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Innovative and Effective Strategies in Developing English Reading Comprehension Performance for EFL Students

University Master's Degree in Teacher Training in Compulsory Secondary Education
and Pre-university Education, Professional Training and Language Teaching
(Foreign languages)

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is particularly important for EFL students who frequently acquire impoverished reading skills despite many years of formal studies. This paper focuses on five main reading comprehension strategies and examines their effectiveness in developing reading comprehension performance for EFL students. The sample of the study consists of thirty EFL students of third of ESO in secondary school located in Vilassar de Mar. Additionally, This paper comprehensively proposes that EFL teachers should adopt such effective reading strategies and implement them in their EFL classrooms. Findings based on the analysis of the data significantly proved that the five reading strategies are of great importance and can be advantageous to improve EFL learners' reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: reading, reading comprehension, EFL students, reading strategies.

Resum

La comprensió lectora és una destresa fonamental en el progrés dels estudiants d'anglès com a llengua estrangera (EFL). Prenent com a referència les cinc principals estratègies de lectura, aquest treball investiga com la seva aplicació influeix en l'aprenentatge de trenta alumnes tercer d'ESO d'un institut de Vilassar de Mar. Els resultats fan palès que si s'usen correctament, ajuden i impulsen significativament en l'adquisició d'una segona llengua, convertint-se en un recolzament clau per a una comunicació efectiva en anglès. Per tant, aquestes estratègies s'erigeixen també com una eina recomanable per als docents d'EFL que vulguin optimitzar el desenvolupament de la comprensió lectora del seu alumnat.

Paraules clau: lectura, comprensió lectora, EFL estudiants. estratègies de lectura

1. Introduction

EFL students are required to make use of material in English for academic purposes. However, reading has been seen as a their weakness in their academic performance as well as in the results obtained in their reading comprehension assessments. It is the instructors' responsibility to give students some elements to improve their reading comprehension skills and, hopefully, have an impact on the results they get on their exams. Reading has been the skill most emphasized in traditional EFL teaching, and even today is the mainstay of EFL instruction in many countries. Reading comprehension is thought to be a process that is strategic, interactive and adaptable for each reader. It is not learned immediately, it is a process that is acquired over time. In other words, reading comprehension needs practice. According to the National Reading Panel in the late 1990s, reading comprehension is one of five elements identified as central to reading instruction. In addition, reading comprehension, as the report noted, is the result of many different mental activities by a reader, done automatically and simultaneously in order to grasp the meaning communicated by a text. These mental activities include predicting the meaning of the text, activating the prior knowledge that is crucial in this case by connecting what readers already know, their prior experience to the new content, which is the text. However, this text cannot be understood unless the readers identify word and sentence meanings in order to decode it and summarise it to create new meanings. Such mental activities need some effective strategies in order for EFL students to be able to question a text, decide what is not understood in it, reflect on its meaning and apply understanding of it as it is needed. The majority of EFL students struggle trying to determine the key ideas from the details of a text, others have a hard time understanding what a purpose of a paragraph or a chapter in a book. Helping EFL students increase their reading comprehension can be a key to educational success or failure. Good reading comprehension strategies, therefore, are not only for low-level students, but also for all students. There is always a room for improving reading comprehension, no matter how skilled a student is. This study mainly focuses on five reading comprehension strategies which can be implemented in EFL classrooms to have students comprehend academic texts in English because the major needs of students are related to reading instructions, to teach them how to process information provided in academic texts so that they can have the opportunity to move forward in their learning in any area from the school curriculum.

2. Theoretical Framework

Reading is the process of identification, interpretation and perception of written or printed material. According to (Wixson, Peters, Weber, and Roeber, 1987) reading is the process of creating meaning that involves: (a) the reader's existing knowledge (b) the text information; and (c) the reading context. Reading can be thought of as a way to draw information from a text and to form a coherent interpretation of that information. (Grabe, 2002 p. 22). (Pourhosein and Ahmadi, 2011) state that the main goal of reading is to gain the correct message from a text that the writer intended for the reader to receive. Another expert defines reading “ as an enjoyable, intensive, private activity, from which much pleasure is derived, and in which one can become totally absorbed.” (Alderson, 2000, p. 13) Comprehension is the understanding of the meaning of written material and involves the conscious strategies that lead to understanding. (Duke, 2003) claims that comprehension is a process in which readers make meaning by interacting with the text through the combination of prior knowledge and previous experience, information in the text, and the views of readers related to the text. According to RAND Reading Study Group (2002, p. 11), comprehension is the process of eliciting and making meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. (McNamara & Magliano, 2009) argue that this process is a task of both reader and text factors that happen within a larger social context. (Grabe ,2002, p. 23) notes that reading comprehension is remarkably complex, involving many processing skills that are coordinated in very efficient combinations.

Reading comprehension abilities are quite complex and that they vary in numerous ways depending on tasks, motivation, goals and language abilities. Moreover, reading comprehension is widely agreed to be not one, but many things. [At a minimum, it entails] cognitive processes that operate on many different kinds of reading tasks. Emerging from the apparent complexity, however, is a central idea: comprehension occurs as a reader builds one or more mental representations of a text message [...] Among these representations, an accurate model of the situation described by the text [...] is the product of successful deep comprehension (Perfetti and Adolf, 2012, p. 3). Similarly, (Oakhill & Cain, 2007, p. 63) note that reading comprehension does not necessarily develop automatically once word reading is proficient, but [...] is dependent on different skills and may need specific teaching. The important fact is to teach

students something more than grapheme-phoneme connections. Understanding and using effective active reading skills and strategies can transform reading and study time from frustrating and confusing to meaningful, purposeful, and successful. A reader has several possible purposes for reading, and each purpose emphasizes a somewhat different combination of skills and strategies (Grabe, 2002, P. 23).

Readers in general should have a clear purpose when they begin to read, they actually have a number of initial decisions to make, among them why we are reading and for what purpose or purposes (Britt, Rouet, & Durik, 2018; Schwanenflugel & Knapp, 2016; van den Broek & Kendeou, 2017) Using active reading strategies can improve comprehension and ensure that EFL students actually retain the information they read by using different skills and strategies which are in essence, essential academic habits. Paris and his colleagues (Paris, Wasik, & Turner, 1991) described reading strategies as “skills under consideration” which means that skills and strategies largely depend on the reader’s awareness, intention, and control of the main reading situation. Strategies are conscious techniques or unconscious processes employed by readers in their attempt to make sense of the written text (Barnett as cited by Gascoigne, 2005). There is a need to provide EFL students with a repertoire of strategies to enable them to know what to use when and for what learning task. What they need to do is acquisition and use of the most important of skills; learning how to learn skills (Abdelhafez, 2006, p. 2). Teachers, therefore, can benefit from an understanding of what makes learners successful or unsuccessful, and establish in the classroom a milieu for the realization of successful strategies (Brown, 2000, p. 94-95)

3. Reading Strategies

a. Metacognitive reading strategy

Metacognition can be considered as a subset of cognition, better to say, a certain kind of cognition. Broadly defined, cognition is a general term for thinking, while metacognition is thinking about thinking (Djudin, 2017, p. 125) Actually, reading is much more than decoding words, multiple levels of cognitive processes ranging from basic perception to the highest levels of cognition are involved (Abdelhafez, 2006, p.

14) Paris and Winograd (cited in Abdelhafez, 2006, p. 5) claim that the metacognitive theory focuses in general on (a) the role of awareness and executive management of one's thinking; (b) individual differences in self-management of cognitive development and learning; (c) knowledge and executive abilities that develop through experience; and (d) constructive and strategic thinking. (Hacker, 2002, p. 11) affirms that the promise of metacognitive theory is that it focuses precisely on those characteristics of thinking that can contribute to students' awareness and understanding of being self-regulatory organisms, that is, of being agents of their own thinking. Thinking is not happening just like a reflex, it is the thinking person causes it, it can be monitored and regulated deliberately; i.e. it is under the control of the thinking person. Undoubtedly, metacognitive strategies are highly effective in developing all the language skills among them reading. Many researchers shed light on the importance of metacognitive strategies and investigated the effect of training in metacognitive strategies in developing reading and comprehension. (Abdelraheem, 1993, p. 35) confirms that metacognition plays a vital role in reading; for example, successful readers plan strategies, adjust efforts appropriately, and evaluate the success of their on-going efforts to understand. (Abdelhafez, 2006, p. 7-8) claims that unskilled readers become skilled readers and learners of whole text if they are given instruction in effective strategies and taught to monitor and check their comprehension while reading.

(Kiernan, 2002, p. 65) investigated the effectiveness of metacognitive strategies implemented in training performance support systems. The results of the study showed a significant difference in test scores between the control and the experimental groups regarding how they felt about the metacognitive strategies. Responses of the experimental group were overwhelmingly positive. (Anderson, 2002, p. 1) argues that learners who are metacognitively aware and know what to do when they don't know what to do; that is, they have strategies finding out or figuring out what they need to do. He asserts that the use of metacognitive strategies ignites one's thinking and can lead to more profound learning and improve performance, especially among learners who are struggling. (Darabie 2001, p. 26) in his turn, suggests that metacognitive strategies can assist students and develop their own judgments and reflections on the topic while reading.

(Fadel, 2016, p. 38) argues that metacognition plays a central role in learning and achievement, he adds, metacognitive strategies are powerful tools for any discipline,

inter-discipline or for learning in general. Improving metacognitive strategies related to students' schoolwork also provides young people with tools to reflect and grow in their emotional and social lives. Additionally, metacognition is regarded as important for memory, comprehension and attention. Similarly, (Anderson, 2002, p. 16) mentions that students without metacognitive approaches are essentially learners without direction or opportunity to plan their learning, monitor their attention, and communication. (Burns, 2003, p. 86) proposes a set of requirements for learning with understanding claiming that students will need, in particular, (a) to be taught about understanding; (b) to be taught the skills necessary to achieve coherence; and (c) to be provided with conditions that will allow them to pursue coherence. Thus, teaching reading cannot be a simpleminded activity; it requires the orchestration of many components into a meaningful whole if success is to be achieved. This shows the need for reading strategies that go beyond decoding surface structures to construct cognitive representations of text content (Abdelhafez, 2006, p. 14).

(Djudin, 2017, p. 124) concludes that teachers who use metacognitive strategies can positively impact students who have learning disabilities by helping them to develop an appropriate plan for learning information, which can be memorized and eventually routine. Hence, as EFL students become aware of how they learn, they will use these processes to efficiently acquire new information, and consequently, become more of independent thinkers. Overall, it is obvious that the task of instructors is to acknowledge, cultivate, exploit, and enhance the metacognitive skills of their students in order to render reading comprehension tasks easier and comprehensible for students.

b. Bottom up and top down strategy

According to (Alyoussef, 2006, p. 144), reading can be seen as an “interactive” process between a reader and a text, which leads to automaticity or reading fluency. In this process, the reader interacts dynamically with the text as he/she tries to elicit the meaning and where various kinds of knowledge are being used: linguistic or systemic knowledge (through bottom-up processing) as well as schematic knowledge (through top-down processing). Top-down processing of language happens when readers use background information to predict the meaning of language they are going to read.

Rather than relying first on the actual words (bottom up), they develop their expectations about what they will read, and confirm or reject these as they read. Top-down processing is thought to be an effective strategy of processing language; it makes the most of what the person brings to the situation. The bottom-up processing is a useful technique to process and understand a text; learners start by recognising phonemes, combining these into syllables, syllables into words, words into clauses, and so on “up” to contextual and background information. EFL students can be encouraged to use both bottom-up and top-down strategies to help them understand a text. For example in a reading comprehension, learners use their knowledge of the genre to predict what will be in the text (top down), and their understanding of affixation is to guess meaning (bottom up).

According to (Angosto, 2013, p. 84), bottom-up processing is based mainly on the smallest linguistic units of a text from which particular knowledge schemas are activated. In this view, the comprehension process starts with words (their pronunciation, semantic value, morphology, etc.), which later give access to more extensive units (syntagmas, sentences, paragraphs) and finally to interpreting the whole text. He also defines top down processing, as the opposite approach. This standpoint holds that comprehension begins with more global aspects, (the title, the basic idea of each paragraph, etc.) and subsequently, goes into smaller linguistic units. In this way, this type of processing is principally based on the prior knowledge the reader has and in the communicative situation. To understand a message, we first start from the meaning of a paragraph (or chunk of text), and later turn to the sentences and words that make up the message. Top-down processing, therefore, allows the understanding of an ambiguous text because it activates high level schemas that guide the reading process. Thus, prior knowledge and reader expectations become vital components in the comprehension process. Hence, when students confront a text, their previous experience guides their comprehension process. Even though the bottom up and the top down strategies seem opposed; however, they always go hand in hand as (Kintsch, 2005, p. 126) notes that both top-down and bottom-up processes are integral parts of perception, problem solving, and comprehension. Without sensory input (bottom-up) learners could neither perceive, nor comprehend, nor think. However, perception, comprehension, and thought would be equally impossible without a memory or knowledge component (top-down). It makes no sense to ask whether one is more important than the other, nothing

happens without both. So the question for the theorist is not top-down or bottom-up, but how do these processes interact to produce fluent comprehension. Both strategies are considered mutually supportive. (Kintsch, 2005) renamed both processes and called them “The contribution-integration model” this model mainly describes “the interplay between top-down and bottom-up processes in comprehension: how top-down processes guide comprehension and how bottom up processes constrain it. At every level of analysis – from basic linguistic processing to knowledge integration – both top-down and bottom-up processes jointly determine the nature of the mental representations formed in comprehension (Kintsch, 2005, p. 125). (Grabe, 1991) reported that interactive model is efficient to bridge between students with high-level and lower- level of students of reading comprehension proficiency. The bottom up and top- down processing are useful strategies used by readers, they enable them to use context when reading and the aim of comprehension “involves the construction of a clear, complete, and integrated representation of a text’s meaning” (Okahil & Chain, 2007, p. 64) Besides the context of the text, such strategies have also to do with the reader’s prior knowledge which plays a crucial role in the interpretation of any text; i.e., to understand a discourse, readers have to relate the language input to background knowledge (Sanford & Garrod, 2005, p. 205). Undoubtedly, memory is the main mechanism that helps students relate what they know to the new content which is the text. As (Angosto, 2013) confirms: “From this memory-based perspective, each word, phrase, or concept that a reader processes triggers an automatic spread of activation to other, related words and concepts in memory”. (Angosto, 2013, p. 84). Finally, The bottom-up model emphasizes on the context, the top-down model deals with the readers and the bottom-up model helps the top-down model to do what it does so well. The bottom-up model completes the top-down model, both of them enable students to recognize words, increase their speed and have the chance to use context to figure out what new words are.

c. Reciprocal teaching strategy

Reciprocal teaching refers to an instructional activity in which students become the teacher in small group reading sessions. Reciprocal teaching is a dialogue model among the learners themselves or between the learners and the instructor (Ahmadi, 2012, p.

156) RT consists of four reading strategies: predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. Once students have learned the strategies, they take turns assuming the role of teacher in leading a dialogue about what has been read (Ahmadi, 2012, p. 153). Reciprocal teaching strategy first was explored by (Palincsar and Brown, 1984) they described it as one of the most effective methods for teaching a foreign language and facilitates learning in different areas. (Oczcus, 2004) notes that reciprocal teaching assists learners in a different teaching and learning situations and it is an explicit teaching by the instructor in the learner's use of the strategies. (Ahmadi, 2004, p. 155) advocates that reciprocal teaching strategy improves learner's reading comprehension, facilitates foreign language learning and helps them to improve the ability to work co-operatively with their classmates [...] reciprocal teaching strategy does not only facilitate reading comprehension in an EFL context; it also gives learners the opportunity to use English to serve many of the language functions and notions that are typical in communicative approach. Because of the involvement of prior knowledge, comprehension is a top-down process and in order to ensure the efficiency of the comprehension process, the bottom-up decoding process needs to be made automatic so that working memory is free to throw its entire capacity into making sense of the text (Just & Carpenter, 2002). From a review of the literature in relation to reading comprehension, (Palincsar & Brown, 1984), concluded that effective reading comprehension was related to the following six key points: a) understanding both explicit and implicit meanings within text b) activating appropriate and related background knowledge; c) focusing on prime content and excluding trivia; d) critically evaluating the content for internal consistency and comparing the content with existing knowledge e) using periodic reviews as a part of ongoing monitoring of comprehension f) drawing inferences to test predictions, interpretations and conclusions. (Palincsar & Brown, 1986, p. 772).

The reciprocal teaching process occurs within a social setting in which students work in teams numbering four or five students. Members of these teams are to take turns in reading the text aloud while other team members follow the passage. Reciprocation occurs as each team-member successively assumes the responsibility of the instructor/ coordinator for the team. The role of the instructor / coordinator is to lead out and ensure that the four strategies of RT, as listed below, are appropriately implemented. Firstly, these strategies are taught and modelled by the teacher who

progressively passes responsibility for their implementation to the teams while monitoring and scaffolding the function of each successive instructor / coordinator within each of the teams (Cooper & Greive, 2009, p. 46). (Palincsar and Brown, 1984) demonstrated that using the “four building blocks” i.e. strategies actively support students’ reading comprehension. The four blocks are described by Cooper & Greive as follow: a) Questioning: the text is read and questions are posed about the content. When questioning the text, students are to concentrate on the main ideas and check their immediate level of understanding b) Clarifying: while the text is being read, students are to critically evaluate the meaning of unfamiliar words and phrases and to draw upon the collective knowledge of the team members. In addition, they are to seek the essence of ideas, main ideas and themes contained in the text c) Summarising: when summarising, students are to re-state the main ideas and themes in their own words to ensure that they have fully understood them d) Predicting: At critical points in the reading of the text students are to pause to draw and test inferences from the text about future content. Initially, teachers closely monitor the implementation of the four strategies, stepping in to correct and scaffold student-efforts. Over time, the student-run teams are to take increasing responsibility for the process, permitting the teacher to progressively remove him- or herself from team mechanics and to concentrate on facilitating and managing the process (Cooper & Greive, 2009, p. 46).

Such building blocks or strategies are highly effective; they should be brought to life in EFL classrooms. In addition, EFL teachers need to teach their students the mechanics of the four building blocks: Predicting, questioning, clarifying and summarizing. In other words, take students through sample passages and show them how they would make predictions, ask questions, clarify foggy areas and summarize the text. The reciprocal teaching strategy operates within the celebre Vygotskian ZDP Zone of Proximal Development of each student. Both the teacher and peers are ready to scaffold individual student-efforts. Hence, each student is permitted to develop reading skills at their on rate. Indeed, a number of authors have commented on the strengths of RT strategy, there is strong evidence that it is an effective teaching method that produces notable improvements in reading comprehension (Hattie, 2009, p.53).

d. Skimming and scanning strategy

Scanning a reading technique used by readers when they want to find specific information quickly. In scanning, readers do have a question in their minds, and they read a passage only to find the answer, ignoring unrelated information. Readers try to anticipate how the answer will appear and look for the main clues that might help them locate the answer. For instance, if students are asked to provide a certain date, they quickly read the paragraph looking only for numbers. In addition, successful readers go directly to headings and other aids that would easily help them identify which sections might contain the information they are looking for; in other words, they selectively read and skip through sections of the passage. (Harmer, 2007, p. 100) affirms that students need to be able to do a number of things with a reading text. They need to be able to scan the text to look for particular bits of information they are searching for. According to Maxwell, 1970 cited in (Diaz & Laguado 2013, p. 138) she stated that with this scanning, students look for specific information within a text such as dates, names, places, among others and to be defined as the ability to locate specific facts and details quickly, is regarded as a desirable reading skill and is taught in most development reading courses. Scanning strategy is the strategy for quickly finding specific information in a text while ignoring its broader meaning (Brown, 2001).

Skimming often refers to the way in which one reads at a faster rate to gain the general idea about the text without paying heed to the intentional and detailed meaning of the text for example, when one reads the text only in order to understand the thesis statement, in one or two lines or reads the introductory paragraph and the conclusion paragraph very carefully looking for headings and subheadings to get a good grasp of the idea of the text. According to (Maxwell, 1969) cited in (Diaz & Laguado, 2013, p. 138), skimming is getting the main idea or gist of a selection quickly in a written text where the student develop powers of inference through systematic practice which encourages them to anticipate of a text. So, skimming can help the students to find the key words that permit them to infer the general sense of a text to interpret text faster and advance the reading process. Skimming has long been advocated as a means of surveying a selection to get the structure and main ideas that are so necessary if one is to organize facts so they can be retained. In addition, (Maxwell, 1969) argued that a preliminary skimming to locate main points not only serves to help the reader organize his ideas, but also increases his confidence that he can understand and retain the information. (Diaz & Laguado, 2013, p. 139). Students also need to skim a text as if

they were casting their eyes over its surface to get a general idea of what it is the topic and conclusions. There are some advantages of skimming and scanning built on (Grellet, 1981) quoted in (Aritonang, Lasmana, & Kurnia, 2018, p. 103) which are as follow: a) Skimming can help the students go through the reading material quickly in order to get gist of the text b) it helps the students to know the text is organized c) it can help students get an idea of the tone or the intonation of the writer. It means that, by reading using skimming, students can make reading material easier and students know how the text is organized and can improve an idea of the tone or the intonation of the writer. The advantage of Scanning are the following: a) Scanning helps students try to locate specific information b) it helps students follow the linearity of the passage c) it helps students use time efficiently. Based on the information mentioned above, both of the strategies help the students to read in a more focused and efficient way. Skimming-Scanning is a speed-reading strategy that enables students to get quickly ideas and specific information out of the text. Furthermore, it helps to change students' perceptions towards reading and make them improve in the reading comprehension process. Therefore, the best way, and perhaps the only way, for today's EFL students to cope with the effects of the information explosion on secondary school reading lists, is to become competent and confident skimmers and scanners.

e. Extensive reading

Extensive reading can essentially be referred to as reading for enjoyment. Students can read as much material in their target language as humanly possible. This way, they get exposed to a wide range of vocabulary and grammatical structures. (Hedge, 2003) described extensive reading it as skimming and scanning activities, while Hafiz and Tudor (1989) cited in (Alyousef, 2006, p. 145) affirm that exposing learners to large quantities of meaningful and fascinating materials and activities will have a significant impact on the learners' knowledge of L2. Learners read extensively, they read very easy, enjoyable books to construct their reading speed, fluency and develop more reading comprehension skills. As by switching their reading into their target language would certainly expose them to much more vocabulary than they would normally learn. Extensive reading has been proclaimed as, the single most effective way to improve language proficiency (Maley, 2005, p. 354). The aim of this strategy is not to look up every single unfamiliar word, but to simply immerse students in their target language.

Students can use context to figure out most of the words they don't know in a text and, with extensive reading, they don't exert themselves too much. Instead, they can take joy in engaging with texts that they can comfortably manage. With extensive reading, students can read material that doesn't challenge their comprehension too much since the idea is to simply subject them to as much of the written word as possible. As (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2004, p. 71) advocate, Extensive reading (ER) and repeated reading (RR) are two types of reading instruction programs that have been used in English as a second or foreign language (ESL or EFL) settings as effective means of developing reading fluency and comprehension. Extensive reading is thought to increase L2 learners' fluency, i.e., their ability to automatically recognize an increasing number of words and phrases, an essential step to comprehension of L2 texts (Grabe, 1991;Paran, Hart, 2001) cited in (Taguchi & Gorsuch, 2004, p. 71).

Many researches confirmed that extensive reading programmes should be implemented in EFL classrooms and teachers should renovate and get detached from the traditional scope of teaching reading. EFL teachers always resort to intensive reading instruction in which students feel somehow limited and cannot go beyond the texts provided in the students 'book. (Timothy, 2001, p. 10) in a research he conducted with an extensive and an intensive group, he came out with the following hypothesis: the extensive reading programme based on graded readers has led to much greater improvement in learners' reading comprehension than traditional text-based, intensive language exploitation activities. In spite of the fact that one of the stated objectives of the material used by subjects in the intensive group was a 'close and detailed understanding of the text', it appears that this approach is much less successful in developing comprehension than providing learners with attractive, high-interest story books, which learners are well-motivated to read and understand. (Timothy, 2001, p. 20) note that the gains in reading speed have been accompanied by similar large and significant differences in the performance of the two groups on the reading comprehension tests (the extensive group clearly outperforming the intensive group on both sets of tests), these results point to a powerful role for graded readers and extensive reading in stimulating reading improvement with learners. With freedom to select material according to their interests, and with associated high motivation, these learners are not only achieving substantial improvements in their reading speeds, they are importantly achieving a greater understanding of the material.

Overall, extensive reading as an approach proved to be superior to traditional approaches on measures of reading comprehension, as well as on measures of writing and reading speed (Masson & Krashen, 1997, p. 101) Indeed, extensive reading has a positive effect on second language acquirers. However, teachers do not implement such motivating strategy to diversify their reading classes and make them profitable and entertaining by selecting appropriate texts and giving students the right to chose their favourite books and genres as well. This way, EFL students can read joyfully at their own level and at their own pace; therefore, they enrich their vocabulary repertoire, activate and train heir metacognitive skills. As (Hedge, 2003, p. 202) believes, a well-motivated and trained teacher will be able to choose suitable handouts or activities books for the students.

4. Research Method

4.1 Subjects and context

The study was conducted during my internship period at IES Vilatzara. It is a public secondary school located in Vilassar de Mar in the Maresme, Barcelona. There is an average of thirty students per class. The group chosen was 3rd of ESO b; students aged between 14 and 16 and had different English levels. This study used quasi experimental with non-equivalent group design which involved two groups. Since it was not feasible to randomly assign subjects to treatments (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007) They were experimental and control group, both groups consisted of 15 students, they were mixed, both of them contained male and female participants. It was easy to divide the class into two groups because students normally do not have English class all together, they are always divided into two groups except for one day per week they have two hours together in which they study both English and Ethical values. The two sections were used for a total of 5 sessions (55 minutes each) over a five-week period January-February 2020.

4.2 Instruments and Data Collection

This study is of mixed nature (qualitative and quantitative) the mixed method is always a good option to gain in breath and depth of understanding and corroboration. (Johnson et., al 2007, p. 123) The instrument employed in the present study are the following: a journal (see appendix 1) where all the observations of the reading sessions were jogged down and a reading comprehension pre-test and post-test (see appendix 2) which were aimed at measuring students' reading comprehension in different texts toward the use of five texts using the following strategies: metacognitive reading strategy, bottom up and top down, reciprocal teaching, skimming and scanning and at last extensive reading. Before giving treatment, a reading pre-test was provided for both experimental and control group. The purpose of the pre-test was mainly to recognize the two groups' level before starting the experimental classes and to compare the results of the pre-test with the result of the post-test after the intervention. The experimental group received the traditional teaching plus the implementation of the previously mentioned strategies, whereas the control group received the traditional teaching method only. The students 'comprehension performance in the post-test was compared for both groups in order to determine whether there were significant differences between the groups in relation to the treatment.

5. Data analysis & results

An independent samples Excel calculator platform was used to determine whether the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group on the mean scores of the pre and post-reading comprehension tests. The two groups were given a reading comprehension test, which contained multiple choice, true or false, complete sentences etc. The thirty tests have been corrected and calculated using Excel platform. The mean scores obtained by the whole class in the pre-test is 54, 83. Later on, the experimental group was given five different reading texts during the programmed five sessions that lasted for five weeks.

In the first session, students were given a text from Burlington's student book, the text was entitled 'Home and Away' (see appendix 3) a website for young people on exchange visits. The experimental group was taught in the first reading comprehension session using metacognitive reading strategy. Students were asked to have a look at the text and try to guess what the text is going to be about. The instructor begun introducing

the topic of the text, linking the students' prior knowledge with the new content which is the text; she tried to shake the students' memory by asking them to provide examples and give their own opinions regarding the subject matter. Students were motivated and the pre-reading phase was of great importance in terms of schemata activation and it highly raised students' awareness. During the reading comprehension process, students were taught how to monitor and check their comprehension while reading by underlining keywords and scanning the text looking for the main ideas of the text. As a post reading activity, students were asked to make a mind map in order to see if they have grasped meaning from the text using their visualizations and associations, and the key words they were underlining meanwhile reading. Mind maps work well as their visual design enables students to see the relationship between ideas and encourages them to group certain ideas together as they proceed. After having finished reading the text, students were asked to do the reading comprehension activities, which they completed properly and in a short time. This proves that metacognition is an integral part of students' performance and metacognitive strategies and can assist students develop their own judgments and reflections on the topic while reading (Darabie, 2001, p .246)

In the second session, the experimental group was given another text from the same student's book. This time students were taught how to use bottom up and top down strategy while reading. The instructor started by activating the students' background knowledge and asked students to start developing their expectations related to the text. Students were asked to predict what the newspaper article might be about from the headline, or first sentences. This way, they were encouraged to use top-down processing on the article as a pre-reading strategy. Then, the instructor incorporated the lower- level processes (Bottom-up) that taught students how they construct meaning from the basic units of language, including letters and words. Students successfully tried to make meaning of the text by building on a foundation of analysis of the smallest units of meaning and gradually moving to grammatical structure identification. They did successfully generate meaning from the text by employing expectations, background knowledge, and assumptions; they searched the text in order to confirm or reject the previously made predictions. After having finished, students were asked to complete the reading comprehension activities, which they amazingly did. The instructor emphasized on combining elements of both bottom up and top- down reading processes simultaneously; this way, students started by reading the article using top-down

strategies to comprehend the text and then shifted to bottom up techniques when they came across unfamiliar words. Hence students used the bottom up strategy to decode the new word before moving on. Similarly, I realised that students managed to use more of a combination of bottom-up and top-down strategy. They may compensate for a lack of vocabulary by using top-down processing about the context, but often rely on bottom-up processing at the expense of these cues, focusing on individual words and sentences. Indeed teachers can help EFL students make more use of top-down cues with classroom activities focusing on this.

The third week session, the experimental group was given the third reading text and taught using the reciprocal teaching strategy (RT). The text was entitled ‘What’s on your plate’ (see appendix 3). The text deals with health problems and diet; the instructor selected this text because it is a CLIL text that the majority of teachers skip. The instructor activated students prior knowledge and successfully related their prior knowledge to the new content and then, she asked students to read the text individually and later on, she put them in groups of four in order to practice the four strategies used in reciprocal teaching (summarizing, questioning, predicting and clarifying). The instructor distributed one note card to each member of the group identifying each person’s unique role: summarizer, questioner, clarifier and predictor. Students read a few paragraphs of the assigned text selection and the instructor encouraged them to take notes and underline words and sentences to help them prepare for their role in the discussion. At the given stopping point, the summarizer was asked to highlight the key ideas in the text, the questioner posed questions about the text (unclear part, puzzling information, connections to other concepts already learned). Additionally, the clarifier addressed confusing parts and attempted to answer the questions that were just raised and the predictor offered predictions about what the author would tell the group next. Throughout the process, the instructor was guiding and nurturing the students’ ability to use the four strategies effectively within each small group and the role of the instructor shifted to students who became the leaders of their own learning process. Such effective strategy made students feel free and expressed themselves and their thoughts properly; it highly enabled students to grasp the meaning of the text and take over the role of the teacher in instructing themselves and their classmates. Reciprocal teaching (RT) teaches students how to coordinate the use of the four comprehension strategies: predicting, clarifying, questioning, and summarizing as (Reutzel, 2005) confirmed “ Good readers

do not use comprehension strategies one at a time as they read. Rather they orchestrate and coordinate a ‘set’ or ‘family’ of strategies to comprehend text” (Reutzel et al., 2005, p. 279)

In the fourth session, the experimental group was given a reading text, a travel magazine article entitled ‘Travelling with a difference’ (see appendix 4). This time, students were taught using Skimming and scanning strategy, they were shown how to skim and scan a text while reading. Students in the experimental group were asked at the beginning to have a look at the pictures and think what the text is going to be about. Moreover, as they were asked about their last visit to certain countries, such warmer did plainly linked students’ background knowledge with the new text. Additionally students seemed to be motivated to share their prior experience and were eager to read the text and discover its content. What I have noticed is that students’ motivation highly depends on the topic of the text, either it makes students participative and get involved in the task or they get bored from the beginning of the session. The instructor asked students to approach the text by looking at the title, introduction and subheadings, then skim the text in order to get clear general idea of what the text is about. Furthermore, the instructor emphasized on the importance of skimming while reading a text. She adverted not to read word by word when skimming which is completely useless and time absorbing. After having finished with the skimming process, students were asked to scan the text in order to find specific information, e.g. figures or names. The instructor emphasized on the great importance of using both skimming and scanning while reading which is an effective strategy that highly develops students’ reading comprehension and makes the reading task easier and accessible. Of course knowing how to read is an important step in building one’s reading skills.

The fifth week was the last week of the reading comprehension experiment; the experimental group was given the choice to go the school library and chose a short story in English. They successfully chose one of the fascinating gothic American short stories “The Legend of sleepy Hollow” (see appendix 6) by the celebre Washington Irving. The instructor suggested taking the short stories and go to the playground to read them in the open air, which is a great idea in order to change a little bit the students reading habits which are always limited to the classroom setting. Students formed groups of four; there were a total of 4 groups of four students and one group of three plus the instructor. The

instructor asked students to do altogether the pre-reading activities in the first pages of the short story to activate their schemata and start to expect what the short story is going to be about. Before that, she asked them to identify the short story genre out of the picture of the cover; she introduced the gothic genre to students in which they were very interested because they like thrillers, Halloween and gothic literature in general. Students were reading individually each chapter and at the end of each, they shared their ideas with their group members. Moreover, students were encouraged to read aloud and everybody was following. Extensive reading is a great approach that gives students freedom to select their favourite books and genres, it makes students become good readers because it provides them with a great repertoire of vocabulary and they become conscious readers and constantly pay heed to the grammatical structures. Hence, students become fluent readers and highly succeed in developing all the other skills such as writing, listening and speaking. The intention of applying the extensive strategy at the last session was to spot the difference between previous sessions and the last one. Students did read joyfully depending on their interest; they successfully discussed the short story and were self-confident while explaining to their classmates all the story details, exchanging their ideas and giving their opinions about the short story by stating what they liked and what they did not and what were their expectations. The main objective of undertaking extensive reading strategy is to get students reading in English and enjoy it, such strategy greatly develops students' reading fluency and reading becomes a pleasurable activity for them. Thus, EFL teachers should promote extensive reading in their classrooms; they should combine both intensive and extensive reading activities in order to meet the needs of EFL students and therefore develop their reading comprehension skills.

Two weeks later, after treatment, a reading comprehension test was aimed at measuring students reading comprehension towards the use of the strategies they were trained on during the five sessions. The results were ambitious, the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control group as indicated in the figure below. There was a significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test; students' performance did noticeably improve after the five sessions training on effective reading comprehension strategies.

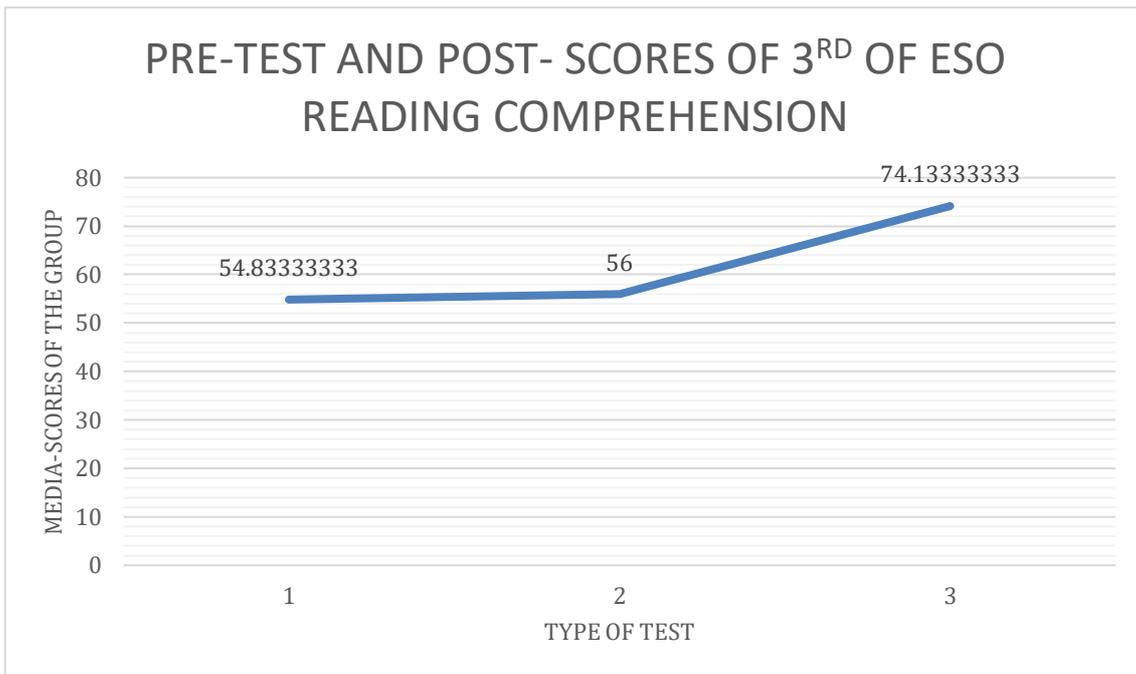


Figure 1: Pre- test and Post-test of experimental and control group

As figure 1 shows, the first variable refers to the mean pre-test scores obtained by both experimental and control groups, which is 54,83. The second variable indicates the post-test scores obtained by the control group, which improved a little bit and scored 56. However, the variable 3 indicates how the experimental group surpassed the control group in the post-test with a remarkable score of 74, 13. Such exceeding score highly illustrates the effectiveness of the reading comprehension strategies used during the five-programmed sessions with the experimental group.

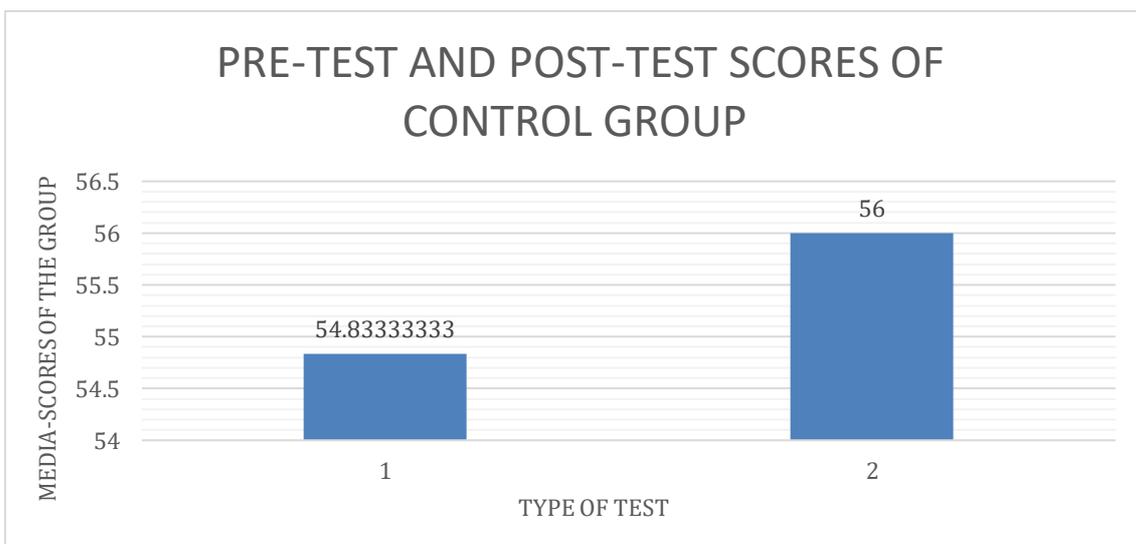


Figure 2: Pre-test scores of experimental group (1) and post-test scores of the Control group (2)

The figure above illustrates the slight improvement of the control group as shown in variable 2, which indicates the scores obtained by the control group in the post-test. On the pre-test, participants in both groups performed similarly and they both gradually increased as indicated in the following figure 3.

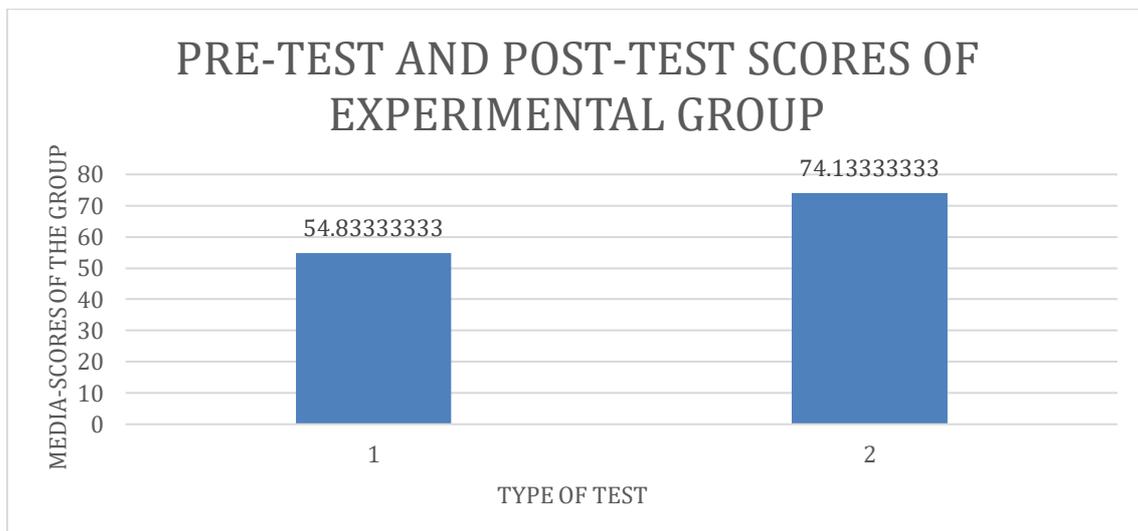


Figure 3: Pre-test scores of control group (1) and post- test scores of experimental and experimental group (2)

The figure above highlights how the experimental significantly improved, the variable 1 shows the global score obtained by the experimental group in the pre-test 54,83 and variable 2 shows the final score obtained after treatment in the post-test which is 74,13.

6. Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that the students of experimental group improved their reading comprehension after treatment as mentioned in figure 3 by using the following effective strategies: Metacognition strategy, Bottom up and Top down strategy, Reciprocal Teaching (RT) strategy, Skimming-Scanning strategy and Extensive Reading strategy. During the treatment process, I focused on improving reading skills through the previously mentioned strategies, students also carried out different activities about what they read, and they were motivated and paid a lot of attention in class. The students of IES Vilatzara were not used to these strategies, therefore they faced some difficulties while completing reading comprehension exercises because they did not

understand the texts. After conducting these strategies, students' reading habits have changed and their comprehension has accelerated. During the pre-test, the majority of students in both control and experimental group left questions in blank, they did not answer some of them and completed the (30 minutes) given. But, after treatment, the majority of students in the experimental group finished their post-test before the limited time. They just read the questions and answered as fast as they could which showed the great effectiveness of the strategies they were trained in. Most of the students got improvement in terms of comprehension in experimental group as showed in figure 1. In addition, students were skilful at getting the ideas that are implied, to make an evaluative judgment about some aspects of the text, and to integrate the thinking processes.

Based on the findings, the data showed that the differences of students reading comprehension after treatment are influenced by treatment given to them. i.e. the strategies taught during the reading comprehension sessions. It was proved by the result of statistical data analysis, which indicated the students' progress. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a significant difference of students' reading comprehension before and after being taught using the five strategies. In addition, the experimental group highly improved over the five reading sessions, I witnessed a great improvement from the first session to the fifth one. Participants were more self-confident and each time surprised me with their great involvement and showed great interest in the reading sessions provided to them. Such strategies play a powerful role in improving EFL students' reading comprehension, they highly increased the participants 'willingness to read more and more. Furthermore, they also helped them acquire large amounts of L2 input through reading, they helped them build vocabulary, learn a variety of sentence structures and led them to a stronger metacognitive awareness of their learning. The participants' improvement provided intriguing insights on the effectiveness of the five reading strategies, I found that all of them share advantages. All methods increase readers' willingness to read different texts and passages, made reading enjoyable and developed participants' ability to deal with unknown words. In this present study, I found out that extensive reading had a great impact on participants, they highly admired it, the fact they were given freedom to chose a short story from the library and read it in groups in the open air, gave them a sense of autonomy and they felt participative and highly enjoyed reading the chapters. I would suggest that EFL teachers should apply

such approach in their EFL classes, organise reading workshops and of course let students select their favourite books, short stories, authors and genres. Additionally, EFL teachers should combine both intensive and extensive approaches in order to generate more reading fluency and effectiveness.

7. Conclusion

All in all, the results of the present study show that the five strategies are promising for enhancing EFL students' reading fluency. The majority of EFL students struggle trying to determine the key ideas from the details of a text, others have a hard time understanding what a purpose of a paragraph or a chapter in a book. Helping EFL students increase their reading comprehension can be a key to educational success or failure. The application of various effective reading strategies in EFL classrooms highly increases EFL students' reading comprehension proficiency as (Pourhusein and Ahmadi, 2012, p. 157) represented that reading strategies have a positive effect on the reading comprehension proficiency of readers and ameliorate the reading skills of proficient and less proficient readers. As EFL students become able to read efficiently, they come to enjoy reading. If they can enjoy reading, their access to language input will increase dramatically, which will further develop their language development. EFL teachers should promote and apply different reading strategies in their EFL classrooms to give a good reading instruction and show students when, what, how, and why to use them in their reading comprehension process in order to overcome their reading comprehension difficulties and make out of a reading class an enjoyable one. EFL students should be guided gradually to comprehend texts by making connections between the new information of the text and the former knowledge and selecting strategies to monitor and evaluate their thinking processes which make them independent and strategic learners. A number of strategies can be used by teachers to enhance students' reading comprehension such as: metacognitive reading strategy, Bottom down and top down strategy, Reciprocal Teaching strategy, Skimming-Scanning strategy and Extensive Reading strategy. Thus, if we all agree that the vital goal of education is also to enhance the quality of students' instruction, we should move outside of the traditional teaching that simply overemphasizes on the acquisition of subjects matter.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1

Class Observation

Criteria	Totally agree	Partially agree	Disagree	Comments
The teacher states clear objectives for the class and accomplishes them successfully.				
The materials used in class are clear and coherent with the objectives of the class.				
The teacher's instruction used in class corresponds with the genre-oriented methodology.				
The teacher fosters participatory activities, which lead the students to accomplish the class objectives.				
There are explicit instructions on strategies.				
There is a reading comprehension set of skills based on the modelling, practice and application of grammar aspects related to each type of text.				
Students' advances in their critical comprehension of texts				

are evident				
The teacher provides effective feedback to students				

Appendix 2

Pre-test of Reading Proficiency

Read the following text and then answer the questions below.

Kids’ Sports Today

In our wonderful past, kids gathered for pickup baseball games, throwing the football on the streets or just running into each other to throw the ball at the basketball court. Anyone could play. Parents watched or didn’t. The point was to have fun. Some kids went on to play high-school sports, and that was it. But now four-year-olds try out for the peewee baseball league. Gym lessons begin at the age of three. Two-year-olds take soccer classes. Ridiculously, tennis camps enrol toddlers. By high school, kids are so burnt out, lessoned out, and played out that they either drop out or fizzle out. Sports have become too competitive, and too many parents see their child as the next Tiger Woods, forcing their children to play or practice sports they do not like or are not good at, or simply are not prepared for meeting the level of demand.

Adapted from: “Elements of Literature” by Holt, Rinehart, and Winston (2009)

Now, give complete responses to the questions:

Section 1: Literal comprehension

1. What kind of games did kids play in the past?
2. What did parents do while the kids played?
3. In the past, what was the purpose of kids practicing sports?
4. What do four-year-olds try out for nowadays?

5. At what age do gym lessons start nowadays?

Section 2: Inferential comprehension

1. Why were sports for kids better in the past?
2. What is the impact of competitiveness in sports for kids?
3. How different is the position of parents now from in the past in relation to their kids when they practice a sport?
4. What is the author's opinion about sports for kids at present?
5. Why do you think children end up burned out after practicing sports in competitive settings?

Section 3: Critical Comprehension

1. What is your opinion about children practicing competitive sports at a very early age?
2. What do you think must be the role of parents when the kids practice a sport?
3. What do you think is the best age for kids to start practicing a competitive sport and why?
4. What was your experience about practicing a sport as a kid?
5. Do you agree or disagree with the writer's point of view regarding the practice of sports of kids at early ages? Why?

Reading Comprehension Post-Test

A. Read the following text.

Healthy Lifestyle

(1) When I was at school, I played some football and rugby. I hated rugby because I couldn't catch the ball, but I enjoyed football. I started out being a terrible player and nobody wanted me to be on their team. But I started to improve slowly and, after a few

years, the other kids in the school accepted me as a player, not a fantastic one, but one who wouldn't do anything stupid.

(2) When I was at university, I stopped playing sports altogether. I was working too hard, started eating too much, and, worst of all, I started smoking. By the time I was thirty, I was overweight and unfit.

(3) Then one day, I was sitting in the park, smoking a cigarette. I was watching these guys running. They looked slim, fit and healthy, and some of them were much older than me. When I got home, I looked in the bathroom mirror and, well, I suppose I just didn't like what I saw. At that moment, I decided to stop smoking and change my life. I went to a sports shop, bought myself a pair of running shoes, shorts, and a sweatshirt. That evening I went running around the park—for ten minutes! Physically, I felt terrible. Everything was hurting: my legs, my chest. But inside, I felt good about it.

(4) The next evening, I went again. I still only did ten minutes, but I didn't feel as bad as I did the day before. Within a week, I was running for fifteen minutes, then twenty, and after three weeks I ran for thirty minutes without stopping. Quite soon, I was running longer distances and my speed and strength were improving all the time. After six months, I was a runner! That was five years ago. I now run eight kilometres six times a week and love it. My proudest moment was last year, when I ran my first marathon and finished in around three hours. I'm fitter now than I've ever been, and am so glad that I went to sit in the park that day five years ago.

B. Read for main ideas. Read the four sentences below. Four of them describe the main idea of a paragraph in the reading passage. Write the paragraph number next to the sentence that best describes the main idea. You will not use one option.

1. How he got fit again and how he feels about it. ___
2. His lifestyle and performance as a sportsman at school. ___
3. The reason he liked playing football. ___
4. The reason he started getting fit again. ___
5. His unhealthy lifestyle when he began university. ___

C. Read for details (multiple choice). Read the following statements and choose the best option to complete them.

1. He hated rugby because...
 - a. Nobody wanted him to play.
 - b. He was very slow and short.
 - c. He wasn't good for catching the ball.
2. He bought a pair of running shoes because...
 - a. He wanted to start running and get fit again.
 - b. He liked the other guys' running shoes.
 - c. His running shoes were old already.
3. The second time he went running, he did it for...
 - a. Ten minutes.
 - b. Fifteen minutes.
 - c. Twenty minutes.
4. He started running...
 - a. Six months ago.
 - b. Five years ago.
 - c. One year ago.

D. Read for details. Provide short answers to the following questions:

1. Which sport did he like best at school?
2. Why did nobody want to play with him at first?
3. Where was he when he decided to change his lifestyle?
4. How often does he run now?
5. What did he do last year?

E. Making inferences. Read the following statements. Circle the option of the inference that can be made from each statement.

1. "Everything was hurting: my legs, my chest. But inside, I felt good about it." He felt good about it because...
 - a. He was not tired.
 - b. It was a good start toward getting fit.
 - c. He didn't feel sick anymore.
2. "I looked in the bathroom mirror and, well, I suppose I just didn't like what I saw." He didn't like what he saw because...

- a. He looked very tired.
 - b. He looked old and unfit.
 - c. He looked sick.
3. "I am so glad that I went to sit in the park that day five years ago." He was glad because...
- a. It motivated him to start running.
 - b. He did not like what he saw.
 - c. It was the first time he ran a marathon.

Adapted from

http://www.dsw.edu.pl/fileadmin/user_upload/SJO/pliki/English_Language_Exam_-_A2-B1.p

Appendix 3

Reading A web page
Read the web page. Which city would you like to visit? Why?

HOME AND AWAY A SITE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON EXCHANGE VISITS

Are you going on an exchange visit soon? How much do you know about your destination? Have you got any questions about its universities, its football pitches or its markets? Check out our students' forum for some helpful information and read about other students' experiences away from home.

ANTHONY ROBERTS from Bolton, England
If you like the beach, then you'll love Paris. Sound strange? It is. Paris hasn't got any real beaches, but every summer they put sand along the River Seine and turn the middle of the city into a beach.

Paris is such a fun place to spend time. If you are interested in art and history like me, you'll love it here. After my lessons, I sometimes walk around the Montmartre area. Many artists sit and paint on the streets there and I enjoy looking at their paintings. I also go to the Left Bank. That's an old and historic area of Paris. The Champs-Élysées, a very well-known street in Paris, is my favourite place to shop. I'm only here for three weeks. I'd stay here longer if I had the time.

LENA MULLER from Leipzig, Germany
I'm spending a month in Dublin, the capital of Ireland. I'm living with a wonderful family and learning English. One month isn't much time, but I'm having a lot of fun. About 50% of Dublin's population is under the age of 25, so it's a great city for young people. The Irish love music and there are always exciting bands to listen to. In pubs, musicians perform almost every night and play traditional Irish music. If you bring a musical instrument, they will often invite you to play with them. If I'd known that, I would have brought my violin to Ireland. I don't usually like sport, but here I often go to watch hurling matches. Hurling is an Irish sport like hockey. Players have got sticks (They call them hurleys) and they use them to hit the ball into the other team's goal. There's also a game called camogie. Only girls play camogie. It's similar to hurling, but the ball is smaller and some of the rules are different.

10 SLIDESHOW
Word Power Recognising cognates (words that look similar and have got similar meanings in different languages) and false friends (words that look similar but have got different meanings in different languages) can help you understand a text. Information (Cognate) Bank (false friend)
How many cognates and false friends can you find on the web page?

4 Find words in the texts to match the definitions below.

1. the place you are going to (lines 1-3)
2. a sandy place next to water (lines 4-7)
3. famous (lines 8-16)
4. people living in a place (lines 20-26)
5. instructions how to play a game (lines 27-33)

5 Which countries are Anthony and Lena visiting? Which countries do they come from? Find the four countries on the map on pages 140-141.

Appendix 4

Reading A travel magazine article

1 Read the travel magazine article about three festivals. What have they got in common?

TRAVELLING NOW

Travelling with a Difference!

Have you got your backpack ready? Are you going to travel abroad this summer? Why don't you try something different? Perhaps these festivals aren't in your guidebook, but they're certainly interesting!



2 At which of the festivals (Lopburi Monkey Festival, La Pourcailhade or BugFest) can you ...?

1. find out facts about animals
2. hear animal sounds
3. eat unusual food
4. feed animals
5. watch animals run fast

3 Answer the questions.

1. What should visitors to Lopburi be careful of? Why?
2. Why will visitors in Trie-sur-Baïse hear strange sounds?
3. On what date does the next pig festival begin in Trie-sur-Baïse? Use a calendar to help you.
4. Are there many arthropods in the world? Which sentence gives you the answer?

4 Why does the text mention the following?

1. November
2. 2,000
3. Trie-sur-Baïse
4. pork sausages
5. Raleigh
6. tarantula spiders

IC SLIDESHOW

English in Use

Sometimes food has got a different name from the animal it comes from:
 pork – pig beef – cow
 but chicken – chicken lamb – lamb



Appendix 5

CLIL Health Health Health Unit 5

1 How much fruit do you eat every day? How much exercise do you get?

2 Read the text. Why does it mention Michelle Obama?

What's on Your Plate?



Obesity is a serious problem. According to the World Health Organisation, in 2008 about 10% of adults around the world were obese. In 2010, 43 million children in the world were overweight. Obesity itself is a serious illness, but it also causes other illnesses, such as heart problems and diabetes.

Back in 1992, the US government introduced the Food Pyramid, hoping to encourage people to adopt healthier eating habits. Most people today recognise the famous pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid are carbohydrates – bread, cereal, rice and pasta. Fruit and vegetables come next, and then meat, dairy and other protein foods.

At the top of the pyramid, you find the food items which are the least healthy – fats, oils and sweets. But according to some experts, this pyramid actually made people less healthy because it recommended eating a lot of carbohydrates. Also, some people find it difficult to understand the pyramid.

In 2011, the USA's First Lady, Michelle Obama, introduced her own recommendations to encourage healthier eating habits: "My Plate". Unlike

the pyramid, it helps you see what the food that's on your plate should look like. It is clearer than the pyramid. The main difference between "My Plate" and the 1992 pyramid is that fruit and vegetables have become much more important than the other food groups. Fruit and vegetables should cover half the plate. The other two quarters should be grains and protein. A circle, or glass, next to the plate reminds people to eat or drink dairy products, too.

Healthy eating is good, but exercise is no less important. The best thing is to combine healthy eating with physical activity. For adults, this means two and a half hours of physical activity a week, and for young people (aged 6-17), an hour of physical activity a day. Recommended activities include walking, running, dancing, swimming, cycling and playing tennis. People who don't exercise regularly should increase physical activity gradually. It gets easier with time. The important thing is to start right now!



IC CULTURE VIDEO

Food Around the World
Watch the video and answer the questions.

3 Copy and complete the sentences.

1. People can get heart problems and diabetes as a result of ...
2. There was a problem with the food pyramid because it encouraged people to ...
3. "My Plate" is easier to understand than the food pyramid because you can ...
4. In "My Plate", there is a circle or glass next to the plate, so people ...
5. Running and swimming are examples of ...

Appendix 6

