DESCRIPTION OF THE READING PROCESSING STYLE AND STRATEGIES USE OF THE UPPER-INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS AT EL PINAR HIGH SCHOOL WHEN READING DIFFERENT TEXT TYPES AND THE TEXT FEATURES THAT INTERFERE WITH THE PROCESS

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INSTITUTO DE ESTUDIOS SUPERIORES EN EDUCACIÓN
MAESTRÍA EN EDUCACIÓN
ÉNFASIS EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS
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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Magister en Educación with énfasis en la Enseñanza del Inglés

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NOTA DE ACEPTACIÓN

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Presidente del Jurado

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FOR MY MOM

AND BRO., WHO PASSED AWAY.
# CONTENTS

| 1. INTRODUCTION        | 7  |
| 2. RATIONALE           | 10 |
| 3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND | 12 |
| 3.2 A view of education | 12 |
| 3.3 Education and reading | 17 |
| 3.3 Theories of reading | 22 |
| 3.3.1 Language acquisition | 23 |
| 3.3.2 Literacy         | 24 |
| 3.4 The reading process | 30 |
| 3.4.1 Theories of learning to read | 34 |
| 3.5 The reader         | 41 |
| 3.6 Factors affecting the process of reading | 42 |
| 3.7 Text types and text features | 52 |
| 3.8 Language learning strategies | 64 |
| 4. STATING OF THE PROBLEM | 69 |
| 4.1 OBJECTIVES         | 71 |
| 4.1.1 General          | 71 |
| 4.1.2 Specific         | 71 |
| 5. METHODOLOGY         | 73 |
| 5.1 RESEARCH APPROACH  | 73 |
| 5.2 DESIGN             | 80 |
| 5.3 STUDY GROUP        | 81 |
| 5.4 TECHNIQUES         | 82 |
| 5.5 INSTRUMENTS        | 82 |
| 5.6 PROCEDURE          | 82 |
| 6. RESULTS             | 84 |
| 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS | 120 |
| 8. BIBLIOGRAPHY        | 131 |
| 9. APPENDIXES          | 138 |
"La pasión de Bastián Baltasar Bux eran los libros... pasaba tardes enteras delante de un libro, con las orejas ardiéndole y el pelo caído sobre la cara, leyendo y leyendo, olvidado del mundo y sin darse cuenta de que tenía hambre o se estaba quedando helado..."

In very oppressed societies like ours which day after day are more conscious of the need to build up a more viable future, in which there is a need for democracy, equality, social justice, peace and harmony, education plays a preponderant role. Education becomes, under these circumstances, the force of a better future due to the fact that it has the most powerful tools to make the necessary changes for the society. In this special sense Alcorta (1986) claims that education is one of the means to get plain freedom, being reading its basic resource.

When reading, students should not only enjoy what they read, but also make a distinction of the different texts, relate them with their own lives and gain experience to analyze them and finally write their own ones. These very decisive factors should be common, not unknown, to the members of our society.

In general terms, the reading habit does not seem to be crucial for the students, being this a disadvantage in terms of cultural and economical competence, compared to other countries. In this sense, Ferro (2004) affirms: “Se ha dicho en
repetidas veces que la lectura es un hábito. Habrá que seguir repitiéndolo porque los hábitos se crean y se afirman con la frecuencia de actos que llegan a volverse una necesidad”. (El HERALDO, Nov. 17/2004, Pág. 3a).

Being this so, the Revolución Educativa of President Uribe, for instance, proposes a transformation of the school system to guarantee the competitiveness of the country, and to assure the betterment of Colombians’ quality of life and education.

This seems to be a global main concern, as well. More and more students are looking forward to acquiring good reading skills in a second or foreign language. Such a concern has grown through the years. One argument to support this is the demand for both effective reading courses as well as high quality second language reading materials (Aebersold and Field, 1997).

This increased interest has its raison d'être in developing a solid reading proficiency and comprehension. Similarly, such a view has supporters who observe readings as paramount in contexts where reading materials written in English are used. Thus, effective reading is critical at least for students of EFL/ESL. In this sense, theorists depict the use of a myriad of pedagogical instructions, which may include the development of certain reading strategies and the use of different texts types, so as to give an answer to such desired reading effectiveness.
Traditionally, reading comprehension refers to a reader’s complete understanding or full grasp of meanings in a text. However, this broad definition results in some confusion when different levels of comprehension cannot be appropriately identified and explained. The conception of reading that underlines this paper is interactive, i.e., the view of reading as an interaction between the reader and the text. ((Aebersold & Field, 1997; Alderson, 2000).

My research will also portray different perspectives concerning the learning strategies models (Oxford, 1990; O’Malley and Chamot, 1990) which seem the most adequate for the purposes of my study. Insights on the different text types (Weaver & Kintsch, 1991; Seidenberg, 1989) will also be taken into account. Added to this is a description of the research approach and the techniques of data gathering (Nunan, 2002; Seliger and Shohamy, 2001; Hatch and Farhady, 1982 in Holmes, 1986; Faerch and Kasper, 1987; Filstead, 1970; Bogdan and Biklen, 1982). The data analysis sought to find answers to research questions which will be provided below. A final step of the study shall deal with the interpretation of results and conclusions.
2. RATIONALE

This research proposal is intended to identify the current 10th grade students’ possible reading comprehension deficiencies at El Pinar School; to enhance the knowledge base about their reading processing style; to ensure a strong, two-way relationship between reading and comprehension with the relevance of the theory and the concepts concerning the reading matter.

Also, to gain insights in terms of their performance when dealing with different texts, the text features affecting them, and the reading strategies they currently use. In this special sense, Alderson (2000), for instance, affirms that there has been surprisingly little empirical research into the reader’s knowledge of the text features of particular genres, and its relationship to the reading process or product. The theorist similarly states that most research has tended to concentrate on the textual features themselves, and how they contribute to text readability, rather than on the state of the readers’ knowledge of such features.

This attempt shall also set the bases to improve the students’ quality of reading and development of the process, the use of suitable strategies when reading, and explore the appropriacy of the reading materials regarding students’ language ability, interest, and motivation. Similarly, the convenience of the research shall
confirm the validity of theoretical frameworks in relation to the way students presently tackle texts and the factors that mainly interfere with this process.
3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

My objective in this chapter is to depict the theory underlying this research analysis on the way 10th grade students develop the process of reading when dealing with different texts types and determine the reading strategies they use and the contextual factors in terms of text types and text features that interfere with the process. I have organized this chapter into several sections. Initially, I will describe a view of education, in which educators and institutions have the autonomy to propose diverse contexts in which language helps to enhance the culture, and develop students as self-critical members of the society. Comments on education and reading, as well as broad ideas about language and language learning will follow. Then, the concept of language acquisition and literacy will give way to concept of reading, and as it unfolds, to the reading process, theories of learning to read, the reader, and factors affecting the process of reading. Parallel to this, it would be important to mention the different text types and text features along with the reading strategies underlying the process of reading.

3.1 A VIEW OF EDUCATION

A worldwide scope on thinking of the future regularly generates uncertainty. Colombians are not exempted from this affliction; consequently, adults,
primordially, wonder about the world’s affairs the new generations will face. It is at this point when we educators are to underpin the grounding for such an oncoming event. It is not a mystery that those new generations will live in a quite different environment. As a result, one should begin working on the construction of a viable future, one where democracy, equality, social justice, peace, and harmony have a place. In this sense, education plays a preponderant role. It is the force of the future since it has the most powerful tools to make such a change.

One of the most difficult challenges will be to adjust the way we think so we are able to deal with the growing complexity, the rapidity of changes and unpredictability of our world. We have to rebuild the organization of our knowledge. In order to do this, it is necessary to put down traditional obstacles among the different fields and to conceive the way to join aspects that have traditionally been separated. We have an enormous responsibility with the new generations that obliges us to renovate educational policies and curricula.

Morin (1999) stresses four pillars to put great emphasis on when considering approaches to learning: learning to know, learning to be, learning to do, and learning to live together. The first two are highlighted by this author, who states that it is not fair that education, which wishes to promote knowledge, ‘remains blind’ towards the knowledge of the humans, their dispositions, imperfections, difficulties, tendencies, and does not absolutely worry about the promotion of the first pillar mention above: learning to know.
Learning to know should be seen as a first necessity that helps prepare ourselves to confront the permanent risks of mistakes and illusions which invade the human spirit.

The second pillar, learning to be, again, stresses the knowledge of a human being who is, at the same time, physical, biological, psychological, cultural, social, and historic. The incapacity to conceive humans as such has made it difficult to understand the meaning of being.

Drawing on the other two pillars, learning to do, for instance, other than learning skills, Delors (1996, in Asken and Carnell, 1998) argues that also includes the acquisition of a competence that enables people to deal with a variety of situations, often enforceable, and to work in teams, a feature to which educational methods do not at present pay enough attention.

The UNESCO report (1996, in Morin 1999) says that learning to live together urges developing and understanding of others and their history, traditions, and spiritual values and, on this basis, creating a new spirit which, guided by recognition of our growing interdependence and a common analysis of the risks and challenges of the future, would induce people to implement common projects or to manage the inevitable conflicts in an intelligent way.
Delors (1996) argues that this assumption owes quite a lot to our role of helping build up the principles of a pertinent knowledge, which also leads to understand global and fundamental problems. This procedure would contribute to realize that all humans have a shared destiny and their own identity.

Finally, we are to promote the ethic of the human genre. Such ethic has to be built based on the idea of a species. As a final premise, Morin (1999) concludes that ‘la Educación debe no sólo construir una toma de conciencia de nuestra Tierra-Patria, sino también permitir que esta conciencia se traduzca en una voluntad de ejercer la ciudadanía terrenal’.

In order to achieve effective results, changes have been introduced to our educational framework, e.g., the Constitution has been reformed to adapt the priorities established in the new world order, and in which education is viewed as a public service with a social function to provide access to culture, science, technology, and different branches of knowledge. Resolución 2343 (1996) reflects the type of education we need for the current world, which one wishes to have according to the broader knowledge we have about the human potential and his possibility to grow up.

Educational institutions must develop a process of study, analysis and acceptance of such regulations to fulfill them with responsibility, joy, and creativity so that they contribute to produce beneficial results to each Colombian in particular and to the
society in general. A logical consequence of the process proposed and mentioned above is to improve the learners’ performance at all levels of competence. It implies a two-way compromise: ‘Si mejorar es la esencia de quienes aprenden, también lo es de quienes se dedican a la enseñanza’.

The quality of the Colombian education is a national policy and a present decision of the government, which should call the attention of every person involved in the education of the new generation of children and adolescents. In short, our compromise is to focus on the students’ needs as to strengthen their natural potential and recognize their diverse learning styles to help them know what to do, with what they already know. The ‘Ley General de la Educación 115 de 1994’ urges our communication to be significant since listening, speaking, reading and writing become really valuable when they help us to understand each other in a better way.

Educators and institutions have the autonomy to propose diverse contexts in which language helps us enhance our culture, and develop as self-critical members of our society. From the very beginning of the educational instruction, it is basic to develop abilities to listen, read, analyze, and become interlocutors of any kind of texts.

Literature should not be discarded from schools. It makes us dream, feel, imagine, get to know other people. During the process of reading, students shall not only
enjoy what they read, but they shall also learn to differentiate texts, to relate them with their own lives, and gain insights to analyze them, and finally write their own ones. These decisive factors should be common sense and shared among all of us.

3.2 EDUCATION AND READING

A rationale for a direct connection between education and reading is Alcorta’s (1986) viewpoint on illiterate societies, which live under permanent vigilance. In this special, such an assumption is still valid and brings about the believing that education is one of the means to get plain freedom, being reading its basic resource.

A comparison among the models of education in Latin-American countries and the developed nations shows that the major difference is the diversity of contents, the quality of the infrastructure or the training of their teachers. It is true that there is a quite big educational underdevelopment concerning these last aspects, but the greater differences are the central model, the basic idea of education, and the foundation of the teaching practice developed in our country. Fundamentally, the model is based in the oral communication and the use of the written texts to memorize its contents. Such model corresponds to the cultural habits of the
Colombian society, which never became one whose culture would be based on the written text.

Going back in time, and with respect to individual instruction, the majority of contents were passed on orally in the family, at church, at work or at school. Today, very few people have access to reading texts from recent published issues. The other readers’ minority learnt to read after having access to the radio or the television.

The logical consequence should have been to have passed from the oral to the written form and then to the audiovisual mass media, but in Colombia, people changed from the oral to the radio and the television, without having time for getting accustomed to the books, with a serious consequence:

Melo (1998) asserts that *la radio y la televisión hacen innecesario el dominio de la letra y un analfabeta puede hoy, como hace 1000 años en Europa, tener casi tanta información sobre las peripecias básicas y elementales del mundo como el más sofisticado intelectual, y un mínimo de capacidad lectora le permite a la mayoría de los colombianos desenvolverse en el medio urbano y seguir las instrucciones mínimas de avisos e instructivos. Muchos analfabetas pueden hoy pasar su vida sin que nadie advierta su limitación, apoyados en la omnipresencia de la información audiovisual.*
Recent studies show that the reading habits in our country come from scenarios where there is a “family” library or where a frequent reading practice is done. Unfortunately, such circumstances are rarely seen at schools where, in general terms, learning to read does not seem crucial for the students. Incidentally, if what was stated above is correct, the cultural and economical productivity shall be affected, due to the fact of having inhabitants whose reading habits and capacity are so limited.

In effect, the lack of reading habits is what brings about an educational focus on a process of passivity and memorization. At this point, the analysis ability development, the critical and logical thinking, the research practice, the problem-solving ability, and so forth, are frustrated for it is quite difficult to give instruction in these aspects without having reading habits.

Additionally, the process of learning to read should go in accordance with the process of learning to write. Perfetti & Zhang (1995) argue that learning to read is coming to know how one’s writing system works. The student already has knowledge of language. It is the writing system that must be learned: how the student’s writing system encodes his or her language. The student who will learn to read English must learn how one writing system works. Unfortunately, this natural association does not happen in a great number of Colombian schools. The school system does not seem to worry about this last aspect and, as a result, a large number of first year university students lack reading and writing skills.
Thus, there is a need of an educational re-arrangement as to make it suitable to the current necessities of our society and to transform it into an active and creative process of students’ shaping so they have the capacity to learn to learn and not only to dedicate time to memorize information.

However, it seems that there is not much awareness of the problem. Apparently, it is not uncommon to come across teachers with reading disabilities who do not feel attracted to a teaching reading methodology, which they ignore. Thus, if the teacher does not read or has reading problems, it is quite difficult that s/he may well teach to read.

Gómez (1999), writing about educational problems, argues that it would be a waste of time to intend for an educational transformation if the books were not taken into account. This is a central component in education and the students’ teaching worldwide.

A final word on this should lead to possible solutions. Having and using libraries at schools is one; although it is well known there is a rejecting reaction from the students towards the idea. However, current cultural issues go up against dealing with books and the reading experience itself, due to the immediacy of the audiovisual narrative, and the idea of libraries with lots of out-of-date books. Gómez argues that without books Colombians shall not enter an existing world of
reading, research, and discovery, and that books make schools a better place for reading, reasoning, and critical thinking.

Other authors (Barthe, 2000) argue that teachers should make readers, and to be it, the books must be drawn near them: it would be something like “books looking for readers” ; Being this so, it would make them active readers, who consider reading a conscious and free-willing activity. Readers would similarly understand the text meaning by questioning it from a real-expectation point of view.

Perfetti (1992) states that practice in reading is critical to success in reading for a number of reasons, most of which point to the development of orthographically addressable word representations. Perfetti additionally argues that practice in reading leads to the development of superior word representations. Thus, the teacher should empower students’ reading capacity instead of merely teaching them. Lévi-Strauss (1969) affirms that It is at this point when the purpose of the education deals with the dilemma “ teaching to obey or teaching to think”.

Concerning the first standpoint, teaching to obey, Lopez (1988) states that it deals with a monologue and the interpersonal relation implies “me-it", reducing the other to a “thing" condition. Here, a tense, threatening, and ambivalent atmosphere is generated towards the authority and the homework routine. Whereas “teaching to think” involves a dialogical language and the interpersonal relation is “me-you”, considering the other as a person. Here, the objectives and activities are decided
on by the group of students and all of them agree with such objectives and activities. The teacher only makes sure the sequence is logic and contributes with having students’ duties on a good track.

After all these ideas, how shall we help fight illiteracy? What type of education do we want? What sort of reading are we talking about? Patte (1984) affirms that a significant first step shall be changing ‘El leedor’, who has a very passive and reliant approach towards the text and the reading matter, to ‘a lector’, who has a more liberal and active attitude towards them.

### 3.3 THEORIES OF READING

A preliminary effort to define the concept of reading shall guide us to go back in time and explore the different conceptions given to this matter in the last fifty years. Initially, it was referred to as a set of abilities or a simple information transference followed by the idea of reading as a product of the interaction between thinking and language. Nevertheless, A more recent tendency focuses on the idea of reading as a process of transaction between the reader and the text (Dubois, 1991). These attempts to give narrow concepts of reading should also lead us to consider the concepts of language acquisition and literacy.
3.3.1 Language acquisition. Theoretically, Language acquisition is the product of strong biological constraints that produce rapid learning of any language over the first few years of life and that learning is a matter of biological readiness that is stimulated by exposure to language (Pinker, 1984). Krashen (1987) asserts acquisition is the product of a subconscious process very similar to the process children undergo when they acquire their first language.

In this sense, Johnson & Newport (1989) claim that learning a second language may have a significant period in which early learning appears to be better-quality to later learning, taking into account the total duration of second-language experience. Curtiss (1977) states that a young adult who, through atypical conditions, fails to be exposed to language as a child is not likely to achieve the same language proficiency when opportunities for learning are presented later. Consequently, authors like Chase and Ericsson (1981) question whether in literacy acquisition learning to read is like learning a language.

Even though O’Malley and Uhl (1990) argue there has not been an analysis describing the influence of cognition in language acquisition, there have been theoretical efforts to identify important influences on second language acquisition. One of the theorists who included an articulated cognitive component, Bialystok (1988) identified four categories of learning strategies: Inferencing, monitoring, formal practicing, and functional practice. Here, the type of strategy used by the
learner depends on the type of knowledge required for a given task. Such strategies, which can be introduced explicitly, can contribute to implicit language knowledge and therefore to students’ ability to comprehend and produce spontaneous learning. (O’Malley and Uhl, 1990).

3.3.2 Literacy. Literacy in reading is directly related to academic, economic, societal, political, and personal life and values. Gates (1985) described reading as the most important and the most troublesome subject at schools. Since mastering reading is essential to learning, almost every other school subject failure at schools is directly related to deficiencies in reading.

Giving an explanation of literacy involves narrow, broader, and extended definitions. Wagner (1986) says that an extended definition, for example, entails the achievement of a broad range of skills that are fixed in cultural and technological contexts. For instance, a person who can recite religious texts from memory without being able to read them is included in such a definition. It suggests that reading may not even be a critical part of literacy.

An extended functional point of view (Kirsch et al., 1993) defines literacy as using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one’s goals, and to develop one’s knowledge and potential. Such a definition is of practical use in specifying expectations for achievement and in helping to make clear the wide
range of literacy tasks that a society might present to its members. That “literacy”
used in a variety of ways partly reflects a discipline perspective.

Reading researchers tend to define literacy acquisition narrowly as reading
acquisition. Anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists tend to define
reading broadly as the acquisition of cultural, social, and educational skills
(Wagner, 1986). Each definition brings an important perspective to some aspects
of a complex problem. For my purpose, it is more convenient to adopt a relatively
narrow definition of literacy, one that refers to learning to read rather than to
particular literacy functions. One might argue that it is naive to assume that
“reading is reading”; however, the rationale for this relationship between literacy
and reading has its bases in Perfetti’s (1989) point of view on one kind of argument
for generalized reading ability: ‘If there are no generalized reading abilities, then
there is no useful concept of fundamental literacy’.

There is a correspondence between definitions of literacy and definitions of
learning to read. To put this another way, Perfetti (1989), for instance, argues that
there are differences within the narrow definition of literacy. Broader definitions of
literacy acquisition as reading acquisition would emphasize comprehension; narrower definitions would focus on decoding.

Still, broader definitions embrace not only comprehension, but writing, literature,
and all other literacy activities. This all-inclusive approach to the teaching of
reading, known as Whole Language, has become dominant in the training of teachers. Goodman (1986) points out that in schools of education, future teachers are instructed that teaching reading is a matter of helping children learn to “construct meaning” and to use their prior learning and experience to make sense of texts.

As a result, the goal seems to be for future teachers to keep language “whole,” not to break words down into smaller phonemic segments, to make reading and writing meaningful, purposeful, student-centered acts.

Drawing on the concept of reading as such, it is a complex information processing skill in which the reader interacts with the text to (re) create meaningful discourse. Such an ongoing interaction makes the process active opposing to other authors’ point of view, e.g., Thorndike (1977) who characterizes it as passive or merely receptive.

Thorndike’s (1977) view of reading as a receptive process proposed above, opposes Melo’s, (1998) who argues that la lectura es un ejercicio constante de creación de sentido, de comprensión y de experiencia, en el que entran en juego prácticamente todos los recursos de la inteligencia y la sensibilidad, es esencialmente desciframiento, comprensión y construcción de sentido de un texto. Similarly, Barthe (2000) affirms that los lectores activos son los que buscan libros y los que consideran la lectura como una actividad consciente y voluntaria. Para
es un proceso de interacción entre lector y texto. Es construir el
significado del texto; interrogar al texto a partir de una expectativa real.

Clearly, reading involves perceiving the written form of language either visually or
kinesthetically. Such a perception activity is similar to the process of listening and
such identification of printed words makes the reading skill the most powerful for all
varieties of reading. Perfetti (1989) states that the problem in saying that reading
acquisition is “learning to get meaning from print” is that this formulation doesn’t
specify a learning problem. Whatever else learning to read is, it is learning. And
what is learned is a writing system. The other generalized components of reading
are shared with language processes.

Goodman (1967) views reading as a selective process, which involves partial use
of available minimal language cues selected from perceptual input on the basis of
the reader’s expectation. As this partial information is processed, tentative
decisions are made to be confirmed, rejected, or refined as reading progresses.

Pinker’s (1984) research findings question what advanced information a student
has in learning, how his or her writing system works, and affirm that in learning
the native language, the student has had a considerable head start in the biological
constraints that represent the universally designed features of language.
Nevertheless, the act of reading has not totally been understood nor simply described, and disputes over the definition of reading are bogus, to some extent, because they confuse reading with attitudes toward education and child education. Some authors may be uncertain to give a clear definition of it. Nuttall (1983) dears to say that reading can not be taught; and Alderson (2000) is skeptical towards the study of its nature.

Reviewing the state of ESL reading, Carrell and Eisterhold (1983) perceive it as an interaction that occurs between the reader and the text in an interpretative way. From a cognitive point of view, a simple definition is that reading is the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. This theory implies word knowledge as the first level when reading, followed by a second level which entails comprehension, and a third level which deals with evaluation. Particularly, the second level mentioned above includes sub-levels, i.e., comprehension or the ability to explicitly understand what the text says, inferencing or the ability to comprehend what is implicit in the text, and critical reading or the ability to evaluate the text quality, the ideas and the author’s purpose.

Based on this point of view, the reader comprehends a texts when s/he is just able to understand the meaning the text brings itself. In application, this demands the ability to be aware of the fact that the meaning of any given text corresponds to the words and sentences which make such a text up, and the role of the reader is to search for it.
While searching, Perfetti (1989) says that the important competences that can be transferred are not specific elements of domain knowledge, but rather language comprehension abilities that are carried across domains. There is a distinction between achieving a meaning and an interpretation for text. Text interpretation requires inference and it is more independent of the text. Constructing meaning depends on knowledge of the language, not knowledge of the situation described in the text.

Researches carried out by Rockwell (1982), Collins and Smith (1980), and Solé (1987) reveal that both teachers’ idea about what learning to read implies and the reading activities developed in the classes do not include aspects concerned with reading comprehension. This means that a great deal of teachers share a button-up view of reading in which reading comprehension is based on the correct reading aloud process. This viewpoint suggests that if a student decodes the text well, s/he will understand it because s/he has the ability to speak and understand the oral language.

In this same sense, Alderson (2000) affirms that due to this reading instruction orientation, readers have poorly developed knowledge about how the reading system works, and find it difficult to evaluate text for clarity consistency and plausibility. Instead they often believe that the purpose of reading is errorless word pronunciation, and the good reading includes nothing more than verbatim recall.
Although this theory was widely accepted in the past, it is surprising that a lot of schools still follow and base their reading instruction on it. Our country is not the exception to the rule. A quick look at the Spanish syllabi teaching and text guides, in which the instructions and reading exercises only have the students get the meaning of the text, shall confirm this assert.

3.4 THE READING PROCESS

When students are learning to read they often sound out words letter by letter, make numerous vacillations, add words not on the page, omit words altogether, or are overly dependent upon pictures as an aid to word recognition. Readers may mispronounce words and stop both to repeat words or to go back and self-correct, all in efforts to make sense of or comprehend the text. For many students, oral reading is demanding with both inappropriate phrasing and repetition. Punctuation may be ignored altogether. Some pupils may even show lack of enthusiasm to read aloud orally, while others are overwhelmed by the task of reading a whole page of text silently. Thus, for many students, learning to read is an extremely difficult task.

It is common to make a distinction between the process of reading and the product that results from that process. Perfetti (1995) argues that readers improve with practice. Practice improves many components, but central among them is the representation of word forms. Experience in reading allows the increasingly accurate representation of a word’s spelling (its specificity), as well. Stanovich & Cunningham (1992) state that one benefit of reading practice is that it supports comprehension ability, spelling skill, and vocabulary.

Understanding reading as a process implies that we know what it means to read: to process text through interaction with print. Along with this, there are several important points to emphasize when raising the standard to include comprehension. Perfetti (1989) states that the first point is that comprehension is a matter of language understanding and the second component of comprehension is basic language skills.

Gernsbacher et al. (1990) argue that the disagreement here is that comprehension is, indeed, important, but that most of what is important about it is highly general to language, not unique to reading. Evidence for this comes from the high correlations observed between written and spoken language comprehension among adults. Comprehension strategies (knowledge and basic language processes that guide a reader’s comprehension) are important in explaining comprehension. But in referring to extreme cases of “word reading without comprehending,” normal variations in such skills are not what one can think of.
In this sense, Grabe (1988) contradicts the view of reading as a process of simply a matter of extracting information from a text. Similarly, Melo (1998) affirms that el aprendizaje de la lectura es un proceso complejo que por supuesto va mucho más allá de la asociación entre unos signos y unos sonidos. Quien aprende a descifrar estos signos apenas comienza el proceso. Sólo el uso reiterado del instrumento desarrolla una capacidad para utilizarlo de manera adecuada, es decir, para comprender textos complejos, comparar argumentaciones, leer entre líneas, evaluar la racionalidad de una exposición escrita, detectar la mentira y el engaño, separar lo importante y relevante de lo secundario y prescindible, captar las sutilezas del lenguaje, advertir las trampas y seducciones de la retórica, escuchar la sonoridad de la palabra y disfrutar el placer del juego verbal.

Widdowson (1979) goes further and argues that the process implies the combination of textual information with the information the reader brings to the text. Reading is consequently viewed as a kind of dialogue between the reader and the text. In a general sense, Aebersold and Field’s (1997) view of reading is what happens when people look at a text and assign meaning to the written symbols in that text. Barnett (1989) claims that we need to know as much as possible about how the reading process works and find out the ways to integrate that knowledge effectively into our reading pedagogy.

In reflecting on the information that the reader brings to the text, Goodman’s (1986) approach has led to affirm that reading is basically concept driven in the
sense that the reader samples the text as necessary to confirm hypothesis and to form a new one.

At this point, it is necessary to say what happens when a reader reads. Obviously, many different things can be going on and that different processes will occur with different readers using the same text at a different time or with a different objective for reading. It is known that learning to read in a broader sense (i.e., learning to get meaning from a text) presents problems beyond word identification to learners. As successful readers acquire word identification skills, they naturally transfer their abilities of language comprehension to written texts. When they fail to understand a text, they need to ask questions, reread the text, or otherwise repair their comprehension problem. For this comprehension repair, they must be aware of their current level of understanding and be motivated to achieve understanding.

In addition to this comprehension-monitoring ability, they need to apply the basic strategies that are assumed by written texts: calling on their relevant knowledge, making inferences, and attending to important information. These comprehension strategies appear to emerge as relatively natural transfers of cognitive and language skills for most readers.

Oakhill (1993) argues that for some, however, failures in these comprehension strategies can be obstacles to text understanding, and the meaning gotten from it.
Still, researchers like Yuill and Oakhill (1991) suggest that these problems can be addressed by training.

Likewise, Aebersold and Field (1997) argue that the meaning that one reader gets from a text may be different from that of other readers reading the same text. Thus, the meaning given when reading varies from one reader to another.

Due to the fact that the process of reading is normally silent, internal, and private, the understanding of such a process becomes apparently significant to have a better idea of the nature of reading.

3.4.1 **Theories of learning to read.** Theories of reading acquisition have usually framed the question in terms of stages of increasing reading skill. One example of a stage theory comes from Chall (1983) in which the child is described as moving from a non-reading stage through successive stages of skill.

I shall provide initially two simpler theories that have been developed to focus on the child's earliest steps in reading and how a transition to a next step occurs. Parallel to this, Perfetti (1992) presents a non-stage theory that focuses on the representation question, i.e., how a reader mentally represents words, and how that representation changes with learning.
Gough and Juel (1991) have described a two-stage account of reading: an early visual association stage and a second stage of decoding-based learning. In the first stage, the reader who lacks knowledge of decoding uses any conceivable source of information in order to discriminate one word from another. In doing this, the reader builds up a visually accessible lexicon.

They refer to this first stage as selective association, because the basic learning mechanism establishes idiosyncratic associations between some part of a printed word and the name of the word. Under the right circumstances, including an increase in phonological awareness and an intention to encode all rather than just some of the letters of the word, the child can move into the cipher (secret messages) stage of true reading. As the child reaches the limits of learning associations, there is pressure to adopt a new procedure, one that is based on the alphabetic principle.

EHRI'S THEORY

In this alternative model, Ehri (1991) does not present a pure visual stage as there is in Gough’s account. Here, children use the names of the letters as cues to word identification from their very first opportunity to read. It is the names of the letters of the alphabet that provide the opportunity. Although letter names do not
generally represent the phonemes of words in which they appear, they have enough phonetic overlap to be useful.

For instance, a child might use the names of the letters \( J \) and \( L \) to remember the sound of the word \textit{jail}. Learning the alphabet, not necessarily the alphabetic principle, is the key that moves a child into the first stage of reading, resulting in a stage that Ehri (1991) calls phonetic cue reading. The acquisition process entails the establishment of word representations that have both phonological and orthographic components.

\textbf{PERFETTI'S RESTRICTED-INTERACTIVE THEORY}

Perfetti (1991, 1992) describes a framework without specific stages to explain the acquisition of word representations, based on a general model of the representation of information in word reading. The acquisition of increasing numbers of orthographically addressable words (quantity acquisition) and the alteration of individual representations along quality dimensions is what the author considers as learning to read. This process is important in establishing sub-lexical connections and phonemic awareness to increase context-sensitive decoding knowledge. As individual words become fully specified and redundant, they move from the functional lexicon, which allows reading, to the autonomous lexicon, which allows resource-cheap reading.
These three theories are mutually compatible and, indeed, share a fundamental assumption that moving into a true stage of reading requires some use of the alphabetic principle and, thus, some knowledge of phonological structure.

Research findings suggest that the term reading may take a number of perceptions as follows. Reading as a process, as a model or as textual interaction or interaction among the elements of a text product. In the first, reading as a process, and based on Grabe's ideas (1991), readers develop different processes when reading. They either use interactive perspectives or schematas. The former deals with the capacity to use low or high level skills when comprehending or interpreting texts; and the latter, considers knowledge of rhetorical structures and conventions as well as the knowledge of the world beyond texts.

As a process, it also implies the application of several models to describe the interaction between reader and text and what happens when people read. Other than the models described above, theorists (e.g., Barnett, 1989; Carrell, et al 1988; Eskey, 1988) argue that there are three main models of how reading occurs:

- **BOTTOM-UP THEORY**

Here the reader constructs the text from the smallest units. Eskey (1988) and Stanovich (1990) argue that it makes readers unaware of how the process works
due to the automaticity of their performance. In this sense, the process becomes one of merely decoding from letters to words and from words to sentences. Despite the simplicity that it may imply in relation to the level in question, Eskey (1988) claims that good readers are good decoders and good interpreters of texts. Besides, the idea of simple language decoding has a major role to play in the process.

**TOP-DOWN THEORY**

Much research has put emphasis on the significance in reading of the knowledge that the reader brings to text. The top-down school of reading affirms that readers fit the text into knowledge they already have, then check back when new or unanticipated information comes out.
In this sense, the central part of the process becomes the activation of a previous schema, i.e., what they believe to be significant existing schemata and map external information into them. In consequence, Alderson (2000) claims that the core of this theory is the emphasis on the importance of these schemata, and the reader's contribution, over the incoming text.

Figure 2. Hypothesis-Test or Top-Down Model

➢ THE INTERACTIVE THEORY

Theorists (Barnett, 1989; Carrell, Devine, and Eskey, 1988; Grabe, 1991) describe this process as parallel rather than sequential. In fact, these theorists explain, see figure 3 below, that both bottom-up and top-down occur either at the same time or interchangeably. Waltz and Pollack (1985, in Carrell, et al, 1988) argue that top-
down and bottom-up strategies are incorporated in a parallel processing model distributed simultaneously and systematically.

There are different aspects going on while reading depending on the type of text, as well as the reader’s background knowledge, language proficiency level, motivation, use of strategies, beliefs, and so forth. Stanovich (1980) affirms that the interaction of the two components, i.e., bottom-up and top-down, depends upon knowledge deficits in individual components. In this sense, there is interaction based on the need for deficit compensation.

Figure 3. Interactive Reading Adapted from Rummelhart, 1977
3.5 THE READER

The reader is seen as an active, problem-solving individual who coordinates a number of skills and strategies to facilitate comprehension. As it was previously pointed out that reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, resulting in comprehension, and that the text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning, one may also find helpful to say that the reader uses knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is. In this special sense, the reader’s knowledge, skills, and strategies include:

- Linguistic competence: the ability to recognize the elements of the writing system; knowledge of vocabulary; knowledge of how words are structured into sentences.

- Discourse competence: knowledge of discourse markers and how they connect parts of the text to one another

- Sociolinguistic competence: knowledge about different types of texts and their usual structure and content

- Strategic competence: the ability to use top-down strategies, as well as knowledge of the language (a bottom-up strategy)
Other aspects also include a psycholinguistic point of view where the reader makes predictions about contents and/or develops expectations about the reading, for instance.

The role of the reader has received considerable attention and reading research shows that good readers:

- Read extensively.
- Integrate information in the text with existing knowledge.
- Have a flexible reading style, depending on what they are reading.
- Are motivated.
- Rely on different skills interacting: perceptual processing, phonemic processing, recall.
- Read for a purpose; his reading serves a function.

### 3.6 FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROCESS OF READING

Although the reading process in L1 shares numerous important basic elements with L2/FL, investigations have found significant differences. Similarly, research (Alderson, 2000) has looked at the way readers themselves affect the reading process and product. Aebersold and Field (2003) argue that a categorization of
factors makes them easier to remember and easier to recognize in student behavior.

Aebersold and Field (2003) have compiled a list of factors that influence reading in L2/FL:

- **Cognitive development and style orientation**

  Language acquisition in relation with the age has been part of an ongoing debate. In this sense, Aebersold and Field affirm that teachers who give instruction on reading have little control over when students begin to study and on their cognitive, or mental, development levels at the time they begin studying L2/FL. Similarly, the idea of L1 reading levels, world knowledge, reading strategies acquired in L1, and some other factors is presented as influencing the success of language learning. Segalowitz (1986, in Aebersold and Field, 2003) claims that L1 and L2 readers use different underlying cognitive processes. These are some of the factors that shape L2/FL reading, which have to be taken into account when the reader begins to study the L2/FL.

  This also suggests shedding lights on the issue of learning styles (also called cognitive style orientation). Messick (1976, in Whyte et al, 1996) defines cognitive styles in the following quote: “cognitive styles help explain how an individual responds to a wide range of intellectual and perceptual stimuli. Each
person’s style is determined by the way he takes note of his total surroundings (... ) how s/he seeks meaning, how s/he becomes informed."

Aebersold and Field state that each person brings a preferred learning style to the learning process. Scarcella and Oxford (1992, in Aebersold and Field, 2003) argue that most learners have style orientation preferences for sensory input, i.e., they prefer visual or auditory or kinesthetic modes. Hence, the teacher’s tasks is to identify these various cognitive differences, seeing when students are using unsuitable strategies, and helping them regulate or at least be aware of how their cognitive style shapes the way they deal with a text.

- Reading performance and competence in L1

Ellis (1986, in Aebersold and Field, 1997) indicates that performance is the ability to produce language and it is influenced by language situation. Competence specifies a conscious understanding of the language rules that govern language production. Based on these assumptions, the level of reading proficiency that a reader has in L1 also appears to be a factor in the development of L2/FL reading skills. In the same way, there seems to be a transfer of reading skills from the L1 to an L2 and a facilitation of such transmission by teaching reading skills in the native language. Conversely, an unskilled reader in L1 may essentially progress by having systematic training and awareness of reading processes in the L2/FL.
Metacognitive knowledge

Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) assert that recent trends within the domain of reading comprehension have led to an increasing emphasis on the role of metacognitive awareness of one’s cognitive and motivational processes while reading. In fact, researchers agree that awareness and monitoring of one’s comprehension processes are critically important aspects of skilled reading. Such awareness and monitoring processes are often referred to in the literature as *metacognition*, which can be thought of as the knowledge of the readers’ cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension.

Tei & Stewart (1985) define the term as having knowledge (cognition) and having understanding, control over, and appropriate use of that knowledge. Thus, it involves both the conscious awareness and the conscious control of one’s learning.

Metacognitive knowledge deals with the student’s ability to discuss, describe, give rules for, and comment on L1 language use (Aebersold and Field, 1997). In this sense, those with a solid metacognitive knowledge of the structure of their own language will better apply such linguistic knowledge in L2/FL learning and reading (Alderson, 2000).
Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) agree that metacognition refers to the knowledge about cognitive states and abilities that can be shared among individuals while expanding the construct to include affective and motivational characteristics of thinking. In his article “Metacognition and Cognitive Monitoring,” Flavell (1979) described the process of cognitive monitoring as occurring through the actions and interactions of four classes or interrelated phenomena: Metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experiences, goals (or tasks), and actions (or strategies). Examples of students’ reflections about their thinking while reading to illustrate what they do when they read also result from the process of cognitive monitoring.

- **L2/FL language proficiency**

Authors (Devine, 1988; Alderson, 1984; Clarke, 1980) agree on the strong influence L2/FL language proficiency has on reading. Clarke, for instance, argues that limitations in L2 language competence can interfere with reading performance. His short circuit hypothesis increases researchers’ interest in knowing whether second language reading is a language problem or a reading problem.

Similarly, Devine provides an overview of the hypothesis that L2 reading problems are due to inadequate knowledge of the target language. Alderson (2000) affirms that in studies of first-language reading the language knowledge
is often taken for granted. This increased concern raises another problem related with what sort of linguistic knowledge is needed and how much of it.

Recent researches (Laufer, 1989; Liu and Nation, 1985) into linguistic knowledge focuses on vocabulary size and metalinguistic knowledge. They show that readers need to know 95% of the words in text to gain adequate comprehension and to be able to guess unknown words from context. Added to this is the idea that a knowledge of the lexis of the text, as well as more general and specific content knowledge, might well compensate for lack of linguistic knowledge.

Even though it is well known that Krashen's (1987) input hypothesis argues that the learner improves and progresses along the 'natural order' when s/he receives second language 'input' that is one step beyond his/her current stage of linguistic competence, teachers should be quite aware of such 'one step beyond' for it is not only important to challenge students and make sure they continue to learn about the reading process, but it is also important to avoid the learner's disappointment and despair that arise from constantly being required to tackle L2/FL reading texts that are far ahead of their language proficiency.

Ultimately, van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) affirm that extralinguistic, syntactic and semantic cues of text are shown to be related to reading performance. This assert points out that if readers have difficulty identifying the constituent
structures in sentences with complex or unusual syntax, such difficulty seems to affect the reader’s ability to understand the text.

- **Degree of difference between the L1 and the L2/FL**

Another factor in L2/FL which should be considered is the writing systems and rhetorical structures of both the native and the target languages. Wallace (1992, in Aebersold and Field, 1997) explains that languages may be so different in the way they represent meaning in their written form that there is, arguably, no generalization from the first to the target language. Thus, for reading comprehension, a major challenge for readers will be the mastery of the L2 writing system.

- **Cultural orientation**

There is agreement that cultural orientation influences an abundant variety of reading behaviours, beliefs, and performance. Alderson (2000) argues that numerous studies with first language readers have examined cultural differences among groups of readers: religious group membership, black vs. white, inner city vs. rural, members of different dialect groups, and so on. In such studies, effects of cultural differences on reading recall, test scores and reading miscues have been consistently found. Aebersold and Field (1997) identify six groups of the most influential ones:
• **Attitudes towards texts and purpose for reading**

This is an assumption that owes more to the idea of how cultural orientation shapes attitude toward text. In short, readers read with different purposes and develop diverse reading abilities based on those purposes.

• **Types of reading skills and strategies used in L1**

Primordially, readers apply their personal experiences, beliefs, cultural training, and educational experiences when reading. This view suggests that not all of them will have developed the same reading strategies, which rely on the values and attitude of their culture toward reading and particularly toward reading in L2/FL.

• **Types of reading skills and strategies appropriate in the L2/FL**

Research findings suggest that different cultural attitudes about what types of reading are important will shape the strategies that beginning readers use and develop.
• **Beliefs about the reading process**

In this special sense, it seems that in the early years of education, teachers transmit and lead the learning patterns they want students to apply during the reading process, and, in part, such patterns are as well transferred to the reading process in L2/FL.

• **Knowledge of text types in the L1 (formal schemata)**

Analyses on this aspect reveal that text types and organization of text in different cultures and readers’ beliefs about this issue have an impact on the way students perceive the text they are reading.

• **Background knowledge (content schemata)**

In application, a reasonable hypothesis stresses that readers would understand the texts about their own culture more precisely than others. In this particular sense, the teacher’s task is to be aware of the amount of background information necessary, to make the information easy to get to, and to see that the students are able to use that information.
Broadly speaking, Grabe (1988) notes conditions such as illiteracy in the reader’s first language, lack of experience in reading for academic purposes or transference of abilities from L1 to the L2, struggle with enormous differences in the writing systems of the two languages or inferior L2 language proficiency.

Alderson (2000), drawing on the factors that affect the process of reading, correspondingly presents a great range of studies related to research on aspects (both from the reader or text) of reading which might affect the process itself and the result of the assessment considering such influential aspects.

Such aspects include the reader’s background and subject/topic knowledge, their cultural knowledge and their knowledge of the language used in the texts being read. In relation to this last aspect, Alderson (2000) includes the linguistic and discourse levels, as well as the awareness of the relationship between the first and the target languages at all levels.

In addition to this, the role of the second language knowledge and the first language reading ability is also considered in the context of reading in a second language. Here Alderson (2000) says that ‘one is clearly the mirror image of the other’.
Another view on the variables is the reader’s ability to process written information which the author considers crucial and valuable for being taken into account when assessing students. Even though Alderson (2000) sets such a list of variables, research is unclear as to what extent they should be considered as part of ‘reading process’ or of ‘general language understanding process’.

Alderson (2000) also notes the linguistic features of texts (other than text type, organization, genre, text topic) as an influential aspect of the readability of the text and readers’ comprehension process.

### 3.7 TEXT TYPES AND TEXT FEATURES

Theorists have echoed that reading comprehension is a complex process. Similarly, research has increased its interest in analyzing readers’ performance on tasks considering simple recall, interpretations, analyses of concepts, and applications in new contexts. In reflecting on task performance, it is important to note that factors such as the approach followed during instruction, dimensions of the task, readers’ motivation, and time on task, among others, affect comprehension. Within the broad area of reading comprehension, this part of the paper shall deal with a major challenge: the relation between the types of text and reading comprehension.
Authors like Kintsch (1974) affirm that the goal of a text is to assist the reader in developing a representation of a situation that goes beyond the textual information. The reader must actively construct meaning in the reading process. In addition, to help with this process, texts should be organized as to build an understanding of the topic, with individual statements fitting together logically to build the main points or arguments. Connections between points should be well developed and explicit.

Since reading is an activity with a purpose and according to its purpose, a person may read in order to gain information, to obtain very valuable information, i.e., traffic signs, ads, and bulletins; similarly, to verify existing knowledge, or in order to critique a writer’s ideas or writing style. A person may also read for enjoyment, or to enhance knowledge of the language being read.

The purpose for reading also determines the appropriate approach to reading comprehension. A person who needs to know whether s/he can afford to eat at a particular restaurant needs to comprehend the pricing information provided on the menu, but does not need to recognize the name of every appetizer listed. A person reading poetry for enjoyment needs to recognize the words the poet uses and the ways they are put together, but does not need to identify main idea and supporting details. However, a person using a scientific article to support an opinion needs to know the vocabulary that is used, understand the facts and cause-effect sequences that are presented, and recognize ideas that are presented as
hypotheses and givens. In short, the purpose(s) for reading guide the reader’s selection of texts.

There are other functions like cognitive, which implies a need for information; instrumental function, as a learning tool to find general information or specific data, to follow instructions when performing a task.

Other than the purpose for reading, there is a need to consider the objective of the reading we present to our students, which may be useful or simply for pleasure. Escarpit (1962) points out that the reading should satisfy a cultural necessity. In this sense, it is worthy to highlight the text types which correspond to each purpose mentioned above. The functional and informative readings have a utilitarian purpose; whereas the literary and argumentative readings provide a spiritual gratification.

Broadly speaking, text structure usually refers to two types of text: narrative and expository. Narrative is more common than expository text and is usually a story written to entertain the reader (Weaver and Kintsch, 1991). By comparison, common expository texts include persuasion, explanation, comparison/contrast, enumeration or collection, problem-solution, and description, designed primarily to inform the reader. The distinction between narrative and expository text is not a simple dichotomy, however. While narrative text structure primarily entertains, expository text primarily communicates information (Weaver and Kintsch, 1991).
Textbooks, essays, and most magazine articles are examples of expository text. (Seidenberg, 1989).

Common expository text structures include compare/contrast, classification, illustration, procedural description (Weaver and Kintsch, 1991), sequence, enumeration or collection, problem-solution, and description (Meyer and Rice, 1984). Each type of expository text structure is represented by an organizational pattern that includes differing types of relations between important information in the text. Weaver and Kintsch (1991) describe three types of relationships expository text: (a) general-to-particular, as in identification, definition, classification, or illustration; (b) object-to-object, as in comparison/contrast; and (c) object-to-part, as in structural analysis to tell how to put something together, functional analysis to tell how something works, or causal analysis to tell a cause or consequence.

Narrative and expository texts have been found to have differential effects upon readers, with narrative appearing easier to comprehend and monitor than expository text. Zabrucky and Ratner (1992) affirm, for instance, that students recall significantly more idea units from narrative than expository passages. expository text more problematic than narrative text.

Drawing on the text types as such, a very detailed classification implies the idea of saying that:
A persuasive text is a text that really wants you to do something.

Persuasive texts might use:

- Repeated words
- Text in capital letters
- Exclamation marks
- Rhetorical questions (questions where no answer is needed)
- An emotional one-sided argument
- Humor

Informative texts is a text that wants to advise or tell you about something.

Informative texts usually:

- Avoid repetition
- Contain facts
- Give information in a clear way - introducing the subject and then developing it

An instructive text is a text that instructs or tells you how to do something

Instructive texts:

- Are written as though the reader is being spoken to - (although the word 'you' is not usually used)
- Language is direct and unnecessary words are left out
- Often use 'must' and 'must not'
- Sometimes use diagrams or pictures to help understanding

A descriptive text is a text that wants you to picture what they are describing.

Descriptive texts usually:
- Make use of adjectives and adverbs
- Use comparisons to help picture it - something is like something
- Employ your five senses - how it feels, smells, looks, sounds and tastes

Other researchers (Seidenberg, 1989; Winograd, 1984) go deeper and include seven types of texts: instruction classification, structure, mechanism, process, concept-principle and hypothesis theory.

Barthe (2000), for instance, emphasizes that el texto informativo-funcional cumple con una función: sirve para satisfacer necesidades cognitivas y el texto por lo general ofrece un significado unívoco; es un instrumento de aprendizaje; alcanza para buscar información general o datos específicos. Sólo requiere una lectura textual. Texts can be organized in very different ways and have a crucial influence on the reader's comprehension in the sense that it is significant to learn to
analyze them and develop strategies to comprehend their organizational patterns as to identify facts such as the main idea and supporting details of texts, problem and solution texts, the sequence in a text, cause and effect texts, comparing and contrasting ideas in texts and texts developing an argument not to mention the length of sentence, vocabulary frequency, and propositional density as other influential aspects.

This lends support to the idea that text structure appears to play an important role in reading comprehension. Moreover, there is strong researched evidence, among other areas of converge showed in Figure 4 below, that readers' awareness of text structure is highly related to reading comprehension.
Put briefly, authors like Eskey (2002) claim that when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose, reading results in comprehension, in a process which is much more than decoding.

In other words, student awareness of structural patterns in expository writing (e.g., sequence, causation, comparison/contrast) facilitates recall of not only more text information, but more theses or main ideas (Seidenberg, 1989). In this particular sense, sequence text structure seem to be significantly easier than enumeration and description text structures, and enumeration and sequence text structures appear to be significantly easier than compare/contrast text structure (Englert and Thomas, 1987). Specifically, the evidence is clear that text structure and students' awareness of text structure are positively related to reading comprehension.

Ultimately, mention must be made of another type of text: the literary, whose reading has the gratification as a solely objective. Kramsch (1985) asserts it broadens in the field of fiction and allows a ludic
development through which the students build themselves up as subjects while a sense of appreciation concerning the author’s style, analysis of images and figurative language, and inference takes part in it, for instance.

In reflecting on the text organization, it seems valuable to shed lights on an array of categories and items (Seidenberg, 1989; Weaver and Kintsch, 1991) as to have a better understanding of its physical presentation.

Text organization includes the physical presentation of text and text structures. Physical presentation of text includes visual textual cues such as headings and subheadings, signal words, and location of main idea sentences. Text structures are more abstract, less visual presentations of text that involve organizational patterns of text written to convey a purpose (e.g., persuade, describe, compare/contrast, or entertain with a story). Terms used in this paper are defined below.

**Global comprehension:** Comprehension measured by questions about the topics and main ideas of text. Related terms: Macroprocesses, macropropositions.
**Local comprehension:** Comprehension measured by questions about details. Related terms: Microprocesses, micropropositions.

**Macropropositions:** The top-level "gist" information or meaning of a passage; macropropositions are critically important for understanding and long-term recall of text. Related terms: global meaning, macroprocesses.

**Micropropositions:** The smallest definable units of meaning in text. Related terms: local comprehension, microprocesses.

**Physical features:** A term used here to include headings, subheadings, signal words, location of topic or main idea sentences, and spacing between "chunks" or idea units within sentences.

**Semantic cues:** Indicators of a text structure. One example of a semantic cue is a topic sentence that uses words to indicate the text structure of the upcoming passage.

**Signal words:** Words such as "first," "finally," "as a consequence of," and "as a result of" that emphasize the structure or organization of a passage, but do not add content information.
**Syntactic cues**: Indicators of a text structure; key signal words such as "first" and "then" signal sequence text structure, whereas "in contrast," "but," and "similarly" signal compare/contrast text structure.

**Text structure**: The logical connections among ideas in text and subordination of some ideas to others, an overall organizing principle for viewing a topic in text, top-level organization patterns. Related terms: text type, rhetorical form, rhetorical schemata, macrostructure, genres of text, top-level structures, structural patterns. Examples of text structures include narrative, persuasive, sequence, problem/solution, descriptive, and compare/contrast.

**Textual cues**: Headings and subheadings, topic sentences, signal words, and author's direct statements of importance. Textual cues include semantic and syntactic signals of differing text structures.

**Clarity and location of main idea statements**: Seidenberg (1989) states that the ability to identify main ideas is central to comprehension. Similarly, Winograd (1984) asserts that empirical support shows that the ability to comprehend main ideas differentiates good and poor readers and is directly related to general comprehension ability, summarizing, and outlining. Yet, main idea
statements often do not appear as the first sentence in a paragraph or are omitted from content area textbooks

Cues to the relations between important ideas: Another skill that is important for comprehension is the ability to form relations between important information in text. Seidenberg (1989) states that textbooks make interrelations between information clear by using semantic and syntactic cues. Syntactic cues include noncontent signal words such as "first," "second," and "finally" to indicate sequential organization. Both normally achieving students and students with diverse learning needs have demonstrated difficulty identifying relations between important ideas.

As Seidenberg (1989) suggests both normally achieving students and students with diverse learning needs have demonstrated difficulty identifying relations between important ideas. The physical structure of passages provides the basis for strategies that readers use to identify main ideas. To identify the main idea, most readers use simple strategies and prior knowledge matched to the organizational structures of passages.
3.8 LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES

The literature on learning strategies in a second language acquisition became known from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. Researchers (Naiman et al. 1978; Rubin 1975; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990) have concentrated on the good language learner and have in the same way identified strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to learning.

As an example of how this might work, researchers (Chamot and Küpper, 1989; Derry, 1990; Gagné, 1985; O'Malley and Chamot, 1990; Wenden and Rubin, 1987) have found in both first and second language contexts that effective learners use appropriate learning strategies when they work on academic tasks, whereas less effective learners apply strategies infrequently or inappropriately. Correspondingly, researchers have found that learning strategies can be used with any learning task, including mathematics and language tasks, and that they have considerable potential for enhancing the academic achievement of students.

Alexander and Jetton (2000) assert that current tendencies within the area of reading comprehension strategies have led to an increasing emphasis on the role of metacognitive awareness of the reader's cognitive and motivational processes while reading. Indeed, researchers agree that awareness and monitoring of
readers’ comprehension processes are critically important aspects of skilled reading. In this particular sense, Gagné (1985) claims that Instruction in various reading strategies, for example, has significantly improved the reading comprehension of poor readers in a number of studies.

Such awareness and monitoring processes are often referred to as metacognition, which can be thought of as the knowledge of the readers’ cognition about reading and the self-control mechanisms they exercise when monitoring and regulating text comprehension.

Learning strategies also suggest the idea of special thoughts or behaviors that individuals use to help them comprehend, learn, or retain new information (O’Malley and Chamot, 1990) and steps taken (by those individuals) to enhance their own learning (Oxford, 1990). Similarly, Weinstein and Mayer, (1986) assert learning strategies are the purposeful actions and thoughts learners engage in for understanding, storing, and remembering new information and skills.

Drawing on the importance of such strategies, theorists agree they are tools for active, self-directed involvement, which are essential for the development of communicative competence. Research has also provided evidence of language proficiency and great self-confidence after strategies have been internalized and put into practice.
As noted earlier, reading is defined as an active yet hidden process where a reader interacts with a text to obtain meaning. Due to this, it is a difficult task for a teacher to know what makes a successful reader. Even a reading comprehension test would not provide the teacher with the answer as it only tests a student’s comprehension. In other words, it reflects the student’s product of comprehension. But to know the magic formula of successful reading, a teacher needs to focus on the process of understanding. This knowledge of the process involves among others, the knowledge of strategies to process the text.

Block (1986) conceives reading strategies as actions which point out how readers visualize a task, what textual clues they attend to, how they make sense of what they read and what they do when they do not understand. It is useful to expand this conception by saying that learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective, more transferrable to new situations.

Parallel to this is the fact that some learning strategies are observable, as in note-taking or writing a plan for problem solution. However, many learning strategies are non-observable because they are purely mental processes. Examples of non-observable strategies are monitoring comprehension or activating prior knowledge. In application, the current study has attempted to gain accurate information from the study group considering such useful strategies distinctions.
Among others researchers, Pressley and Harris (1990) commonly discuss three types of learning strategies: metacognitive strategies, or the executive strategies that individuals use to plan for, monitor, or evaluate learning; cognitive strategies, the actual manipulation of learning materials by reorganization and grouping, elaboration or relating one new idea to another and relating new ideas to existing knowledge; and social affective strategies in which the learner calls on another person for assistance or works cooperatively with others on a common task. Considerable success in teaching less effective students to apply useful learning strategies has been reported for first and second language students in several curriculum areas.

Oxford (1990) explains (see Table below) the central features of such strategies, which are oriented towards the broad goal of communicative competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language learning strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contribute to the main goal, communicative competence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Expand the role of teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are specific actions taken by the learner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Are not always observable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Are often conscious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Can be taught.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Are flexible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Are influenced by a variety of factors.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Strategies, therefore, are of two types: direct and indirect. Cognitive strategies which aid in bringing meaning to the text, a framework for understanding are direct. O’Malley et al., (1985) argue that these strategies involve more direct manipulation of the learning material itself. Metacognitive strategies, which are indirect, on the other hand, refer to the understanding of one’s cognitive process, for instance.

Likewise, research findings suggest that the choice of strategies is influenced by many factors: degree of awareness, stage of learning, task requirements, teacher expectations, age, sex, nationality/ethnicity, general learning style, personality traits, motivation level, and purpose for learning the language (Oxford, 1990).

As noted, and due to the fact that each reader brings an individualized package of personal experiences, beliefs, cultural training, and educational experiences to the reading process, Aebersold and Field, (1997) emphasize that not all readers will use the same reading strategies equally.

Lastly, researchers (Garner, 1987; Palincsar and Brown, 1984) agree that instruction in various reading strategies, for example, has significantly improved the reading comprehension of poor readers in a number of studies, and that readers’ strategy use also depends on the values and attitudes of their culture towards reading and towards reading in L2/FL.
4. STATING OF THE PROBLEM

10th grade high school students at El Pinar school deal with the study of EFL four hours a week. The instruction takes into account the four basic skills development: speaking, writing, reading, and listening. Students' performance on speaking, writing and listening is considered good by the teacher; the process of reading comprehension has been presenting difficulties, though.

Apparently, students perceive the English class as one where they have a good opportunity to speak and communicate ideas and get in touch with their mates through dialogues, role plays, dramas, presentations, and any other classroom behavior which implies oral practice. The writing skill practice also has a good acceptance due to the appealing strategy suggested by the study materials they have and the exhibition of their written works on the bulletin board where other mates can see what they do. The listening activities take place either in the audiovisual or the computer lab, which are well-equipped air-conditioned rooms where students exercise with videos, interactive CD ROM’s, and the Internet, which make them feel very comfortable and entertained. The instruction of reading goes in accordance with the suggestions in the students’ book and the complementary materials provided by the teacher, which include literary texts and the reading texts of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).
Students performance and disposition towards reading has ups and downs. It seems that their attitude when performing the reading skill changes and is not as involving and participative as it is regarding the others. On the one hand, the texts in their student’s book present topics which may sometimes not be appealing to them and the comprehension exercises generally include factual questions, which are apparently easy to answer, and may not seem as challenging and interesting enough as they claim the literary texts are. On the other hand, the TOEFL reading comprehension texts, which are based on topics such Science, North American history, government or geography, art and literature, including biographies of famous people, seem to be quite higher in level of difficulty considering the students’ command of English.

Besides, the questions typology appeared on the TOEFL includes: main idea, inference, restatement, vocabulary, referent author’s attitude/opinion/purpose, text organization, precedent /following topic, support, analogy, and negative questions, among others, which implies a different and more exhaustive criteria at the moment of measuring students’ ability to understand written texts if compared with the reading comprehension exercises contained in the study materials and the literary texts used in their current English classes.

As a consequence, the similarly good performance expected diminishes considerably when dealing with this kind of comprehension questions typology and, consequently, the reading comprehension success is fairly being achieved.
As a result, an analysis of the way students are approaching the different kinds of texts (those in the TOEFL, mainly) should be put into practice to know the way they develop the process of reading comprehension and determine the contextual factors that may be interfering with the process. Such analysis of the process shall also involve, among others, the knowledge of strategies to process the text, as well. The research questions, consequently, shall be: a) **How do 10th grade students at el Pinar school develop reading comprehension?** b) **What contextual factors in terms of text types and text features interfere with the process?** c) **What reading strategies do the students use when reading the texts?**

4.1. OBJECTIVES

4.1.1 **General.** Analyze the way 10th grade students develop the process of reading when dealing with different texts types and determine the reading strategies they use and the contextual factors in terms of text types and text features that interfere with the process.

4.1.2 **Specific.**

1. **Explore the processing style of reading comprehension of 10th grade students at El Pinar school.**

2. **Analyze the contextual factors that interfere with the reading processing.**
3. Determine the kind of reading strategies students use when dealing with the different reading tasks.
5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. RESEARCH APPROACH

Essentially, the term *research* corresponds to a systemic process of inquiry consisting of three main components: (1) a question/problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data (Nunan, 2002). *Research* is also seen as part of natural human activity in the sense that we carry out these activities because we seek answers to questions about phenomena that occur in our daily lives. (Seliger and Shohamy, 2001). Hatch and Farhady (1982 in Holmes, 1986) simply define the term as a systemic approach to finding answers to questions.

The reasons for second language learning vary all around the world. Thus, for researchers (Seliger and Shohamy, 2001), it is not surprising that research in this field has become one of the exciting frontiers of cognitive science. Consequently, it is quite impossible to carry out research from one single perspective. Therefore, variations in research paradigms in second language depend on: the circumstances under which the research is conducted, the methodology employed, and the tools used to study the second language.

Seliger and Shohamy (2001) affirm that because of the complexity of second language acquisition itself and the variety of ways in which it may be studied, it
would be useful to have a coherent and consistent set of characteristics with which to categorize the possible approaches, objectives, designs, and data-gathering methods used in the field.

Similarly, Faerch and Kasper (1987) assert that a look at the methodological paradigms of Second Language research during the last 20 years reveals an emphasis on the process level rather than the product level. The rationale for this is that during the early 1970’s a focus on the learner has increased. Therefore, a focus on the learner’s performance has outnumbered the other methodological paradigms. Performance analysis incorporates relevant production features into the analysis, and other important insights can certainly be expected from this approach in the future.

However, reconstructing unobservable phenomena from performance data will always entail situations where the ambiguity between product and process cannot be solved. Faerch and Kasper emphasize that the challenge consists of looking for methods that provide a more direct access to learners’ processes and knowledge. Methods of this type use as data, informants’ own statements about the way they organize and process information, as an alternative or supplement to inferring their thoughts from behavioral events. Methods of this type are known as introspective and include stylistic variants, verbal reports, statements, data, protocols among others.
Whereas the use of introspection was a methodological taboo, during the era of behaviorism, the paradigm has renewed researchers’ interest due to the validity, which can be assessed in terms of explicit models of information processing (Ericsson and Simon, 1980 in Faerch and Kasper, 1987).

Drawing on other methodological paradigms of Second Language research mention must equally be made of retrospective reports in which the subject gives a report of everything s/he can remember about his/her thoughts during the performance of the task.

In both theoretical and practical domains, introspective and retrospective methods have been the subject of fierce controversy for they do not seem to be objective, i.e. they do not provide intersubjectively replicable results.

The main pros and cons of these types of data (Nisbett and Wilson 1977 in Faerch and Kasper, 1987) are among others:

1. **Introspective**

   **Pros:**

   ✓ Verbalization of the learners’ thoughts allows the researcher more direct access to learner processes.

   ✓ The information recently attended by the central processor is kept in short term memory and is directly accessible for producing verbal reports.
Cons:
✓ That the subjects produce verbalizations that are inconsistent with their actual behavior.
✓ That the verbalization task alters the normal course of the task performance.
✓ That the verbalizations are necessarily incomplete even for the conscious part of the process.

2. Retrospective:

Pros:
✓ The data is collected immediately after task performance, when memory is still fresh.
✓ The subjects are provided with contextual information to activate their memories.

Cons:
✓ The information retrieved from long-term memory may not be recalled in its original form.
✓ Informants can not communicate their thoughts and there is a risk of only getting the expected answers.

Here the terms descriptive and qualitative will be used indistinctively since they are both concerned with providing descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally,
without the intervention of an experiment or an artificially contrived treatment (Selinger and Shohamy, 2001). Based on the current research topic, the main objective is the description and analysis of a certain domain of reality with the aim of hypothesis formation. Thus, the style of the investigation shall follow Seliger and Shohamy’s proposed analytic parameter in an attempt to analyze the phenomenon into its sub-parts. In such descriptive and analytic paradigm, data analysis is often carried out exclusively by means of interpretative procedures. Researchers like Filstead (1970) and Bogdan and Biklen (1982) affirm that the procedure, when using such paradigm, includes, among other methods of gathering information, discussions about participant observation and in-depth, unstructured or semi-structured interviews which allow the researcher to learn first hand about the social world, and are used to grasp a certain domain of reality, and are considered to be qualitative. In this sense, a qualitative research may be generally defined (Creswell, 1998) as a study, which is conducted in a natural setting where the researcher, an instrument of data collection, gathers words or pictures, analyzes them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and describes a process that is both expressive and persuasive in language.

Thus, since the investigator observes as many factors as possible and records some aspects or context of second language, the research is heuristic, i.e., the data will be collected in an attempt to include as much of the contextual information as possible and then categorized or analyzed descriptively to end with the possible formulation of hypotheses.
Drawing on the control and manipulation of the research context, Seliger and Shohamy suggest *analytic* and *heuristic* approaches to think of whether and how to set limits on the scope or focus of the investigation. These decisions tend to affect the kinds of designs and methods which are used in the research. Low levels of restriction on scope or focus will probably make it more difficult to control the effect of different factors in the research context, but this may also be beneficial on the part of the researcher if s/he chooses a *heuristic* approach to the research. Thus, in exploratory, descriptive, or analytic research no manipulation of naturally occurring phenomena occurs.

Although research may be characterized by the degree of control exercised by the research design and methodology over the variables, identified or unidentified, in the research context, this is no the case of the current research, which generally do not control for variables. It is interesting to state that, although descriptive research methods do not have a control of variables, it does develop thorough methods for data collection and analysis which have produced results that would not be possible through experimental designs.

Creswell (1998) asserts that qualitative study, which is also concerned with description, is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting.
Qualitative research, which is often quantitative, should not be viewed as an easy substitute for a “statistical” or quantitative study. It demands a commitment to an extensive time in the field, engagement in the complex, time-consuming process of data analysis, writing of long passages, and participation in a form of social and human science research, which does not have firm guidelines or specific procedures and is evolving and changing constantly.

Additionally, such method allows the researcher to get close to the data and to understand the definitions, concepts and meanings that participants attribute to the social situations. This approach is very narrow and places an unnecessary straitjacket on research in the course of learning about the social world.

To engage in qualitative enquiry, there is a need to first determine whether a strong rationale exists for choosing a qualitative approach. The following cases could call for a qualitative research.

✔ Topics that need to be explored: This is a situation where variables cannot be easily identified, theories are not available to explain behavior of participants or their population of study.

✔ Need to present a detailed view of the topic: this is the case where the distant panoramic view is not enough to present answers to the problem.
✓ Need to study individuals in their natural setting: this is the case where, if participants are removed from their natural setting, it leads to contrived findings that are out of context.

✓ Time and resources to spend on extensive data collection in the field and detailed data analysis of “text” information.

✓ The nature of research question: in a qualitative study, the research question often starts with a how or a what.

✓ Audiences are receptive to qualitative research.

5.2. DESIGN

Seliger and Shohamy (2001) assert that any research project needs a design or a plan, even if the plan is minimal. The aim of the design or plan is to say how the various components of the research are assembled into a construction. Since I need to figure out how and why things are happening, this research shall put emphasis on descriptive and explanatory methods. The former describes behaviors or conditions and uses large collections of data and random samples so that the variation in whole populations can be accurately estimated. Attitudinal studies, e.g., their satisfaction with the reading texts, are necessary. The latter shall find explanation to the issues being researched along with their corresponding systematic analysis.
Thus, the suitability of descriptive design is in the sense of the existing phenomena and the necessity to explicitly describe them.

5.3. STUDY GROUP

The study group meets at ‘Centro Educativo El Pinar’, which is a secondary school with high academic standards, qualified as Muy Superior among private schools by the ICFES. It is located in Barranquilla, Colombia, Autopista Puerto Colombia KM 2+400 m. The group originally had 17 students. Five of them dropped out of school for various reasons. Most of them have been at this school since kindergarten, their age average is 17, their level of English is heterogeneous, and a few of them have had the chance to travel to an English speaking country.

The study group has a morning timetable of eight hours a day, five days a week. The ‘Pinarista’ anthropology has its basis on values and principles and there is a good academic level. The number of students per class is limited to a maximum of 20 students who see in their academic performance their own believing, feelings and behaviors, and who make of this school their place of work. In relation to the English classes, all the courses have a four-hour-a-week schedule.
5.4. TECHNIQUES

The data will be collected using survey questionnaires for students and teachers, observations of reading tasks development and introspective/retrospective interviews with students. Additionally, reading tests will be administered as to obtain data analyses.

5.5. INSTRUMENTS

The data collection instruments required in the response of the subject included interviews with students, survey questionnaires, and subject observations while reading. Also, reading tests were administered. Teachers had the chance to give their opinion on the issue, as well. They underwent interviews and answered questionnaires, similarly.

5.6. PROCEDURE

a. Survey questionnaires: Initially, the study group answered survey questionnaire 1 which included aspects related to their language ability, interest when reading and personal motivation towards this issue, as to know if they were related to achievement. Teachers also answered a questionnaire focused on their
general view on students reading performance, activities, and level of motivation.

b. Observations: To know how informants behave and interact during the reading tasks, three observation instruments were elaborated in a very systematic way and the researcher became a participant observer through the slight use of introspection.

c. Interviews: Retrospective procedures were used to learn what the study group thought about the concept of reading, the way they approached texts, the difficulties they had, and strategies used, to identify factors, i.e., organizational forms and rhetorical structures, that were possibly affecting their comprehension of the different texts types.

d. Reading tests: They were administered basically to have a more accurate idea of the way students' developed the process of reading, their level of reading comprehension and of the possible effect of the different text types during the process. Also, to contrast the students' self-perception in terms of reading performance as stated in the first survey questionnaire.
6. RESULTS

I will dedicate this section to the description of the results derived from the analysis of data that I obtained for this study. To facilitate such analysis, I will arrange this description around the three research questions: a) How do 10th grade students at El Pinar school develop reading comprehension? b) What reading strategies do the students use when reading the texts? c) What contextual factors in terms of text types and text features interfere with the process?

Reading Processing Models the Study Group Employed When Performing Reading Tasks

Specifically, this part corresponds to the answer to the first Research Question: How do 10th grade students at El Pinar school develop reading comprehension? As mentioned above, I agree with the conception of reading as an interactive process. The most likely accurate and truthful insights on the way the students tackled the different texts, i.e., what they did while answering the tests and performing the reading tasks, as to have a better idea of the predominant reading models, resulted from the analysis of the submitted survey questionnaires, the interviews and observations done by the author.
To begin with, students’ idea of reading is directly correlated with the idea of comprehending a text, which denotes how --not what-- we comprehend. In this respect, survey questionnaire 1 (see Appendix A), submitted in advance to the students, becomes a crux for it was not only intended to have a very broad idea of the students’ idea of reading process, but also about their readiness towards the reading skill as a first step to gain insights of the study group to whom the reading tasks were administered afterwards.

Consequently, I rather dedicate some time to describe the data collected and analyzed from this instrument. First, it explains that almost all 10th grader-students at El Pinar school were likely to describe themselves by saying:

✓ I like to read
✓ I think I am a good reader

On the one hand, the first affirmation above features facts which go along with why the students like to read and, in this respect, the reasons given point at the newness of topics and their connection with society and technology, how helpful the texts are in relation to reading comprehension and personal improvement, how entertaining and significant it is for the reader, how it gives the chance to know about other cultures and language, and how imagery is activated. Those who refuse the idea of reading think learning by doing is basic and, in this sense, reading does not give them the chance to learn at all.
On the other hand, the idea of being a good reader or not, ranks five students who do not do reading for they think they are obliged to, they recognize a lack of practice and constancy, they refuse to finish the texts all or there is some kind of boredom incidence. Surprisingly, the idea of being a good reader for this group of students was not connected with having a good understanding of the texts.

Besides, in the questionnaire for teachers (see Appendix B), only one of them matched the idea of being a good reader with the comprehension of the printed or written text; others, on the contrary, matched such idea with the quantity of books read in a month and the enjoyment the texts may give while reading. Differently, those students who see themselves as good readers emphasize good concentration and understanding, they find reading easy and enjoyable, they see it as part of their daily or weekly routine and how fast and well they read and pronounce the text words, accordingly, as well as the capacity to answer comprehension questions after reading. Graphic 1 condenses the interviewees’ responses.

Graphic 1. Reading habits and its value.
Concerning these two aspects (habits and reading value), teachers conversely think students neither like to read nor have a reading habit and only read for grading purposes, for instance. Additionally, they think today’s students belong to a social group in which there is not a socially generated motivation towards reading as to consider them good readers. Likely, teachers underline the importance of reading in the sense that it enhances readers’ understanding of the culture and the world, and the fact that reading implies the development of one of the most important and fundamental communicative abilities.

With reference to the third item of the reading habits and its value in survey questionnaire ,1, item 1 denotes a considerable appealing attitude (73.3%) towards reading story grammars (narrative) in L1/L2 indistinctly. More than half of the group (59.9%) results demotivated when the texts become difficult, but curiously such difficulty is not a demotivating issue for the same percentage (59.9%) of students (items 2-3). Item 4 shows an inconsistency in relation with the first question. A considerable group of students (59.9%) confirms the idea that the teachers also interviewed have about students doing reading and related homework as part of school demands only (item 5); however, a fair percentage (39.9%) of students do feel willing to it.

Item 6 reports on a big group of students (59.9%) who see and identify the English classes as the scenario not only to gain some knowledge of the language, but of
the culture of English speaking countries. Others (39.9%) do not have the same perception.

Items 7 and 8 show the usefulness students see in the language (100%) and how entertaining (59.%) it results to be engaged in reading a text in English; a considerable group (39.9%) does not have the same idea, though. Table 2 below shows the percentages of affirmative and negative answers to each reading situation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Sí</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Me sumerjo en historias interesantes incluso si son en Inglés.</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Las lecturas difíciles me desmotivan.</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Me gusta el desafío que representan las lecturas difíciles.</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No tengo deseos de leer textos en Inglés incluso si el contexto es interesante.</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. No leería voluntariamente en Inglés a no ser que sea una tarea o un trabajo de la clase</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Al ser capaz de leer en Inglés, espero entender más a profundidad el estilo de vida y la cultura de los países de habla inglesa como EEUU e Inglaterra.</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. El leer en Inglés hará de mi a una persona más informada y capaz.</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Es aburrido leer en Inglés.</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the students’ reading competence, some of them (4) found reading itself difficult due to features such as a poor command of English, some of the ideas in the reading are not well interpreted and this causes uncertainty; equally, vocabulary is a major fact for students make parallel comparisons with their L1 and
think they differ to a great extent. Graphic 2 condenses the answers to the question *Do you find reading difficult?*

![Reading competence](image)

Another aspect of the reading competence deals with the students’ confidence when reading different text types. On the whole, the choice of texts was determined by how interesting or entertaining such texts are for them, how they give the chance to “travel to another world and fantasize” (e.g., magazines, and literary) and the relation to their subject preferences and age, which, consequently, make them be more involved in the reading task. Catalogs were rather accepted, unless they deal with or are related to technical instruction.

Additionally, reading in English is seen as a way of learning no matter the kinds of texts they read. Technical and scientific texts were almost totally rejected for students are not familiar with the concepts such texts have, as well as the hard-
to-interpret diagrams and pictures contained. The texts that have been adapted or simplified for teaching purposes are mostly unaccepted mainly due to the fact that the topics they present do not catch their attention or are out-dated.

Finally, academic texts were fairly accepted by the intellectual-type students or the close relation such texts may have with the careers they are likely to follow after high school. Graphic 3 below summarizes this item of confidence.

Another aspect of the questionnaire aimed at the students’ self-classification considering the amount of knowledge to the tasks of reading. Although there were five levels of reading abilities, Figure 5 below only shows the ones selected by the students. (see Appendix A, Section B, question 5) for the whole classification)

Many of them (9) consider they are able to read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writer adopts particular attitudes or points
of view and to understand literary prose. Very few (3) think their command may be situated either above or below this category. Figure 5 illustrates such self-classification.

![Figure 5: Self-Classification of the Reading Competence](image)

Source: Council of Europe.

The last aspect of section B about competences is related with the students’ proposal to improve reading comprehension. It features ideas such as reading articles, books, short stories everyday and about something they like, followed by a step-by-step analysis of the passages, and taking out and learning new vocabulary with the use of the dictionary, or by asking the teacher.
Letter C in the questionnaire corresponds to their reading attitude, interest and motivation. Most of them recognize themselves as totally concentrated and with a positive attitude towards the tasks of reading. Some of them also included constancy as a key factor. Graphic 4 below summarizes students’ answers in this respect.

Finally, survey questionnaire 1 intended to describe some other behaviors, interests, opinions, motivations and attitudes when being engaged in reading as to gain some more insights from the study group. Table 3 below summarizes students’ answers.
Table 3. Reading attitude, interest and motivation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>SA*</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading is one of my favorite pastimes</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading is OK if there is nothing else to do</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only like reading if the language is made simple</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer short stories because I get bored easily</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like to give my opinion about what I’ve read</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer one long story to several short stories</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like readings to have pics. It's childish.</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pics. Help me understand. I like them.</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading is not fun</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read for fun in my own language, but not in English</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a desire to learn about the topics in the texts</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to read about new things</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to my friend about what I’m reading</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>39.9%</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like stories with interesting characters</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0.66%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* SD: Strongly disagree, D: Disagree, SA: Strongly agree, A: Agree

These first round research findings shed significant lights on the reading behaviors of the group. At this point, I will retake the matter of the Research Question 1 by saying that most (66.6%) of the students seem to begin reading at a bottom-up level, i.e., they begin to construct the meaning from decoding words, phrases, sentences, etc. Then, they start to connect that meaning to what they already know about the topic. One of them stated, for instance:

“Cuando empiezo a leer...eh...voy descifrando las palabras, las frases...es decir, las oraciones, que hay allí... en el texto. Así voy...hasta que me dan una idea para relacionarla con la siguiente en el mismo escrito” (Interview 1).
Other bottom-up processing strategies (observed during the reading task performance considering the percentage of students and the frequency of use) include:

- **Individual word focus**
  
  “‘Led’ aquí es el pasado o participio de ‘lead’?” (task 1, text No 2)

- **Use of grammatical structure**
  
  “Ah...’rose’ no es ‘rosa’...it’s the past for ‘rise’...Teacher, verdad? (task 1, text No 3b)

  “Pero ‘Will’ es para futuro..entonces no entiendo... (task 1, text No 3a)

- **Intrasentencial features**
  
  “Teacher...¿pero es que la ‘coma’ aquí no me indica que en esos países fue después?” (task 1, text No 1)

- **Restatement**
  
  “Tienen que buscar comida en otro lado” ( “Birds must fly long distances for food”) (task 6, text No 10)

- **Hypothesizing word meaning**
  
  ‘Czar’ debe ser ‘Zar’ porque esa era la época de ellos... se parece al Español...no sé” (task 5, text No 9)

  “¿’Falkirk’?... no ningún nombre...mira que tiene ‘at’ delante... debe ser más bien el lugar donde pelearon...el lugar” (task 1, text No 2)
Table 4 summarizes other behaviors that were monitored during the observation sessions. The instrument below was designed to record information on how students currently go about using observable cognitive reading strategies when they read the different text types. The percentages correspond to the number of students (12). The numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, which correspond to the frequency students use the strategies listed below, stand for 1: **never or almost never**, 2: **only occasionally**, 3: **sometimes**, 4: **usually**, 5: **always or almost always**.

### Table 4. Individual strategies: Bottom-up Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She attempts to understand the meanings of individual words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She questions the meaning of a word.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She attempts to understand the meaning or structure of a clause or sentence.</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. She questions meaning of a clause or sentence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. She questions grammatical structures.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. She translates from English into Spanish.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was stressed above that students seem to begin the reading task from a decoding start.

A preliminary attempt to explore what the students consider useful to do when reading, (see Appendix A, section B, question 3) intended to know how students
keep on when meeting a challenge or difficulty to understand a passage. Even though the question was not only related to vocabulary problems, most of the students did associate challenge or difficulty to understand with vocabulary and, consequently, the first thing to do was to stop reading and ask about the meaning or use the dictionary.

In this sense, while observing those students who stopped reading and asked about the meaning of the unknown words, I asked them why they stopped, and most of them said they could not continue reading because of those words. As an example, a conversation came up like this:

*T (Teacher):* ¿Qué pasó?
*S (Student):* Es que no sé esta palabra...y...me cuesta trabajo.
*T:* ¿Por qué te detienes?
*S:*

Es que no puedo seguir...ya trate de adivinar el significado...no creo que sea ese porque no entiendo.
*T:*

¿Siempre te detienes?
*S. Bueno... sí. algunas veces trato con el contexto...es lo que generalmente hago... pero no...ahora tengo que buscar el diccionario para mirar que quiere decir.* (Interview 2)

It seems that the unknown words play a decisive role for some students’ comprehension and the dictionary becomes the most used source to remedy the problem. The answer to one of the questions in Interview 1 *(¿Qué haces al leer*
Students’ awareness of other possibilities to solve such a vocabulary problem (e.g. finding definitions from structural clues, determining meaning from word parts, or using context clues to determine meaning) seems to be limited. For instance, being questioned about the reading strategies effectiveness to understand a text better (see Appendix A, section B, question 4) the exploration of both the reading in a step-by-step process (79.9%) and the vocabulary (66.6%) has a lot of acceptance as effective. Again, this behavior shows an idea of the students’ engagement in having a prevalence for the bottom-up process, i.e., a linear or sentence-by-sentence building of comprehension.

Theoretical underpinnings (Grabe, 1988; Goodman, 1986; Carrell, et al., 1988) concerning reading comprehension as a process in which the reader builds a bridge between what is being read and what they already know in the real world also include deciding what strategies or skills will be called upon, making inferences, i.e., tying the new meaning to what we already know, predicting what will come, revising predictions when necessary and/or evaluating the worth of the
message. Models of reading that stress the centrality of this knowledge are known as schema-theoretic models. They are based upon schema theory, which accounts for the acquisition of knowledge and the interpretation of text though the activation of schemata: networks of information stored in the brain which act as filters for incoming information (Alderson, 2000).

Being this so, some students (41.6%) put into practice some of the comprehending processes like focusing on the topic and then connecting what they read with what they already know about the topic: “Bueno...primero empiezo desde el título...y me imagino...es decir, da una idea como muy general de lo que está hablando...luego leo párrafo por párrafo hasta el final”. (Interview 1). And some of them (38%) sometimes think of deciding on a purpose and the strategies or skills needed to be called upon. (Interview 2)

The analysis of survey questionnaire 2, for instance, intended to address the theoretical foundations (mentioned above) in three different moments of the students’ reading tasks. A pre-reading questioning, a while-reading questioning and a post-reading questioning. Drawing on the first moment, some of the students (61%) claimed that they always ask themselves the purpose for reading for it is a good way of centering the task of reading and it has become a pre-reading habit. Among the purposes listed in item 2 in the same survey questionnaire, the purpose for reading with most acceptance is the one for learning (77%), some others (23%) read to get information and the same percentage reads
for entertainment. In this pre-reading exploration, all students asked themselves what they knew about the texts to be read, a great number (92%) asked themselves what the text was about, and only 46% percent of the students dedicate some time to explore the structure of the text.

The next item in survey questionnaire 2 corresponded to the while-reading step. Here, students’ hypothesizing and prediction making towards the texts featured that only some of the students (46%) attempted to do it. A great number of students (84%) asked questions about what was being read. They (91%) also clarified possible doubts (in terms of vocabulary mainly) during the reading tasks. Being asked about the use of any mental images to visualize possible vague descriptions in the texts, a similar percentage (92.3%) attempted it. Surprisingly, students’ could not report on any other strategies used. Although it may frequently happen to readers, specially young ones, it was necessary to expose students to other strategies readers employ, consciously or not, while reading for they guarantee precious insights about readers’ performance. Such list of strategies will be described later.

The almost null use of predictions (8.3%) and scarce inference (13.3%) during the process of reading may, in the same way, confirm the predominance of the bottom-up processing of the passages. Teachers interviewed think reading-alouds work well if they are followed by the students’ re-count of the text read, as well as
an exploration of the main idea of the text, taking out relevant information, making inference, summarizing, interpreting, stating arguments for or against and analyzing. Table 5 below summarizes students' grading of the effectiveness of strategies.

Table 5. Students' view on effectiveness of reading comprehension strategies.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGIES</th>
<th>EFFECTIVE</th>
<th>NOT EFFECTIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Summarize</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
<td>73.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Compare and contrast</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Summarize and make predictions</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Inferring</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Explore vocabulary</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Answering questions</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Making diagrams</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Answering true-false sentences</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Explore reading little by little</td>
<td>79.9%</td>
<td>19.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Organizing sentences</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though there seem to be a predominance of bottom-up processing over top-down processing, students’ use of top-down processing strategies (observed during the reading task performance considering the percentage of students and the frequency of use) include:

- **Prediction**
  
  “Mira...este va a ser de ‘natación’ seguro... mira la vieja en la piscina” (task 2, text No 7)

- **Confirmation of prediction**
“Ay...no, no, no...es de los 'juegos Olímpicos'” (task 2, text No 7)

✓ Reference

“Esta palabra (wood stork) está por todos lados y no sé que significa...no aparece en el diccionario” (task 6, text 10)

✓ Inferences

“‘Napoleon’...ah... seguro es de Historia...¿te acuerdas con Minerva (Profesora de Historia y Geografía) lo vimos...” (task 5, text No 9)

✓ Use of Prior knowledge

“Teacher! ...¿usted sabía que las pirámides de Egipto no son así tan triangular cuando está cerca?...se ven como un poco de piedras ahí” (task 7, text 11)

✓ Evaluative comments

“Aquí hay otra diferencia...que...que creo es importante”. (task 7, text 11)

✓ Self-Questioning

“Ah...¿entonces era que se estaba comparando y por eso se sentía mal?, a lo mejor” (task 1, text 3a)

Giving way to the last part of the survey questionnaire 2, which is related with what the students do to have a better comprehension of the text once they have finished reading, some of the students (30,7%) attempt to summarize, others (46,1%) feel better answering comprehension questions, the same number of students (46.1%) prefers to recount the text, and some others (38,4%) utilize web diagrams with the same purposes (see Appendix B for a sample of Solé’s survey questionnaire).
Some other insights on the students' reading process may be gained through the exploration of the reading strategies use which i shall describe below.

Reading Strategies the Study Group Employed When Performing Reading Tasks

The information provided in this part of the paper corresponds to the answer to the second question of this study: What reading strategies do the students use when reading the texts? I will describe the strategies used by the study group during the reading tasks performance. Again, the instruments utilized to collect the data included a survey questionnaire, interviews and observations.

Two observation instruments (see Appendixes D and E) were designed to record information on how students go about using observable cognitive and metacognitive reading strategies when performing the reading tasks. Due to the fact that in the preliminary survey questionnaire 1, students were not able to report on the use of reading strategies, other than the ones provided in survey questionnaire 1, and that researchers (Pressley and Afflerbach, 1995) agree that awareness and monitoring of readers’ comprehension processes are critically important aspects of skilled reading, a slight introspective procedure was necessary as to gain some insights on those unobservable procedures about how readers extract meaning from the texts for such a process of extracting meaning.
gives valuable information about readers’ cognitive and metacognitive procedures when reading.

Research studies ((Paris and Winograd, 1990) depict young developing readers and some inexperienced adolescents and adults as quite limited in their metacognitive knowledge about reading. A preliminary attempt to gain insights about the study group’s behavior towards strategies use (survey questionnaire 2, while-reading, question 9) showed, in the same way, their weakness to recall any. Thus, there was a need of discussing cognitive and metacognitive characteristics of thinking, i.e., a pre-“consciousness-raising” process.

Some of the observable functional strategies are described in Table 5, though. They corresponded to different moments and one purpose (to support their performance) while executing the reading tasks. In this sense, Mokhtari and Reichard (2002) assert strategies such as these serve a useful purpose for some of the students who seem to invoke them as needed. These strategies provide the support mechanisms aimed at sustaining responses to reading.

Drawing on the answers given to survey questionnaire 4 (see Appendix E), skilled readers would use strategies more frequently; in particular, we predicted highly skilled readers to use Global and Problem-Solving Strategies more frequently than less skilled readers. Under these circumstances, it is good to say that the MARSI is not intended to be used as a comprehensive measure of students’ comprehension
monitoring capabilities. Rather, it is designed as a tool for helping students increase metacognitive awareness and strategy use while reading. The results obtained can be used for enhancing assessment, planning instruction, or conducting classroom research. This props, for instance, the rationale for a student who reports overusing support strategies such as “using the dictionary” to look up every word in text as one who may have a restricted view of reading.

Even though the study group seems or tends to focus on reading as a decoding process rather than as a meaning-getting process, the students’ observed behaviors show that a fair number (8) of informants did, on the whole, relatively good monitoring of such perceptible metacognitive strategies in an average frequency basis. The listed items in Table 6 seemed to be deliberate actions taken by the informants before, during, and after reading tasks.

**Table 6: Study group observable metacognitive strategies.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Never/almost never</th>
<th>Only occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always/almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She takes notes while reading to help her understand.</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>66.6 %</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. When the text becomes difficult, she reads aloud to help her understand what she reads.</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td>41.6 %</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td>24.9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She discusses what she reads with others to check her understanding.</td>
<td>33.3 %</td>
<td>49.9 %</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. She underlines or circle information in the text to help her remember it.</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td>16.6 %</td>
<td>58.3 %</td>
<td>8.3 %</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Let us analyze now the readers’ monitoring of some other metacognitive strategies which, although they belong to the so called “reader’s black box”, similarly correspond to what people do when reading but are not as noticeable as the one listed in table 5 above. The application of introspective procedures were of great help in gaining more accurate and precise information in this sense.

Globally speaking, having a purpose in mind when reading seems to be a reasonable foundation before starting any reading task. Conversely, a very small percentage of students (8.3%) think it is a very functional strategy, and most of the respondents sometimes or usually (49.9% and 41.6% accordingly) think of setting such plan before starting reading. The analysis also suggests that the activation of the prior knowledge, i.e., the moment when the readers think about what they know to help them understand what they read, is, to a customary extent, essential for most (91.5%) of the respondents.
In the vast majority of cases, the readers (41.6%) now and then predict what the text is about. This lends support to assert that the preview of the text to see what it is about before reading has a very small number (8.3%) of followers. The analysis also reveals that most of the students (91.5%) only occasionally think whether the content of the text fits their reading purpose. Parallel to this is the fact previously mentioned about the setting of a purpose for reading, which also had very little application. In terms of length and organization of the text, a great number of students (66.5%) skim at times to note such characteristics of the text.

Giving way to the readers’ decision-making in relation to what to read closely and what to ignore, most of them make such a choice almost repeatedly. Besides, their understanding seems to have a positive influence and improvement when using other textual features such as tables, figures, and pictures. In looking at the context clues and typographical aids (charts, boxed texts, quotation marks, italics, or boldface), most of the respondents (from 74.9% to 83.3%) stressed such clues were of great help to identify key information and to understand what they were reading better. Mention must be made of other procedures in which a group of students dedicated some time to analyze and evaluate the information presented in the text (58.3%), to check their understanding when coming across conflicting information (91.5%), or to see if their guesses about the reading were right or wrong (66.6%).
To shed more lights on the issue, let us consider now the problem-solving strategies put into practice by the respondents. For instance, to be sure their understanding of what they read was unequivocal, a great number of students (74.8%) read slowly but carefully. The percentage increased (91.5%) when their concentration diminished, having to get back on track, consequently. In this special sense, most of the respondents (74.9%) perceived the need for an adjustment in their reading speed and attention consistent with what they were reading and the text difficulty, which made them reread the text to increase their understanding. Added to this course of action is the fact that the same percentage of readers stopped from time to time to think about what they were reading via visualization or depiction of information. It seems that under this circumstances of adjustment and reflection, the readers’ tendency to decipher the meaning of unknown words using the dictionary lessened. In other words, the percentage of students (74.9%) who by different means tried to guess the sense of unfamiliar words augmented considerably. Table 7 below summarizes the analysis of the readers’ monitoring of those veiled metacognitive strategies.

Table 7. Study group unobservable metacognitive strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Never/almost never</th>
<th>Only occasionally</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Usually</th>
<th>Always/almost always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. She has a purpose in mind when she reads.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She thinks about what she knows to help her understand what she reads.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She previews the text to see what it is about before reading.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. She thinks about whether the context of the text fits her reading purpose.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. She reads slowly but carefully to be sure she understands what she is reading.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. She skims the text first by noticing the characteristics of length and organization.</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. She tries to get back on track when she loses concentration.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. She adjusts her reading speed according to what she is reading.</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. She decides what to read closely and what to ignore.</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When the text becomes difficult, she pays closer attention to what she is reading.</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. She uses pictures, figures, and tables in text to increase her understanding.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. She stops from time to time and think about what she is reading.</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. She uses context clues to help her better understand what she is reading.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. She tries to picture or visualize information to help her remember what she reads.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. She uses typographical aids to identify key information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. She critically analyzes and evaluates the information presented in the text.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. She checks her understanding when she comes across conflicting information.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. She tries to guess what the material is about when she reads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. When the text becomes difficult, she rereads to increase her understanding.</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. She checks to see if her guesses about the text are right or wrong</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>49.9%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. She tries to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contextual Factors in Terms of Text Types and Text Features that Interfere with the Process

The information provided in this part of the paper corresponds to the answer to the third question of this study: What contextual factors in terms of text types and text features interfere with the reading process? I shall initially report on the students’ performance in terms of good and bad answers given to the different tasks with comprehension questions. Subsequently, I will mention students’ perception of being exposed to the different text-types and the factors that interfered with their comprehension. Again, the instruments employed to collect the data included 14 reading tasks with comprehension questions, survey questionnaires 4 (Appendix E) and 5 (See Appendix F), retrospective interviews, and introspective observations.

Analysis of the Answers to the Comprehension Questions in the Different Reading Tasks.

Reading task No 1

This first task was comprised of eight different texts (see Appendix G). The first text included a local comprehension question (LCQ), asking for details, based on Weaver and Kintsch (1991), which most of the students (66.6%) answered
correctly. The conjunction *and* (cohesive factor) followed by the name of the country (*Scotland*) and the comma (intrasentential factor) became the main difficulty to give an appropriate answer. Such text organization confused the students making them believe they had to include *Scotland* as one of the countries reached by the black plague. The LCQ including the word *countries* may have been another distracting factor.

Text number two comprised another LCQ question which all the students answered correctly, due to the fact that the answer was enclosed in the question. The third text (3a) contained, on the one hand, a global comprehension question (GCQ), asking for the main idea, based on Weaver and Kintsch (1991), which only a few informants could respond adequately. Syntactic factors (long sentences, relative clauses, intrasentencial factors, contrastive sentences) vocabulary, and focus on grammar aspects did not allow students to answer successfully. On the other, text 3b included a LCQ which 58.3% of the students could answer. Although both texts 3a and 3b were descriptive, text 3b had a higher number of good answers due to the signal cue *like*, which facilitated the idea of comparing.

Text four included a LCQ which half the group answered adequately, the other respondents claimed not to have perceived the grammatical factor (imperative form of the verb) of phrase ‘*write to me immediately*’ in the text, which was the
main clue the students who answered successfully reported as the guide to give a correct response.

Text five asked a GCQ which a relatively good percentage of students (58.3%) answered correctly. Those who did not, claimed to have confused the idea of what an informative text is with an instructive one.

Text six asked about the purpose of the text. Here, a bigger number of students (8) answered accurately; the rest, as in text five, confused informative with instructive.

As a follow-up and preliminary nature-of-the-text-identification activity, on the one hand, a great number of readers failed to recognize informative and instructive texts (33.3% and 8.3% correspondingly). Students claimed the difference between them is slight. On the other, descriptive and persuasive texts were easier to identify. Students (58.3%) asserted that the inclusion of adjectives and comparative words, as well as the implied encouragement to do something were the main cues which helped recognize such kinds of texts. See Table 8 below for a summary of this nature-of-the-text-identification activity.

**Reading task No 2**

In this second task, students were asked to read a magazine article (see Appendix G). Most of the students (66.6%) answered the first question (GCQ)
correctly. Some of the sports related words influenced students’ good response. A lack of familiarity or aversion to sports topics and magazines was the main reason not to answer appropriately. The other questions (LCQ) were fairly well answered. Most of them (58.3%) mismatched the picture of the article (The Bronze Syndrome) with having health problems or getting a tan. The information appeared in the boxes was of help for most of the students (74.9%), but the meaning of the vocabulary word (syndrome) was not correctly allocated (only 33.3% answered well) due to the choice of the first entry (physical or mental problem) instead of the second (events, behaviour problem), being the most appropriate in this case. Contrary to this, it seemed that the prefix re-: again (in revamped) was of help for most of the students (66.6%) to give a good answer on this item. Being ask to classify the text, the students did much better. See table 8 below.

**Reading task No 3**

This text enclosed two paragraphs. After reading, the students were asked the same GCQ and LCQ. In the first text, half the students answered the GCQ correctly. Those who gave a good answer argued that the main idea of any text is almost always at the beginning or at the end of it. Surprisingly, all of the respondents gave a good answer when being asked to mention the supporting details in the same paragraph. The second text of this reading task had more good responses (66.6%) to the GCQ, and the same percentage in the LCQ. It
seemed that the repeated type of questioning might have facilitated the increase in the good answers to the GCQ’s. Being asked to classify the text, the students did much better. A considerate number (58.3%) related the texts with the previous texts (“The Black Plague” and “The Battle of Stirling Bridge”) in task No 1 to decide on their response. See table 8 below.

Reading activity No 4

This task had two LCQ’s, which most of the students (74.9% and 66.6% accordingly) answered well. The structure of a problem-solution text helped them identify both the problem and the solution straightforwardly. Respondents stated that first logically goes the problem and then the solution. Other aspects stated by the respondents included indicators of a text structure such as words to indicate the text structure of the upcoming passage, e.g., cause, can be useful in the battle for, and can fight noise by. Being asked to classify the text, a big number of students (66.6%) answered well. See table 8 below.

Reading task No 5

This task included two LCQ’s and a comprehension exercise, which was well done by all the readers. In the LCQ’s, students were asked to look for words that signaled time and order. The signal words for time, which emphasized the structure or organization of the passage, but did not add content information,
were properly identified by a good number of students (58.3%). Those who did not respond accurately (41.6%) claimed to have matched time expressions only with numbers and not with expressions such as since the time, this time, in which the signal word time was enclosed there. Similarly, they failed to distinguish whether the word after referred to time or order; in the same way, they wrongly assigned the time connotation to the word as in the phrase as a boy, being used to describe when Napoleon was a child. In effect, what may have confused them is the fact that the word as can be interchangeably used with while or when. Finally, it frequently happened that the readers failed to signal the different time and order words for they looked for complete sentences and not phrases. They claimed that if they segmented the sentences or phrases, such sentences or phrases would not have meaning, then. Being asked to classify the text, the same percentage of students (58.3%) classified it correctly. They claimed to have compared it with other informative they had read before. See table 8 below.

**Reading task No 6**

This text contained two LCQ’s and a diagram to fill in with information from the same passage, which all the students answered correctly. In the first LCQ, only a few students (16.6%) answered properly. Those who did not give an accurate response failed to indicate the words signifying cause and effect; they underlined complete sentences, instead. Others signaled verbs, not expressions.
Most of them had no difficulty to distinguish very explicit words for cause and effect (*cause, because*), but failed to recognize others in which more deduction was somehow necessary (*be a reason for, consequently, changing, contribute to, changes, brings, force*). Being asked to classify the text, all of them responded effectively. See table 8 below.

**Reading task No 7**

This task had two LCQ’s and a diagram to complete with information from the same text, which a big number of students (66.6%) answered correctly. Most of the respondents (74.9%) answered the LCQ’s well. Those who did not give correct answers, erroneously pointed out complete sentences, not words or phrases as indicated; they did not differentiate between contrast and comparison; additionally, they claimed to have the idea of comparing as a fixed parallel structure. Again, very explicit words for contrast (*in contrast*) and comparison (*adjective+er, similarly*) were signaled with no difficulty; those in which they had to deduct by some means (*however, the same, resemble, as, both, also*) were not pointed out in any way. Being asked to classify the text, most of them (74.9%) responded effectively. See table 8 below.

**Reading task No 8**

This text enclosed two LCQ’s and a chart to fill in with information from the same passage, which most of the students (83.3%) answered correctly. Some
of the respondents (33.3%) answered the first LCQ well. Those who did not respond appropriately had difficulties to distinguish between words that indicated opinion themselves and those which indicated the writer’s opinion indeed. Yet again, those who did not answered correctly, erroneously pointed out complete sentences, not words or phrases as indicated. Similarly, a big number of students (74.9%) did not give a correct answer when being asked to classify the text. See table 8 below.

Students’ perception after being exposed to the different text-types and the factors that interfered with their comprehension.

In this part of the study, students were asked to answer questionnaire 5 (Appendix F) as a guide to explore and have a more accurate idea of those text features, in terms of text-topic and content, text genre, literary texts, and text organization, which seem to interfere with their comprehension. In looking at the text topic and content during the students’ performance on the different tasks, some of them found task number 1, (particularly texts 2, which had a lot of passive forms, dates and historical names, and number 3, which included a lot of descriptive and comparative words, and long sentences) 2 (which was a text from a magazine that included complex vocabulary) and 3 (which had a lot of historical names and dates) difficult to deal with. On the contrary, the readers considered task 5 more undemanding due mainly to the fact that such task contained concrete and informative facts about Napoleon’s accomplishments,
which activated the respondents’ schema or prior knowledge about the topic, and generated quite many mental images to visualize the information. Finally, task 8 appealed the readers as a result of the content of the text, whose readership was allegedly for young people, or the fact that some of them associated it with a personal experience.

Giving way to the text type and genre, on the one hand, text number 3 in task 1 seemed to be hard to deal with for the text contained an extract of a short story and readers claimed the need for some background information as to have a more general idea of its content, other than the way the text enclosed lots of passive forms, both participle and gerund ones, uneasy vocabulary, and long sentences as mentioned above. On the other, task 2 gave readers a hard time for it was a long text with lots of unknown words, put in long complicated sentences of a typical sports article, written for an informative purpose rather than an English language teaching one. Although readers argued to like reading magazines, they did not have much familiarity with the topic, fact which was influential on the resultant inadequate reading comprehension performance explained above.

Concerning literary texts, some of the readers found particular difficulty in comprehending the non-lineal writing style used by the writer. Besides, the bottom-up reading style which was perceived in early steps of this study led students to virtually give literal meanings and interpretations to the ideas exposed by the author. Mention must be made of the fact that even though the story
belonged to a particular culture and contained somehow complex vocabulary and long sentences, readers argued such detail did not interfere with the global and local comprehension of the text itself nor their literary competence for the level of motivation and interest the text aroused was to a certain extent higher in comparison with the rest of the tasks. This assumption has supporters (Wade, 1992; Hidi and Anderson, 1992) who hold that interest and motivation effect comprehension of reading passages of various difficulties.

In reflecting on the organization of the texts, the readers found the texts in tasks 1 (number 1), 4, and 5 particularly easy to read for number one, for instance, was a short extract, made up of short sentences and simple vocabulary; the text in task number four was a problem-solution text type, in which the problem was presented with very concise ideas, followed by proposed solutions listed in bullets. Research findings suggest that the type of sentences which were difficult to understand included those in the tasks whose topics were not familiar, the vocabulary was challenging, there were lots of hyphenated words, e.g., adjective plus modifying noun plus noun (full-time profession) or hyphenated modifier plus noun (tech-heavy discipline, grass-roots network); compound nouns, and long sentences having the participle and gerund passive forms.

Alternatively, those aspects which facilitated the comprehension of the texts included, to some extent, the readers’ ability to understand the different texts and to compare them with previous experiences, their skill to differentiate the types of
texts and their characteristics, and their capacity to recognize words and their function within the texts. Finally, and concerning vocabulary, it had a great influence on the readers’ broad comprehension of the different texts. The procedures to cope with such drawback included mainly to stop the reading to look words up in the dictionary for there was the general believe that the meaning of a single word was vital to the global understanding of the ideas.

Table 8: Follow-up and nature-of-the-text-identification activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEXT</th>
<th>CLASSIFICATION</th>
<th>IDENTIFIED</th>
<th>DID NOT IDENTIFIED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Black Plague”</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Battle of Stirling Bridge”</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Marcus”</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Uma”</td>
<td>Descriptive</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Letter”</td>
<td>Persuasive</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“London Borough of Welard”</td>
<td>Instructive</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Wedding Directions”</td>
<td>Instructive</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>91.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Bronze Syndrome”</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Queen Elizabeth I”</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>41.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Too Much Noise”</td>
<td>Problem-solution</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Napoleon’s Accomplishments”</td>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>66.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Wood Storks”</td>
<td>Cause-effect</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Pyramids in Egypt”</td>
<td>Comparison and Contrast</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Should Students work?”</td>
<td>Argumentative</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>74.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Original
7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The focus of my study was to analyze the way 10th grade students develop the process of reading when dealing with different texts types and determine the reading strategies they use and the contextual factors in terms of text types and text features that interfere with the process. With this purpose in mind, the next step was to determine the research questions to guide my research. The first question was intended to know how 10th grade students at El Pinar school develop reading comprehension. The second was to analyze the contextual factors in terms of text types and text features that interfere with the process of reading comprehension. The third question was to gain insights of those reading strategies the students use when reading the different text types.

With the use of a carefully and suitably planned methodology, in both theoretical and practical domains, this study allowed me to gain some insights about the processing style of reading comprehension of 10th grade students at El Pinar school, to determine the contextual factors that interfere with the reading processing, and to identify and analyze the different reading strategies students use when dealing with the different reading tasks.

In relation with the study group, it was said that most of them have been at El Pinar school since kindergarten, their age average is 17, a few of them have had the
chance to travel to an English speaking country, and, even though their level of English is heterogeneous, early research findings suggest that, in terms of reading comprehension, a considerable number of them favor the use of a bottom-up approach.

Findings and implications related to research question 1

The objective of the first question was to know how 10th grade students at El Pinar school develop reading comprehension. The findings after the analysis of the answers to the different reading tasks, the introspective and retrospective interviews, and the application of survey questionnaires and observation sessions, show that the readers’ general tendency is to follow a bottom-up approach to reading, i.e., they emphasize on word recognition and are perceived as being almost passive decoders of visual stimuli.

This analysis reveals not only the need to keep on developing readers’ skill to convert the language on the text into the information it represents both rapidly and accurately; but also, and based on what the currently interactive models imply, to develop readers’ ability to relate new information to the relevant knowledge they already have to create a reasonable meaning for the text.

In effect, readers’ tendency to favor a bottom-up approach to reading was enriched by their automated dictionary dependence when dealing with unfamiliar lexis.
Dictionaries were largely used during reading. In effect, readers constantly stopped their task to look up words making fluent reading difficult. Although most readers’ believed that the understanding of the meanings of words was basic to comprehension, it is also true that words have a number of potential rather than one fixed meaning and, in the vast majority of cases, such disposition diminished either the chance to make inferences that go beyond the propositions explicitly stated in the text or the awareness of a more accurate text reconstruction and implication.

But surely all this shall set the foundations to improve both reading comprehension and understanding of word meaning through building background and establishing story and informational settings before assigning reading or employing immediate and replicated activities to clarify ideas; similarly, through dramatization and role playing or stressing reading to comprehend more than accurate word calling, and directing questions so that readers are led to infer the meaning of words as they are employed in particular settings.

Methodologically, the teacher’s business shall entail to always be on alert and establish a problem-solving approach to teaching, to regularly assess each reader’s progress in order to determine which aspects related to reading success are operant. Thus it should be necessary to question constantly whether lexical, syntactic or semantic knowledge constraints are interfering with learning to read and to make the required teaching adjustments.
Understood properly, it has been said that the overall goal of reading, however, is comprehension. In this sense, we must ensure, therefore, that we activate prior knowledge or build topic awareness before we actually assign reading. Developing a schemata for the text shall not only facilitate word recognition but also comprehension and recall.

In very general terms, a reasonable hypothesis shall consider, on the one hand, a more increased and shared understanding of the factors which influence reading performance including knowledge of textual limitations and the effect of the reader's prior experiences on inferencing behaviors. And on the other, our job is to be especially adjusted to students' language problems, to mismatches in any given text, and to the problem of introducing students to materials they might need or want to read in English and the uses normally made of these materials.

Finally, In both theoretical and practical domains, it seems obvious that as teachers there is need to fine-tune instructional strategies and opportunities so that students' efforts to read to comprehend are facilitated significantly through a great deal of reading practice for the more a person reads, the easier the act becomes.

*Findings and implications related to research question 2*

The objective of the second question was to analyze the contextual factors in terms of text types and text features that interfered with the process of reading
comprehension. Again, the findings after the analysis of the answers to the different reading tasks, the introspective and retrospective interviews, and the application of survey questionnaires and observation sessions, showed that readers’ awareness and knowledge of text structure as somehow critical for reading comprehension was almost limited; after being familiarized with detecting the organizational patterns or structures of texts, students could observe how authors arrange ideas and determine which kinds of structures are used to interrelate ideas.

Under these circumstances, and knowing the study group’s preference for a bottom-up approach to reading, and that research suggests that younger and less mature readers do not concentrate on textual features because they are not aware of the impact text structures have on learning, readers had a slightly better performance when being asked to answer LCQ’s (local comprehension questions) than GCQ’s (global comprehension questions) possibly due to the fact that many language textbooks emphasize a product-driven approach (answers to comprehension questions) and that while answering LCQ’s, some of the readers claimed to be more familiar with the reading purpose of finding specific details in informative and expository texts. Respondents asserted such texts were easier to follow, and that they have long been exposed to texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, which have an informative title, and which present the information following an obvious organization.
Conversely, GCQ’s, in which readers were asked about the topics and main ideas of text, had more ups and downs. The analysis reveals that it was due possibly to the fact that such types of questions implied more than word-by-word comprehension of the text, the readers’ determination to enter the text from a top down (to attend to the overall meaning) instead of the bottom-up (focus on the words and phrases). Similarly, the use of reading strategies to maximize its comprehension, and the identification of relevant and non-relevant information. To accomplish this goal, respondents shall be expected to focus on the process of reading rather than on its product.

Authors (Collins, 1994) argue that the reader must learn how to adapt reading behavior to specific tasks for each one requires a different process. Being said that the group of study claimed to be more familiar with finding answer to LCQ’s seems to shed lights on respondents’ weakness to differentiate the reading purpose with respect to their knowledge of, and ability to control, reading tasks. Methodologically, the teacher’s job shall include instruction on adapting reading behavior to specific tasks, and building up the ability to accurately predict reader’s performance on the task. In theory, for young readers, this may be quite difficult at first, but with age and reading experience, they shall begin to pick up cues which give them information about how well they have performed.

In reflecting on the influence that text features had on comprehension, the study suggests that in terms of text-topic and content, reading activities shall focus on a
previous exploration of the respondents’ familiarity with the topic and content. The benefits of this procedure has its foundation on the fact that any misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences, for instance, can create major comprehension difficulties. The teacher’s business shall be to assess students’ background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text, as well as to give students the background knowledge necessary for comprehension of the text, or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess.

Drawing on the text genre influence, the study shows that this particular aspect was the readers’ Achilles’ heel, i.e., their ability to identify the different text types was considerably fair, and having made students aware of the type of text they were to read and the purpose(s) for reading, was of great help. The study shall also be the cornerstone to start giving importance to the differences between text types and, consequently, it is stressed here that students shall need—at least—instructional exposure to different types of text.

Regarding literary texts, the reading process development and comprehension of the short story “The Landlady” by Roald Dahl was tested following the same procedure of analysis of the different components of short stories the study group was accustomed to doing in Spanish and Literature classes. Albeit the assumption that narrative texts or short stories are easier to comprehend because of their predictable structure, the non-lineal writing style used by Dahl and the bottom-up reading style prevalence made some of the readers find particular difficulty in
comprehending “The Landlady” at first; besides, the respondents asserted to have overcome such difficulty due to elements (e.g., danger, death, as well as certain categories of events such as surprise, personal relatedness, and trickery) deliberately sought out because they were interesting to most of the readers, and what was interesting in the passages was coincidentally important to the main idea, for instance. Research findings suggest that even the study group claimed the task itself was difficult, its interest had the ability to outweigh task difficulty in terms of influence on task performance. Drawing from these results, then, a hypothesis shall be directed to think that interestingness of passage has a greater impact on reading comprehension than does reading difficulty level. Thus, the challenge for future research consists of giving an answer to this particular issue.

Text organization shall also receive considerable attention for there were significant differences in the respondents who could identify the different types of texts and the way in which they approached them. Accordingly, the author has come to believe that differences between text types are so important for readers that they should be part of instruction for there are reading skills that cannot be taught in the context of stories and there are reading skills that cannot be taught in the context of exposition. Consequently, it seems to be important to attempt to use reading expository materials on an equal balance with narrative materials in the language classroom, as well as developing students’ sociolinguistic competence, i.e., how to recognize different types of text, how to make use of text
features in information text, how to assess information text in critical ways and how to make use of multiple sources of information.

*Findings and implications related to research question 3*

The objective of the third question was to gain insights of those reading strategies the students use when reading the different text types. Yet again, the findings after the analysis of the answers to the different reading tasks, the introspective and retrospective interviews, and the application of survey questionnaires and observation sessions reveal that there is not an automatic—and expected--transference of the strategies they use when reading in their native language to reading in English.

Instead, a great number of respondents seem to think reading in English means going word by word, stopping to look up every unknown vocabulary item, until they reach the end. While doing this, they are relying exclusively on their linguistic knowledge, a bottom-up strategy.

As mentioned above, reading comprehension is thus much more than decoding. Added to this is the idea that reading comprehension results when the reader knows which skills and strategies are appropriate for the type of text, and understands how to apply them to accomplish the reading purpose.
At the early stages of this research, particularly after the application of survey questionnaires and interviews, there was a need to inform and raise students' awareness of the reading process first, and reading strategies second while developing reading tasks due to the low levels of recall on this particular issue. This initial step led to a further amount of practice and use so strategies application could become more automatic, notwithstanding how desirable it might be for the study group.

Oxford (1990) asserts strategy assessment and training might be necessary to help learners become more aware of the strategies they are using and to evaluate the utility of those strategies. Moreover, The results obtained can be used for enhancing assessment, planning instruction, or conducting further classroom research. In this particular sense, a major challenge shall be to have the study group trained on setting up the purpose(s) for reading and, depending on the type of text, determining the specific knowledge, skills, and strategies to apply to achieve comprehension.

Several comments shall help sum up this study. The research process itself in accordance with the theoretical background helped shed lights on the in progress informants’ approach to reading, whose quality and development needs to be improved in terms of understanding reading as a process or as a product depending on the task aim. Whatever the purpose, it shall also set the bases to
study the effect the students’ awareness of such reading purpose(s) might have on their performance.

Despite some early proposals on the convenience of the training, use and mastery of suitable strategies when reading, it shall as well be good to develop more sensitive readers’ to inconsistencies in text, and explore the appropriacy of the reading materials regarding students’ language ability, interest, and motivation; evenly, a classroom environment that supports the improvement of active reading for it creates contexts that shall satisfy the student’s needs for curiosity, aesthetic involvement, challenge, competitiveness, and social exchange. Personally, the author believes the most central of these seems to be curiosity, the desire to know more about something. All students should have reading interests and preferences, and affording students opportunities to read according to their preferences may be motivating.
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Survey questionnaire for students

This set of questions is to determine whether you like to read, and if so, why and what. Besides, the questions asked can help to plan and select material more appropriately for the level, interests and personality. The answers given are neither good nor bad. Answering every single question is very important, though. I appreciate your maximum of cooperation.

A. Reading habits and its value

1. Do you like to read?

Yes: _____ No: _____ Because

2. Do you think you are a good reader?

Yes: _____ No: _____ Because

3. Mark YES or NO based on the statements below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>SI</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Me sumerjo en historias interesantes incluso si son en Inglés.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Las lecturas difíciles me desmotivan.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Me gusta el desafío que representan las lecturas difíciles.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. No tengo deseos de leer textos en Inglés incluso si el contexto es interesante.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. No leería voluntariamente en Inglés a no ser que sea una tarea o un trabajo de la clase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Al ser capaz de leer en Inglés, espero entender más a profundidad el estilo de vida y la cultura de los países de habla inglesa como EEUU e Inglaterra.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. El leer en Inglés hará de mí a una persona más informada y capaz.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Es aburrido leer en Inglés.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. Reading competence

1. Do you find reading difficult?

Yes: _____ No: _____ Because____________________________________

_______________________________________________________________

2. With what type of texts do you feel more confident when reading?

a. ___ technical
b. ___ adapted texts for teaching English as a foreign language.
c. ___ scientific
d. ___ magazines
e. ___ catalogs
f. ___ academic
g. ___ literary (short stories, novels, poems, etc)
h. other: ________________________________

Why? _________________________________________________________

3. When you meet a challenge or difficulty to understand, what do you do?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

4. Which of these strategies do you think is the most effective to understand a text better?
Write 1 = more significant ....10 = least significant

a. ___ summarize
b. ___ compare and contrast
c. ___ summarize and make predictions
d. ___ inferring
e. ___ explore the vocabulary and idiomatic expressions
f. ___ answering questions based on what you read
g. ___ make diagrams to summarize what you read
h. ___ answer false and true questions
i. ___ explore the reading little by little
j. ___ organize sentences based on what you read
5. Where would you classify yourself considering reading? Circle the letter

a. I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogs

b. I can read short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday materials such as ads, prospectuses, menus, timetables and I can understand short and simple personal letters.

c. I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters

d. I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writer adopt particular attitudes or points of view. I can understand literary prose.

e. I can understand long and complex factual literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialized articles and longer technical instructions, even when I do not know that field.

f. I can read with ease virtually all forms of written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialized articles and literary works.

6. What do you propose to improve reading comprehension?

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

C. Reading attitude, interests, and motivation

1. When reading, YOU ARE:

a. ____ totally concentrated
b. ____ little concentrated
c. ____ positive
d. ____ negative
e. ____ constant
f. ____ with ups and downs
g. other: _____________________________________________________________________

2. Read the statements below and put:

++ for strong agreement
+ for agreement
- for disagreement
- - for strong disagreement
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEMS</th>
<th>MARK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading is one of my favorite pastimes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading is OK if there is nothing else to do.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only like reading in English if the language is made simple.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer short stories because I get bored/ tired easily.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like to give my opinion about what I’ve read.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer one long story to several short stories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not like reading to have pictures. It is childish.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pictures help me to understand. I like them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading is not fun.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I read for fun/pleasure in my own language, but not in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a desire to learn about the topics in the texts.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like to read about new things.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk to my friends about what I am reading.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I always do my reading work exactly as the teacher wants it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the teacher discusses something interesting, I might read more about it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I like stories with interesting characters.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: A Sample Format of Solé’s Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grupo de preguntas del cuestionario de Solé (1994) --Modificado</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ Antes de la lectura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Antes de la lectura, te preguntaste para qué ibas a leer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ¿De los siguientes propósitos de lectura cuál crees que corresponde a tu caso?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ___ Para aprender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ___ Para presentar una exposición.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ___ Para practicar la lectura en voz alta.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ___ Para obtener información precisa.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ___ Para seguir instrucciones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ___ Para revisar un escrito.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ___ Por placer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ___ Para demostrar que he comprendido.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ___ Otro. ¿Cuál? ______________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Durante la lectura</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Formulaste hipótesis e hiciste predicciones sobre el texto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ¿Te formulaste preguntas sobre lo que estabas leyendo? 3.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ¿Aclaraste posibles dudas acerca del texto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ¿Resumiste el texto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ¿Releíste partes confusas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. ¿Consultaste el diccionario?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. ¿Leíste en voz alta?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. ¿Creaste imágenes mentales para visualizar descripciones vagas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. ¿Utilizaste alguna otra estrategia?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Después de la lectura y para lograr una mejor comprensión del texto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. ¿Hiciste resúmenes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. ¿Formulaste y respondiste preguntas?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ¿Recontaste el texto?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ¿Utilizaste organizadores gráficos?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C: Sample of the Survey Questionnaire for Teachers

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This set of questions is to explore the insights you have the reading skill. Besides, the questions asked can help to plan and select material more appropriately for the level, interests and personality. The answers given are neither good nor bad. Answering every single question is very important, though. I appreciate your maximum of cooperation.

1. Do your students like to read?
Yes: ___ No: ____ maybe because ______________________________________

2. What is the importance of reading and how should it be taught and developed?
____________________________________________________________________

3. Do you seem well-informed of your students' reading process?
Yes: ___ No: ___ because ______________________________________________

4. Do you think you need more training in the way to teach the reading skill?
Yes: ___ No: ___ because ______________________________________________

5. Do you see yourself as a good reader? Why?
____________________________________________________________________

6. What reading strategies for comprehension work better with your students?
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

7. How do you support the development of such strategies?
____________________________________________________________________

8. Which activities do your students feel more confident with?
____________________________________________________________________
10. What do you think interferes with your students' reading comprehension?
Appendix D: Observation Instrument of Cognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies

Interviewer guide for reading strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRATEGY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. She attempts to understand the meanings of individual words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. She questions the meaning of a word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. She attempts to understand the meaning or structure of a clause or sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. She questions meaning of a clause or sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. She questions grammatical structures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. She translates from English into Spanish.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (Modified): Assessing Students' Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies
Kouider Mokhtari and Carla A. Reichard
Oklahoma State University
Journal of Educational Psychology Copyright 2002 by the American Psychological Association, Inc. 2002, Vol. 94, No. 2, 249–259 0022-0663/02/$5.00 DOI: 10.1037//0022-0663.94.2.249

* 1: never or almost never, 2: only occasionally, 3: sometimes, 4: usually, 5: always or almost always
Appendix E: Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies Inventory (MARSI) Survey Questionnaire (Adapted)

**Interviewer guide for reading strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Has a purpose in mind when she reads.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thinks about what she knows to help her understand what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Previews the text to see what it’s about before reading it.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Writes summaries to reflect on key ideas in the text.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Think about whether the content of the text fits her purpose.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Reads slowly but carefully to be sure she understands what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Skims the text first by noting characteristics like length and organization.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Tries to get back on track when she loses concentration.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Adjusts her reading speed according to what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Decides what to read closely and what to ignore.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. When text becomes difficult, begins to pay closer attention to what she reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Uses tables, figures, and pictures in text to increase her understanding.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Stops from time to time to think about what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Uses context clues to help her better understand what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Tries to picture or visualize information to help her remember what she’s reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Uses typographical aids like boldface type and italics to identify key information.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Critically analyzes and evaluates the information presented in the text.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Checks my understanding when she comes across conflicting information.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Tries to guess what the text is about when reading.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. When text becomes difficult, rereads to increase her understanding.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Asks herself questions she likes to have answered in the text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Checks to see if her guesses about the text are right or wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Try to guess the meaning of unknown words or phrases.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source (Modified): Assessing Students' Metacognitive Awareness of Reading Strategies
Kouider Mokhtari and Carla A. Reichard
Oklahoma State University

* 1: never or almost never, 2: only occasionally, 3: sometimes, 4: usually, 5: always or almost always
Appendix F: Text-Types and Text Structure Questionnaire

El objetivo del siguiente cuestionario es explorar algunos aspectos relacionados con la estructura y organización de los diferentes textos la manera como los mismos pudieron influenciar tu comprensión. No hay respuestas buenas ni malas. Responde de la manera más sincera y clara posible. Gracias.

✔ Text topic and content

1. ¿Qué texto fue más difícil de entender? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué texto fue más fácil de entender? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Cuál te produjo más imágenes visuales? ¿Por qué?
4. ¿Cuál fue el más interesante? ¿Por qué?

✔ Text type (genre)

1. ¿Te causó dificultad algún texto por la forma como está escrito? ¿Cuál?
2. ¿Cuál(es) de los temas desarrollados en los textos te era más familiar? ¿Cuál(es) no?
3. ¿Cómo influyó en tu comprensión esa familiaridad, o no, del tema?

✔ Literary texts

1. Los textos literarios son difíciles por:
   a) No tener un orden lineal de los hechos narrados.
   b) Las múltiples interpretaciones que se pueden hacer de las ideas expresadas.
   c) El lenguaje es más amplio y complejo
   d) Tu competencia literaria es baja.
   e) Pertenecen a una cultura específica.

✔ Text organization

1. ¿Qué texto(s) leístes con más rapidez? ¿Por qué?
2. Da ejemplo(s) de oración(es) en los textos que te creó (crearon) dificultad para entenderla(s). Diga por qué.
3. ¿Cuál(es) de estos aspectos te facilitó más la comprensión de los diferentes textos:
   a) El contenido y tu capacidad de compararlo con experiencias previas.
   b) Tu capacidad para distinguir los diferentes tipos de textos y los elementos de su estructura que los caracterizan.
   c) Tu capacidad para reconocer las palabras y como funcionan en el texto.
Appendix G: Texts for the Reading tasks

Activity 1

Here, you’ll be tested on the way you approach different types of texts. Now read the texts below and answer the questions afterwards.

1. The Black Plague

In 1348, the bubonic plague arrived in Britain through the southern coast ports. The plague reached London by September 1348 and Scotland, Wales and Ireland in the winter of 1349. Estimates place the total dead as somewhere between a tenth and a third of the population (for the period 1348-50)

Which of the UK’s main countries did The Black Plague reach first?

2. The Battle of Stirling Bridge

Wallace was spectacularly dressed against a better equipped and better trained English army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge (11 September 1297) but was ultimately defeated by an army led by Edward I in person at Falkirk (22 July 1298). Wallace remained politically active in guerrilla warfare for a further seven years but was ultimately betrayed to the English.

Who was the king that led the army in battle at Falkirk in 1298?

3. Marcus

Will caught sight of the pair of them in a mirror, and was shocked to see that they could easily pass for father and son; he had somehow imagined himself as Marcus’ elder brother, but the reflection threw age and youth into sharp relief - Will’s stubble and crow’s feet versus Marcus’s smooth cheeks and gleaming white teeth. And the hair... Will prided himself on having avoided even the tiniest of bald patches, but he still had less on top than Marcus, almost as if life had worn some of it away.

What does the passage above describe?

3. Uma

Uma knelt there, in the shallows, water pouring from her mouth and hair. She rose, gasping for breath, struggling, flailing her arms and choking like a big, wounded water bird.

What comparison does the piece of text make to Uma as she struggled for breath?
I would like to help guide you through this difficult time so that you can have the wonderful life that you deserve. If you would like the advice you need to help you find the love and riches you have always looked for. Write to me immediately. The sooner I can send out your 12 month reading and start you on your path to happiness and success the better.

What is the reader encouraged to do in this example of a letter from a clairvoyant?

5. London Borough of Welard

Register of Electors 2002
Every British, Irish or Commonwealth citizen living in Great Britain on the 12th of November 2001 is eligible to vote in this country's elections. European Union citizens can vote in local and European Parliamentary elections.

What is the intention of the text?

6. Wedding Directions

How to get to Anne Marie and John's wedding.
From the South via the M3
Leave the M3 Junction 12 (B3446) sign posted Winchester. Go straight over 1st roundabout. Take 2nd exit of 2nd roundabout into Rabbit Farm Road. Continue straight across next roundabout and take 2nd exit at next roundabout.

What is the purpose of this text?

How would you classify the texts above? They can be: Descriptive, Informative, Instructive and Persuasive

1. __________ 
2. __________ 
3. __________ 
4. __________ 
5. __________ 
6. __________
THE BRONZE SYNDROME

Germany revamped the way it picks and rewards its team after a slim gold haul in Sydney

BY STEFAN THEIL

The swimmers were bickering and unmotivated, finishing far slower than their personal bests. The track-and-field team watched medal after medal fall to small-country upstarts such as Ethiopia or Belarus. That was four years ago in Sydney, where the once mighty German sports machine fell to fifth place, barely leading a large pack of middling nations—after coming in an easy third in the two prior Games. The fact that Germany took almost as many total medals as third-place China, yet only half as many gold, seemed a particularly acute sign of malaise. Were German athletes missing a “victory gene” asked Böhl, a mass circulation tabloid, at the end of the Games. The president of the German Olympic Committee diagnosed a case of bronze-medal syndrome, commenting that Germans “have no problem winning medals but a problem winning the gold.”

Now Berlin is revamping the Olympic program in ways that mirror its attempts to attack the “German disease” of an underperforming economy. Free-market competition and incentives are challenging the bureaucratic inertia of this egalitarian society. Germany’s unofficial Olympic motto—“Being there is everything”—has been jettisoned in favor of a new focus on winning. Funding for dies was a new state-financed center at the University of Heidelberg to investigate performance anxiety and train dysfunction. The swimmers are now monitored by psychologists, as are most of the other teams. As a result, star swimmers like Anja Bueschelbidle and Franziska van Almsick have emerged from slumps and are back to medal-winning strength.

Germany’s descent was largely inevitable. Following the fall of the Berlin wall, reunited Germanyakaced in medals in Barcelona and Atlanta. But its success was inflated by the momentum of the East, where the communists had employed coercion and drugs to surpass U.S. medals totals by 1998. As the East Germans melded into a nation wallowing in economic torpor, the Olympic program began to sink too. Complains Athens-bound Jürg Schulte, 29, European champion in the 400-meter run: “The desire to perform isn’t very developed among Germany’s young athletes.”

Today the German Olympic program has no national sports authority, relying on an unusual variety of state sponsors at all levels. A third of this year’s 453 athletes, including favorite star Eric Walther, belong to special army units that allow soldier athletes to train full time. The rest emerge from some 8,000 discipline-specific sports clubs, regional training centers and schools. This grass-roots network was great at producing large numbers of top amateur athletes, but has developed its own byzantine bureaucracy that can often stifle change. And now that Olympic training has become a full-time profession, says Ziegler, the system needs change.

Germany also continues to harness its engineering strengths to the medal chase. One of the few state institutions rescued from the communist era is the Sports Equipment Research Institute in Berlin, where scientists develop the boots, bikes and bob sleddas that give Germany an edge in tech-heavy disciplines. “Two hundred countries might be able to train runners,” says a German Olympic official, “but wind tunnels and digital testing is something Burundi can’t afford.” While the institute has been urged to raise funds by selling its technology, it has resisted doing so for fear of aiding rivals. In Athens, it is the crew and canoe teams that are expected to shine most brightly for Germany.

For now the reforms seem to be working. A projection by the Interior Ministry puts Germany back in third place behind the United States and Russia. Unless, of course, bronze-medal syndrome strikes again.
Too Much Noise by Joan Matson

It's nighttime, and you're trying to sleep. You can hear gulls or birds outside your window. A street sweeper drives by. Then a neighbor turns on a stereo. If you have ever found yourself in this situation, you are a victim of one of today's most common problems: noise pollution.

According to hearing experts, noise in excess of 85 decibels can cause hearing loss if exposure is long enough. Hair dryers and lawn mowers commonly reach levels of 90 decibels. Noise pollution is not just an annoyance—it can actually be dangerous.

Forming a community antinoise group can be useful in the battle for peace and quiet. Ask neighbors if they share your concerns about noise. Then invite interested people to a meeting. Your group can fight noise by:

- Researching your community's laws about noise levels
- Printing fliers and making presentations about noise pollution
- Setting a good example instead of adding to the volume

1. Identify the proposed solution
2. Identify at least one detail that supports the need for a solution
3. How would you classify the text?

Activity 5

Read the photocopied article about Napoleon Bonaparte's career. Use the information from the article and the tips above to answer the questions:

1. Identify the words or phrases that signal time.
2. Identify the words in the article that signal order.
3. Use the information in the article to complete this timeline.
4. How would you classify the text?

Activity 6

Read the photocopied passage. Then answer the following questions:

1. Identify words in the passage that signal causes and effects.
2. What causes fish to become concentrated in small pools of water?
   Identify the cause.
3. Use information from the passage to complete the following diagram.
4. How would you classify the text?
Activity 7

Read the photocopied essay. Then use the information from the essay to answer the questions:

1. Identify the words and phrases that signal comparisons.
2. Identify the words and phrases that signal contrasts.
3. This diagram shows how the subjects are similar and how they are different. Complete this diagram to compare and contrast ancient pyramids in Egypt and the Americas. Add at least one similarity to the middle part of the diagram. Add at least one difference in each outer circle.
4. How would you classify the text?

Activity 8

Read the argument on the photocopied page, and then answer the questions below:

1. Identify the words that signal opinion.
2. Underline the words or phrases that give the writer's opinion.
3. The writer presents both sides of the argument. Fill in the chart below to show the two sides. Check the example.
4. How would you classify the text?
Activity 2
Mientras leías
1. ¿Leiste los títulos y los otros encabezados? Sí: ___ No: ___ ¿Por qué no?
2. ¿Para qué son los párrafos o las partes del texto escritas con diferentes tipos de letras?
3. ¿Hiciste con términos aparecidos en comillas, itálicas o sombreado?
4. ¿Viste o estudiaste las fotos y ayudas visuales? ¿Para qué?
5. ¿Viste los textos incluidos en los pequeños cuadrados? ¿Para qué?

Activity 3
1. ¿Cómo buscaste la idea principal?
2. ¿Cómo hiciste para decidir cuáles serían las ideas secundarias?

Activity 4
1. ¿Cómo encontraste la oración que describía el problema?
2. ¿Cómo decidiste cuáles ideas explicaban el problema?
3. ¿Cómo identificaste la solución propuesta?
4. ¿Cómo identificaste las ideas secundarias de la solución propuesta?

Activity 5
1. ¿Qué hiciste para decidir cuáles eran las palabras que indicaban tiempo, orden?
2. ¿Tuviste alguna dificultad para encontrar palabras que indicaban orden, tiempo? ¿Por qué? ¿Por qué no?

Activity 6
1. ¿Qué hiciste para hallar las ideas que indicaban efecto?
2. ¿Qué hiciste para hallar las ideas que indicaban causa?

Activity 7
1. ¿Cómo hiciste para seleccionar las palabras que indicaban comparación?
2. ¿Qué hiciste para seleccionar las palabras que indicaban contraste?

Activity 8
1. ¿Qué hiciste para encontrar las palabras que indicaban opinión?
2. ¿Qué tuviste en cuenta para subrayar las palabras o frases que indican la opinión del autor?
Napoleon’s Accomplishments

Napoleon Bonaparte was born in 1769 on the Mediterranean island of Corsica. As a boy, he was sent to boarding school in France. At 16, he joined the French army and began his military career.

After becoming a soldier, Napoleon was gradually assigned more important duties, including the defense of a revolutionary convention in 1795 against royalist rebels. After many military successes, Napoleon was given control of the military on November 9, 1799. The next day, he drove out members of the legislature and seized power. By 1802, after failing to defeat Napoleon, Britain, Austria, and Russia signed a peace agreement with France. For the first time in 10 years, Europe was at peace.

Next, Napoleon began to restore order to France. He set up an efficient tax collecting system, established a national bank, introduced a code of law, and reduced government corruption. In 1804, he crowned himself emperor.

Napoleon controlled the largest European empire since the time of the Romans. However, unlike the Roman Empire, Napoleon’s empire lasted only 10 years. His failed attempt to invade Russia in 1812 weakened the French military. His enemies were quick to take advantage of this weakness. By March 1814, the Russian czar and the Prussian king were leading their troops through Paris.

In April 1814, Napoleon gave up his throne and was exiled to the island of Elba. After an escape from Elba and a brief return to power in 1815, he was defeated at the Battle of Waterloo on June 15, 1815. Napoleon was again banished, this time to the island of St. Helena, in the South Atlantic. He died in 1821.

Historians recognize Napoleon as a military genius. However, his most lasting accomplishments were his law code and other reforms.
Activity 6
Pyramids in Egypt and the Americas

The pyramid is perhaps the most well-known accomplishment of ancient peoples. When most people think of these amazing structures, they think of Egypt. However, Egypt was not the only place where pyramids were built. Pyramids were also constructed in America, mainly in Central and South America.

Most pyramid construction in Egypt took place between 2686 and 2345 B.C. In contrast, most Central and South American pyramids were built much later. So far, only one pyramid of the Americas has been found to be similar in age to those in Egypt. A pyramid in Caral, Peru, has been dated to 2627 B.C.

Both the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacan, Mexico, and the Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, measure nearly the same at their base. Egyptian pyramids are taller, however. The Great Pyramid originally reached a height of 481 feet, while the tallest pyramid in the Americas is 216 feet high. Even the pyramid at Caral is only one-eighth the height of the Great Pyramid.

Pyramids in Egypt and the Americas have major structural differences as well. Pyramids in the Americas have receding steps that resemble the layers of a cake. Egyptian pyramids, on the other hand, have smooth sides that connect in a point at the top.

Egyptian pyramids were always part of a larger collection of buildings, including temples and houses. Similarly, American pyramids were built in the middle of cities. However, pyramids in the Americas typically served as temples and were the sites of human and animal sacrifices. In contrast, all Egyptian pyramids were built to be royal burial chambers.

Modern scientists are still amazed at the size and durability of these structures. Many pyramids took as long as 20 years to build, using millions of stone blocks and thousands of laborers. Pyramids in Egypt and in the Americas were both outstanding accomplishments for the civilizations that created them.

Activity 7
Why Are Wood Storks Leaving Florida?

The endangered American wood stork is disappearing from its native Florida swamps, changing the delicate ecological balance in southern Florida wildlife sanctuaries. Researchers have found that the storks have been migrating north to Georgia and South Carolina during mating season. Commercial development of swamps, changes in weather conditions, and varying water levels have all contributed to the storks’ migration.

Since 1900, Florida swamps have been drained to make room for homes, farms, golf courses, and roads. As a result, the wood storks and other wildlife that lived in the swamps have had to find other places to feed.

Drought is also a cause of the wood storks’ migration. Wood storks prefer somewhat dry weather because fish become concentrated in small pools of water and are easy to find. Too much drought, however, brings water down to a level where even wood storks have to fly elsewhere for food. Dry spells also often force the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to drain swamps to provide running water for Floridians. This process continues the destruction of swamps, including protected areas such as the Everglades.

Unusually wet weather can also be a reason for wood stork migration. Water is pumped into the Everglades during wet years to keep cities and farms safe and dry. High water levels cause fish and other food sources to spread out. Consequently, birds must fly long distances for food.

Flying north is not a perfect solution for the wood stork because it puts storks and their young in danger of cold spells. Luckily, plans to restore the Florida swamps and better manage swamp water are being developed. If these plans succeed, the wood stork might return to nest in Florida. John Ogden, a biologist from the South Florida water management district, has this message for northern states: “We’re going to get those South Carolina and Georgia wood storks back!”
Activity 8

Should Students Work?

by David Azarian

Americans tend to assume that working is good for students. In the United States, nearly two-thirds of all high school students hold part-time jobs. But in countries like Sweden and Switzerland, only 10 percent of students work as much as a typical American teen. Evidence is mounting that part-time jobs can hurt students’ academic performance.

Students who work up to 15 hours a week usually benefit from having a job. Their paychecks allow them to be responsible for expenses such as clothes and car insurance. They build good work habits by following a work schedule and meeting an employer’s expectations. Those who find work related to a field they’re interested in can learn whether that industry would be a good fit for them.

However, students who work more than 20 hours a week often find that school is just one more thing competing for their attention. If they work late, they come to school tired and may even fall asleep in class. Working longer hours also limits their participation in extra-curricular activities.

Other costs of working long hours are less obvious. In 1991, researcher David Stern found that students’ grade point averages dropped if they worked more than 15 to 20 hours a week. Those who worked the most were also the most likely to drop out of school. Compared with their classmates, they were 33 percent more likely to use drugs and alcohol. Other studies have confirmed the link between working longer hours and lowered achievement.

Does that mean high school students should stick to their books? I’ve learned a lot from my part-time jobs, so I think that position ignores the benefits of work experience. But the experts have a point—high school students should work no more than 20 hours a week.
Activity 7

Read the photocopied essay. Then use the information from the essay to answer the questions.

1. Circle the words and phrases that signal comparisons.
2. Underline the words and phrases that signal contrasts.
3. This diagram shows how the subjects are similar and how they are different. Complete this diagram to compare and contrast ancient pyramids in Egypt and the Americas. Add at least one similarity to the middle part of the diagram. Add at least one difference in each outer circle.
Read the argument on the photocopied page, and then answer the questions below:

1. Circle any words that signal opinion.
2. Underline the words or phrases that give the writer’s opinion.
3. The writer presents both sides of the argument. Fill in the chart below to show the two sides. Check the example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits of Working Part-Time</th>
<th>Disadvantages of Working Part-Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Students are able to be responsible for expenses.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THE LANDLADY
by ROALD DAHL

Billy Weaver had travelled down from London on the slow afternoon train, with a change at Swindon on the way, and by the time he got to Bath it was about nine o'clock in the evening and the moon was coming up out of a clear starry sky over the houses opposite the station entrance. But the air was deadly cold and the wind was like a flat blade of ice on his cheeks. "Excuse me," he said, "but is there a fairly cheap hotel not too far away from here?" "Try The Bell and Dragon," the porter answered, pointing down the road. "They might take you in. It's about a quarter of a mile along on the other side." Billy thanked him and picked up his suitcase and set out to walk the quarter-mile to The Bell and Dragon. He had never been to Bath before. He didn't know anyone who lived there. But Mr. Greenslade at the Head Office in London had told him it was a splendid city. "Find your own lodgings," he had said, "and then go along and report to the Branch Manager as soon as you've got yourself settled." Billy was seventeen years old. He was wearing a new navy-blue overcoat, a new brown trilby hat, and a new brown suit, and he was feeling fine. He walked briskly down the street. He was trying to do everything briskly these days. Briskness, he had decided, was the one common characteristic of all successful businessmen. The big shots up at Head Office were absolutely fantastically brisk all the time. They were amazing. There were no shops on this wide street that he was walking along, only a line of tall houses on each side, all them identical. They had porches and pillars and four or five steps going up to their front doors, and it was obvious that once upon a time they had been very swanky residences. But now, even in the darkness, he could see that the paint was peeling from the woodwork on their doors and windows, and that the handsome white façades were cracked and chintzy from neglect. Suddenly, in a downstairs window that was brilliantly illuminated by a street-lamp not six yards away, Billy caught sight of a printed notice propped up against the glass in one of the upper panes. It said BED AND BREAKFAST. There was a vase of yellow chrysanthemums, tall and beautiful, standing just underneath the notice. He stopped walking. He moved a bit closer. Green curtains (some sort of velvety material) were hanging down on either side of the window. The chrysanthemums looked wonderful beside them. He went right up and peered through the glass into the room, and the first thing he saw was a bright fire burning in the hearth. On the carpet in front of the fire, a pretty little dachshund was curled up asleep with its nose tucked into its belly. The room itself, so far as he could see in the halfdarkness, was filled with pleasant furniture. There was a baby-grand piano and a big sofa and several plump armchairs; and in one corner he spotted a large parrot in a cage. Animals were usually a good sign in a place like this, Billy told himself; and all in all, it looked to him as though it would be a pretty decent house to stay in. Certainly it would be more comfortable than The Bell and Dragon. On the other hand, a pub would be more congenial than a boarding-house. There would be beer and darts in the evenings, and lots of people to talk to, and it would probably be a good bit cheaper, too. He had stayed a couple of nights in a pub once before and he had liked it. He had never stayed in any boarding-houses, and, to be perfectly honest, he was a tiny bit frightened of them. The name itself conjured up images of watery cabbage, rapacious landladies, and a powerful smell of kippers in the living-room. After dithering about like this in the cold for two or three minutes, Billy decided that he would walk on and take a look at The Bell and Dragon before making up his mind. He turned to go. And now a queer thing happened to him. He was in the act of stepping back and turning away from the window when all at once his eye was caught and held in the most peculiar manner by the small notice that was there. BED AND BREAKFAST, it said. BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST, BED AND BREAKFAST. Each word was like a large black eye staring at him through the glass, holding him, compelling him, forcing him to stay where he was and not to walk away from that house, and the next thing he
knew, he was actually moving across from the window to the front door of the house, climbing the steps that led up to it, and reaching for the bell. He pressed the bell. Far away in a back room he heard it ringing, and then at once—it must have been at once because he hadn't even had time to take his finger from the bell-button—the door swung open and a woman was standing there. Normally you ring the bell and you have at least a half-minute's wait before the door opens. But this dame was a like a jack-in-the-box. He pressed the bell—and out she popped! It made him jump. She was about forty-five or fifty years old, and the moment she saw him, she gave him a warm welcoming smile. "Please come in," she said pleasantly. She stepped aside, holding the door wide open, and Billy found himself automatically starting forward into the house. The compulsion or, more accurately, the desire to follow after her into that house was extraordinarily strong. "I saw the notice in the window," he said, holding himself back. "Yes, I know." "I was wondering about a room." "It's all ready for you, my dear," she said. She had a round pink face and very gentle blue eyes. "I was on my way to The Bell and Dragon," Billy told her. "But the notice in your window just happened to catch my eye." "My dear boy," she said, "why don't you come in out of the cold?"

"How much do you charge?" "Five and sixpence a night, including breakfast." It was fantastically cheap. It was less than half of what he had been willing to pay. "If that is too much," she added, "then perhaps I can reduce it just a tiny bit. Do you desire an egg for breakfast? Eggs are expensive at the moment. It would be sixpence less without the egg." "Five and sixpence is fine," he answered. "I should like very much to stay here." "I knew you would. Do come in." She seemed terribly nice. She looked exactly like the mother of one of his best school-friend welcoming one into the house to stay for the Christmas holidays. Billy took off his hat and stepped over the threshold. "Just hang it there," she said, "and let me help you with your coat." There were no other hats or coats in the hall. There were no umbrellas, no walking-sticks—nothing. "We have it all to ourselves," she said, smiling at him over her shoulder as she led the way upstairs. "You see, it isn't very often I have the pleasure of taking a visitor into my little nest." The old girl is slightly dotty, Billy told himself. But at five and sixpence a night, who gives a damn about that? —I should've thought you'd be simply swamped with applicants," he said politely. "Oh, I am, my dear, I am, of course I am. But the trouble is that I'm inclined to be just a teeny weeny bit choosy and particular— if you see what I mean." "Ah, yes." "But I'm always ready. Everything is always ready day and night in this house just on the off-chance that an acceptable young gentleman will come along. And it is such a pleasure, my dear, such a very great pleasure when now and again I open the door and I see someone standing there who is just exactly right." She was half-way up the stairs, and she paused with one hand on the stair-rail, turning her head and smiling down at him with pale lips. "Like you," she added, and her blue eyes travelled slowly all the way down the length of Billy's body, to his feet, and then up again. On the first-floor landing she said to him, "This floor is mine." They climbed up a second flight. "And this one is all yours," she said. "Here's your room. I do hope you'll like it." She took him into a small but charming front bedroom, switching on the light as she went in. "The morning sun comes right in the window, Mr Perkins. It is Mr Perkins, isn't it?" "No," he said. "It's Weaver." "Mr Weaver. How nice. I've put a water-bottle between the sheets to air them out, Mr Weaver. It's such a comfort to have a hot water-bottle in a strange bed with clean sheets, don't you agree? And you may light the gas fire at any time if you feel chilly." "Thank you," Billy said. "Thank you ever so much." He noticed that the bedspread had been taken off the bed, and that the bedclothes had been neatly turned back on one side, all ready for someone to get in. "I'm so glad you appeared," she said, locking earnestly into his face. "I was beginning to get worried." "That's all right," Billy answered brightly. "You mustn't worry about me." He put his suitcase on the chair and started to open it. "And what about supper, my dear? Did you manage to get anything to eat before you came here?" "I'm not a bit hungry, thank you," he said. "I think I'll just go to bed as soon as possible because tomorrow
I've got to get up rather early and report to the office. "Very well, then. I'll leave you now so that you can unpack. But before you go to bed, would you be kind enough to pop into the sitting-room on the ground floor and sign the book? Everyone has to do that because it's the law of the land, and we don't want to go breaking any laws at this stage in the proceedings, do we?" She gave him a little wave of the hand and went quickly out of the room and closed the door. Now, the fact that his landlady appeared to be slightly off her rocker didn't worry Billy in the least. After all, she was not only harmless - there was no question about that - but she was also quite obviously a kind and generous soul. He guessed that she had probably lost a son in the war, or something like that, and had never got over it. So a few minutes later, after unpacking his suitcase and washing his hands, he trotted downstairs to the ground floor and entered the living-room. His landlady wasn't there, but the fire was glowing in the hearth, and the little dachshund was still sleeping in front of it. The room was wonderfully warm and cozy. I'm a lucky fellow, he thought, rubbing his hands. This is a bit of all right. He found the guest-book lying open on the piano, so he took out his pen and wrote down his name and address. There were only two other entries above his on the page, and, as one always does with guest-books, he started to read them. One was a Christopher Mu holland from Cardiff. The other was Gregory W. Temple from Bristol. That's funny, he thought suddenly. Christopher Mu holland. It rings a bell. Now where on earth had he heard that rather unusual name before? Was he a boy at school? No. Was it one of his sister's numerous young men, perhaps, or a friend of his father's? No, no, it wasn't any of those. He glanced down again at the book. Christopher Mu holland, 231 Cathedral Road, Cardiff. Gregory W. Temple, 27 Sycamore Drive, Bristol. As a matter of fact, now he came to think of it, he wasn't at all sure that the second name didn't have almost as much of a familiar ring about it as the first. "Gregory Temple?" he said aloud, searching his memory. "Christopher Mu holland? ..." "Such charming boys," a voice behind him answered, and he turned and saw his landlady sailing into the room with a large silver tea-tray in her hands. She was holding it well out in front of her, and rather high up, as though the tray were a pair of reins on a frisky horse. "They sound somehow familiar," he said. "They do? How interesting." "I'm almost positive I've heard those names before somewhere. Isn't that queer? Maybe it was in the newspapers. They weren't famous in any way, were they? I mean famous cricketers or footballers or something like that?" "Famous," she said, setting the tea-tray down on the low table in front of the sofa. "Oh no, I don't think they were famous. But they were extraordinarily handsome, both of them, I can promise you that. They were tall and young and handsome, my dear, just exactly like you." Once more, Billy glanced down at the book. "Look here," he said, noticing the dates. "This last entry is over two years old." "It is?" "Yes, indeed. And Christopher Mu holland's is nearly a year before that - more than three years ago." "Dear me," she said, shaking her head and heaving a dainty little sigh. "I would never have thought it. How time does fly away from us all, doesn't it, Mr Wilkins?" "It's Weaver," Billy said. "W-e-a-v-e-r." "Oh, of course it is!" she cried, sitting down on the sofa. "How silly of me. I do apologise. In one ear and out the other, that's me, Mr Weaver." "You know something?" Billy said. "Something that's really quite extraordinary about all this?" "No, dear, I don't." "Well, you see - both of these names, Mu holland and Temple, I not only seem to remember each one of them separately, so to speak, but somehow or other, in some peculiar way, they both appear to be sort of connected together as well. As though they were both famous for the same sort of thing, if you see what I mean - like ... like Dempsey and Tunney, for example, or Churchill and Roosevelt. "How amusing," she said. "But come over here now, dear, and sit down beside me on the sofa and I'll give you a nice cup of tea and a ginger biscuit before you go to bed." "You really shouldn't bother," Billy said. "I didn't mean you to do anything like that." He stood by the piano, watching her as she fussed about with the cups and saucers. He noticed that she had small, white, quickly moving hands, and red finger-nails. "I'm almost positive it was in the
newspapers I saw them,” Billy said. “I'll think of it in a second. I'm sure I will.” There is nothing more tantalising than a thing like this which lingers just outside the borders of one's memory. He hated to give up. “Now wait a minute,” he said. “Wait just a minute. Mulholland ... Christopher Mulholland ... wasn't that the name of the Eton schoolboy who was on a walking-tour through the West Country, and then all of a sudden ...”

“Milk?” she said. “And sugar?” “Yes, please. And then all of a sudden ...” “Eton schoolboy?” she said. “Oh no, my dear, that can't possibly be right because my Mr Mulholland was certainly not an Eton schoolboy when he came to me. He was a Cambridge undergraduate. Come over here now and sit next to me and warm yourself in front of this lovely fire. Come on. Your tea's all ready for you.” She patted the empty place beside her on the sofa, and she sat there smiling at Billy and waiting for him to come over. He crossed the room slowly, and sat down on the edge of the sofa. She placed his teacup on the table in front of him. “There we are,” she said. “How nice and cozy this is, isn't it?” Billy started sipping his tea. She did the same. For half a minute or so, neither of them spoke. But Billy knew that she was looking at him. Her body was half-turned towards him, and he could feel her eyes resting on his face, watching him over the rim of her teacup. Now and again, he caught a whiff of a peculiar smell that seemed to emanate directly from her person. It was not in the least unpleasant, and it reminded him – well, he wasn't quite sure what it reminded him of. Pickled walnuts? New leather? Or was it the corridors of a hospital? “Mr Mulholland was a great one for his tea,” she said at length. “Never in my life have I seen anyone drink as much tea as dear, sweet Mr Mulholland.” “I suppose he left fairly recently,” Billy said. He was still puzzling his head about the two names. He was positive now that he had seen them in the newspapers – in the headlines. “Left?” she said, arching her brows. “But my dear boy, he never left. He's still here. Mr Temple is also here. They're on the third floor, both of them together.” Billy set down his cup slowly on the table, and stared at his landlady. She smiled back at him, and then she put out one of her white hands and patted him comfortingly on the knee. “How old are you, my dear?” she asked.

“Seventeen.” “Seventeen!” she cried. “Oh, it's the perfect age! Mr Mulholland was also seventeen. But I think he was a trifle shorter than you are, in fact I'm sure he was, and his teeth weren't quite so white. You have the most beautiful teeth, Mr Weaver, did you know that?” “They're not as good as they look,” Billy said. “They've got simply masses of fillings in them at the back.” “Mr Temple, of course, was a little older,” she said, ignoring his remark. “He was actually twenty-eight. And yet I never would have guessed it if he hadn't told me, never in my whole life. There wasn't a blemish on his body.” “A what?” Billy said. “His skin was just like a baby's.” There was a pause. Billy picked up his teacup and took another sip of his tea, then he set it down again gently in its saucer. He waited for her to say something else, but she seemed to have lapsed into another of her silences. He sat there staring straight ahead of him into the far corner of the room, picking his lower lip. “That parrot,” he said at last. “You know something? It had me completely fooled when I first saw it through the window from the street. I could have sworn it was alive.” “Aaah, no longer.” “It's most terribly clever the way it's been done,” he said. “It doesn't lock in the least bit. Who did it?” “I did.” “You did?” “Of course,” she said. “And have you met my little Basil as well?” She nodded towards the dachshund curled up so comfortably in front of the fire. Billy looked at it. And suddenly, he realised that this animal had all the time been just as silent and motionless as the parrot. He put out a hand and touched it gently on the top of its back. The back was hard and cold, and when he pushed the hair to one side with his fingers, he could see the skin underneath, greyish black and dry and perfectly preserved. “Good gracious me,” he said. “How absolutely fascinating.” He turned away from the dog and stared with deep admiration at the little woman beside him on the sofa. “It must be most awfully difficult to do a thing like that.” “Not in the least,” she said. “I stuff all my little pets myself when they pass away. Will you have another cup of tea?” “No, thank you,” Billy said. The tea tasted faintly of bitter almonds, and he didn't much care for it. “You did sign the book, didn't you?” “Oh, yes.” “That's good. Because later on, if I happen to
forget what you were called, then I can always come down here and look it up. I still do that almost every day with Mr. Muholland and Mr. . . . Mr. . . . " Temple," Billy said. "Gregory Temple. Excuse my asking, but haven't there been any other guests here except them in the last two or three years?" Holding her teacup high in one hand, inclining her head slightly to the left, she looked up at him out of the corners of her eyes and gave him another gentle little smile. "No, my dear," she said. "Only you."
Appendix H: Tapescript for retrospective/introspective interviews.

Interview 1: The Reading Process

Teacher (T): ¿Qué es leer?
Student 1 (S1): Mi concepto de leer está ligado a mi concepto de escribir. Porque yo pienso que leer es plasmar en el papel lo que yo pienso o siento...bueno, el autor...entonces cuando una persona va a leerlo...está...está leyendo lo que el autor sabe o piensa acerca de ese tema. Entonces, cuando yo leo, me estoy como imaginando todo lo que la otra persona quiere escribir...bueno yo lo veo así.

S2: Para mi leer es como una forma de informarse, a la vez de ocupar un rato del tiempo que uno tiene libre.

S3: Es enriquecer tu intelecto, tu cultura general, tu conocimiento.

S4: Es una forma de adquirir información, de aprender, usando nuestra imaginación, usando la mente, nuestras propias ideas y formas de percibir las cosas, para entender lo que cada texto nos está diciendo.

S5: Cuando empiezo a leer...eh...voy descifrando las palabras, las frases...es decir, las oraciones, que hay allí... en el texto. Así voy...hasta que me dan una idea para relacionarla con la siguiente en el mismo escrito” Leer es eso descifrar las palabras, fases, oraciones, textos, etc. que me dan una idea para relacionarla con la siguiente en un escrito.

S6: Es una forma de pensar, de aprender, de mejorar.

S7: Leer es comprender lo que está escrito.

S8: Leer es comprender un texto, es aprender lo que éste te informa, es una de las diferentes maneras de informarte.

S9: Leer es comprender un idea que se expresa en una o varias oraciones.

S10: Leer es comprender.

S11: Leer es educarse. Ya sea obteniendo información o hacer crecer nuestra imaginación.

S12: Es la acción que ejercemos cuando tratamos de comprender un texto.

T: Cuando lees, ¿Qué haces para comprender?

S1: Bueno...primero empiezo con el título...el título me da una idea como muy general de lo que está hablando...eh, luego leo, párrafo por párrafo y como analizo o saco como un resumen de lo que en ese pedazo...eh en el párrafo de ese texto me están hablando, lo leo hasta el final, y si tiene, por ejemplo 3 párrafos, saco la idea principal de cada párrafo, los junto y saco un resumen para mi comprensión, luego lo relaciono con el título para ver que tanto tenía que ver con el texto, pues y después saco como mis ideas, mi opinión acerca de lo que leí.

S2: Eh...pues lo que voy entendiendo lo busco en el diccionario y el...si... sigo leyendo...digamos que no entendí una parte, sigo leyendo, pues con lo que siga leyendo, pues deduzco lo que leí primero, también.

S3: Leo otra vez, hago resúmenes, lo relaciono con otras informaciones en otros textos, o pregunto a alguien, busco en Internet.

S4: Subrayo, pregunto qué significa, tal vez una palabra que no conozco, leo varias veces, hablo sobre lo que he leído.

S5: Imagino en mi mente cada situación que me describe el texto para así tener una gran comprensión.

S6: Primero que todo, tengo un diccionario a la mano por si no entiendo alguna palabra. Luego voy leyendo, releo y hago un resumen.

S7: Vuelvo a leer y si no conozco alguna palabra, consulto con alguien que sepa, o el diccionario.

S8: Busco las palabras desconocidas, subrayo ideas confusas, leo más de una vez, busco un fin del porqué del texto.

S9: Imagino la historia que estoy leyendo, y si es una novela o historia anoto los personajes y su relación con el protagonista.
S10: Leo atentamente y vuelvo a leer ese pedazo que no entendí.
S11: Trato de imaginarme lo que estoy leyendo, y cuando no entiendo, vuelvo a leer ese pedazo.
S12: Me imagino lo que leo en mi mente y analizo lo que me dicen.

T: ¿Te fijas en palabras en particular?
S1: Sí, sobretodo si hay alguna que me cueste trabajo entenderla.
S2: Sí, en las palabras que no sé cuáles son, sí. A veces me fijo en ellas y las busco en el diccionario.
S3: Claro, especialmente en las resaltadas.
S4: Sí en las que no entiendo, y en las que me llaman la atención por ser complejas, aunque ya conozca su significado en la lectura.
S5: Sí, me fijo en aquellas que para mi son nuevas y en aquellas que son utilizadas con poca frecuencia, luego las busco en el diccionario.
S6: Sí, para tener una mejor comprensión, ya que si no las sé, las busco.
S7: Sí porque hay algunas que no conozco, las consulto con alguien que las conozca o en el diccionario.
S8: Sí, cuando no las entiendo, o palabras que pensé que no podría utilizar y en las que me podrán ayudar más adelante a la hora de hablar o escribir.
S9: Sí, en la que no entiendo porque a veces no dejan comprender la idea y entonces cojo el diccionario y las busco.
S10: Sí porque a veces hay palabras sobre las cuales no sé su significado, entonces las busco en el diccionario.
S11: No, porque trato de leer el texto completo y trato de comprender la idea.
S12: Sí, las que no entiendo.

T: ¿Qué estrategias usas para lograr una mejor comprensión?
S1: Bueno...principalmente hago un resumen del texto, no creo...o sea, la verdad es que yo no haría diagramas o ninguna otra forma...simplemente saco un pequeño resumen de lo que voy a decir, de lo que... perdón!, de lo que saqué como conclusión, y...eh...lo escribo para entenderlo mejor.
S2: Pues...utilizo el diccionario...es lo principal que utilizo, y si no...pregunto a una persona.
S3: Bueno, hablo conmigo misma en voz alta, conversar conmigo misma, relacionar con otras cosas que ya sé o textos que ya he leído.
S4: Subrayar para después volver a leer y no olvidar aquellas ideas que me parecieron más importantes, también explico oralmente lo que acabo de leer.
S5: Me imagino la situación que me describen y analizo con más detalle aquello que se me dificulta comprender.
S6: Hacer resumen, buscar palabra que no entiendo.
S7: Vuelvo a leer y resalto las palabras no conocidas.
S8: Subrayo las ideas principales e intento resumir el texto.
S9: Leo antes de ir a dormir, por eso para comprender tengo diccionario y una buena luz enfocando el libro. Me relajo e imagino lo que estoy leyendo. Si son textos informativos, o que no sean historias o novelas, subrayo las ideas principales.
S10: Por ejemplo hago resúmenes, leo todo el texto dos veces, subrayo, hago comparaciones, etc.
S11: Imagino lo que leo, vuelvo a leer lo que no entiendo y busco en el diccionario las palabras que no entiendo.
S12: me imagino lo que leo, en mi mente, y trato de buscarle cosas similares a lo que me dicen, pueden ser hechos históricos, etc.

T: ¿Cuáles son las estrategias que más te funcionan?
S1: Creo que cuando leo y vuelvo a leer. Cuando leo una segunda vez, me queda mucho más claro... pero siempre que leo una segunda vez es porque antes ya había sacado otras ideas principales.
S2: La que te dije.
S3: La que te comenté ahorita.
S4: Explicar oralmente lo que acabo de leer, así me doy cuenta de todas las ideas que me habían quedado erróneas e incompletas, y las clarifico.
S5: Imaginar la situación que estoy leyendo.
S6: Hacer resumen.
S7: Volver a leer, y si puedo yo misma, saco el significado de las palabras desconocidas.
S8: La de encontrar las ideas principales y buscar las palabras que no conozco, y las busco en el diccionario.
S9: Las anteriores son las que más uso, las dos.
S10: El resumen y volver a leer el texto.
S11: Imaginar lo que estoy leyendo.
S12: Imaginarme lo que dicen.

T: ¿Crees que los diferentes tipos de textos afectan tu comprensión?

S1: Pues, sí... para mí creo que es importante cuando se cambia de una manera de escribir a otra... adaptarse a lo que... eh a la forma que te están escribiendo porque no es lo mismo que te hablen de un texto informativo, que en una novela... que es, pues, más de entretenimiento, yo lo asumo así. Si leo un texto de historia, lo tengo que leer más despacio para ubicarme en los espacios de tiempo... novela te ubicas en la narración..., en la acción que están cometiendo (sic) haciendo lo personajes... y te ubicas como en la historia... son diferentes maneras de asumir cada lectura... que creo que tengo que asumir cuando voy a leer.
S2: Sí, depende. Digamos que es un texto sobre Sociales o un texto sobre alguna otra cosa, un libro de acción o alguna cosa, lógicamente el de Sociales va a ser un poco más difícil de comprender que el otro, por los hechos históricos y todo eso.
S3: No, es más lo complementan.
S4: Sí porque son diferentes, y es más difícil para mí leer un texto de comprensión a uno descriptivo o argumentativo.
S5: No. Pienso que incrementan mi comprensión porque estoy tratando con los textos y ellos habilitan mis capacidades para poder leer con más facilidad.
S6: No porque fuera cualquier texto, e busca la forma de entender.
S7: No porque estoy acostumbrada a leer cualquier tipo de texto.
S8: No. Pienso que es lo mismo, en algunos casos se expresan diferente, pero siempre busco el poder comprender.
S9: Creo que los diferentes tipos de texto afectan mi comprensión. Claro porque si el texto es informativo, narrado, sea que trate de Economía o Historia, son diferentes temas y enfoques diferentes por parte del autor.
S10: No porque estoy acostumbrada a leer texto de toda clase.
S11: No porque d igual manera en todos los tipos de textos utilicé las estrategias anteriores para lograr comprender.
S12: No, para nada, al contrario, me ayudan a empaparme de las diferentes cosas que existen.

Introspective Interview 2: Strategies

T: Estas son las actividades de comprensión de lectura que van a desarrollar. Pueden hacer preguntas libremente o comentar lo que deseen.
S: ¿Cuántas son?
T: Varias, pero no las van a hacer todas de una vez, o.k?
S: ¿Por qué?
T: Bueno algunas podrán hacerlas todas, depende de la capacidad individual para realizarlas, algunos textos son largos, otros son más cortas.

Tiempo después...

T: ¿Qué pasó?
S: Es que no sé esta palabra...y me cuesta trabajo.
T: ¿Por qué te detienes?
S: Es que no puedo seguir...ya trate de adivinar el significado...no creo que sea ese porque no entiendo.
T: ¿Siempre te detienes?
S: Bueno... sí... algunas veces trato con el contexto...es lo que generalmente hago... pero no...ahora tengo que buscar el diccionario para mirar que quiere decir.

Tiempo después...

S1: Mira...este va a ser de 'natación' seguro... mira la vieja en la piscina.
S2: Yo voy por otra...esa está muy larga.
S1: Ay...no, no, no...es de los 'juegos Olímpicos'.

Tiempo después...

S: Teacher!
T: Dime...
S: Teacher! ...¿usted sabía que las pirámides de Egipto no son así tan triangular cuando está cerca?...se ven como un poco de piedras ahí.

Tiempo después...

S: Profe...Esta palabra (wood stork) está por todos lados y no sé que significa...no aparece en el diccionario.
T: Trata con el contexto, ok?

Tiempo después...

S1: Ah... ¿entonces era que se estaba comparando y por eso se sentía mal?, a lo mejor.
S2: Yo creo que también es comparativo, es lo mismo.

Tiempo después...

S: 'Napoleón' era bien bajito ah? ...seguro es de Historia...¿te acuerdas con Minerva (Profesora de Historia y Geografía) lo vimos?
Tiempo después...

S1: Aquí hay otra diferencia...que...que creo es importante. ¿Cuantas llevas tú?
S2 Varias, no las he contado.

**Interview 3: Text types**

**A. Text topic and content**

T: ¿Qué texto fue más difícil de entender? ¿ Por qué?
S1: “The Bronze Syndrome” porque tenía algunas palabras y frases difíciles.
S2: El #2 por su complejidad.
S3: El #3 porque había palabras que no entendía.
S4: En el #2 porque había palabras no conocidas.
S5: El texto 3 porque tuve que leerlo varias veces para entenderlo.
S6: El texto #3 de la Actividad 1 porque había muchas palabras desconocidas.
S7: El de la Actividad 2 porque tenía muchas palabras desconocidas.
S8: En la Actividad 1, el 3; el de la Actividad 2. En la primera por la manera en la que se expresaban era un poco desconocida para mí y tenía que interpretar mejor.
S9: El texto 2 porque había palabras que no entendía.
S10: De la Actividad 1, el 3 porque me confundía mucho cuando hablaba de “Marcus”.
S11: No pude entender bien el de “Uma” y “Marcus”...las frases eran muy largas y no entendía.
S12: Me costó un poquito de dificultad “The Bronze Síndrome”... era muy largo.

T: ¿Qué texto fue más fácil de entender? ¿Por qué?

S1: El del matrimonio y el del clarividente...porque describe en uno y en el otro invita.
S2: El #5 porque es una historia y para mí es más fácil de entender.
S3: El #5 porque el vocabulario no era difícil...me sabía todas las palabras y tenía conocimiento sobre la historia.
S4: El #5 porque era corto y las palabras las conocía.
S5: El 5 porque la forma en que transmiten el mensaje es accesible para entender.
S6: El de “Napoleón” porque tenía idea de la historia de él.
S7: El de la Actividad 5 porque tenía palabras conocidas.
S8: El de la 5, se me facilitó la comprensión en esta texto y fue rápido de realizar la actividad.
S9: El texto 5 porque era un lenguaje comprensible.
S10: El texto 8 porque es algo en lo que uno convive, ya que por lo menos a veces Yo trabajo medio tiempo y fue para mí el más fácil de entender.
S11: El de “Napoleón”...porque en clase con la profesora de Historia vimos algo de eso.
S12: Creo que el #5 era fácil...bueno a mí me pareció.

T: ¿Cuál te produjo más imágenes visuales? ¿Por qué?

S1: El texto 5 creo...no sé...me imaginé esa época.
S2: El #5 porque es una historia que ya pasó y la cuentan sin rodeos.
S3: El #1 de la Actividad 1 porque era breve.
S4: El #5 porque era muy conciso.
S5: El texto #8.
S6: El texto 6...el de la aves porque hablaban sencillo.
S7: La Actividad 5.
S8: En la Actividad 1, el 3; En la 5 y la 8.
S9: El 3 de la Actividad 1 porque era sencillo.
S10: El 5 de la Actividad 1; la 5 y la 8.
S11: El de “Queen Elizabeth” por la historia.
S12: El de las aves...me las imaginé volando.

T: ¿Cuál fue el más interesante? ¿Por qué?

S1: El #3 de la Actividad 1 porque descrebían y comparaban mucho.
S2: El #2 porque aprendí de ese texto.
S3: El #5...
S4: El #7...
B. Text-type (genre)

T: ¿Te causó dificultad algún texto por la forma como está escrito? ¿Cuál?

S1: Sí, “The Bronze Síndrome”; el de la Actividad 2 y 3; el de “Queen Elizabeth”, por el nivel de Inglés.
S2: El #2
S3: Sí, el de la Actividad 2
S4: Sí, el #2
S5: El 3 de la Actividad # 1 porque tenía palabras a las que yo no entendía su significado.
S6: Sí el de “Marcus” y el de “Bronze Síndrome”.
S7: El de la Actividad 2
S8. La Actividad 6
S9: Ninguno
S10: El 3 de la Actividad 1
S11: El #3...era como enredado.
S12: El de “Bronze Síndrome”.

T: ¿Cuál(es) de los temas desarrollados en los textos te era más familiar? ¿Cuál(es) no?

S1: De la actividad 1, el # 6, el de la Actividad, “Napoleón”, el de la Actividad 8, 7, 4...casi todos...“The Landlady” era muy largo y difícil...la Actividad 2 y 3.
S2: El #5 de la Actividad 1
S3: El #5 de la Actividad 1
S4: El #5, el #2 y el # 6
S5: El de la Actividad 4 y 8
S6: El de Napoleón y el de las Pirámides...no me era conocido el de “Marcus”, el de las aves y el de “Ema”
S7. El de la Actividad 5 y 6
S8: El de la Actividad 5, 3, la 6, los textos 2 y 3 de la 1.
S9: Los textos 1, 2, 5, 7.
S10: Casi todos... no me eran familiares el 4 y 6
S11: El de Napoleón...lo vimos en Historia.
S12: El de las “Pyramids”...Yo vi un video de eso en Discovery Channel.

T: ¿Cómo influyó en tu comprensión esa familiaridad, o no, del tema?

S1: Bueno...me ayudó porque entonces sabía algo...sabía más o menos de lo que hablaba.
S2: Sí influyó...
S3: Sí influyó porque iba recordando cosas...
S4: Las cosas que decía...se me hizo más fácil...
S5: Bueno...pude asociar lo que ya sabía con lo que el texto decía.
S6: Sí influyó mucho...
S7: Me ayudó a entenderlo mejor.
S8: En algunos casos era más difícil responder sino sabía nada al respecto.
S9: Sí me ayudó bastante.  
S10 me ayudó a entender mejor el texto.  
S11: Es que ya lo había visto y me fue más fácil...Yo sabía algo y pude comprender mejor.  
S12: No sé... me eran familiares las cosas que se decían en el texto me iba imaginando...

### C. Literary texts

T: El texto “The Landlady” fue difícil por...

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No tener un orden lineal de los hechos narrados.</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sí</td>
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<td>Sí</td>
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<tr>
<td>Las múltiples interpretaciones que se pueden hacer de las ideas expresadas.</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sí</td>
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<tr>
<td>El lenguaje es más amplio y complejo</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Sí</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tu competencia literaria es baja.</td>
<td>Sí</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>Pertenecen a una cultura específica.</td>
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D. Text organization

T: ¿Qué texto(s) leíste con más rapidez? ¿Por qué?

S1: Los de las Actividades 4,5,7, bueno...todos estaban fáciles para mí.
S2: El #4 y 5
S3: El 1 de la Actividad 1; el de la Actividad5 y 6
S4: El #5
S5: El 4 y 5
S6: El de Napoleón, el de las aves y el, de “Queen Elizabeth”.
S7: En la Actividad 1, el 3
S8: De la Actividad 1, casi todos... el 1, 2, 4, 6, 3; el de la Actividad 4 y la 8
S9: El 5
S10: Todos los de la Actividad 1, menos 3.
S11: Los más cortos... todos los de la Actividad 1.
S12: El de Napoleón lo lei rápido... el de las Pirámides también.

T: Da ejemplo(s) de oración(es) en los textos que te creó (crearon) dificulta
por qué.

S1: En la Actividad 5 y la 6 porque no sabía el significado, pero me di cuenta por lo que seguía.
S2: Ninguna
S3: En las Actividades 6,7 y 8.
S4: En el # 3 de la actividad 1
S5: El la Actividad 1, el #3
S6: En la actividad 1, el texto 3, había varias...
S7: En la Actividad 2 hubo varias...
S8: Las de la Actividad 6 porque no sabía mucho del tema
S9: Algunas del texto 3 de la Actividad 1
S10: Algunas de “Marcus” porque no sabía el significado en Español.
S11: Las del texto 3 en la Actividad 1 eran pesadas...eran como muy largas y no las entendí muy bien.
S12: Las de “Bronze Syndrome” eran largas y el vocabulario no me lo sabía mucho.

T: ¿Cuál(es) de estos aspectos te facilitó más la comprensión de los diferentes textos:

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<th>Student</th>
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</thead>
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<td>El contenido y tu capacidad de compararlo con experiencias previas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu capacidad para distinguir los diferentes tipos de textos y los elementos de su estructura que los caracterizan.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tu capacidad para reconocer las palabras y cómo funcionan en el texto.</td>
<td>✓</td>
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