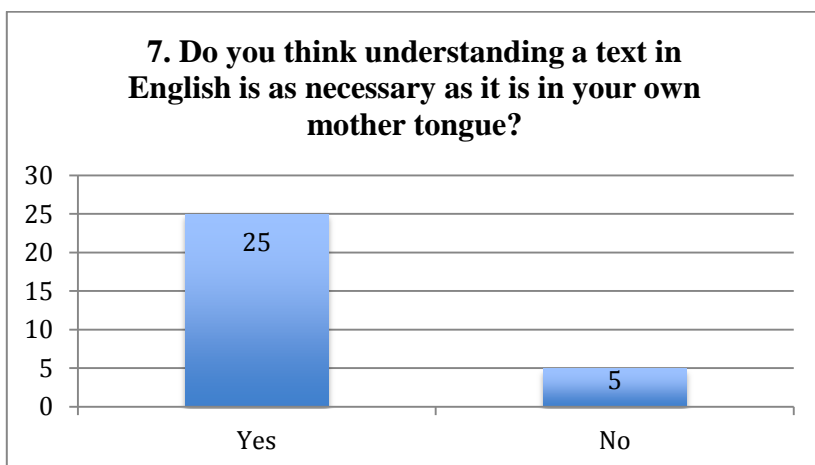


Most of the students or twenty-seven of them considered English reading skills to be acceptable. Only two of them said that they felt excellent reading texts and just one of them said that he had bad reading skills.

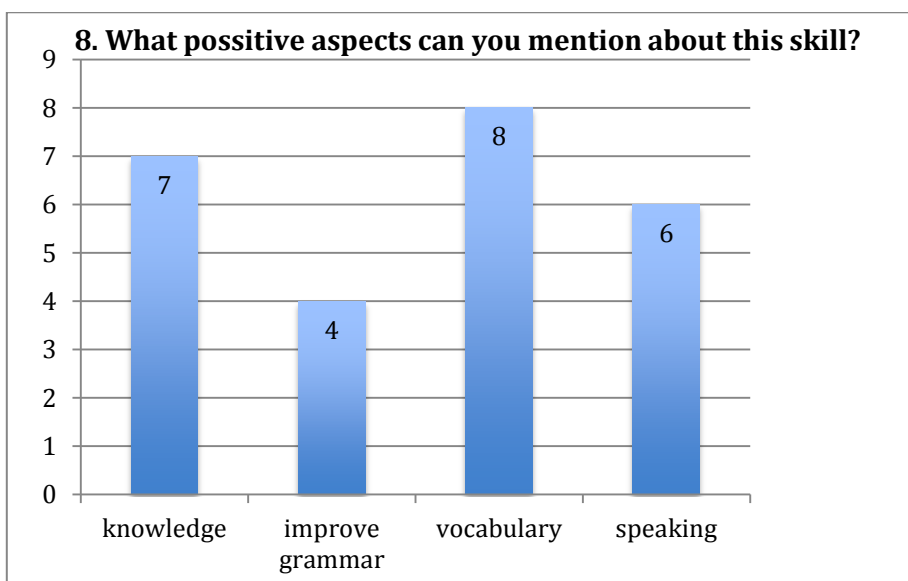


Twenty-five students show a high interest in “**stories**”, ten students selected “other” and they wrote “things related to everyday activities”. Seven students chose “news”, four

students selected “letter”, three students made a choice for “science” and only one student wrote “essays.”

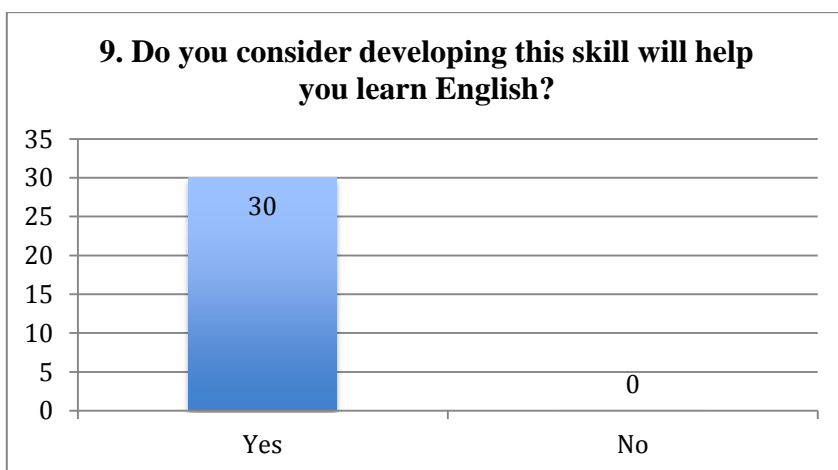


In this answer, twenty-five students think understanding a text is important in both English and Spanish because there is a lot of interesting information in English, too.



Eight students said that “knowledge” is the one of the most important aspects of this skill, seven students chose “**vocabulary**”, six students selected “speaking” and four students said

that it helps improve their reading skills, and when they talk about the text, they learn grammar and vocabulary.



All the students (30) agreed that the development of this reading skill will help them learn English because they can improve their knowledge and give their opinions about things.

In folder 2 , we organized the written consent forms, which were approved by the participants a week before this project began, the forms were read and explained, therefore the participants took part of the study from their own free will without any pressure, obligation or any incentive in return. All the participants signed to join the project, twenty-four of them accepted to be videotaped, but four participants did not want to appear in the video, therefore, they were not included. Five participants did not agree about being photographed and two of them did not want their names to be mentioned. Consequently, all this was taken into consideration before videotaping. See (Consent Forms 1)

Here, we also included the information about the video group interview which was recorded after a class, the recording data show the students' perceptions about the reading activities in which two students highlighted the relationship between the reading text and

their everyday life in the aspects of *familiarity* and vocabulary improvement. A girl also said, “*I go to grocery stores everyday.*” Another student said, “ *This activity is about a different context.*” Therefore, it was not like other readings, which students do not usually understand or have complex vocabulary. In the video, they said that these activities encourage them for information exchange and they can speak with more certainty. You could see that students can express their opinions about the previous topics much more easily. Another student stated “*These activities help us increase our vocabulary.*”

(Transcription of Video Group Interview 1 Transcription).

In folder 3, we included the lesson plans and some surveys which were given to the students after the reading activities. The survey was conducted with some closed questions in order to explore the students’ perceptions and provide information about the topic and material.

In the same folder , we included the surveys about cooperative learning, which were asked after some classes “Grocery Shopping, and Using Technology In the Classroom”, students were asked some questions about the way they helped each other while they were doing their activities together and what it meant to them to be helped when they were performing the activities. They had to evaluate each other in the survey in terms of cooperative work.

They also needed to negotiate, understand and construct meanings while interacting and discussing the questions in the text. You could see that by watching the information exchange between the students in the class videos, and the information which they wrote in the survey. The students also mentioned that during the activities, they discussed some answers and the things which they did not understand and that they had different opinions

about them. They also claimed that their classmates had active participation and that they helped them answer the questions about the readings. Other students said, “*We learned vocabulary with our classmates` support.*” (see Cooperative work forms 1)

Table: 3 (See Activity Assessment 1 about “Neighborhood Grocery Stores”)

Questions	1.Not good	2.Poor	3.Fair	4.Good	5. Very good
The reading activity was helpful		1sts	1sts	7sts	8sts
It improved my reading skills	1sts		1sts	8sts	8sts
The topic was interesting	1sts		2sts	7sts	8sts
It was clear and comprehensive			1sts	2sts	14sts
It increased my vocabulary with useful words		1sts	1sts	6sts	10sts
It encouraged discussion of the topic		2sts	3sts	9sts	4sts
It was introduced by the teacher in an interesting way			2sts	5sts	22sts
It was about something I am familiar with		2sts	2sts	6sts	8sts

CONCLUSIONS

In this section of the research, we want to discuss the overall significance of the findings of this small-scale project, followed by a summary of the conclusions of the study, its limitations or implications and suggestions for future research.

The findings of this reading-skills unit represents an essential contribution to the process of attempting to encourage ESL/EFL teachers to consider introducing reading skills in their classes since these skills seem to have been avoided, neglected or simply not emphasized by some of the teachers.

This research study has been designed with a type of methodology intended to successfully help students with their reading ability as well as integrating the other skills such as speaking, writing and listening in the activities which were developed in class. As great importance of these activities was the introduction of personalized topics to attract students' interests and encourage them to participate in the reading sessions, since a lot of the topics of the articles and texts which students read might be boring to them. This research has explored how EFL students in B1 level can improve their reading skills through the combination of cooperative learning and interaction in the L2 classroom. Specifically, this project investigated a research question. Firstly, it explored the benefits of reading texts in English before and after the intervention. Secondly, whether or not B1 students at the Colombo could benefit from the development of this reading skills unit. Finally, the study examined the role of cooperative learning and interactions. During the intervention, the students were involved in interacting with each other in discussions, negotiations of meanings, as a result, learning became a social activity accomplished cooperatively in pairs and small groups. The class centered on concepts

which enabled students to express their views and share their experiences. They engaged in thinking activities whereby they took ownership of their own learning without interference from the teacher; therefore, they were free to talk and contribute actively in class. This improvement of the students' spoken English may have been a consequence of many factors among which are the following. Firstly, students had some considerable opportunities to practice their English in class through interaction and cooperative group discussions while they were reading the texts. Interaction and cooperative work provided an ideal environment for them to learn from each other while sharing their thoughts and experiences. As a result, the classroom environment was encouraging and made students feel engaged in the learning activities.

Eventhough this study was not conducted for a long time, some improvements in terms of speaking and reading skills were observed. This might have been due to the students positive reaction to this project. They developed greater interest in the readings because they understood and appreciated what they were taught. Consequently, their views and contributions during the study were respected and valued. This pedagogical intervention exposed students to different skills simultaniously, which could be more effective than mastering one skill at a time. Besides, through these readings, students gained new vocabulary and grammatical uses, which they used in their performance.

LIMITATIONS

This reading skills unit went through certain limitations which are the following. Most of the students agreed to participate in this project, but some of them decided not to do it because of the tools which we used to record the class, such as a camera for the video and the interview and they felt a little uncomfortable in front of a camera, therefore they

were not videotaped. Another difficulty which we had during the development of this reading skills unit were the dates and times of the activities which had to be changed due to the different schedules and groups which we had at the Colombo. In addition, Colombo classes last for 19 days, therefore we had to think about a way to teach the regular class and set the necessary days and time for the reading activities without sacrificing the normal Colombo English program. It was not easy. Fortunately, we were able to overcome these situations and finish the project.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

The participation of the students who decided to take part in this reading-skills unit was essential and very important to carry out the project. From the beginning they showed interest and were eager to be part of it. Throughout the project it can be seen that their positive attitudes towards the reading activities increased, and by the end of the project, they were truly engaged in all the different reading activities. Students were asked to sit in pairs or in small groups to first read the texts silently for about five to ten minutes and to form some ideas about the task individually before acting cooperatively in groups. This was to offer each students the opportunity to reflect and think about it, which can help them to assess their own level of understanding and how sharing their ideas with others later has deepen their understanding. Individual reflection followed by collective performance on the same task can help students to realize their areas of weaknesses. Awareness of individual weaknesses can assist the learners to improve themselves. After the silent reading, the teacher asked each pair or group to cooperatively answer the questions of the text. A video was used to record some groups' interaction during the process of answering questions.

However, this part of the class was a little complicated due to the fact that some of them wanted to work by themselves, and the idea of this exercise was to encourage cooperative learning, so we had to explain the importance of cooperative learning, and when we finished telling them about it, they seemed more motivated to work in pairs or in groups.

Through the different activities the students showed how much they had improved their reading skills, and how interested they were in the topics of the readings. However, some students felt a little shy to participate during an activity where they voluntarily had to share with the group what they thought about the reading. After they felt confident by telling the importance of everyone's opinion and that they were there because they wanted to improve their English, we noticed that most of them wanted to say something.

Something to consider is that this project was conducted in a short time, which means that the time spent on the intervention was not enough to actually obtain better results in an important study like this. However, this reduced time does not take importance away from this reading skills unit. The findings obtained in this study highlight the fact that much work lies ahead and more importantly, research should be conducted over longer periods in order to allow for proper investigation of students' reading skills to improve speaking and how they adjust to the demands of L2 learning.

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Appendix 1: Diagnostic Tests

We applied two diagnostic reading tests to my B1 level students and this was the result:

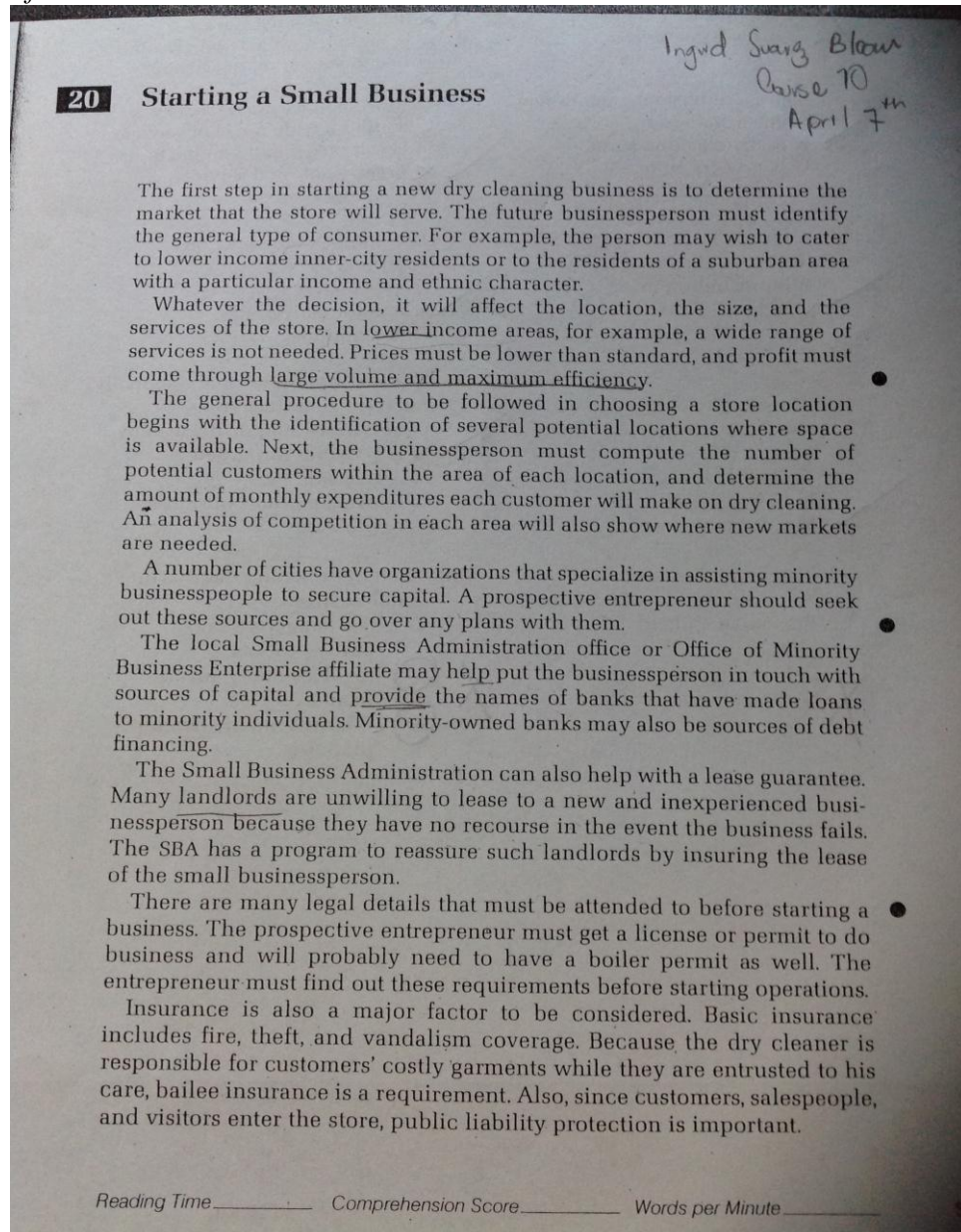
First Test: **“Starting a Small Business”**

The learners had to read an article, and after that, they had to answer 10 questions about it.

Time for the activity: 10 minutes

Number of questions: 10

Number of students: 14



Diagnostic test 1

Recalling Facts

1. The Small Business Administration can provide
 - ☐ a. purchase money.
 - ☐ b. lease guarantees.
 - ☒ c. new customers.
2. The small business mentioned in the article is a
 - ☒ a. dry cleaning store.
 - ☐ b. grocery store.
 - ☐ c. record shop.
3. A person is most likely to find the Small Business Administration in
 - ☐ a. large cities.
 - ☐ b. small towns.
 - ☒ c. rural areas.
4. The amount of money each customer will spend is figured on a
 - ☐ a. daily basis.
 - ☐ b. weekly basis.
 - ☒ c. monthly basis.
5. The Small Business Administration can introduce businesspeople to
 - ☐ a. banks.
 - ☐ b. customers.
 - ☒ c. landlords.

Understanding the Passage

6. According to the author the first step in starting a small business is
 - ☐ a. buying a large store.
 - ☐ b. finding a reliable wholesaler.
 - ☒ c. understanding the customer.
7. In low income areas, stores must
 - ☐ a. offer a wide range of services.
 - ☐ b. sell on a small volume basis.
 - ☒ c. sell items and services at low cost.
8. The author's tone may be described as
 - ☐ a. amusing.
 - ☒ b. informative.
 - ☐ c. emotional.
9. The author implies that the Small Business Administration
 - ☐ a. is a self-supporting agency.
 - ☐ b. provides important assistance.
 - ☒ c. oversimplifies business problems.
10. We may conclude that starting a small business
 - ☐ a. is a dangerous and costly process.
 - ☐ b. involves many government agencies.
 - ☒ c. requires much advanced planning.

One student had 5 right answers	5 wrong answers
One student had 3 right answers	7 wrong answers
Two students had 9 right answers	1 wrong answer
Four students had 8 right answers	2 wrongs answers
Three students had 7 right answers	3 wrong answers
Three students had 6 right answers	4 wrong answers

Second Test: "A New Respect for Drugs"

The learners had to read an article and then they had to answer 10 questions about it.

Time for the activity: 10 minutes

Number of questions: 10

Number of students: 13

08/APRIL/2014 Level 10
Andrea Romero Montes

24 A New Respect for Drugs

Drug addiction is the physical dependence upon a drug. Its definition includes the development of tolerance and withdrawal. As a person develops tolerance, he requires larger and larger amounts of the drug to achieve the same effect. Withdrawal occurs when the use of an addicting drug is stopped. It is characterized by a wide range of distressing symptoms such as diarrhea, vomiting, and cramps. Many drug users develop a compulsion to continue taking a drug to avoid the withdrawal symptoms.

Many people think drugs are magic potions that have only good effects. However, almost every drug is potentially dangerous at some dosage level for certain people under some circumstances. Some drugs can also be harmful when taken in dangerous combinations or by very sensitive people in small or ordinary amounts.

The fact that some drugs can bring about beneficial results does not mean that pills will solve all problems. What is needed is a new respect for all drugs. Drugs that affect the mind can have subtle or obvious effects, which may occur immediately or become evident only after long-term, continuous use.

All drugs have many effects that vary among individuals, on different occasions in the same individual, with the amount of the drug and the length of time the drug is used. Many factors not related to the chemical makeup of the drug cause varying effects. These include the expectations of the user, the circumstances under which he takes the drug, and the meaning of drug use to the individual.

Even the same individual taking the same dose of a drug on subsequent occasions may have a completely different reaction. As the drug affects the individual, he becomes more susceptible to the moods of the people around him and affected by his surroundings. These factors can markedly alter the drug's effects on an individual.

A user can ask his family, friend, physician, or minister to help him find the best resource in the community. The family doctor, mental health professionals, or school counselors should be among the first contacted. Some community mental health centers have special drug abuse units; all centers can provide referral to appropriate resources.

The harmful, and the beneficial uses of drugs should be understood. Children should not be continually exposed to the idea that the stresses of daily life require chemical relief. Respect for all chemicals, especially mind-altering chemicals, should be instilled in children at an early age.

Reading Time _____ Comprehension Score _____ Words per Minute _____

Recalling Facts

1. Vomiting, cramps, and diarrhea are symptoms of
☒ a. addiction.
☐ b. overdose.
☐ c. withdrawal.
2. Many people think of a drug as a
☒ a. magic potion.
☐ b. pleasant escape.
☐ c. necessary medicine.
3. The article points out that drugs can be harmful if taken
☒ a. in combinations.
☐ b. in pill form.
☐ c. without prescription.
4. The author says that children should not be continually exposed to
☐ a. the stresses of life.
☐ b. maltreatment.
☒ c. the need for medicine.
5. Drug addition is considered a
☐ a. mental dependence.
☒ b. physical dependence.
☐ c. social dependence.

Understanding the Passage

6. The author implies that
☒ a. tolerance levels are different for each person.
☐ b. teenagers take drugs because of social pressure.
☐ c. drugs often cause serious side effects in the elderly.
7. The author advises the reader to
☐ a. study medicine labels carefully.
☒ b. use drugs cautiously.
☐ c. have a physical examination yearly.
8. The author suggests that
☐ a. only a few drugs can be dangerous.
☒ b. drugs lose their potency as they age.
☐ c. drugs work at varying speeds.
9. The author feels that the most dangerous drugs
☐ a. can cause vitamin deficiencies.
☒ b. affect the mind.
☐ c. enlarge the liver.
10. The article leads the reader to believe that
☒ a. a person's attitude can modify the effects of a drug.
☐ b. drugs are always harmful in large doses.
☐ c. organic compounds are safer than drugs.

Appendix 2: Survey about “reading skills for Students

SURVEY ABOUT “READING SKILLS” FOR STUDENTS AT THE CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO IN CARTAGENA.

NAME: Maria Alexandra Baraza Barasnegras
 DATE: Nov/15/2013

This survey is intended for students to express their opinions about their reading habits in English in a natural and spontaneous way, after reading a suitable text for their level.

1. After reading a text in English, do you usually feel prepared to give your opinion or start a discussion?
 Yes X No _____

Why?
I Always prepared my opinion because it's important for start a good discussion with my partner

2. Do you think it is important to have good reading skills?
 Yes X No _____
it is important because you can understand And learn more the text or whatever you read

3. What difficulties do you have when reading a text?
 The order _____ Getting the main idea _____ Grammar ✓ Vocabulary _____

4. Do you consider it is necessary to implement this supplementary reading course at the Colombo Americano?
 Yes ✓ No _____

Why?
I think it's necessary because the students can learn more the Grammar and vocabulary

5. According to your level of English, how would you rate your reading skills?
 Excellent _____ Acceptable ✓ Bad _____ Terrible _____

6. What types of texts do you enjoy reading?
 Essays _____ Stories ✓ Letters _____ Science _____ Other _____

7. Do you think understanding a text in English is as necessary as it is in your own mother tongue?
 Yes ✓ No _____

Why?
because you can compare the Grammar between your mother tongue And English

8. What positive aspects can you mention about this skill?
 Justify your response:
Read more the text in English And you can talk with other persons

9. Do you consider developing this skill will help you learn English?
 Yes ✓ No _____

Why?
Because you can talk much And understanding the text.

SURVEY ABOUT “*READING SKILLS*” FOR STUDENTS AT THE CENTRO COLOMBO AMERICANO IN CARTAGENA.

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

This survey is intended for students to express their opinions about their reading habits in English in a natural and spontaneous way, after reading a suitable text for their level.

1. After reading a text in English, do you usually feel prepared to give your opinion or start a discussion?

Yes _____ No _____

Why?

2. Do you think it is important to have good reading skills?

Yes _____ No _____

3. What difficulties do you have when reading a text?

The order _____ Getting the main idea _____ Grammar _____ Vocabulary _____

4. Do you consider it is necessary to implement this supplementary reading course at the Colombo Americano?

Yes _____ No _____

Why?

5. According to your level of English, how would you rate your reading skills?

Excellent _____ Acceptable _____ Bad _____ Terrible _____

6. What types of texts do you enjoy reading?

News _____ Stories _____ Letters _____ Science _____ Other _____

7. Do you think understanding a text in English is as necessary as it is in your own mother tongue?

Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

8. What positive aspects can you mention about this skill?

Justify your response:

9. Do you consider developing this skill will help you learn English?

Yes _____ No _____

Why? _____

Appendix 3: Consent Forms

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

SIGNATURE: I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks and discomforts as well as benefits have been explained to me. I have agreed to participate in this study.

The participant agrees to be audio-taped YES ☒ NO ☐

The participant agrees to be photographed YES ☒ NO ☐

The participant agrees to be videotaped YES ☒ NO ☐

The participant would like his/her name to be used YES ☒ NO ☐

Participant name: Andrea Patricia Romero Montes

Signature of Participant giving Consent : Andrea P. Romero

Date: 07/APR/14

This project was carried out at the **Centro Colombo Americano** in Cuatro Vientos (Cartagena)

Consent Forms 1

WRITTEN CONSENT FORM

SIGNATURE: I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks and discomforts as well as benefits have been explained to me. I have answered all questions. I have agreed to participate in this study.

Participant name:

Signature of Participant giving Consent : _____

Date: _____

The participant agrees to be audio-taped YES_____ NO _____

The participant agrees to be photographed YES_____ NO_____

The participant agrees to be videotaped YES _____ NO_____

The participant would like his/her name to be used YES _____ NO_____

This project was carried out at the **Centro Colombo Americano** in Cuatro Vientos
(Cartagena)

Appendix 4

Reading Practice 1

Movies and Music

This is a class, which was both taught for practice, and also observed to analyze some aspects of a reading class. Here, it was observed that most of the students looked demotivated, did not interact or help each other during the activity and it seemed that they did not use good reading techniques while reading.

Video Transcription

Teacher : *Ok, the next part of the class is...the reading part. Please read the two reviews about “**Movies and Music**”, and then...eh.. continue with the exercise C. Find the words on the left in the reviews.*

There is a long pause...

Students were reading silently, the teacher gave them about 10 minutes to read the text. The students took more time than expected to start answering the questions. Aproximately, 15 minues later, they started responding the questions with some difficulties. Unfortunately, the cell phone was not completely charged; Therefore, we could not record the rest of the class.

Lesson Plan - “Grocery stores”
SCHOOL: Centro Colombo Americano
TEACHERS: Jose Cortes/ Carlos Valiente

GROUP: B1 Level

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: 14

SUBJECT: Neighborhood Grocery Stores

PERIODS OF TIME: 50 Minutes **VOCABULARY AND EXPRESSIONS:** consumer, beverages, owners, block, custom.

GRAMMAR POINTS: simple present **OBJECTIVES:** Students will apply different reading strategies to find out information in the text.

COMMUNICATIVE SKILLS: Reading, Speaking

STANDARDS:

STRATEGIES: Activating prior knowledge, skimming, asking comprehension questions.

TIME	CLASS STAGE	TEACHER	STUDENTS	MATERIALS
10 Minutes	WARM-UP	The teacher will ask some questions related to grocery shopping to activate prior knowledge	Students will try to answer according to what they know.	
10 Minutes	PRESENTATION	The teacher will give the students an article about Neighborhood grocery stores in order to read and do some activities.	Students will skim the article and express what they expect to learn from it.	Article about Neighborhood grocery stores.
15 Minutes	PRACTICE	The teacher will ask students to answer the questions in part D after reading and sharing their answers with a classmate.	Students will answer questions in part D about the reading text and share with a classmate.	Questions part D about the reading text.
15 Minutes	PRODUCTION	The teacher will have students get together in pairs and discuss their answers in part E .	Students will get together in pairs to discuss their answers to questions in part E .	Questions in part E about the reading text.
	HOMEWORK	The teacher will ask the students to find more information about grocery stores and share with the group in the following class.	The students will find out more information about grocery stores (where they go, what they buy...) and share with the class in the next session.	

Appendix 5

Transcription of reading skills class “Grocery stores”

Group 1:

Student1: Neighborhood grocery stores have important cultural roots in Colombia. So, for that one I think the first one is false.

Student2: Yeah, it's false because it's not a new way to buy food. Actually, it's a familiar way to buy in this country.

Student1: Yeah, it's very common that people buy food and everything like that in grocery stores.

Student2: what do you think about this...

Student1: It's interesting because... I usually buy... in my neighborhood grocery store like... twice a week.

Student2: what do you think about the owners attending their business?

Student1: He always attends the people.

Student2: the first one is false; the second part is false too, because the owner makes friendship with the customers. He always has a smile in the face.

Group 2:

Student1: who usually attends these grocery stores? What do you think?

Student2: always the grocery store is attend by the owner. It's personalized attention with the neighborhood.

Student1: yeah, the owner of the place attend this business, especially in Colombia, you can see this especially in Cartagena. In our neighborhood usually has two or three neighborhood grocery stores.

Student2: what are some of the reasons why consumers prefer to buy in these grocery stores?

Student1: well... I think that the friendship of the customer with the grocer, credit and being attended by the owner, they are some reason for that.

Student2: Maybe I think that people prefer to buy in the grocery store in the neighborhood, because you can have fresh fruits and a good price.

Group 3:

Student1: Who usually attends these grocery stores?

Student2: well, generally the grocery stores are attend by the owners, because the relationship with the customer is more closer and that helps to the buyer, they can increment their sales, I think, in my opinion.

Student1: Yes, I agree with you and in the text say that there is a cycle of favors, money loans and other services are provided.

Student2: And what are some of the reasons why consumers prefer to buy in these grocery stores?

Student1: Well, in the text say the costumers prefer to buy... like vegetables, fruits, dairy products, bread, beers like soda, iced tea, meat and also some cleaning items too.

Student2: Well, also because the price are cheaper than supermarket so that increment the people who buy things in grocery stores.

Student1: mmm yeah.

Student2: how popular are these grocery stores in Cartagena?

Student1: These grocery stores are very popular in Cartagena. In some places you can see two and even three grocery stores in just one block.

Student2: Like I said before, in the question, are more popular because the prices are cheaper than supermarketers so that helps to the people who can buy in grocery stores more than supermarkets.

Group 4:

Student1: the stores are attended by the owner, because it's quicker and easier to attend this business.

Student2: And they can have a friendship with the customer, and it's great for the business too.

Student3: what are some of the reasons why consumers prefer to buy in these grocery stores?

Student1: because there is a friendship with the owner and the costumers, it's closer.

Student2: and get a good price too.

Appendix 6

Reading Skills Activity

A. Pre-reading activity.

Answer the following questions about grocery shopping.

Do you go grocery shopping?

How often do you go?

Who do you go with?

Where do you usually go?

What do you think about neighborhood grocery stores?

B. Skim the article. What do you think is the author's intention with this article?

C. Reading.

Read the article.

Neighborhood grocery stores

Neighborhood grocery stores have important cultural roots in Colombia; they are appreciated because they are personal ventures. The owner of the place attends these businesses, so there is a cycle of favors; money loans and other services are provided. The friendship of the customers with the grocer, the custom of giving credit and being attended by the owner, are some of the reasons why consumers prefer to buy in these grocery stores instead of going to big supermarkets.

Cartagena is no exception when it comes to this kind of business. Neighborhood grocery stores are so popular here, that in some places you can see two and even three grocery stores in just one block. One of the most popular grocery stores in Cuatro Vientos neighborhood is -----. There you can get vegetables, fruits, dairy products, bread, beverages like soda, beers, iced tea, meat, and also some cleaning items. The owners are always there ready to sell you whatever products you need.

For this reason neighborhood grocery stores are and will be the number one choice to go food shopping in Colombia.

D. Are the sentences true or false? Correct the false sentences.

1. Neighborhood grocery stores are a new way to buy food.
2. The owners of the grocery stores do not have time to attend Customers.
3. Cartagena has a lot of grocery stores in neighborhoods.
4. People prefer to shop in big supermarkets.
5. You can also buy cleaning products in grocery stores.

TRUE FALSE

E. Read the article again, and answer the questions. Then compare with a partner.

1. Who usually attends these grocery stores?
2. What are some of the reasons why consumers prefer to buy in these grocery stores?
3. How popular are these grocery stores in Cartagena? Why?
4. Which is the most popular grocery store in Cuatro vientos? What can you get there?

Appendix 7

Transcription of Video Group Interview 1

Teacher: *Hi, girls*

Female students: Hi

T: *How are you?*

FSs: Fine

T: *Hi, guys!*

Male students: Hi, teacher. How is everything?

T: *Everything is fine. The last activity, eh... reading activity. We did another one yesterday. And today we did the last one. The one yesterday was about neighborhood grocery stores. Do you remember? And the one today was about the use of technology in the English classroom. Let's talk about the one yesterday. How did you feel yesterday doing this reading activity?*

FS1: That topic is about our life. We everyday go to, for example I everyday go to grocery stores. For me is more common so...

T: *It's very familiar.*

FS1: Yeah

MS1: These activities are more different than others, because the activities talk about other context. Some students don't understand about the vocabulary or what's the meaning behind the text. With these activities like that we can practice, we can understand because the topics are more familiar to us.

T: *More familiar. Ah... the one that you did today was about technology. It was the use of technology in the English classroom. How about this topic?*

MS2: It is a good idea, we use technology only to find out that words I don't know.

FS2: I think it is a controversial topic because people use the technology for different ways and I think the technology is good depends the use the people give. Eh... people can use cellphone in the classroom for looking for topics or can use it like a dictionary.

FS3: I love technology because the technology can be used for English class, but I think the technology takes the people time, the people use the technology a lot, and in the classroom eh... the cell phones and the computers eh... I think sometimes eh... take time in the "what's app"..., in the chatting...

T: *People spend too much time checking messages on "what's app" or other...*

MS1: People waste important time to teach English. I only use my cell phone to search some meanings of words that I feel not sure about it. Actually I have a nice app. Word reference. We can use word reference to translate the words. It's more useful.

T: *Do you think um... this reading activity helps you in English some way?*

FS2: Yes of course. This activity encourages us to learn to look for words. It helps us to increase the vocabulary.

FS1: Well, I think these readings are very well for us because, first, that helps to us to get more vocabulary that we use in everyday, for example the reading from today I think is better for change us opinion about the technology, more than get vocabulary, for example today I think yeah we can use the cell phones or tablet or technology here in class for make the class more enjoy, more interesting yeah. That's for vocabulary, and for get more information or something like that.

T: *Would you like to receive more of these activities, reading activities?*

All SS: yeah.

MS2: Because you understand more quickly.

T: *You feel that you learn to read more or... faster if you have these kinds of activities?*

FS1: I think if we use these activities in all levels, in all classes we can be better in the future because we can understand more reads, more vocabulary, you can talk with more... you can speak more sure because you know about some topics, or some things about your life or about something like that.

FS3: In this level is more important speak than write or understand all the topics. The most important speak in this activity we practice a lot.

T: *Ok, um... girls, guys thank you very much for your time and your participation. Bye.*

All SS: Bye teacher.

Students' reading skills survey

Circle from 1 to 5. (1 not good, 5 very good)

1. The reading activity was helpful 1 2 3 4 (5)
2. It improved my reading skills 1 2 3 4 (5)
3. The topic was interesting 1 2 3 4 (5)
4. It was clear and comprehensible 1 2 3 4 (5)
5. It increased my vocabulary with useful words 1 2 3 4 (5)
6. It encouraged discussion of the topic 1 2 3 4 (5)
7. It was introduced by the teacher in an interesting way 1 2 3 4 (5)
8. It was about something I am familiar with 1 2 3 4 (5)
9. Would you like to have more reading activities like this? If yes, why?

Yes I would like it, because there are more interesting,
we can improved our skills and also
we can get more comments about it.

Students' reading skills survey

Circle from 1 to 5. (1 not good, 5 very good)

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The reading activity was helpful | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. It improved my reading skills | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. The topic was interesting | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. It was clear and comprehensible | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. It increased my vocabulary with useful words | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. It encouraged discussion of the topic | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. It was introduced by the teacher in an interesting way | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. It was about something I am familiar with | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. Would you like to have more reading activities like this? If yes, why? | |

Appendix 9

Cooperative Work Assessment

READING-SKILLS UNIT

CHECKLIST FOR THE PEER ASSESSMENT (COOPERATIVE WORK)

NAME: Angie Guerrero Babil
DATE: _____
LEVEL: P1

EVALUATING MY CLASSMATE'S WORK

1. During our reading activity in pairs, my classmate's participation was active.
Yes X No _____

2. Did my classmate help me during this activity? Yes X No _____
And how? he said me the means of some words.

3. What was his contribution during our teamwork?
he participated on the video answering the questions

4. Did my classmate make our teamwork efficient? Yes X No _____
In what ways? he answered the questions in the activity correctly.

5. What new things did I learn from this activity with his support?
the means of some words.

Cooperative work forms 1

READING-SKILLS UNIT

CHECKLIST FOR THE PEER ASSESSMENT (COOPERATIVE WORK)

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

LEVEL: _____

EVALUATING MY CLASSMATE'S WORK

1. During our reading activity in pairs, my classmate's participation was active.

Yes _____ No _____

2. Did my classmate help me during this activity? Yes _____ No _____

And how? _____

3. What was his contribution during our teamwork?

4. Did my classmate make our teamwork efficient? Yes _____ No _____

In what ways? _____

5. What new things did I learn from this activity with his support?
