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ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

TITLE

**READER'S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE
READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH
YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD
EDUCATIVA "LAURO DAMERVAL AYORA" N°1 IN LOJA
CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015.**

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obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Science
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Specialization.

AUTHOR

JHULEYDI CECIBEL CASTILLO SIGUENZA

THESIS ADVISOR

Dra. CARMEN ENITH DÁVILA VEGA, Mg. Sc.

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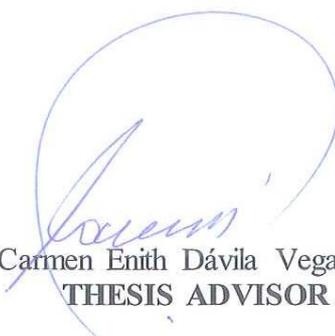
CERTIFICATION

DRA. CARMEN ENITH DÁVILA VEGA, Mg. Sc. PROFESSOR OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA,

CERTIFIES

The present research work entitled **READER'S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "LAURO DAMERVAL AYORA" N°1 IN LOJA CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015**, under the responsibility of the undergraduate student: Jhuleydi Cecibel Castillo Siguenza has been thoroughly revised and fully analyzed; therefore, I authorize the presentation of the thesis for the pertinent legal aims.

Loja, December 1, 2015



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Firma: _____



Número de cédula: 1104465529

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Firma: 

Autora: Jhuleydi Cecibel Castillo Siguenza.

Cédula: 1104465529

Dirección: Loja, Barrio La Argelia

Correo electrónico: jhuleydi.castillo@gmail.com

Teléfono: 2 640-517 **Celular:** 0985022015

DATOS COMPLEMENTARIOS

Director de tesis: Dra. Carmen Enith Dávila Vega, Mg. Sc.

Tribunal de grado:

PRESIDENTA: Dra. Carmen Aurora Ojeda Pardo, Mg. Sc.

PRIMER VOCAL: Lcda. Miriam Eucevia Troya Sánchez, Mg. Sc.

SEGUNDO VOCAL: Lcdo. Jhimi Bolter Vivanco Loaiza, Mg. Sc.

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THE AUTHOR

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this work to my family, because they have given me all of their support throughout my studies and the time it took me to finish my work.

To my mother, who has been with me in all the moments that I have needed to finish one of the main goals in my life.

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MATRIZ DE ÁMBITO GEOGRÁFICO

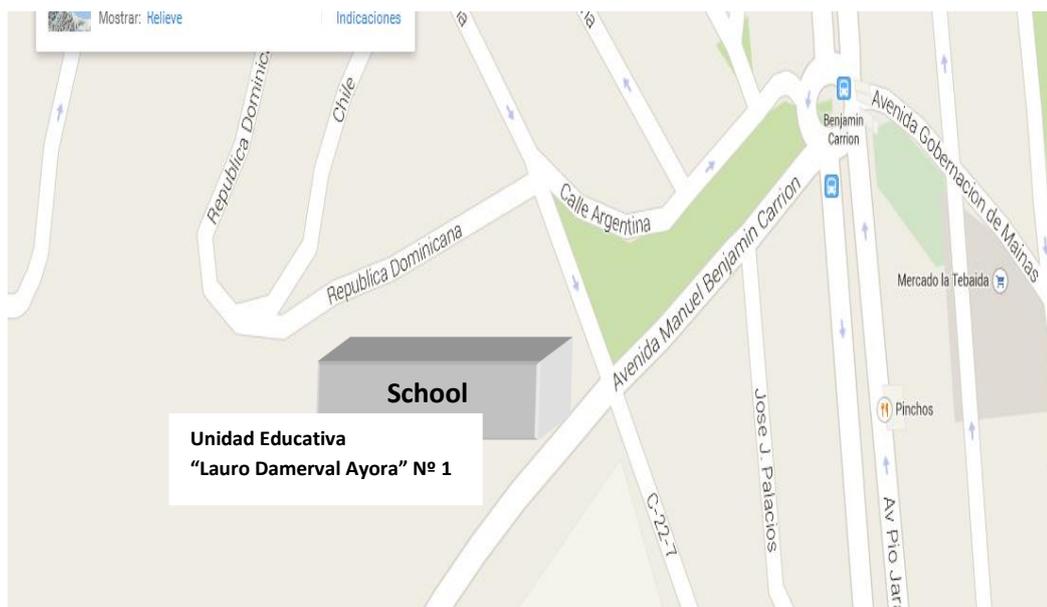
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a. TITLE

READER'S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING
FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH YEAR STUDENTS OF
BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "LAURO DAMERVAL
AYORA" N°1 IN LOJA CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015.

b. RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de investigación tuvo como objetivo mejorar la fluidez y comprensión lectora de los estudiantes de octavo año de Educación Básica de la Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1 en la ciudad de Loja, durante el año escolar 2014-2015 a través de la estrategia Teatro del Lector. Se requirió el uso de métodos como; científico, descriptivo, analítico-sintético y estadístico para analizar e interpretar datos cualitativos y cuantitativos, explicar el objeto de la investigación y establecer conclusiones. Se aplicaron exámenes y cuestionarios a veinte y siete estudiantes para determinar su nivel de lectura y percepción en cuanto a la estrategia antes mencionada. Los resultados demostraron que los estudiantes mejoraron considerablemente su comprensión, sin embargo necesitan leer más a menudo hasta obtener fluidez. En conclusión la estrategia Teatro del Lector contribuyó a elevar el nivel de lectura de los estudiantes y a desarrollar las clases de manera dinámica y fácil.

ABSTRACT

The present research work aimed to improve reading fluency and comprehension of the eighth year students of Basic Education at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city, during the school year 2014-2015 through the application of Reader's Theater Strategy. This work required the use of methods such as scientific, descriptive, analytic-synthetic and statistical, in order to analyze and interpret qualitative and quantitative data, give a clear explanation of the purpose of the research and draw up conclusions. Tests and questionnaires were applied to 27 students to determine their reading level and to know their perception of the aforementioned strategy. The results showed that students improved considerably in reading comprehension, however, they need to read more often in order to reach reading fluency. In conclusion, it was determined that Reader's Theater strategy contributed to raise students' reading level and to develop the classes in a dynamic and easy way.

c. INTRODUCTION

Reading is a fundamental skill in order to function in today's society, but it requires constant practice as a daily habit to comprehend what is being read and to reach fluency. As a multifaceted process, it involves word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation; these aspects allow the reader to make meaning from print. To be an effective reader, it is necessary to practice every day, but not all educational institutions make reading one of the most important mediums to attain knowledge, so students are not motivated enough to read. Because students are not interested in developing this skill, they are not able to understand any kind of text, lack a far-reaching lexicon, hesitate and even mispronounce words and are not able to find simple information from texts in order to answer comprehension questions.

After analyzing the students' situation, it has been necessary to formulate the question; how does Reader's Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension among 8TH year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city, during the school year 2014-2015?

As a solution for students' situation on reading skill, Reader's Theater strategy was chosen to help them improve their fluency and comprehension, because this strategy gets students highly motivated and engaged and gives them a purpose for repeated reading, which leads to fluency. Also, it lets students apply comprehension skills, including author's purpose, character traits, mood and theme in a funny and enjoyable way.

To achieve the main objective of this research work, some specific objectives were set up. They were: To investigate the theoretical references about reading skill and Reader's Theater Strategy to help students to build their reading fluency and comprehension, to detect the difficulties that limit to 8TH year students of Basic Education at "Unidad Educativa Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city to develop their reading skill, to arrange a plan which allows students improve their reading skill through Reader's Theater strategy, to execute reader's theater strategy as a scholarly activity to develop reading skill, and to verify the success or failure of the application of Reader's Theater as a strategy to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension.

Different methods were used in the process of applying the intervention plan. They were: the scientific method which helped to support the analysis of the gathered data and to make relevant predictions about the possible solutions. The descriptive method served to explain and analyze the object of the investigation, and also, was useful to describe the stages of the research work and the strategy applied. The analytic-synthetic method allowed the researcher to analyze and interpret the results obtained from the tests and questionnaires and to redact the conclusions. The statistical method was helpful to make the quantitative and qualitative statistical analysis of the data collected.

The structure of this research work is detailed as follows:

Firstly, the abstract, which contains the main objective of the research, methods, results and conclusions. Secondly; the introduction, which includes the contextualization of the central problem, the reasons why the strategy was chosen,

the specific objectives, the methodology and the content of the thesis. Third, the literature review which involves essential information about the two categories of the research. After that, the materials and methods, which contain the design of the research, materials used during the intervention, methods, techniques and instruments and the population who participated in the application of this research work. Then, the results obtained from the application of the tests and questionnaires are clearly organized into tables and graphs. Each result has a logical analysis and interpretation. Later, the discussion, which includes the major findings of the research, the meanings behind the results, and reasons why the findings are relevant. Afterward, the conclusions, which announce the findings and the growth students had when the intervention plan was concluded. These interpretations were drawn up considering the results collected from the tests and questionnaires applied to students. Finally, the recommendations, which are suggestions as a guide for possible future researchers in this field.

d. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reading

Definition

Leipzig (2001) sees Reading as a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. He presents the following facets which readers integrate to make meaning from print.

He thinks that reading is making meaning from print that requires:

- Identify the words in print – a process called word recognition
- Construct an understanding from them – a process called comprehension
- Coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate – an achievement called fluency

Leipzig shows that it is possible to make meaning from print even without being able to identify all the words. He proposes a note in messy handwriting as an example, where people may understand it, although it is not possible to decipher all the scribbles. He says that sometimes people is able to identify words without being able to construct much meaning from them.

Finally, he says that sometimes people is able to identify words and comprehend them, but if the processes mentioned before does not come together smoothly, reading will still be a labored process.

He thinks that reading in its fullest sense involves weaving together word recognition and comprehension in a fluent manner, but he says that it is complex; he shows its complexity in the following way:

To develop word recognition, children need to learn:

- How to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words – this is phonemic awareness

Example: *feet* has three sounds: /f/, /e/, and /t/

- Certain letters are used to represent certain sounds – this is the alphabetic principle

Example: *s* and *h* make the /sh/ sound

- How to apply their knowledge of letter-sound relationships to sound out words that are new to them – this is decoding

Example: sssssppppooooon – spoon!

- How to analyze words and spelling patterns in order to become more efficient at reading words – this is word study

Example: *Bookworm* has two words I know: *book* and *worm*.

- To expand the number of words they can identify automatically, called their sight vocabulary

Example: Oh, I know that word – *the*!

Leipzig says that if reading is not pleasurable or fulfilling, children will not choose to read, and they will not reach the practice they need to become fluent readers. It is because the re-reading of texts makes possible to gain fluency when reading.

So, he highlights that reading also means developing and maintaining the motivation to read. Since reading is an active process of constructing meaning (...).

Based on the information that Leipzig provides, it can be said that to develop reading skills involves developing important aspects such as word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation.

The 5 most important aspects of learning to read

There are 5 core areas of literacy that children need to develop to reach reading success:

Phonemic Awareness

Every word is made up of combination of individual units of sound, called phonemes. This organization says that phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate individual units of sound so, it is the main skill children should acquire when learning to read.

Phonics

Constructing directly from phonemic awareness; phonics is a method of instruction which introduces children to the link between letters and sounds, known as the alphabetic principle, which can be one of the major complexities children can face when learning to read. When children fail to understand that written spelling represent the sounds of spoken words makes it difficult to identify printed words. Also, there are a lot of phonics activities that can help children develop this critical skill, even though; these activities should always be complemented with regular reading.

Vocabulary

All children approaches reading with different levels of ability. The larger a child's speaking and listening to vocabulary, the more words they will be able to

easily map to their reading and writing vocabularies. A wide variety of books is one of the best ways for a child to expand their vocabulary. The first 100 sight words have more significance than fifty percent of most early texts, so that, they are very important for a child to develop early on in their reading journey.

Fluency

Fluency enables readers to quickly span the gap between recognizing a word understanding its meaning. It is there where the pleasure of reading takes place. Since fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus more on interpreting the meaning conveyed by words and sentences. Fluency is something that comes as a child develops their phonemic awareness, phonics skill and vocabulary. Constant reading practice is essential for developing fluency. Every day reading to children provides them a vocal model to help them grasp what fluency reading sounds like.

Comprehension

Reading for meaning is the final aim of learning to read. Since comprehension is a skill that will not only affect a child's future reading ability but also their academic ability throughout school and beyond. Asking children questions or stimulating them to ask questions about a book is a fruitful manner to both control how much they understand and enhance their comprehension (Reading eggs, 2013).

Reading Fluency

Definition

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy and proper expression. To grasp what is being read, children have to be able to read fluently

whether they are reading aloud or silently. When reading aloud, fluent readers read in phrases and add intonation appropriately. Reading is smooth and has expression. It means that, when people listen a fluently reading it is an enjoyable great moment (Reading Rockets, 2015).

In conclusion learners must have the opportunity to listen to the appropriate intonation of a text, in this way they will be able to read with proper expression silently or aloud, which directs them to read fluently.

Importance

Reading fluency is the power to read quickly and accurately. The more fluent a reader, the more he or she automatically groups and recognizes words. Fluent readers excel at oral reading, which is highlighted by smooth and natural expression.

Reading fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension. Since fluent readers do not have to concentrate on decoding the actual words, they can focus their attention on what the text actually means. They can make mental connections throughout the text, as well as apply those connections to their personal backgrounds and experiences. Simply, fluent readers recognize the words and comprehend their overall meaning at the same time (LearningRx Franchise Corp., 2015).

In conclusion fluent readers are able to comprehend the text while they read it.

To develop fluency, children need to:

According to Leipzig (2001) students need to develop the following aspects in order to reach fluency:

- Develop a high level of **accuracy** in word recognition
- Maintain a **rate** of reading brisk enough to facilitate comprehension
- Use **phrasing and expression** so that oral reading sounds like speech (...).

In conclusion, to read fluently students have to develop accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression.

Read with Accuracy, Appropriate Rate, Phrasing, and Expression

A fluent reader thinks about reading accurately, with appropriate rate and phrasing, and with expression.

Accuracy

To read accurately is reading the words in a text without mistakes (...).

Rate

Rate is the speed at what people speak. When readers read at a good rate the audience is able to understand the message. The text must be read not too fast or too slow to facilitate comprehension. Readers should sound natural, make pauses, stop, speak at a normal pace, speed up, or slow down when it is needed.

Phrasing

Phrasing refers to make pauses or stop within the text extracting meaningful phrases. Punctuation marks such as commas and end punctuation indicate a pause or a stop.

Expression

To change the voice to emphasize a word or phrase in a text according to the theme and content (...). Using an appropriate emphasis enables the reader to read aloud with expression (Benchmark Education Company, 2015).

In conclusion, accuracy is to read words without mistakes, rate is the speed at what the text is being read, phrasing is to pay attention to punctuation marks in order to make appropriate pauses and expression is emphasizing on words or phrases when it is required.

Instruction

There is a variety of best practices to help students develop reading fluency.

Modeling

Adult modeling is of great importance since, a number of young readers do not read with the appropriate rate to comprehend a text. As using expression and phrasing may not be the appropriate one. So, when adults read aloud, using an appropriate rate, phrasing and expression, children develop an understanding of the importance of these aspects when reading to be understood and also to comprehend the text.

Sight Words Instruction

One of the main important aspects of reading fluently is a significant range of vocabulary since; fluency depends on a reader's ability to quickly and accurately decode words.

Oral Reading Strategies for Increasing Fluency:

Guided Oral Reading

This strategy helps students to develop both, accuracy and word recognition skills. In this activity, an adult works one-on-one with child. The child reads a text that is at or slightly above her independent reading level aloud with the adult guidance helping him/her to comprehend the text.

Repetitive Oral Reading

This strategy helps students to develop reading fluency and vocabulary. Students have to read aloud a text repeated times increasing each time his/her reading fluency.

Choral Reading

It is a none-on-one oral reading activity for students. In this activity two readers sit close together with a single copy of the text. The two read the text aloud with the adult (or stronger student reader) reading it at a slightly faster rate than the other one.

Readers' Theatre

This strategy is useful to improve reading fluency within a whole class or small groups. Through this strategy, students use just their voices to “perform” a dramatic script, where students receive a role from the story script they also have the opportunity to silently read over the whole script. Then, they read it aloud focusing on fluency. Students receive instruction to appropriate maintain a good rate, and use expression and phrasing. The script should be read several times by students having more chances to read it fluently (...) (k12reader.com, 2015).

Reading comprehension

Definition

According to Kintsch van Dijk and Kintsch cited by (Woolley, 2011); reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. Its goal is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences (...).

In conclusion, reading comprehension consists on an overall understanding of the whole text, instead of understanding word by word.

Importance of Learning Reading Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension is essential when reading any kind of text. When the reader understands the message of the text he/she experiences the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Strong reading comprehension skills help people in whatever aspect of their lives.

In conclusion reading comprehension is so important because it helps people understand any kind of text in whatever area of their lives.

Types of comprehension

According to Richard R. Day & Jeong-suk Park (2005) there are six types of comprehension which are useful for students become interactive readers. Their taxonomy has been influenced in particular by the work of Pearson and Johnson (1972) and Nuttall (1996).

Literal comprehension:

Literal comprehension refers to an understanding of simple information from the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times, and locations. Questions of literal

comprehension can be answered directly and explicitly from the text, all the information students are asked to find is actually detailed on the text.

Reorganization:

In recognizing students are based on a literal understanding of the text; they use information of different parts of the text and combine it to get additional understanding.

Inference:

Making inferences involves more than a literal understanding. In the beginning this strategy turns difficult for students to answer inference questions because the answers they need are in the text, but they are not explicitly stated.

Prediction:

Prediction refers to apply students' understanding of the text and their own knowledge of the topic and related matters which help them determine what might happen next or after a story ends.

Evaluation:

Evaluation requires students to give a global or comprehensive judgment about some aspect of the text. To answer this kind of questions, students apply a literal understanding of the text and also their own knowledge of the theme.

Personal response

It requires readers to express their feelings about the text. Answers to this kind of comprehension cannot be found on the text since; the answers come just from the reader. There is no incorrect answer while the answers are based and in relation with the text.

In conclusion, the six types of comprehension should be taken into account to analyze students' reading comprehension, and to check students' understanding of the text.

To develop comprehension, children need to develop:

According to Leipzig (2001) to reach comprehension, students need to develop the following aspects:

- **Background knowledge** about many topics

Example: This book is about zoos – that's where lots of animals live.

- Extensive **oral and print vocabularies**

Example: Look at my trucks – I have a tractor, and a fire engine, and a bulldozer.

- Understandings about **how the English language works**

Example: We say she *went* home, not she *goed* home.

- Understandings about **how print works**

Example: reading goes from left to right

- Knowledge of **various kinds of texts**

Example: I bet they live happily ever after.

- **Various purposes for reading**

Example: I want to know what ladybugs eat.

- **Strategies for constructing meaning** from text, and for problem solving when meaning breaks down

Example: This isn't making sense. Let me go back and re-read it.

Reader's Theater

Definition

According to Cornwell (2014) Readers Theater is an integrated approach for involving students in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. It involves children in:

- Sharing literature
- Reading aloud
- Writing scripts
- Performing with a purpose, and
- Working collaboratively

Cornwell states that Readers Theater strategy is, readers reading a script adapted from literature, and the audience picturing the action from hearing the script being read aloud. It requires no sets, costumes, props, or memorized lines. Instead of acting out literature as in a play, the performer's goal is to read a script aloud effectively, enabling the audience to visualize the action. Performers bring the text alive by using voice, facial expressions, and some gestures.

According to Sebesta (2014) Readers Theatre is an oral reading activity that closely resembles radio drama. Two or more readers stand or sit side by side, usually in a semicircle, holding scripts and reading their parts to portray characters, narration or exposition. Physical movement is minimal. Instead, speech conveys the action.

In conclusion reader's theater is a strategy which enables students to read accurately, maintain a good rate and use phrasing and expression.

Why Use Readers Theatre?

Sebesta (2014) says students can get highly motivated with Readers Theatre, because it gives participants a purpose for repeated reading, leading to fluency; internalized such fluency transfers to effective silent reading as well. Readers Theatre lets students apply comprehension skills, including author's purpose, character traits, mood and theme.

Sebesta says that, according to drama expert Nellie Mc Caslin, Readers Theatre is "a way of enjoying good literature through guided study, a mutually agreed-upon interpretation and clear and expressive oral reading."

Sebesta thinks that Reader's Theatre can also include nonfiction (such as history), descriptive science and biography. Divide the non-dialogue text among students. Then have them present it in Readers Theatre style to bring clarity and purpose through oral interpretation.

Benefits of Using Readers Theater in the Classroom or Library

Robertson (2009); states that ELLs can benefit from Reader's Theater activities, such as fluency practice, comprehension, engaging in a story, and focusing on vocal and physical expression. She offers a number of approaches to Reader's Theater with ELLs. An interesting story script is motivating for students engage and build reading and comprehension skills.

When English language learners (ELLs) read, they may have difficulty engaging with a story if:

- They lack the background knowledge to understand the plot, setting, and characters

- They have not had much practice "putting themselves in the story"
- They only get one or two opportunities to read a text before the class moves on to something new.

ELLs can benefit greatly from having opportunities to read a text many times because this helps them develop fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. One way to reread a text while keeping it interesting for students is through Readers' Theater. In a Readers' Theater activity, students read stories that have been scripted like a play, and they act out the story together. Students may practice their parts several times before acting the story out in front of the class, which gets them thinking about their characters and the plot in a focused way. Rather than using elaborate props, costumes, or scenery, students can be encouraged to use vocal, facial, and physical expression to engage with the script and their character.

As students continue their repeated readings of the script, they are improving their reading skills and comprehension. They also will have the opportunity to practice speaking skills, such as pronunciation, inflection, expression, and varied volume. Since the activity is meant to practice reading, students don't need to memorize their lines, which keep the spotlight on the reading practice, not the performance.

Reader's Theater offers ELLs an opportunity to completely immerse themselves in a story, and it gives students the chance to think about how engaged readers interact with print, such as by seeing pictures in their heads — very similar to watching a movie or play. Teachers can help ELLs make this connection by

explaining how they can visualize the plot in their heads while they read and as they practice bringing stories to life.

Reader's Theater has something for all students, regardless of their language level. Beginning English speakers can have a small role with one or two short sentences, or if the student is at the "silent period," he or she can be assigned a non-speaking role such as an animal character. The more advanced a student's speaking skills are, the more the student can focus on improving expression and clarity in their role.

Students should read through the story about 15 times. Robertson says that Amber, acknowledges that students would never want to read a story so many times if it weren't for Reader's Theater. Within the context of this engaging activity, however, it has proven to be popular with the students, and she has seen noticeable improvements for her students as a result of repeated exposure to the text. They begin to develop fluency and comprehension because they become very familiar with the text and the plot structure. They also improve their pronunciation and presentation skills because they have so much practice reading and listening to the stories. Finally, the students begin to show more self-confidence while reading out loud and getting up in front of the class (...).

Cornwell (2014) details below what reader's theater strategy helps to:

- Develop fluency through repeated exposure to text.
- Increase comprehension.
- Integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening in an authentic context.
- Engage students.

- Increase reading motivation.
- Create confidence and improve the self-image of students.
- Provide a real purpose for reading.
- Provide opportunities for cooperative learning.

Characteristics of an Effective Readers Theater Reader

Cornwell (2014) details how an effective reader's theater reader is:

- Reads with expression, proper emphasis, and clear enunciation, using his/her voice effectively to convey meaning.
- Projects to the audience.
- Is familiar with the part and is able to read it with fluency.
- Paces himself/herself effectively.
- Uses props, when employed, effectively (the script is a prop).
- Demonstrates poise and self-confidence.

Concluding, an effective Reader's Theater reader develops certain abilities which make him/her to read with self-confidence and fluently.

Tips for Implementing Readers Theater

Cornwell (2014) details some tips to implement Reader's Theater:

- Model expressive reading often.
- Introduce Readers Theater using pre-prepared scripts. Students need to make theirs the concept of Readers Theater and become familiar with the format of a script before writing their own.

- Teach the basic steps of performance: how to highlight the parts each student has, how to interpret the part and read expressively, how to hold the script, and when to assume various stage positions.
- Give the students lots of time to prepare. Emphasize practice. Readers should practice their roles in different ways: individually and in small groups, privately and in front of others.
- Keep a copy of the marked script at school and send one home for parents to read and practice with their children.
- Rehearse with the readers, providing needed direction and support regarding their interpretation, pacing, expression, volume, positions, and motions.
- Begin with short presentations.
- Perform for an audience as often as possible.
- Use props sparingly.

According to Sebesta (2014) there are three important tips to follow with Reader's Theater:

1. Practice, practice, practice!

Sebesta (2014) thinks that it is so beneficial to encourage students to practice repeated reading at home, not only in class, and when they practice in their classrooms is important to get them support each other in their groups. Students must be aware of just through practice they would be able to reach reading fluency at the time they also build confidence.

2. Coach readers to improve oral interpretation.

Sebesta thinks that without guidance and encouragement, Readers Theatre may be lifeless. It is important to aim the coaching specifically at a character's emotions and intentions. For example, you might say, "Fillmore has sly intentions, so use your voice to show his sly intentions, even in his first speech." He says that specific suggestions help far more than generalities, highlighting the contrast between characters raise students' understanding and enjoyment of all their literary reading.

3. Consider inviting an audience.

Sebesta says that an audience enhances performance and pride. So, for beginners, keep it small. Have three or four groups in a classroom take turns performing for one another.

How to Get ELLs Started with Reader's Theater

Amber Prentice, a Robertson (2009) colleague explained her how she frequently uses Reader's Theater with her seventh- and eighth-grade ESL students:

Introduction:

When she first introduces Reader's Theater to her students, she talks a little bit about what to expect and explains that this activity is meant to help them improve their reading and speaking abilities.

Story Selection

Amber tends to get her scripts from Reader's Theater books or websites. (...) Amber uses the same story for the entire class. Amber thinks this is helpful for her ELL students because they will understand the story very well by the end of the

activity, and will be able to laugh at all the right lines and be more involved in other groups' performances.

Vocabulary:

After she has chosen a story, Amber goes through it and selects the vocabulary words students will need to know in order to understand the plot.

Read-Through:

Next, Amber reads the whole play out loud to her students and asks comprehension questions to make sure they understand the story.

Roles:

She then assigns roles or allows students to choose parts in the play, depending on the level of the students.

Practice:

Amber gives her students ample time to practice their parts. She circulates through the room and gives feedback to students as they read. If students are reading without expression, she prompts them to try the line with more feeling. If students are stumbling with pronunciation, she models the correct pronunciation for them.

Staging:

Before students do their performance for their classmates, they practice the staging and create any simple props they think will be helpful to the story.

Evaluation:

Before the performance, Amber explains how the students will be graded. She reviews each element in the following list, making sure that students understand

what each part means and showing examples of what she wants to see from the students as they are reading.

Students are evaluated based on:

- Volume
- Clarity of pronunciation
- Expression
- Posture
- Eye contact

Performance:

Once the students have practiced their lines, prepared simple props, and understand how they will be evaluated, they are ready to perform! (...).

This way, reader's theater strategy effectively benefits students following the four steps: introduction, practice, evaluation and performance. Giving students enough time to practice their scripts, they become able to enhance their reading fluency and comprehension.

e. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Materials

For the development of this research work three kinds of resources were applied. The first one is human resources, which involved the researcher who applied and executed the intervention plan, 27 students of eighth year of Basic Education, parallel “B” and the certified English teacher who supported the researcher in controlling students’ discipline. The second one is material resources, which included office supplies as paper to print simple story scripts, and reading comprehension questions worksheets. The third one is technical resources, used to develop the research were a computer to type all the information, internet to search needed information for the elaboration and implementation of this work and a flash memory to save all the searched information.

Design of the research

The present research work was based on the action research proposed by Kemmis and Mc Taggart (2000); which was executed to understand, assess and change a situation, involving the researcher into the teaching practice. This design includes a self-reflective cycle which detects a problem, plan a solution, take action and observe the process and outcomes. Moreover, this design enabled the researcher to apply Reader’s Theater as a strategy to enhance reading fluency and comprehension.

Methods

The following general methods were applied along the research:

The Scientific method facilitated the study of Reader's Theater to improve reading fluency and comprehension. Also, it favored the elaboration of the instruments applied in the intervention and supported the analysis of the data collected with theory.

The Descriptive method was useful to describe the different stages of the research work, at the beginning, during and after the intervention and how reader's theater improved reading fluency and comprehension. It served to describe the results obtained from the pre and post intervention represented on the tables and graphs.

The Analytic-synthetic method was used to analyze and interpret the results gathered from the tests and questionnaires. It also helped to draw up the conclusions.

The Statistical method was used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and the qualitative data from the questionnaires. Also, the information was translated into tables and graphs. The means for each section was calculated taken into account the formula $x = \frac{x}{n}$. This calculation provided an overall view of performance of the group in each test.

Techniques and Instruments

To collect the data, tests, questionnaires, a rubric and a diary were designed and applied at the beginning, during and after the application of the intervention plan.

Test

Two kinds of tests were used. A pre-test of reading comprehension questions was used to diagnose the students' capacity to understand texts. The same pre-test was used as post-test and applied at the end of the intervention plan, to obtain information about students' progress on reading comprehension. The test consisted on three questions, two of them were for literal comprehension and the last one consisted on a short and simple paragraph in order to students individually read. To diagnose, and check students' progress on fluency, a rubric was used, which contained the aspects of accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression with its corresponding levels according to the students' development (see on page 144).

Questionnaire

A pre and post-questionnaire consisting on four closed questions and three multiple choice questions were applied to collect qualitative information of students' feelings about reader's theater in order to know if students noticed positive or negative changes on their reading fluency and comprehension through this strategy.

Field Diary

The researcher used a diary to record what happened in each lesson. It helped to write up the findings during the intervention, relevant events during the observation or particular situations that could have happened.

Population

The students of eighth year of Basic Education, parallel “B” of the Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1 participated in the development of this action research. The participants were twenty seven between boys and girls. They were between twelve and thirteen years old. The students received five hours of English per week with a certified English teacher.

f. RESULTS

This section details how the objectives were achieved:

The first objective was verified through the theoretical references that contain relevant information about reading fluency and comprehension and Reader's Theater strategy, which was the support to design the intervention plan, analyze the results and make the instruments.

The second objective was accomplished with the pre-test results shown below in table 1, which allowed to diagnose students' difficulties in reading skills.

The third objective was fulfilled through the elaboration of the intervention plan carried out during two months. It consisted of eight lessons. The lessons contained different re-reading story-scripts about several topics which were developed following four steps: introduction, practice, evaluation and performance.

The fourth objective was accomplished by the application of Reader's Theater strategy, as a scholarly activity to develop reading skills, it was verified with the pre and post-questionnaires results, shown in tables from 2 to 7.

The fifth objective was reached with the post-test results, which allowed to verify the students' progress on reading skills and the effectiveness of Reader's Theater strategy, the results are shown below, in table 8.

Pre-Test Results

Objective two: To detect the difficulties that limit to eighth year students of Basic Education at “Unidad Educativa Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1 in Loja city to improve their reading skill.

a. Table 1

Pre-test Scores of the Eighth Year Students in Reading Skills

Students' code	RC /6	f /4	Total /10
UELDANU 001	2.6	1	3.6
UELDANU 002	1.8	1	2.8
UELDANU 003	2.6	1	3.6
UELDANU 004	3.2	1	4.2
UELDANU 005	3	1	4
UELDANU 006	2.2	1	3.2
UELDANU 007	1.4	1	2.4
UELDANU 008	3	1	4
UELDANU 009	2.8	1	3.8
UELDANU 010	1.6	1	2.6
UELDANU 011	2	1	3
UELDANU 012	3	1	4
UELDANU 013	3.2	1	4.2
UELDANU 014	1.4	1	2.4
UELDANU 015	3	1	4
UELDANU 016	2.2	1	3.2
UELDANU 017	3.2	1	4.2
UELDANU 018	1.8	1	2.8
UELDANU 019	2	1	3
UELDANU 020	1.2	1	2.2
UELDANU 021	2.4	1	3.4
UELDANU 022	0.6	1	1.6
UELDANU 023	3	1	4
UELDANU 024	1.4	1	2.4
UELDANU 025	2.2	1	3.2
UELDANU 026	2.6	1	3.6
UELDANU 027	3	1	4
Mean	2.3	1	3.3

Note. **UELDANU**= Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N° 1; **001**= Students' code; **RC**= Reading Comprehension; **F**= Fluency

b. Interpretation and Analysis

Based on the information obtained from table 1, students achieved the total score mean of 3.3/10 which was not the average expected 8/10. However, the highest score mean gathered was 2.3/6 in the aspect of reading comprehension, which shows that students were in a good level, (see scale, pg. 145) it is because students were able to understand some straightforward information from the text. On the other hand, the lowest score mean of 1/4 achieved in reading fluency reflected that students need to read more often (see rubric on page 144) in order to develop their accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression. It is evident that students' limitations were concerning the numerous errors they made in pronunciation when they read, their slow reading with several pauses in a monotone voice and little attention to punctuation.

In reference to the aspects mentioned above, Leipzig (2001) states that students need to develop accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression in order to reach fluency. Richard R. Day & Jeong-suk Park (2005) state that Literal comprehension, Reorganization, Inference, Prediction, Evaluation and Personal response are the six types of comprehension useful for students become interactive readers.

Comparison of the Pre and Post Questionnaire Results

Objective four: To execute Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity to develop reading skill.

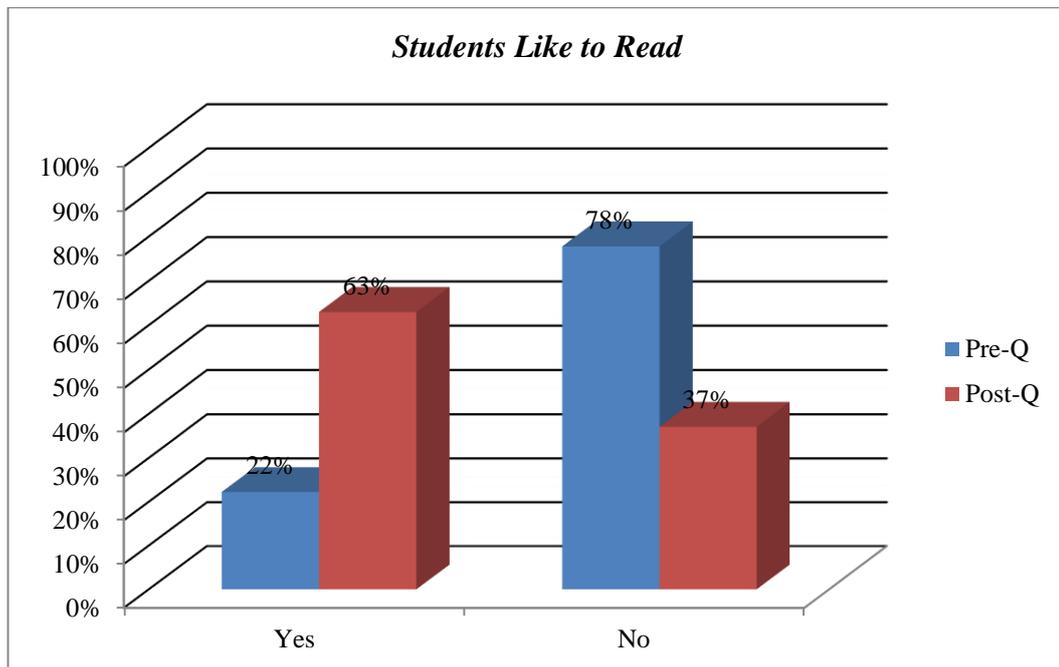
Question 1: Do you like to read?

a. Table 2

Students Like to Read

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	6	22	17	63
No	21	78	10	37
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 1



c. Interpretation and Analysis

According to the results in table 2, the majority of students represented by 78% did not like to read before the intervention. This means that they were not motivated and enabled to read. But, after the intervention 63% of students answered they like to read, which indicates they finally got interested in reading.

To develop students’ motivation to read it is required to help them appreciate the pleasures of reading, to view reading as a social act to be shared with others, to see reading as an opportunity to explore their interests and to read widely for a variety of purposes, from enjoyment to gathering information (...) (Leipzig, 2001).

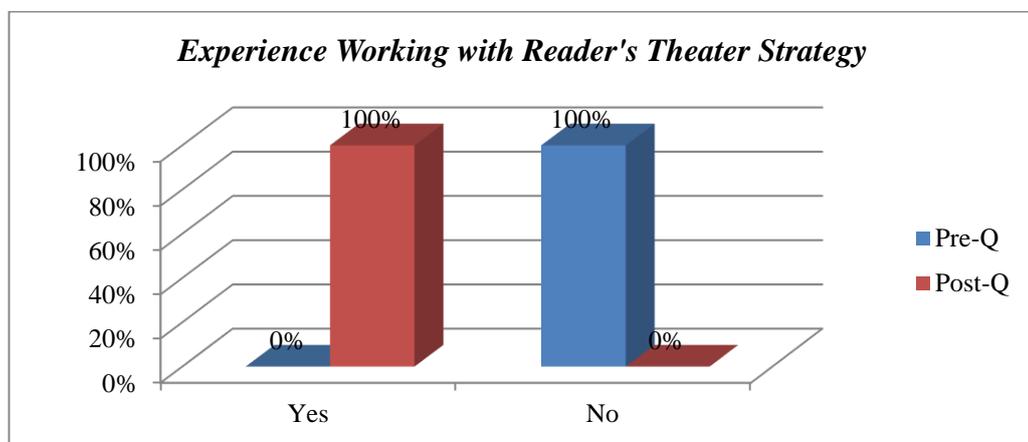
Question 2: Have you ever worked with Reader’s Theater Strategy?

a. Table 3

Experience Working with Reader’s Theater Strategy

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	0	0	27	100
No	27	100	0	0
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 2



c. Interpretation and Analysis

The information gathered in table 3, reflected that students were not practicing reading making use of suitable strategies that allow them to comprehend the text and read it fluently before the intervention. That’s why at the end of the intervention, all students thought Reader’s Theater strategy increased their interest and desire by reading fluently and comprehensibly. Reader’s Theater strategy helps to develop fluency through repeated exposure to text. It also, increases comprehension and reading motivation, engages students, creates confidence and improves the self-image of students, provides a real purpose for reading and opportunities for cooperative learning (Cornwell, 2014).

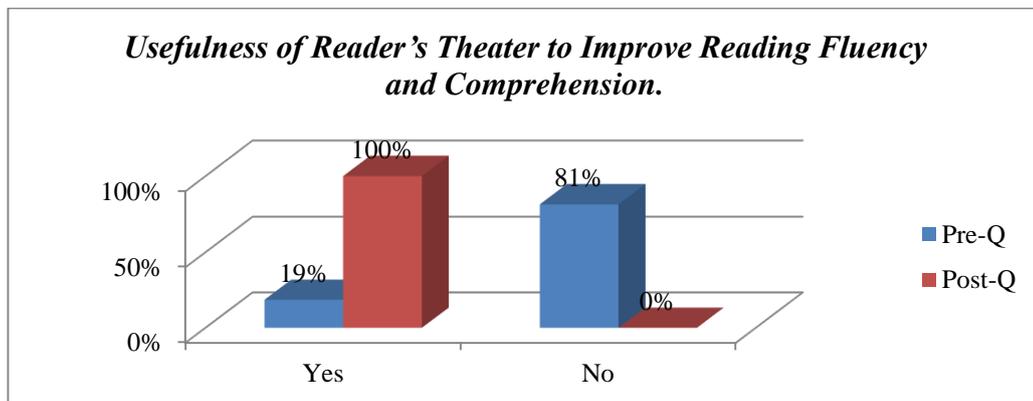
Question 3: Do you think that Reader’s Theater help you to improve reading fluency and comprehension?

a. Table 4

Usefulness of Reader’s Theater to Improve Reading Fluency and Comprehension.

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	5	19	27	100
No	22	81	0	0
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 3



c. Interpretation and Analysis

Based on the results of table 4, most of students represented by 81% said that Reader's Theater strategy is not helpful to improve reading fluency and comprehension. This indicates students did not know how to develop their reading skills before the application of this strategy. But, after the intervention, all students considered this strategy is helpful to improve their reading fluency and comprehension. It was the first time students worked with a reading strategy and this experience made them aware of the effectiveness of this kind of strategies to improve their reading skills. Bafile (2005) has seen noticeable improvements in her students because of repeated exposure to the text. They began to develop fluency and comprehension because they become very familiar with the text and the plot structure.

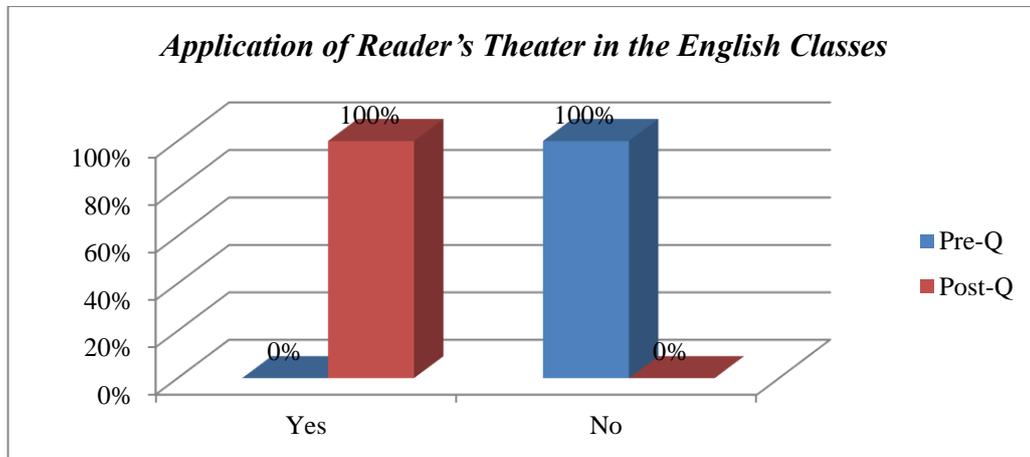
Question 4: Does the teacher apply Reader's Theater to work on reading comprehension and fluency in the English classes?

a. Table 5

Application of Reader's Theater in the English Classes.

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Yes	00	0	27	100
No	27	100	0	0
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 4



c. Interpretation and Analysis

According to the results of table 5, all the students agreed their teacher did not applied Reader's Theater strategy to improve reading fluency and comprehension, before the intervention. It would be said that students were not developing their reading skills appropriately, due to the lack of suitable strategies that motivate them to read fluently and comprehensibly. While, at the end of the intervention all students said the teacher applied Reader's Theater Strategy. They changed their answer since, their teacher worked with this strategy in class, because of its benefits and effectiveness to improve students' reading skills.

Educators have long elaborated on the benefits of using Readers Theatre and related strategies for increasing reading fluency and sight-word vocabulary, improving reading comprehension, providing opportunities to interpret dialogue and communicate meaning (Mraz, Nichols, Caldwell, Beisley, Sargent, & Rupley, 2013).

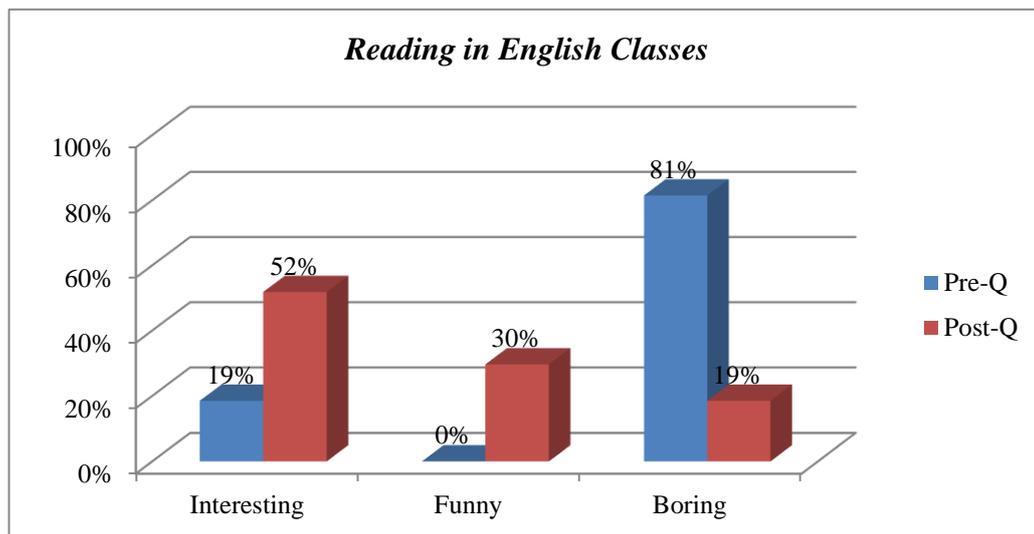
Question 5: Learning to read during English classes is?

a. Table 6

Reading in English Classes.

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Interesting	5	19	14	52
Funny	0	0	8	30
Boring	22	81	5	19
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 5



c. Interpretation and Analysis

The findings of table 6 shows that before the intervention, the majority of students which represent 81% considered that learning to read is boring. This indicates that classes were not catching students' attention and were not developed with appropriate reading material. However, at the end of the intervention was noticeable that students changed their attitude about reading, since, more than half of students, which is 52% considered reading is interesting and 30% answered

reading is funny, which means they got engaged in reading and enjoyed it. But 19% of students still think reading is boring.

Sebesta (2014) said that students can be really motivated through Readers Theatre because it gives participants a purpose for repeated reading, leading to fluency (...). Readers Theatre lets students apply comprehension skills, including author's purpose, character traits, mood and theme.

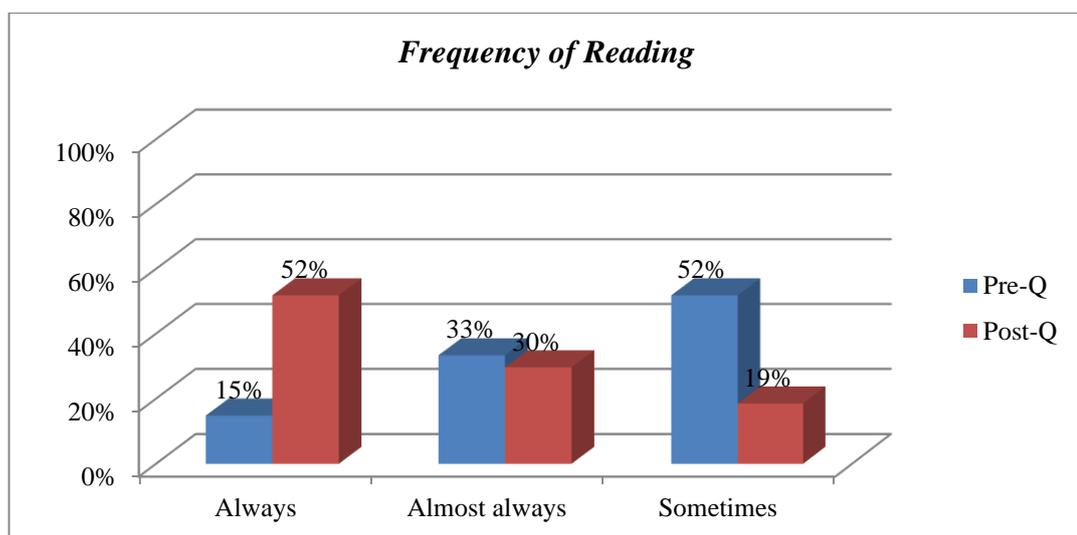
Question 6: How often do you read?

a. Table 7

Frequency of Reading

Options	Pre-Questionnaire		Post-Questionnaire	
	f	%	f	%
Always	4	15	14	52
Almost always	9	33	8	30
Sometimes	14	52	5	19
Total	27	100	27	100

b. Figure 6



c. Interpretation and Analysis

The results illustrated in table 7, indicates that before the intervention, more than half of students, that is 52% sometimes read. This reflects that students were not interested in reading by themselves and were not enabled to read neither in school nor at home. But, after the application of Reader's Theater, students increased their reading time, doing it always at home and in the class.

As Robertson (2009) says, through reader's theater strategy students develop interest in reading. Reader's theater motivates reluctant readers and provides fluent readers the opportunity to explore genre and characterization.

Post-Test Results

Objective five: To verify the success or failure of the application of Reader's Theater as a strategy to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension.

a. Table 8

Post-test Scores of Eighth Year Students in Reading Skills

Students' code	RC /6	F /4	Total /10
UELDANU 001	5	1	6
UELDANU 002	5	2	7
UELDANU 003	3.5	2	5.5
UELDANU 004	4	2	6
UELDANU 005	5.6	1	6.6
UELDANU 006	4	1	5
UELDANU 007	4	1	5
UELDANU 008	4.5	1	5.5
UELDANU 009	3.8	2	5.8
UELDANU 010	4.2	2	6.2
UELDANU 011	4.2	1	5.2
UELDANU 012	5	2	7
UELDANU 013	4.2	2	6.2
UELDANU 014	4.6	1	5.6
UELDANU 015	5.6	2	7.6
UELDANU 016	4.6	2	6.6
UELDANU 017	5	1	6
UELDANU 018	4.6	1	5.6
UELDANU 019	5	2	7
UELDANU 020	5.2	2	7.2
UELDANU 021	5.6	1	6.6
UELDANU 022	3.4	1	5
UELDANU 023	5.8	2	7.8
UELDANU 024	4	1	5
UELDANU 025	4	1	5
UELDANU 026	5	1	6.4
UELDANU 027	4.9	1	5.9
Mean	4,6	1,4	6

Note. UELDANU= Unidad Educativa Lauro Damerval Ayora N° 1; 001= Students' code; RC= Reading Comprehension; F= Fluency

b. Interpretation and Analysis

The results in table 8 present the total score mean students gathered, 6/10 which was below the expected level 8/10. The highest score mean 4.6/6 was for reading comprehension placing students on a very good level (see scale on page 145) which

means that they understood the majority of straightforward information from the text. In the other case, it was noticeable that the lowest score mean was 1.4/4 in reading fluency which demonstrates students could not overcome the difficulties they had at the beginning of the intervention in this aspect. This means students continue misreading words, pausing unnecessarily, reading without extracting meaningful phrases and without emphasizing when needed.

According to Richard R. Day & Jeong-suk (2005) Literal comprehension, which is a type of reading comprehension refers to an understanding of simple information from the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times, and locations. Questions of literal comprehension can be answered directly and explicitly from the text; all the information students are asked to find is actually detailed on the text.

A fluent reader thinks about reading accurately, with appropriate rate and phrasing, and with expression (The MacGraw-Hill Companies, 2015).

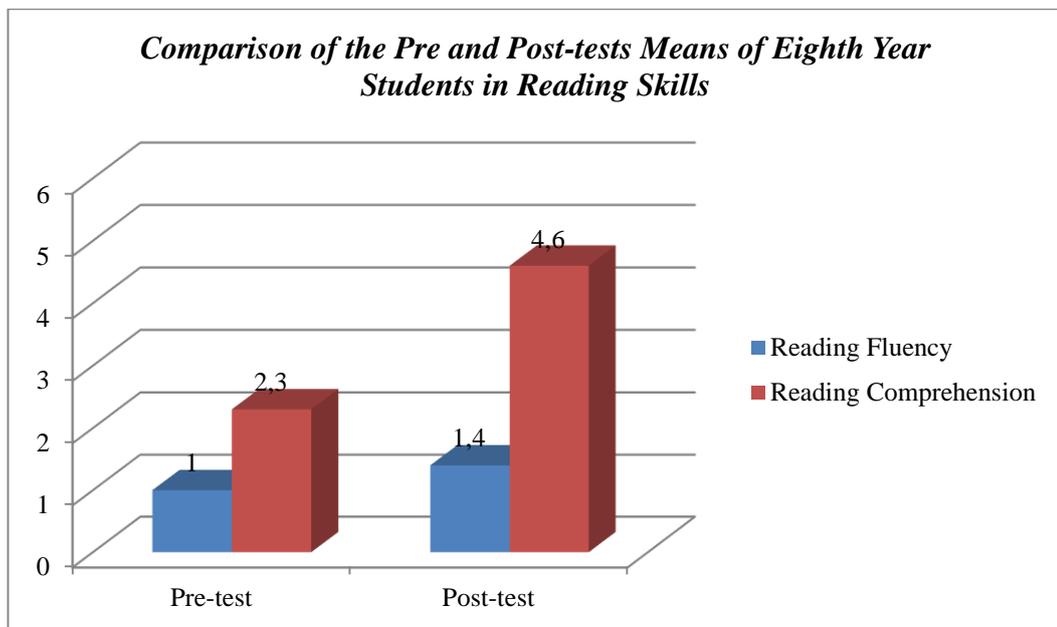
Comparing Pre and Post-Tests Means

a. Table 9

Comparison of the Pre and Post-Tests Means of Eighth Year Students in Reading Skills

	Pre-test /10	Post-test /10
Reading Comprehension	2,3	4,6
Reading Fluency	1	1,4
Total	3.3	6

b. Figure 7



c. Interpretation and Analysis

Observing the results in table 9 and figure 7, it can be expressed that the strategy applied during the development of this research work helped students to enhance their reading comprehension, which is reflected on the difference between the pre-test mean of 2.3/10 and the post-test mean of 4.6 out of 10. It is noticeable

students achieved a very good performance in reading comprehension. However, students did not enhance their reading fluency as it was expected, which is shown in their pre-test mean of 1/4 and their post-test media of 1.4/4. Students still need to read more often to get better results.

g. DISCUSSION

Reader's Theater as a strategy to enhance reading fluency and comprehension among 8TH year students of Basic Education, at "Unidad Educativa Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city, during the school year 2014-2015. The implementation of Reader's Theater caused an improvement in students' reading skills. Students' pre-test mean was 3.3/10. But, after the intervention, the post-test mean was 6/10. This improvement in students' reading skills is showed statistically. Judy Freeman, cited by Bafle (2005) a children's consultant said: "If you're searching for a way to get your children reading aloud with comprehension, expression, fluency, and joy, Reader's Theater is a miracle (...).

The aspects students were tested within reading fluency were accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression. Withing reading comprehension the aspect was literal comprehension. Through the results of the pre and post-test and pre and post-questionnaire, it was noticeable the improvement students got. This means that Reader's Theater strategy is effective in enhancing students reading skills.

When the intervention plan started, students were a little uncomfortable working with Reader's Theater strategy, because they did not like to read and have not had experience working with this strategy before. During the process the students preferred working individually than in group. When students got in groups, it was difficult to get them practice all the time, some of them felt uncomfortable working with some classmates, and others got easily distracted, so their progress in fluency was slow. At the end of the intervention students felt motivated working with

Reader's Theater, but still they need to read more to reach fluency. Reader's Theater had a great impact on students' reading comprehension.

Further, during this research work some strengths and difficulties came up which facilitated and stopped the students' progress. The strength was that the majority of students were pleasant finding simple information from texts, and the most relevant difficulty students faced was that it took too much time to get students involved in the group work; they looked the way of joining just with close friends. Also, it was a little difficult to get each group focused on re-reading the story scripts, since they were a big number of students, making it harder to control all the groups at once. While one group was controlled, the others were distracted.

In addition, it is important to mention that, since students worked with reader's theater, a big difference between the beginning and the ending of the intervention was shown on the results of the tests and questionnaires applied to students. Reader's Theater contributed in enhancing students' reading comprehension, which permitted them to enrich their lexicon and understand simple texts.

h. CONCLUSIONS

- The reading limitations the eighth year students of Basic Education were concerning reading fluency and reading comprehension. These aspects involved mispronouncing of the words, a too slow or too fast reading, reading of incomplete sentences, lack of attention to punctuation, reading in a monotone voice and lack of understanding the texts. Students also showed little interest in reading by themselves.
- The application of Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity, in the aspect of reading comprehension helped students to learn new words, and to pick up simple information from the texts. In the aspect of reading fluency students supported each other in their groups to reach the best performance in front of the class.
- Reader's Theater strategy enhanced students' reading skills, they became interactive readers during the English class periods. Their interest in reading actively increased and the opportunities to explore new ways of finding reading entertaining and enjoying also were incremented.

i. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Teachers should start a course program or a new phase of teaching by diagnosing the level of the students' reading skills in order to be aware of their strengths and weaknesses, and plan activities with Reader's Theater strategy to overcome the difficulties that limit the students' progress on this skill
- Teachers should apply new and appropriate strategies, such as Reader's Theater in order to teach in an interesting, enjoyable and funny way thus, get students engaged in improving their reading skills. Considering that the stipulated time should be enough to enable students accomplish with the required tasks.
- At the end of the research work, it was noticeable that Reader's Theater had a positive effect on students' reading skill, mainly in reading comprehension. So, it is advisable for teachers to continue using Reader's Theater Strategy, which enables students to enhance their reading skills, it also provides them opportunities to practice their reading through interactive activities.

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k. ANNEXES



UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL DE LOJA

ÁREA DE LA EDUCACIÓN, EL ARTE Y LA COMUNICACIÓN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT

THEME

READER'S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "LAURO DAMERVAL AYORA" N°1 IN LOJA CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015.

This thesis project is a previous requirement to obtain the Bachelor's Degree in Science of Education, English Language specialization.

AUTHOR

JHULEYDI CECIBEL CASTILLO SIGUENZA

LOJA – ECUADOR

2015

a. THEME

READER'S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA "LAURO DAMERVAL AYORA" N°1 IN LOJA CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015.

b. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Background

The research work will be developed at Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1. This institution has its origins in October, 1940. It started as a single room school, during the mayoralty of Mr. Alfredo Rodríguez. Due to the students’ population increased, the school became a complete one.

Later, on June 26th, 1967 under the direction of Ms. Gloria Ochoa Torres it was possible to get its own building. In September of 1967, by decree No. 1430 of Ministry of Education this institution was designated with the name of “Lauro Damerval Ayora”.

On January 17th, 1984 the kindergarten was created and later, from the beginning of the academic year 2013-2014 the first year of unified general baccalaureate was implemented as well as the subjects of Computing, English Language, Laboratory, Physical Education and Aesthetics Culture.

Nowadays this institution is a “Unidad Educativa” that features initial level, school and high school. It counts with a teaching staff of 44 professionals and it is directed by Dr. Francisco Martinez.

Description of the current situation of the research problem

The research work will be focused on the use of Reader's Theater as a strategy to enhance students' reading fluency and comprehension. The selected props to develop this research are the eighth year students of Basic Education.

Reading is fundamental to function in today's society. There are many adults who cannot read well enough to understand the instructions on a medicine bottle. That is a scary thought especially for their children. Filling out applications becomes impossible without help. Reading road or warning signs is difficult. Even following a map becomes a chore. Day-to-day activities that many people take for granted become a source of frustration, anger and fear. Also, many well-paying jobs require reading as a part of job performance. There are reports and memos which must be read and responded to. Poor reading skills increase the amount of time it takes to absorb and react in the workplace. A person is limited in what they can accomplish without good reading and comprehension skills. Reading is important because it develops the mind. The mind is a muscle. It needs exercise. Understanding the written word is one way the mind grows in its ability.

Some problems that avoid a successful reading are: Lack of concentration, demotivation, a difficult textbook, dissatisfaction with speed or reading comprehension, and limited vocabulary. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress report, in America, 37% of fourth graders struggle with reading problems so severe that it is impossible to successfully understand and complete normal fourth grade assignments. Further, 3 out of 4 of that group read so

poorly; they have little chance at educational progress and ultimate educational attainment (LearningRx Franchise Corp., 2015).

In Loja city, the members of the editorial board of the newspaper La Hora, agreed that it's important young people improve their reading habits. They think that the problem is in reading levels, i.e., the time spent and the type of texts that are preferred today. They believe that at homes, schools and colleges, reading habits can be improved. Denisse Condolo, Daniel Alvarez Burneo Institute's student said that young people are not motivated to read because the technology offers several options to invest their free time. Furthermore, she believes that meetings between friends affect their scale of preferences. "Youth turns a meeting to an occurrence and neglects issues of importance," said the girl.

Adriana Torres, student of Eugenio Espejo School said that reading is the greatest source of knowledge of people, "but young people do not pay attention because they do not adopt a critical awareness to the reality that surrounds us". Victor Quezada from La Dolorosa School thinks it is a matter of education and parents with teachers should motivate young people to be inclined to the love of reading. He proposes that classroom teachers should dedicate a space to read texts, students like Andrea Roldan, student of Calasanz, goes further and says that at home parents should encourage their children to read, she believes that the best way to teach, is by example, so she encourages parents to begin this task.

Lisbeth Carolina, Inmaculada's student asks youth to take the initiative and build critical thinking about their development and training. Borys Sarango, San

Francisco's student, indicated that reading levels are born at home and should be strengthened there. Everybody concluded that youth must improve the reading habits considering the professional requirements imposed in the new millennium. 22 members make up the Editorial Board of Journal la Hora. (La Hora, 2008).

As it can be seen, reading is a really important part of people's lives and as around the world, not all people have a good reading level, it happens in our city as it was mentioned above. Thus, this research work is focused on the use of reader's theater as a strategy to enhance reading comprehension and fluency. Similar situation is happening with students of eighth year of Basic Education in the Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1. After some observations done it was possible to notice that, even students know how print works, they are not motivated to read, actually for them reading, is a boring activity, disregarding the pleasures of it. The low knowledge of vocabulary prevents students to understand various kinds of texts on different areas. Students are not able to answer correctly all the reading comprehension questions based on a text, which reflects a low level of literal meaning. They also, hesitate when new words come up, so that, students are not able to read with accuracy, expression, phrasing and the rate necessary to comprehend the text which simultaneously, makes them impossible to read with fluency.

These aspects not only affect the language learning but also the achievement of the students' reading fluency and comprehension. Therefore, the application of Reader's theater strategy during the development of the lessons will support students reading fluency and comprehension. Reader's theater is a highly

motivational reading strategy which is developed by using students' voice, facial expressions, and gestures. The only requirement is the script; other materials such as costumes, props, and make-up are not needed. Through the aloud reading they also increase reading fluency.

More recent studies by Griffith and Rasinski (2004) and Young and Rasinski (2009) indicate that Readers Theatre promotes fluency and interest in reading. Reader's Theater offers an entertaining and engaging way of improving fluency and enhancing comprehension.

So, the goal for these students is to develop a high level of accuracy in word recognition and background knowledge about many topics appreciating the pleasures of reading. This group will receive group instruction.

The research problem

How does Reader's Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Delimitation of the research

Temporal

This research will be developed during the academic period 2014–2015

Spatial

The present project will be applied at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora"

Nº1

Observation Units

This research will count with the English teacher and students of eighth year of basic education.

Sub-problems

- What kind of theoretical references about reading skills and Reader's Theater are useful for the eighth year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1, during the school year 2014 – 2015?
- What are the factors do not permit students' progress on their reading skill?
- What are the main phases of the intervention plan that address the current issues of reading fluency and comprehension through the use of Reader's Theater of the eighth year of Basic Education?
- How is Reader's Theater strategy implemented to enhance reading fluency and comprehension?
- How does Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity solve the issues of students' reading fluency and comprehension?

c. JUSTIFICATION

The research work Reader's Theater as a strategy to enhance reading fluency and comprehension has been chosen because it is a pleasant way for understanding and representing oral reading, promoting the practice of the language, developing comprehension skills and reaching reading fluency.

Reader's Theater is applicable because it makes students get engaged with reading and become better on it, so that, they do not get bored re-reading the same script many times that directs to fluency. Re-reading leads to successful silent reading. It allows students put into practice comprehension skills, considering author's intention, characters' role, environment and topic.

Reader's Theater really engages students in repeated reading developing fluency and comprehension since they become very familiar with the text and its structure. Students also improve their pronunciation and presentation skills based on the much practice they do, that leads to self-confidence while reading out loud in front of the class, as well to extensive reading.

This project is an opportunity for the researcher to gain experience and learn how to work better as a future professional of teaching.

The present research work is an important document since it is a previous requirement of the Universidad Nacional de Loja to get the Bachelor's Degree in Sciences of Education, English Language Specialization.

d. OBJECTIVES

General

- To enhance reading fluency and comprehension through the implementation of reader's theater strategy among eighth year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1, in Loja city, during the school year 2014 – 2015

Specific

- To investigate the theoretical references about reading skill and Reader's Theater strategy to help students to build their reading fluency and comprehension.
- To detect the difficulties that limit to 8TH year students of Basic Education at "Unidad Educativa Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city to improve their reading skills.
- To arrange a plan which allows students improve their reading skills through Reader's Theater strategy.
- To execute Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity to develop reading skill.
- To verify the success or failure of the application of Reader's Theater as a strategy to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension.

e. THEORETICAL FRAME

Reading

Definition

Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Learn how readers integrate these facets to make meaning from print.

Reading is making meaning from print. It requires people:

- Identify the words in print – a process called word recognition
- Construct an understanding from them – a process called comprehension
- Coordinate identifying words and making meaning so that reading is automatic and accurate – an achievement called fluency

Sometimes you can make meaning from print without being able to identify all the words. Remember the last time you got a note in messy handwriting? You may have understood it, even though you couldn't decipher all the scribbles. Sometimes you can identify words without being able to construct much meaning from them. Read the opening lines of Lewis Carroll's poem, "Jabberwocky," and you'll see what I mean.

'T was brillig, and the slithy toves

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All mimsy were the boro goves,

And the momeraths out grabe.

Finally, sometimes you can identify words and comprehend them, but if the processes don't come together smoothly, reading will still be a labored process. For example, try reading the following sentence:

It isn't as if the words are
difficult to identify or understand, but the spaces
make you pause between words, which means your
reading is less fluent.

Reading in its fullest sense involves weaving together word recognition and comprehension in a fluent manner. These three processes are complex, and each is important. How complex? Here goes?

To develop word recognition, children need to learn:

- How to break apart and manipulate the sounds in words – this is **phonemic awareness**

Example: *feet* has three sounds: /f/, /e/, and /t/

- Certain letters are used to represent certain sounds – this is the **alphabetic principle**

Example: *s* and *h* make the /sh/ sound

- How to apply their knowledge of letter-sound relationships to sound out words that are new to them – this is **decoding**

Example: ssssspppooooon – spoon!

- How to analyze words and spelling patterns in order to become more efficient at reading words – this is **word study**

Example: *Bookworm* has two words I know: *book* and *worm*.

- To expand the number of words they can identify automatically, called their **sight vocabulary**

Example: Oh, I know that word – *the*!

To develop comprehension, children need to develop:

- **Background knowledge** about many topics

Example: This book is about zoos – that's where lots of animals live.

- Extensive **oral and print vocabularies**

Example: Look at my trucks – I have a tractor, and a fire engine, and a bulldozer.

- Understandings about **how the English language works**

Example: We say she *went* home, not she *goed* home.

- Understandings about **how print works**

Example: reading goes from left to right

- Knowledge of **various kinds of texts**

Example: I bet they live happily ever after.

- **Various purposes for reading**

Example: I want to know what ladybugs eat.

- **Strategies for constructing meaning** from text, and for problem solving when meaning breaks down

Example: This isn't making sense. Let me go back and re-read it.

To develop fluency, children need to:

- Develop a high level of **accuracy** in word recognition
- Maintain a **rate** of reading brisk enough to facilitate comprehension
- Use **phrasing and expression** so that oral reading sounds like speech
- Transform deliberate strategies for word recognition and comprehension into **automatic skills**

But if reading is not pleasurable or fulfilling, children won't choose to read, and they will not get the practice they need to become fluent readers.

Therefore, **reading also means developing and maintaining the motivation to read**. Reading is an active process of constructing meaning? The key word here is active.

To develop and maintain the motivation to read, children need to:

- Appreciate the **pleasures** of reading
- View reading as a **social** act, to be shared with others
- See reading as an opportunity to explore their **interests**
- Read widely for a variety of **purposes**, from enjoyment to gathering information.

- Become comfortable with a variety of different written forms and **genres**.
(Leipzig, 2001)

The 5 most important aspects of learning to read

When a child takes their first steps on their learning to read journey, there are five core areas of literacy that they will need to develop in order to achieve reading success:

Phonemic Awareness

Every word is made up of a combination of individual units of sound, called phonemes. For instance, the word cat is made up of three individual sounds; c/a/t. Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify and manipulate these individual units of sound. It is the most fundamental skill children need to acquire when learning to read. Word games, language play, rhymes and simply reading are all very effective ways to develop phonemic awareness.

Phonics

Building directly from phonemic awareness, phonics is a method of instruction that introduces children to the link between letters and sounds, known as the alphabetic principle. One of the major difficulties children can have when learning to read, is understanding the alphabetic principle. Failure to grasp that written spellings represent the sounds of spoken words makes it difficult to recognize printed words. There are countless phonics activities available either online or in

books that can help children develop this critical skill, although these activities should always be complemented with regular reading.

Vocabulary

Every child approaches reading with different levels of ability. The larger a child's speaking and listening vocabulary, the more words they will be able to easily map to their reading and writing vocabularies. Reading a wide variety of books is one of the best ways for a child to expand their vocabulary. Some of the most fundamental words that a child will learn when starting to read are sight words – words like 'is', 'the', 'and', 'it', etc. that can often be spelled irregularly and therefore need to be learned 'at sight.' The first 100 sight words make up more than fifty per cent of most early texts; therefore they are very important for a child to develop early on in their reading journey.

Fluency

Fluency enables readers to quickly span the gap between recognising a word and understanding its meaning. It's where the magic of reading takes place. Because fluent readers don't have to concentrate on decoding words, they can focus more on interpreting the meaning conveyed by words and sentences. Fluency is something that comes as a child develops their phonemic awareness, phonics skills and vocabulary. Regular reading practise is essential to developing fluency. Reading regularly to your child can also provide them with a vocal model to help them understand what fluent reading sounds like.

Comprehension

Reading for meaning is the ultimate goal of learning to read. Comprehension is a skill that will not only affect a child's future reading ability but also their academic ability throughout school and beyond. Asking your child questions or encouraging them to ask questions about a book they are reading is a great way to both monitor how much they understand and improve their comprehension. (Reading eggs, 2013)

Reading Fluency

Definition

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. In order to understand what they read, children must be able to *read fluently* whether they are reading aloud or silently. When reading aloud, fluent readers read in phrases and add intonation appropriately. Their reading is smooth and has expression. (Reading Rockets, 2015)

Importance

Reading fluency is the power to read quickly and accurately. The more fluent a reader, the more he or she automatically groups and recognizes words. Fluent readers excel at oral reading, which is highlighted by smooth and natural expression.

Reading fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and reading comprehension. Since fluent readers don't have to concentrate on decoding the actual words, they can focus their attention on what the text actually means. They can make mental connections throughout the text, as well as apply those connections to their personal backgrounds and experiences. Simply, fluent readers recognize the words and comprehend their overall meaning at the same time. (LearningRx Franchise Corp., 2015)

Read with Accuracy, Appropriate Rate, Phrasing, and Expression

To be a fluent reader, you need to think about reading accurately, with appropriate rate and phrasing, and with expression:

- Accuracy
- Rate
- Phrasing
- Expression

Accuracy

Accuracy means reading the words in a selection correctly. There are strategies you can use to help you read words. For example, you can sound out the letters in a word or reread the sentence to figure out the meaning of an unknown word.

Rate

Rate is the speed with which you are speaking. Readers need to speak at an

appropriate rate so listeners understand the message. Reading too fast or too slow makes the reading hard to understand. To sound natural, readers pause, stop, speak at a normal pace, speed up, or slow down at certain parts.

Phrasing

When you think about pausing, you are focusing on **phrasing**. When you pause or stop, you are chunking the text into small, meaningful phrases. All selections include vital clues that signal a stop or a pause. Commas and end punctuation indicate a pause or a stop. Other pauses come after words that are grouped together. Let's try it!

Expression

As you read a selection, think about the mood, or feeling that you get from a selection. The topic and words that an author uses influence the mood. There are many different ways that a selection can make you feel.

Understanding the mood of a selection can help you read aloud with **expression**. If you read every word in the same way, your reading would sound uninteresting. To show expression, you change your voice when pronouncing different words and phrases. (The MacGraw-Hill Companies, 2015)

The Struggle

Reading fluency is a significant struggle for many. The less fluent a reader, the more he or she must focus on decoding individual words. Less fluent readers have

difficulty with oral reading, which is often slow, choppy, and without natural expression. Less fluent readers must focus their time and attention on figuring out the words, leaving little room for actually understanding the text. Since reading fluency is the key to reading comprehension, less fluent readers often fall behind in educational and professional achievement.

Although some readers identify words well when those words are alone or on a list, they may not read the same words fluently when they appear in a passage of text. Automatic word recognition is an important reading skill, but it's not the end of the story. It's crucial to help students move from word recognition *in isolation* to reading fluency *in context*. This takes training and practice.

The Findings

Reading fluency is defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) as: “the ease or ‘naturalness’ of reading,” including how a reader (i) groups or phrases words as revealed through intonation, stress, and pauses; (ii) adheres to the writer’s syntax; and (iii) expresses oneself in feeling, anticipation, and characterization during oral reading.

In 1995, a significant study on reading fluency was conducted by the NAEP. It found that 44% of U.S. fourth graders were on the lower end of the fluency scale. The study also confirmed the tight correlation between reading fluency and reading comprehension. The study concluded that reading fluency is “a neglected reading skill in many American classrooms, affecting many students’ reading

comprehension.” (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Listening to Children Read Aloud*, 15. Washington, DC: 1995.)

Researchers at the National Institute for Literacy have investigated two major instructional approaches related to reading fluency. The first is repeated and monitored oral reading, where students read passages aloud several times and receive guidance and feedback from the instructor. The second is independent silent reading, where students are encouraged to read extensively on their own. So, what was their key finding?

“Repeated and monitored oral reading improves reading fluency and overall reading achievement.” (National Institute for Literacy website, 2006)

The Power of Reading Out Loud

At LearningRx, we understand that better reading fluency is the key to better reading comprehension. Our clinical and scientific research confirms that students who read and reread passages orally as they receive guidance and feedback become better readers. Indeed, repeated oral reading significantly improves reading fluency for a lifetime. Therefore, it’s important to understand your student’s strengths and weaknesses on the reading fluency scale. To get a basic understanding of your child’s level of reading fluency. (Benchmark Education Company, 2015)

Instruction

As the importance of fluency in reading ability has been recognized more educators are including a fluency component in their reading education programs. There are a number of best practices for helping children develop reading fluency.

Modeling

Adult modeling is essential for helping students, especially those in the elementary grades, develop fluency. Many young readers do not intuit the pace at which they must read to comprehend a text. Similarly, expression and phrasing may not be readily apparent to them. This is why it is important that adults read aloud to children using appropriate phrasing, expression and pacing. When we model these aspects of reading for children they begin to develop an understanding not only of the ways that they can use fluency in their own reading, but also the importance of it for reading comprehension. Teachers and parents should employ a wide variety of high interest texts in different genres for modeling fluency. While the greatest impact on fluency is seen when adults model it with younger children, read aloud should not be restricted to the elementary grades. Middle and high school aged students, especially those with reading difficulties, continue to benefit from fluency modeling through adult read aloud.

Sight Words Instruction

A strong foundation in basic vocabulary is one of the primary components of fluency. Because fluency depends on a reader's ability to quickly and accurately

decode words, sight word instruction has a significant and beneficial effect on this aspect of reading. Sight words make up between 50 and 70% of all words in children's literature. When a young reader is able to efficiently move through this percentage of the words on a page, his fluency and comprehension rates increase. Therefore sight word instruction is essential to improve a reader's fluency.

Oral Reading Strategies for Increasing Fluency

Guided Oral Reading

Guided oral reading is an excellent tool for improving fluency. This strategy benefits children in developing accuracy and word recognition skills, two of the components of fluency. In this activity, an adult works one-on-one with a child. The child reads a text that is at or slightly above her independent reading level aloud with the adult guiding her. The role of the adult is not to constantly correct the child's oral reading, but to guide her in applying appropriate strategies for comprehending the text. For example, if the reader comes to an unfamiliar word the adult can encourage her to use phonics to sound out each phoneme in and then to blend these together to create the entire word. Similarly, if a child is reading with little expression, the adult can ask her guiding questions about the sort of emotional associations she might have with certain words to help her elicit these when reading aloud.

Repetitive Oral Reading

Repetitive oral reading is a strategy for improving a reader's fluency as well as his vocabulary. Like guided oral reading, repetitive reading is conducted one-on-one. The adult should select a text that is at least 50 words long and is at or slightly above the child's independent reading level. The child reads the selection aloud several times with the adult providing guiding feedback focusing on different elements of fluency each time the text is read. Each time the child reads the piece his fluency should increase. By the final reading he should be able to read the passage aloud at an appropriate rate of fluency. Repetitive oral reading does not have to be only an adult-child activity. Teachers can pair children together for repetitive oral reading practice. When choosing student pairs teachers should consider student personalities as well as reading abilities. Generally, children with low fluency rates should be paired with compassionate students who are at or above grade level in their fluency.

Choral Reading

Choral reading is another beneficial one-on-one oral reading activity for children. For this activity the paired readers sit close together with a single copy of the text. The two read the text aloud with the adult (or stronger student reader) reading it at a slightly faster rate than the other. As the pair reads the adult (or stronger student reader) should track the words on the page with a finger to help the other reader follow along. This encourages child to focus her attention on the words on the page.

Readers' Theatre

Readers' theatre is an excellent whole class or small group activity for improving fluency. In readers' theatre the readers "perform" a dramatic script using only their voices. While there are many texts specifically designed to be used for readers' theatre (a good number are available online) any piece of drama may be used. Students are assigned roles in the play and are given an opportunity to silently read over the script. Then they read it aloud focusing on fluency. The teacher should guide students in using appropriate pacing, expression and phrasing. Readers' theatre is most beneficial when the script is read aloud several times because this gives the readers multiple opportunities to practice reading it fluently. This strategy is particularly useful in developing the prosody component of fluency.

Silent Reading Strategies for Increasing Fluency

Silent Sustained Reading (SSR)

While most strategies for improving fluency are conducted orally and cooperatively, one of the most beneficial, silent sustained reading is performed silently and independently. In silent sustained reading or SSR children spend a pre-selected amount of time silently reading texts that they have chosen. The goal of this activity is to give them opportunities to engage in pleasurable, sustained reading. It is important that children are able to select what they read during this activity because choice increases their motivation and ability to focus. It is also

essential that the SSR period be uninterrupted. Fluency increases when a reader is given the time to “get into” a text.

Audio-books

Audio-books provide an excellent bridge between decoding and comprehension for struggling readers. Children who are reluctant to read or who have particularly low rates of fluency benefit from hearing a text read aloud while following along in a print version of it. When they hear the book these children pick up on the speed and prosody appropriate to the reading task and are able to accurately identify more words. The audio-book serves as a positive fluency model for the reader. (k12reader.com, 2015)

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is the process of making meaning from text. The goal, therefore, is to gain an overall understanding of what is described in the text rather than to obtain meaning from isolated words or sentences. In understanding read text information children develop mental models, or representations of meaning of the text ideas during the reading process. There are two classes of mental models: a text-based model, which is a mental representation of the propositions of the text and a situation model consisting of what the text is perceived to be about Kintsch van Dijk and Kintsch cited by (Woolley, 2011).

Although word recognition, decoding, and fluency are building blocks of effective reading, the ability to comprehend text is the ultimate goal of reading

instruction. Comprehension is a prerequisite for acquiring content knowledge and expressing ideas and opinions through discussion and writing.

Comprehension is evident when readers can:

- Interpret and evaluate events, dialogue, ideas, and information
- Connect information to what they already know
- Adjust current knowledge to include new ideas or look at those ideas in a different way
- Determine and remember the most important points in the reading
- Read “between the lines” to understand underlying meanings

Comprehension strategies work together like a finely tuned machine. The reader begins to construct meaning by selecting and previewing the text. During reading, comprehension builds through predicting, inferring, synthesizing, and seeking answers to questions that arise. After reading, deeper meaning is constructed through reviewing, rereading portions of the text, discussion, and thoughtful reflection. During each of these phases, the reader relates the text to his own life experiences.

Comprehension is powerful because the ability to construct meaning comes from the mind of the reader. Therefore, specific comprehension instruction—modeling during read-aloud and shared reading, targeted mini-lessons, and varied opportunities for practice during small-group and independent reading—is crucial to the development of strategic, effective readers (...) (Benchmark Education Company, 1997, 2015).

Importance of Reading Comprehension Skills

Reading comprehension skills increase the pleasure and effectiveness of reading. Strong reading comprehension skills help in all the other subjects and in the personal and professional lives.

The high stake tests that control advancement through elementary, middle, and high school and that determine entrance to college are in large parts, a measure of reading comprehension skills. And while there are test preparation courses which will provide a few short-cuts to improve test-taking strategies, these standardized tests tend to be very effective in measuring a readers reading comprehension skills.

In short, building reading comprehension skills requires a long term strategy in which all the reading skills areas (phonics, fluency and vocabulary) will contribute to success (Miami University, 2010).

Types of comprehension

The six types of comprehension that we propose and discuss are based on our experiences in teaching reading and developing materials. We do not intend this taxonomy to cover all possible interpretations of comprehension; we have found the six types to be useful in helping our students become interactive readers. Our taxonomy has been influenced in particular by the work of Pearson and Johnson (1972) and Nuttall (1996).

Literal comprehension

Literal comprehension refers to an understanding of the straightforward meaning of the text, such as facts, vocabulary, dates, times, and locations. Questions of literal comprehension can be answered directly and explicitly from the text. In our experiences working with teachers, we have found that they often check on literal comprehension first to make sure that their students have understood the basic or surface meaning of the text.

An example of a literal comprehension question about this article is: How many types of comprehension do the authors discuss?

Reorganization

The next type of comprehension is reorganization. Reorganization is based on a literal understanding of the text; students must use information from various parts of the text and combine them for additional understanding. For example, we might read at the beginning of a text that a woman named Maria Kim was born in 1945 and then later at the end of the text that she died in 1990. In order to answer this question, *How old was Maria Kim when she died?* the student has to put together two pieces of information that are from different parts of the text.

Questions that address this type of comprehension are important because they teach students to examine the text in its entirety, helping them move from a sentence-by-sentence consideration of the text to a more global view. In our

experience, students generally find reorganization questions somewhat more difficult than straightforward literal comprehension questions.

Inference

Making inferences involves more than a literal understanding. Students may initially have a difficult time answering inference questions because the answers are based on material that is in the text but not explicitly stated. An inference involves students combining their literal understanding of the text with their own knowledge and intuitions.

An example of a question that requires the reader to make an inference is: *Are the authors of this article experienced language teachers?* The answer is not in the text but there is information in the third paragraph, page 2 of this article that allows the reader to make a good inference: "These types of comprehension and forms of questions are a result of our work in teaching foreign language reading and in developing materials for teaching foreign language reading." Readers are required to use their knowledge of the field, teaching foreign language reading, with what they have gained from reading the article, in particular that sentence, to construct an appropriate answer. That is, readers might understand that newcomers to the profession generally do not develop materials or write articles, so the authors are probably experienced language teachers.

Prediction

The fourth comprehension type, *prediction*, involves students using both their understanding of the passage and their own knowledge of the topic and related matters in a systematic fashion to determine what might happen next or after a story ends.

We use two varieties of prediction, while-reading and post- (after) reading. While-reading prediction questions differ from post-reading prediction questions in that students can immediately learn the accuracy of their predictions by continuing to read the passage. For example, students could read the first two paragraphs of a passage and then be asked a question about what might happen next. They can determine the answer by reading the remainder of the text.

In contrast, post-reading prediction questions generally have no right answers in that students cannot continue to read to confirm their predictions. However, predictions must be supported by information from the text. Generally, scholarly articles, such as this one, do not allow for post-reading prediction questions. Other types of writing, such as fiction, are fertile ground for such questions. To illustrate, consider a romance in which the woman and man are married as the novel comes to a close. A post-reading prediction question might be: *Do you think they will stay married? Why or why not?* Depending on a variety of factors including evidence in the text and personal experiences of the reader, either a *yes* or a *no* answer could be justified.

Having students make predictions *before* they read the text is a pre-reading activity. We do not see this type of prediction as a type of comprehension. Rather, it is an activity that allows students to realize how much they know about the topic of the text.

Evaluation

The fifth type of comprehension, *evaluation*, requires the learner to give a global or comprehensive judgment about some aspect of the text. For example, a comprehension question that requires the reader to give an evaluation of this article is: *How will the information in this article be useful to you?* In order to answer this type of question, students must use both a literal understanding of the text and their knowledge of the text's topic and related issues. Some students, because of cultural factors, may be reluctant to be critical or to disagree with the printed word. In such circumstances, the teacher might want to model possible answers to evaluation questions, making sure to include both positive and negative aspects.

Personal response

The sixth type of comprehension, *personal response*, requires readers to respond with their feelings for the text and the subject. The answers are not found in the text; they come strictly from the readers. While no personal responses are incorrect, they cannot be unfounded; they must relate to the content of the text and reflect a literal understanding of the material.

An example of a comprehension question that requires a personal response is: *What do you like or dislike about this article?* Like an evaluation question, students have to use both their literal understanding and their own knowledge to respond.

Also, like evaluation questions, cultural factors may make some students hesitate to be critical or to disagree with the printed word. Teacher modeling of various responses is helpful in these situations.

Forms of questions

We present and discuss five forms that comprehension questions may take to stimulate students' understanding of texts. This is not a discussion of all possible ways of questioning students. For example, we do not discuss *fill-in-the-blank* activities or *cloze*, as such activities or tasks may be more appropriate for assessing, and not comprehending, the types of comprehension presented and discussed in the previous section.

Yes/no questions

Yes/no questions are simply questions that can be answered with either *yes* or *no*. For example: *Is this article about testing reading comprehension?* This is a common form of comprehension question, but it has the drawback of allowing the student a 50% chance of guessing the correct answer. So when using *yes/no* questions, we recommend following up with other forms of questions to ensure that the student has understood the text.

Yes/no questions can be used to prompt all six types of comprehension. When *yes/no* questions are used with personal response or evaluation, other forms of questions seem to follow readily. For example, *Did you like this article? Why?* The follow-up questions may be more useful in helping students than the initial *yes/no* questions.

Alternative questions

Alternative questions are two or more *yes/no* questions connected with or: for example, *Does this article focus on the use of questions to teach reading comprehension or to test reading comprehension?* Similar to *yes/no* questions, alternative questions are subject to guessing, so the teacher may want to follow up with other forms discussed in this section.

Alternative questions have worked best for us with literal, reorganization, inference, and prediction types of comprehension. We have found that they do not lend themselves as well to evaluation and personal response.

True or false

Questions may also take the form of *true* or *false*. While *true* or *false* questions are found frequently in commercially available materials, there is a potential danger in relying exclusively on them. As with *yes/no* questions, students have a 50% chance of guessing the correct answer. Teachers might simply accept a right answer, failing to ask why the answer is correct or the distracters (the wrong choices) are not correct.

An example of a *true or false* question focusing on literal comprehension is: *Is this statement true or false?: The authors believe that the use of well-designed comprehension questions will help students become better readers.*

True or false questions are difficult to prepare. The false answers must be carefully designed so as to exploit potential misunderstandings of the text. False answers that are obviously incorrect do not help teach comprehension because students do not have to understand the text to recognize them as incorrect. True or false questions may also be hard to write because sometimes, as written, both answers are plausible, regardless of the degree of comprehension of the text.

Like *yes/no* questions, *true or false* questions can be used to prompt all six types of comprehension. When used with personal response or evaluation, follow-up tasks are sometimes necessary. To illustrate, a personal response question about this article might be: *Is this statement true or false? I like this article. Explain your choice.*

Wh-questions

Questions beginning with *where, what, when, who, how, and why* are commonly called *wh*-questions. In our experience, we have found that they are excellent in helping students with a literal understanding of the text, with reorganizing information in the text, and making evaluations, personal responses and predictions. They are also used as follow-ups to other questions forms, such as *yes/no* and *alternative*.

In particular *wh*- questions with *how/why* are often used to help students to go beyond a literal understanding of the text. As beginning and intermediate readers are often reluctant to do this, using *how/why* questions can be very helpful in aiding students to become interactive readers.

Multiple-choice

Multiple-choice questions are based on other forms of questions. They can be, for example, a *wh*-question with a choice:

When was Maria Kim born?

a. 1940

b. 1945

c. 1954

d. 1990

Generally, but not always, this form of question has only one correct answer when dealing with literal comprehension.

The multiple-choice format may make *wh*-questions easier to answer than no-choice *wh*-questions because they give the students some possible answers. Students might be able to check the text to see if any of the choices are specifically discussed, and then make a choice.

Multiple-choice questions may be used most effectively, in our experience, with literal comprehension. They can also be used with prediction and evaluation.

However, when used for these types of comprehension, we suggest using follow-up activities that allow students to explain their choices.

As with true or false questions, developing good multiple-choice questions requires careful thought. We have found that developing a question with four choices works best for students with low proficiency in the target language. One of the four, obviously, is the desired answer; the others should be seemingly plausible responses.

An important consideration

Regardless of the level of comprehension or the form of the question, teachers and materials developers need to make sure that the questions are used to help students interact with the text. This can be done by making sure that students keep the text in front of them while answering questions on the text. They should always be able to refer to the reading passage, for we are interested in teaching reading comprehension, not memory skills.

Another element in ensuring that the questions actually teach is avoiding what we call *tricky questions*. If the goal is helping students to improve their reading comprehension abilities, teachers must resist the temptation to trick them with cleverly worded questions (e.g., a complex sentence in which one clause is true and the other is false). Negative wording in a question can also make it tricky. Such unclear or misleading questions tend to discourage students. It is better to ask about important aspects of the text in a straightforward, unambiguous fashion.

Conclusion

In our experience, the use of well-designed comprehension questions can be used to promote an understanding of a text. However, comprehension questions are only a means to an end. The use of questions by themselves does not necessarily result in readers who interact with a text utilizing the six types of comprehension discussed in this article. The teacher, through a combination of teacher-fronted and group activities, must promote a discussion of the answers, both the right and wrong ones, so that students are actively involved in creating meaning.

We would like to end on a note of caution. Beware of the *death by comprehension questions* syndrome. The use of comprehension questions in teaching reading can be overdone. Even the most highly motivated student can become bored having to answer 20 questions on a three-paragraph text. As with most things in life, moderation is the best course of action (Richard R. Day & Jeong-suk Park, 2005).

Reader's Theater

Reader's theater is minimal theater in supporting of literature and reading. There are many styles of reader's theater, but nearly all share these features:

- Narration serves as the framework of dramatic presentation.
- No full stage sets. If used at all, sets are simple and suggestive.
- No full costumes. If used at all, costumes are partial and suggestive, or neutral and uniform.
- No full memorization. Scripts are used openly in performance.

Reader's theater was developed as an efficient and effective way to present literature in dramatic form. Today as well, most scripts are literary adaptations, though others are original dramatic works. Popular first in colleges and universities, reader's theater has now moved to earlier education, where it is seen as a key tool for creating interest and skill in reading. Young people love to do it, and they give it their all—more so because it's a team effort, and they don't want to let down their friends! Repeated readings bring fluency, and if a script is based on an available book, kids want to read that too. What's more, reader's theater is a relatively simple activity for the teacher, with no required setup other than making copies of scripts. Reader's theater has been found effective not only for language arts but for social studies as well. Performing stories based on another culture is one of the best ways for students to become interested in and familiar with that culture.

As to how to spell it, there's no one right way, so take your pick! All the following have been used:

- reader's theater
- readers' theater
- readers theater
- reader's theatre
- readers' theatre
- readers theatre

That's why it is sometimes easier to call it RT (Shepard, 2004).

Readers Theatre is an oral reading activity that closely resembles radio drama. Two or more readers stand or sit side by side, usually in a semicircle, holding scripts and reading their parts to portray characters, narration or exposition. Physical movement is minimal. Instead, speech conveys the action (Sebesta, 2014).

Readers Theater is an integrated approach for involving students in reading, writing, listening and speaking activities. It involves children in:

- Sharing literature,
- Reading aloud,
- Writing scripts,
- Performing with a purpose, and
- Working collaboratively.

Readers Theater is, readers reading a script adapted from literature, and the audience picturing the action from hearing the script being read aloud. It requires no sets, costumes, props, or memorized lines. Instead of acting out literature as in a play, the performer's goal is to read a script aloud effectively, enabling the audience to visualize the action. Performers bring the text alive by using voice, facial expressions, and some gestures (Cornwell, 2014).

Readers Theatre introduces the element of drama into literacy learning and magically transforms the classroom into a stage. During Readers Theatre time, the reader is at center stage, totally absorbed in reading. The reader is a star.

Readers Theatre is a highly motivational strategy that connects oral reading, literature, and drama in the classroom. Unlike traditional theater, Readers Theatre does not require costumes, make-up, props, stage sets, or memorization. Only a script is needed, from which students read aloud. Using only their voices, facial expressions, and bodies, they interpret the emotions, beliefs, attitudes, and motives of the characters. A narrator conveys the story's setting and action and provides the commentary necessary for transition between scenes.

The element of drama enables students to realize that reading is an activity that permits experimentation -- they can try reading words in different ways to produce different meanings. Using volume, pitch, stress, and intonation, readers delve into the Readers Theatre text, making printed words come alive and giving their characters life. As they practice their roles, readers are also given the opportunity to reflect on the text and to evaluate and revise how they interact with it (Carrick, 2000).

Educators have long elaborated on the benefits of using Readers Theatre and related strategies for increasing reading fluency and sight-word vocabulary, improving reading comprehension, providing opportunities to interpret dialogue and communicate meaning, and increasing awareness and appreciation of plays as a form of literature. For example, Harris and Sipay (1990) describe script reading as one of the most interesting oral reading activities for children, and Coody (1992) notes that script reading provides a context for purposeful reading. Through this interactive activity the students are energized, actively involved in responding to

and interpreting literature (Sebesta, 1997). Readers Theatre reinforces the social nature of reading (Busching, 1981) and provides an opportunity for students of varying abilities to work as a team in a cooperative learning environment (Flood, Lapp, Flood, & Nagel, 1992; Trousdale & Harris, 1993). Because implementation includes many readings of the script, Readers Theatre promotes oral reading fluency (Carrick, 2000; Millin, 1996) and enhances students' ability to understand and transform text (Stayter & Allington, 1991) Cited by (Mraz, et al., 2013).

Why Use Reader's Theatre?

You can really motivate students with Readers Theatre. It gives participants a purpose for repeated reading, leading to fluency. Internalized, such fluency transfers to effective silent reading as well. Readers Theatre lets students apply comprehension skills, including author's purpose, character traits, mood and theme. According to drama expert Nellie McCaslin, Readers Theatre is "a way of enjoying good literature through guided study, a mutually agreed-upon interpretation and clear and expressive oral reading."

Reader's Theatre can also include nonfiction (such as history), descriptive science and biography. Divide the non-dialogue text among students. Then have them present it in Readers Theatre style to bring clarity and purpose through oral interpretation (Sebesta, 2014).

Finding and Selecting Text for a Readers Theater Script

Readers Theatre scripts can be purchased through publishers, book vendors, or script services. However, many scripts suitable for a variety of grade and reading levels and representing a range of genres and content matter are available at sites on the World Wide Web. These scripts are free and can be easily downloaded, printed, and duplicated for classroom use.

Selecting a good script is important for a successful Readers Theatre experience. Scripts must be of high quality, interesting, and appropriate to the age, grade, and readability levels of the students who will be engaged in the dramatic activity. They should offer a rich vocabulary, use proper grammar, and be presented in a font and format that is easily read. In particular, the script should contain lively dialogue. The narrator's role is also important, in that it describes the action of the characters, establishes the setting, and paints the picture by providing necessary background.

Readers Theatre is also a suitable activity for theme units. To enhance a study of poetry, for example, elementary school students might enjoy preparing Readers.

Creating a script is another exciting option in Readers Theatre. Finding the right source for inspiration is important. Quality children's literature with spirited dialogue is a good choice; however, poetry or nonfiction texts can also be used (Carrick, 2001).

Readers Theater may be performed with many kinds of literature: picture books, short stories, parts of novels, poetry, folk tales, works of non-fiction, newspaper or

magazine articles. Not all literature, however, makes a good Readers Theater script. Look for literature which:

- Is interesting or has compelling content.
- Has a strong story line, interesting characters, conflict, plot action, humor.
- Uses dialogue.
- Is not filled with descriptive passages.
- Flows at a steady pace (Cornwell, 2014).

Tips for Creating a Readers Theater Script

It is not necessary to use a piece of literature in its entirety. Excerpts can be used very effectively. Be sure to keep in mind the reading level of the readers in selecting a piece of text. Choose text that is within the reach of your readers and that they can read aloud successfully, given repeated practice.

Start with picture books. Model how to create a script and create several scripts as a class before asking the students to create their own scripts in small, cooperative groups. Once you have selected the piece of text you wish to adapt to script form, show the students how to:

- Determine what portions of the text to leave in to be true to the story line, characters, or topic and which portions can be deleted.
- Delete the less critical passages: descriptions, transitions, etc.
- Rewrite or modify those passages that need to be included but require adaptation.

- Keep speeches and narrative passages short.
- Divide the parts for the readers (Cornwell, 2014).

Variations on Reader's Theater for English Language Learners

Students' Scripts

Rather than using prepared scripts, students can write a script on a topic of their choosing, or they can summarize a book by using the Language Experience Approach to re-tell the main parts of the story. The teacher then works with the students to create dialogue that makes sense for the parts of the story and formats it into a script that students can use that for their performance.

This exercise can be used to reinforce content-area concepts. For example, in history class, students can re-enact an event such as the Boston Tea Party by making up dialog to match what happened. In a science class, if the students are learning how a vaccine works, they may want to create a script about the development of vaccines, with characters who discuss how vaccines are created and used. They may wish to cast famous scientists as the main characters of the play.

Memorization for Beginners

For ELLs with emerging literacy skills, it may be easier for teachers to repeat lines verbally to help students memorize them. Also, it may be appropriate for students to first do the play in their native language, and then again in English. This helps reinforce their understanding of the story and allows them to transfer the

confidence they feel from their native language performance into their English language performance.

Peer Interaction:

Another way to practice the read-through is to pair students as they are rehearsing their parts with another student who can model and support the fluency of the ELL.

Diversity in Subject Matter:

Teachers should try to find scripts that represent a variety of cultures, including folk tales that ELLs can relate to. Students may be able to tell the class stories that they grew up with. For example, many cultures have different versions of stories like Cinderella that students will find familiar.

Performance Opportunities:

Teachers may want to create opportunities for ELLs to perform for audiences other than their classmates. This is especially beneficial if there are younger grades the ELLs can visit. For example, after performing the piece in class, ELLs can perform it for a younger child or class of children. After practicing in class, students should be comfortable performing the story in a different setting.

I believe that one of the most important things we can do as teachers is to help our students fall in love with reading. Reader's Theater is a wonderful way to engage ELLs and get them excited about great stories (Robertson, 2009).

Benefits of Reader's Theater

From the start of the activity to the finish, students read through the story about 15 times. Amber acknowledges that her students would never want to read a story so many times if it were not for Reader's Theater. Within the context of this engaging activity, however, it has proven to be popular with the students, and she has seen noticeable improvements for her students as a result of repeated exposure to the text. They begin to develop fluency and comprehension because they become very familiar with the text and the plot structure. They also improve their pronunciation and presentation skills because they have so much practice reading and listening to the stories. Finally, the students begin to show more self-confidence while reading out loud and getting up in front of the class.

Since it is an activity she uses on a fairly regular basis, her students now know what to expect, and they can jump right into new scripts as soon as they receive them. Amber noted, too, that there is a lot of potential for using Reader's Theater to bring history and science to life, as well as narrative stories (Bafile, readingrockets, 2005).

Readers Theater helps to:

- Develop fluency through repeated exposure to text.
- Increase comprehension.
- Integrate reading, writing, speaking, listening in an authentic context.
- Engage students.
- Increase Reading motivation.

- Create confidence and improve the self-image of students.
- Provide a real purpose for reading.
- Provide opportunities for cooperative learning.

Characteristics of an Effective Readers Theater Reader

- Reads with expression, proper emphasis, and clear enunciation, using his/her voice effectively to convey meaning.
- Projects to the audience.
- Is familiar with the part and is able to read it with fluency.
- Paces himself/herself effectively.
- Uses props, when employed, effectively (the script is a prop).
- Demonstrates poise and self-confidence (Cornwell, 2014).

Improving Oral Reading Fluency and Comprehension through Reader's Theatre

Mraz, et al., (2013) stated that reading is a process where readers strive to understand and respond to ideas that are expressed in written text. It is a complex, interactive process that consists of multiple interactions between variables such as the reader's background, reading materials, developmental levels, learning context, and learning goals to name a few (Author, 2007). Even with all these complexities, reading can be conceptualized as consisting of two separate, but highly interrelated aspects - word identification and comprehension (Hook & Jones, 2002; Pressley, 2006). As children's reading skills develop, they are expected to read words in print

both effortlessly and quickly. Word recognition must become automatic: something that is done both instantly and independently in order to free up cognitive processes for higher level comprehension and connections with texts (La Berge & Samuels, 1974). They cannot take time to analyze or decode every word they encounter if the goal is higher level thought processes and enjoyment of reading (Richek, Caldwell, Jennings, & Lerner, 2002). With practice, the beginning reader becomes a more fluent reader, learning more and more sight words, so that those words can be recognized at a glance (Unrau, 2004).

Struggling with word identification can be a hindrance to constructing meaning. Many struggling readers have difficulty moving to a level of fluency that allows them to easily comprehend what they are reading. If students cannot recognize a substantial number of words encountered while reading texts, then their reading becomes laborious and slow, the comprehension of the text declines (Hoffman & Isaac, 1991; Levine, 2002; National Reading Panel, 2000; Stanovich, 1993/1994). It is well established that a reader's ability to effectively comprehend what they are reading is significantly affected by difficulties in fluent and automatic word recognition (La Berge & Samuels, 1974; May, 1998; Stanovich, 1993/1994). In fact, mild difficulties in word identification can draw a student's focus away from the underlying meaning, reduce the reading rate, create the need to reread selections in order to grasp meaning, and decrease the overall enjoyment of the experience.

When successful readers read aloud, not only do they read fluently and with adequate speed, they also use appropriate phrasing, intonation; their oral reading

mirrors their spoken language. The opposite is true of struggling readers. Their reading tends to be evidenced by a slow, halting, and inconsistent rate; poor phrasing; and deficient intonation patterns that convey a lack of understanding of the text's intent (Dowhower, 1989). Slow reading requires the reader to take more time to complete a reading task than students who are fluent decreasing their exposure to more reading situations.

Many teachers provide systematic and synthetic phonics instruction to compensate for initial reading problems experienced by struggling readers. Often, these students become accurate decoders, but fail to reach the level of fluency needed to become efficient readers (Arlington, 1983). Fluency can be viewed as a steppingstone to comprehension, and it has been found to impact comprehension in the primary grades and beyond (Rasinski, Rikli, & Johnson, 2009) Cited by (Mraz, et al., 2013).

"A great deal of fluency research reiterates the need for repeated reading," said Finney. "Without fluency, there is little comprehension. The value of reader's theater is increased tenfold when used as a strategy for increasing understanding of what is being read."

Dr. Peggy Sharp, a former classroom teacher and library media specialist, noted, "Reader's theater is a wonderful technique for helping readers learn to read aloud with expression. I especially like to perform reader's theater without props so the readers learn that the expression in their voices needs to provide much of the drama of the story."

Judy Freeman, a children's literature consultant said: "If you're searching for a way to get your children reading aloud with comprehension, expression, fluency, and joy, reader's theater is a miracle. Hand out a photocopied play script, assign a part to each child, and have them simply read the script aloud and act it out. That's it. And then magic happens" (Bafle, readingrockets, 2005).

The reader's theater strategy blends students' desire to perform with their need for oral reading practice. Reader's Theater offers an entertaining and engaging means of improving fluency and enhancing comprehension.

What is reader's theater? It's a way to involve students in reading aloud. In reader's theater, students "perform" by reading scripts created from grade-level books or stories. Usually they do so without costumes or props.

Reader's theater is a strategy that combines reading practice and performing. Its goal is to enhance students' reading skills and confidence by having them practice reading with a purpose. Reader's theater gives students a real reason to read aloud.

"I love the active involvement in this approach," said Susan Finney, a retired educator and author who gives seminars about improving reading instruction. "It's hard for a child to be a passive observer when you have a script in your hands."

Reader's theater motivates reluctant readers and provides fluent readers the opportunity to explore genre and characterization.

"The first reader's theater scripts I saw were shared with me by a veteran first-grade teacher," Finney explained. "She would send small groups of her beginning

readers around the school to perform in different classrooms. It was a brilliant idea. The children never knew that they were being tricked into re-reading - a key factor in developing fluency" (Robertson, 2009).

ELLs can benefit from Reader's Theater activities in a number of ways, including fluency practice, comprehension, engaging in a story, and focusing on vocal and physical expression. Kristina Robertson offers a number of approaches to Reader's Theater with ELLs in this article.

One of my favorite movies is *The Princess Bride*, which is based on the novel by William Goldman. For those of you haven't experienced this classic, the movie begins with a little boy who is sick and home from school, and his grandfather, who offers to read the boy a fairy tale that he had enjoyed when he was young. The boy is not very interested at first, but soon realizes that he has nothing better to do, and agrees to at least hear the beginning. The story that follows, of course, is an enchanting tale filled with unforgettable characters and exciting plot twists. Despite his best efforts to resist getting drawn in, by the end, the boy is begging his grandfather to finish the story and even admits that he would be ready to hear it all over again if his grandfather returns with the book the next day.

What resonates with me in the movie is the experience of a child falling in love with a good story. While that experience is magical in its own right, it is also an important part of becoming a strong reader. Engagement is a critical piece of building reading and comprehension skills and plays an important part in reading motivation as well.

When English language learners (ELLs) read, they may have difficulty engaging with a story if:

- They lack the background knowledge to understand the plot, setting, and characters
- They have not had much practice "putting themselves in the story"
- They only get one or two opportunities to read a text before the class moves on to something new.

ELLs can benefit greatly from having opportunities to read a text many times because this helps them develop fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. One way to reread a text while keeping it interesting for students is through Readers' Theater. In a Readers' Theater activity, students read stories that have been scripted like a play, and they act out the story together. Students may practice their parts several times before acting the story out in front of the class, which gets them thinking about their characters and the plot in a focused way. Rather than using elaborate props, costumes, or scenery, students can be encouraged to use vocal, facial, and physical expression to engage with the script and their character.

As students continue their repeated readings of the script, they are improving their reading skills and comprehension. They also will have the opportunity to practice speaking skills, such as pronunciation, inflection, expression, and varied volume. Since the activity is meant to practice reading, students don't need to memorize their lines, which keep the spotlight on the reading practice, not the performance.

Reader's Theater offers ELLs an opportunity to completely immerse themselves in a story, and it gives students the chance to think about how engaged readers interact with print, such as by seeing pictures in their heads — very similar to watching a movie or play. Teachers can help ELLs make this connection by explaining how they can visualize the plot in their heads while they read and as they practice bringing stories to life.

Reader's Theater has something for all students, regardless of their language level. Beginning English speakers can have a small role with one or two short sentences, or if the student is at the "silent period," he or she can be assigned a non-speaking role such as an animal character. The more advanced a student's speaking skills are, the more the student can focus on improving expression and clarity in their role (Bafile, readingrockets, 2005).

Procedures for Implementing Reader's Theater

A Readers Theatre project can last several days, with the exact number varying with the length of the script and the amount of daily class time allotted for reading. On average time spent on one script in the primary grades is generally 5 to 10 days. Following is a day-by-day outline of how a 5-day project with a short script might progress:

Day 1

- Distribute a copy of the script to each student.
- Read the title of the script and its author together with the students.

- Encourage students to make predictions about the story, characters, etc.
- Read the script aloud to the students as they follow along.
- Ask for feedback: How did you like the story? Did this story remind you of another story? What about our predictions?
- With student input, generate a list of vocabulary words from the script. Write the words on the board or on large sheets of paper, and keep the list posted for the duration of the project. Refer to the list daily, focusing on the words' pronunciation and meaning.

Day 2

- Divide the class into pairs. Assign a number of pages to be read -- longer scripts can be divided into several parts -- and a time limit for paired reading. Students should take turns reading every other entry in the script; this ensures that they will all have the same amount of material to read. Pairs can reread the pages again if they finish before the end of the assigned reading time.
- While the students are reading the script, circulate among them to offer assistance in the correct pronunciation of words, reading with feeling and emotion, and reading at an appropriate rate and volume.
- Close the session by doing a group read-around of the script or by assigning roles and having students perform a segment of the script.

Day 3 and 4

- Continue the paired reading and circulating and modeling, until the entire script has been read by all students.
- Once the students become familiar with the script, they can begin working in groups of three or four, with each group member reading an assigned role or roles.

Day 5

- Option 1: Assign parts and let the students perform informally for their class or for other classes. A reader can read more than one part, especially if there are several smaller parts. Everyone should be given an equal opportunity to read as much of the text as possible or students with smaller parts may see themselves as poorer readers or may lose interest or enthusiasm.
- Option 2: On certain occasions, the students can engage in giving a major performance. This can be done by assigning roles, transforming the classroom into a theater, and inviting other classes or parents to a special presentation. Such a production may feature two or three groups, with each group reading a different script.

Assessment

According to Dixon, Davies, and Politano (1996), “Readers theatre is enhanced by evaluation that supports student learning” (p. 97). Evaluation may measure aspects of fluency, such as volume, rate, tempo, and intonation during a presentation, or it

may focus on how students work together as a group. Evaluation could also measure skills or concepts that were features of the script, such as characterization and story elements. Evaluation can be self-directed, with the students making observations and reflecting on what they learned and on what they need to improve. It can also include an audio- or videotape of the Readers Theatre activities or the final performance. These tapes can be placed in students' portfolios (...) (Carrick, 2001).

Take a look at the way Amber Prentice teaches vocabulary before starting a Reader's Theater activity based on *The Great Kapok Tree!*

One of my colleagues in the St. Paul Public School District, Amber Prentice, frequently uses Reader's Theater with her seventh- and eighth-grade ESL students. She explained to me how she does it from start to finish.

Introduction:

When she first introduces Reader's Theater to her students at the beginning of the school year, she talks a little bit about what to expect and explains that this activity is meant to help them improve their reading and speaking abilities.

Story Selection

Amber tends to get her scripts from Reader's Theater books or websites. She notes that it can be difficult to find stories with enough parts for all students in a class; while some teachers may choose different stories for different groups of students, Amber uses the same story for the entire class. If only a few roles are

available in the story she has chosen, she breaks the class down into separate "casts" so that all students have a part.

Amber thinks this is helpful for her ELL students because it provides them with maximum exposure to the plot. Students will understand the story very well by the end of the activity, and they will be able to laugh at all the right lines and be more involved in other groups' performances.

Vocabulary:

After she has chosen a story, Amber goes through it and selects the vocabulary words students will need to know in order to understand the plot. She then previews the vocabulary with a variety of activities until she is confident that they have mastered the definitions.

Read-Through:

Next, Amber reads the whole play out loud to her students and asks comprehension questions to make sure they understand the story.

Roles:

She then assigns roles or allows students to choose parts in the play, depending on the level of the students. She makes sure students know how to read the script by highlighting their parts and helping them understand that reading cues such as "Narrator" or "Woman enters the room" should not be read.

Practice:

Amber gives her students ample time to practice their play and read their parts. She circulates through the room and gives feedback to students as they read. If students are reading without expression, she prompts them to try the line with more feeling. If students are stumbling with pronunciation, she models the correct pronunciation for them.

Staging:

Before students do their performance for their classmates, they practice the staging and create any simple props they think will be helpful to the story.

Evaluation:

Before the performance, Amber explains how the students will be graded. She reviews each element in the following list, making sure that students understand what each part means and showing examples of what she wants to see from the students as they are reading.

Students are evaluated based on:

- Volume
- Clarity of pronunciation
- Expression
- Posture
- Eyecontact

As students become more proficient at Reader's Theater, they can use the list to evaluate each other, as well as give helpful feedback.

Performance:

Once the students have practiced their lines, prepared simple props, and understand how they will be evaluated, they are ready to perform! Each group presents its version of the story, which also gives students an opportunity to compare how each group's interpretation is similar or different.

Amber has found that students approach Reader's Theater in a variety of ways. She had a group of boys that she thought might not like the activity because they would be afraid to look silly. Instead, the boys were very enthusiastic, found costumes, made masks, and gave animated performances to make the story a true dramatic success. Other students have taken Reader's Theater a little more slowly and want specific instructions as to how to put their story together (Robertson, 2009).

Suggestions for implementing Reader's Theater

Freeman's "magic" occurs when the students get to be on stage — even if that stage is the floor of the classroom or library. Shy kids blossom, and students develop a strong sense of community.

"Some of our students are hams — they just don't know it until they get up in front of the group," Finney observed. "In reader's theater, there is no risk, because

there's no memorization required. There's enough opportunity for practice, so struggling readers are not put on the spot."

Finney offered the following pointers for teachers new to reader's theater:

- Choose only scripts that are fun to do with lots of good dialogue. Boring scripts are no better than boring stories.
- Start slowly and spend the time necessary so students feel comfortable in the performance mode. Provide opportunities for students to practice. Students do not memorize their parts; they always read from their scripts.
- A stage is unnecessary. Students simply stand or sit in a semicircle.
- Model each character's part and match roles to readers.
- Combine parts if there are too many, and cut out scenes and characters that aren't important. Scripts are not sacrosanct. Change them if they work better another way.
- Work with small groups, not with the whole class, whenever possible.
- Provide instructional support for new vocabulary and for understanding the different characters.

Sharp suggests the following:

- Begin with very easy scripts. It is important at the start that students do not have to think about how to read the words.
- Select scripts that involve many readers. I prefer the ones that give more readers fewer words.

- Short scripts are best in the beginning. Students need to learn to listen to the reader's theater script just as much as they need to learn to read the script.
- Provide each reader with a separate script, highlighting his or her part with yellow (or another appropriate color). I like to put the scripts in folders for a more "professional" look.
- Give the readers the opportunity to read the script to themselves silently, and to read their parts to themselves aloud.

If the script is adapted from a children's book, Freeman suggests that teachers read it aloud first so students can enjoy it and can listen to expression and phrasing. Then scripts can be distributed, and students can practice sounding out difficult words and getting a sense of their lines.

"Always perform a reader's theater script at least twice," she advised. "The first time, the children will be struggling with words and their meanings, and with making sense of the play. The second time, they'll be able to focus on enjoying the performance and their parts in it. You can, if you wish, carry it further, adding props, costumes, and scenery; memorizing lines; or even putting on the play for other groups. You do not have to, though. It is the process that is important here, not a finished product."

Educational publisher Lois Walker believes that a good script can transcend reading levels. She explained, "A sensitive teacher who knows the capabilities and reading levels of his or her students will be careful to assign the proper reading parts to the proper readers so everyone can have fun and succeed."

Freeman added, "Reader's theater allows children the luxury of lingering over a story; acting it out many times so they come to understand all of its nuances. Too often, children read a story and only understand it at its most superficial literal level. With reader's theater, they're not just reading a story; they're living it" (Bafle, readingrockets, 2005).

Cornwell details some tips to implement reader's theater:

- Model expressive Reading often.
- Introduce Readers Theater using pre-prepared scripts. Students need to grasp the concept of Readers Theater and become familiar with the format of a script before writing their own.
- Teach the basic steps of performance: how to use highlighters to mark the parts, how to interpret the part and read expressively, how to hold the script, and when to assume various stage positions.
- Give the students lots of time to prepare. Emphasize practice. Readers should practice their roles in different ways: individually and in small groups, privately and in front of others.
- Keep a copy of the marked script at school and send one home for parents to read and practice with their children.
- Rehearse with the readers, providing needed direction and support regarding their interpretation, pacing, expression, volume, positions, and motions.
- Begin with short presentations.
- Perform for an audience as often as possible.
- Use props sparingly (Cornwell, 2014).

Sebesta suggested the following tips for Reader's Theater success:

1. Practice, practice, practice!

Instead of passing out scripts and asking students to read aloud at sight, send scripts home and encourage individual practice. Or have small groups rehearse alone or with your help.

Once the players are assembled, have them read through the script several times for rate fluency before working on interpretation. This practice builds confidence and also helps develop reading skills.

2. Coach readers to improve oral interpretation.

Without guidance and encouragement, Readers Theatre may be as lifeless as the best-forgotten round-robin reading. Aim your coaching specifically at a character's emotions and intentions. For example, you might say, "Fillmore has sly intentions, so use your voice to show his sly intentions, even in his first speech."

Specific suggestions help far more than generalities, such as, "Read with more expression." Emphasize the contrast between characters. For instance, Poppleton is kind but gullible, while Fillmore is sly and scheming. Seeking out contrasts has carryover, of course, to students' understanding and enjoyment of all their literary reading.

3. Consider inviting an audience.

Sometimes an audience enhances performance and pride. Sometimes an audience undermines developing skills and confidence. If you opt for an audience, keep it small. Have three or four groups in a classroom take turns performing for one another.

In no case should the audience possess the script. Their role is to listen and respond, not to follow along. In fact, an audience may need coaching, too, to encourage players with positive, perceptive responses. Readers Theatre is a great way to turn your students on to the joy of literature. (...) (Sebesta, 2014).

f. METHODOLOGY

Design of the research

The present research work is based on the Action Research as a constructive enquiry, which is carried out in order to understand, to evaluate and then to change a situation, at the time the research is conducting and improve educational practice. This study is an educational research that will allow the practitioner to study and practice a variety of aspects making use of Reader's Theater as a reading strategy with the purpose to enhance reading fluency and comprehension.

Methods, techniques and instruments

Methods

The following general methods will be applied along the Research:

The Scientific method: It will facilitate the study of appropriate resources to improve reading fluency and comprehension. Also, it will help in the observations done before and during the intervention. This one will support with gathering data to make relevant predictions about the possible solution.

The Descriptive method: It will be useful to describe the different stages of the study and the kind of resources used by the researcher. It will serve to explain and analyze the object of investigation.

The Analytic-synthetic method: It will be used to analyze and interpret the results through the tests. It also will help to draw up the conclusions.

The Statistics method: It will be used to make the quantitative statistical analysis of the data obtained from the tests and the qualitative data from the observations and teacher's diary.

This research work also will follow the process of an action research which includes planning, acting, observing and reflecting, proposed by (Kemmis, 2000).

This process will help the researcher to see if any necessary modification or amendment would be necessary to improve student's reading fluency and comprehension.

The process of the research will be carried out systematically, by collecting data on one's everyday practice, analyzing it in order to draw conclusions about how the future practice should be.

Techniques and Instruments

Data Collection

To collect the data, questionnaires, tests, a rubric and a diary will be designed and applied at the beginning, during and after the application of the intervention plan.

Questionnaire

To collect qualitative information which will allow the researcher to be aware of students' feelings about reader's theater as a strategy to enhance reading fluency and comprehension at the beginning, and at the end in order to know if students notice positive or negative changes on their reading skill through this strategy.

Test

Two kinds of tests will be used. A pre-test of reading comprehension will be used to collect and analyze students' answers, in order to diagnose the level of students' knowledge about the capacity they have to understand texts. The same pre-test will be used as post-test and applied at the end of the intervention plan, to obtain information about students' progress on reading comprehension during the intervention plan. The test will be conducted in class and the researcher will give students a clear explanation of the questions they will develop and also, clarify all queries raised. A scale will be used in order to state the students' level.

Rubric

A rubric will be used in order to list the criteria or quality level of students' reading fluency, due to it is a great tool that defines what is expected from students.

Field Diary

The researcher will use a diary to record what happens in each lesson. It will help to write up the findings during the intervention, relevant events during the observation or particular situations that could happen.

Procedures

The action research work process will involve the following stages:

The intervention plan will start and end with the application of two tests. The first one will be applied at the beginning to collect data about the level of the students. And the other one will be applied at the end to verify if students improved or not their reading comprehension. Students' development in reading fluency will be controlled through a rubric while they perform in front of the class.

During the development of the lessons reader's theater strategy will be applied through story scripts that will be introduced to practice and improve reading fluency and comprehension. Likewise, a diary will be used to record particular situations and to observe students' performance.

The findings before and after the intervention plan will be compared and analyzed to draw up conclusions about the research work.

Tabulation

The tabulation of data will be done with the results obtained in the tests. A logical analysis will be done with the information received.

Organization

The researcher will organize the work based on the information received in all the strategies applied to compare and analyze the impact of the intervention plan.

Description

The obtained data will be described in graphics considering the information pre and post intervention. The description of each question will be completed to facilitate the interpretation of the information shown, and also do the logical analysis of the data received.

Population

The students of eighth year of Basic Education, parallel “B” will participate in the development of this action research. The participants are twenty seven students between boys and girls. They are between twelve and thirteen years old. The students receive five hours of English per week with a certified teacher.

Intervention and observation plan

Alternative:

Reader's Theater as a strategy to enhance reading fluency and comprehension among 8TH, year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja City, during the Academic Period 2014 – 2015.

Objective:

To enhance reading fluency and comprehension through the implementation of Reader's Theater strategy among eighth year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja City, during the Academic Period 2014 – 2015.

Introduction:

The intervention plan is a two month course program that will prepare students of eighth year of Basic Education to read in a comprehensible manner and in reading fluently, through the use of Reader's Theater strategy.

It contains interesting story scripts that are based on the topics students are studying, such as vocabulary, nouns, prepositions, WH questions and verb "to be" with practical exercises. This strategy will help students to gain reading fluency due to they have to re-read the scripts in order to master new vocabulary, so, they will read it without hesitation and understand what the script is about improving reading

comprehension and developing critical thinking through well-understanding of the story, and then giving their opinions about how the story is developed.

The goal of the intervention plan is to make reading unforgettable through:

- Re-reading of story scripts
- The performance of multiple roles and reading aloud for small audience
- The development of critical thinking
- Expressing opinions about what is read

Also, it includes eight lessons with story scripts, which are based on the topics students are studying. Each lesson will be developed considering the phases: Introduction, Practice, Evaluating and Performance proposed by (Robertson, 2009).

Introduction: During the Introduction phase, students are familiarized and engaged with the story script by reading and pronouncing new vocabulary, which helps them to comprehend the story script. Moreover, students feel motivated to re-read the story script to gain fluency. Then, the researcher reads aloud the story script to the students, who have the chance to ask any question and give their own opinions about it. Lastly, students answer some reading comprehension questions.

Practice: Students subconsciously acquire a fluent pronunciation and knowledge of the themes they study through repeated reading of the scripts, which will direct them to read accurately and to develop comprehension. The researcher breaks the class into groups so that all students will have a role. First, students read silently

their part, and then out loud to the group. The researcher circulates through the room and gives feedback to students as they read.

Evaluation: In this step, on the second week of practicing each script, before the performance, students are explained what is expected from them and how they will be graded based on the elements that consist on the fluency rubric.

Performance: During the Performance stage, students read aloud to each other in their groups as a way of practicing for the final performance each group will do in front of the class, after two weeks of practice.

Period:

This plan will be carried into effect throughout the months of April and May during the academic period 2014 - 2015

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Pre-test, and Questionnaire.

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK ONE (2 periods)	<p>Pre-test</p> <p>Unit one: What is your name?</p> <p>Unit two: This is Brian</p> <p>Unit three: Where are you from?</p> <p>Unit four: Can you repeat that, please?</p>	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Answer the pre-test and questionnaire</p> <p>Identify the process of reader's theater strategy during its application.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The researcher explains how to develop each item of the pre-test and questionnaire. ▪ Students answer the pre-test and the questionnaire ▪ The researcher talks to students about the importance of reading skill and introduces Reader’s Theater strategy, what it is, how it works and what it is helpful for. ▪ Students clarify any doubt about Reader’s Theater strategy. 	<p>Pre-test</p> <p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Wall-chart</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK TWO (2 periods)	Unit one: What is your name?	Students will be able to: Pronounce each new word correctly. Answer the multiple choice questions appropriately. Read accurately	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Stacy’s band</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students get their first script called “Stacy’s band” ▪ The researcher models the pronunciation and gives the meaning of the new vocabulary. ▪ Students pronounce the new vocabulary. ▪ The researcher reads the whole story script aloud to students as they follow along. ▪ Students have the chance to clarify any doubt, as well as, to give opinions about the story script. ▪ Students answer multiple choice questions about “Stacy’s band”. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The researcher divides the class into groups and assigns roles for each student. ▪ Students read their parts silently and then loudly to each other within their groups. ▪ The researcher surrounds the groups and gives feedback as students read. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students re-read several times their roles to gain accuracy and be prepared for the performance day. 	Script “Stacy’s band” Worksheet

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary, Fluency Rubric

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK THREE (2 periods)	Unit one: What is your name?	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Use the new words correctly completing the gap filling worksheet.</p> <p>Read aloud reflecting their progress on reading accurately</p>	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Stacy’s band</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students develop a gap filling worksheet applying the new words. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students re-read their roles each other in their groups mastering a good pronunciation. The researcher monitors students’ task and helps them to pronounce correctly. Students have time to prepare the staging. <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are explained the aspects they will be graded: accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression; according to the rubric. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group of students performs the story script in front of the class. 	<p>“Stacy’s band” Script</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK FOUR (2 periods)	Unit two: This is Brian	Students will be able to: Generate own sentences using the new vocabulary. Students express their independent opinions about the script. Use correctly the new vocabulary. Read aloud with a good rate.	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Friends</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students get their second script called “Friends” ▪ The researcher analyzes the meaning and pronunciation of the new vocabulary and asks students to make their own sentences using the new words. ▪ The researcher reads aloud the story script to students, who have the chance to clarify any doubt, and give opinions about the script. ▪ Students unscramble words and use the appropriate one, to complete sentences. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will be joined into groups to receive each one a role to read silently and then aloud, receiving feedback from the researcher. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students re-read their roles each other in their groups gaining a good rate. 	<p>“Friends” Script</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK FIVE (2 periods)	Unit two: This is Brian	Students will be able to: Distinguish and apply new vocabulary Read aloud accurately and maintaining a good rate.	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Friends</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students develop a word search to recall the new vocabulary. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students re-read several times the story script mastering a good rate. <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are explained the aspects they will be graded: accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression; according to the rubric. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group of students performs the story script in front of the class. 	<p>“Friends” Script</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK SIX (2 periods)	Unit 3: Where are you from?	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <p>Pronounce new words correctly.</p> <p>Use correctly new vocabulary</p> <p>Students read using phrasing and expression.</p>	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Birth place</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students get their third script called “Birth place” ▪ The researcher models how to pronounce the new words and explains its meaning. ▪ The researcher reads the story script aloud. ▪ Students express opinions about the story script. ▪ Students fill a crossword based on “Birth place” story script. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students join into groups and get their roles to read silently and then, re-read aloud to the group several times ▪ The researcher walks around the classroom and monitors students' pronunciation. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students practice reading aloud to each other within their groups developing phrasing and expression. 	<p>“Birth place” Script</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary, Fluency Rubric

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK SEVEN (2 periods)	Unit 3: Where are you from?	Students will be able to: Differentiate new words. Read aloud accurately, with phrasing and expression and maintaining a good rate.	<p>Reader’s theater strategy: Birth place</p> <p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students reinforce new vocabulary by matching the words with their definition. <p>Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The researcher surrounds each group helping them to pronounce correctly if necessary. <p>Evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are explained the aspects they will be graded: accuracy, rate, phrasing and expression; according to the rubric. <p>Performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each group of students performs the story script in front of the class. 	<p>“Birth place” Script</p> <p>Worksheet</p>

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

Research Problem: How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?

Data Collection Instruments: Field Diary, Post-test, Fluency Rubric

	TOPIC	LEARNING OUTCOMES	INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS	TEACHING RESOURCES
WEEK EIGHT (2 periods)	Unit one: What is your name? Unit two: This is Brian Unit three: Where are you from? Unit four: Can you repeat that, please?	Students will be able to: Give opinions about reader’s theater strategy Respond properly the post –test and the questionnaire Apply reader’s theater strategy to enhance fluency and comprehension with any text	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The researcher reminds students about the importance of reading skill. ▪ The researcher evaluates the implementation of reader’s theater strategy. ▪ The researcher explains how to develop the post-test and questionnaire. ▪ Students answer the post-test and questionnaire 	Post-test Questionnaire

Support: Coaching and guidance from the University professor.

Observation Notes:

**g. ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
RESEARCH**

Resources

Human

The researcher,

The 8TH year students of Basic Education.

Material

Scripts

Reading comprehension questions sheet

Markers

Technical

Computer

Internet

Budget

RESOURCES	COST
Internet	\$ 25.00
Print of reports	\$ 17.00
Print of the project	\$ 15.00
Print of final report and thesis	\$ 150.00
Unexpected expenses	\$ 50.00

Financing

The financing of the expenses derived from the present research work will be assumed by the research author.

All expenses related to the present research work will be assumed entirely by the researcher conducting the investigation.

h. TIME LINE

PHASES	ACTIVITIES	2015										2016		
		Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
PROJECT	Project presentation	x												
	Appointment of the teacher advisor		x											
	Project approval		x											
	Appointment of thesis advisor		x											
INTER-VENTION/ ACTION	Application of the Instruments		x											
	Act-observe			xxxx	xxxx									
THESIS PROCESS	data organization and tabulation					xx								
	Interpreting and reflecting					xx								
	Writing up and reporting						xx							
	Presenting the thesis report						x							
	Thesis revisión						x							
	Submission of the folder							xxxx	xxxx	xxxx				
	Thesis presentation										xxxx			
	Private review and thesis approval											xxxx		
	Corrections												xxxx	
	Public presentation and incorporation													xxxx

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Pre-Questionnaire

As an undergraduate of the English Language Career, the researcher is doing an action research work about Reader's Theater strategy. This study will help you to improve your reading fluency and comprehension of the English Language learning. For that reason; I ask you politely to answer the question in a real and responsible way.

Student's name: _____

Date: _____

1. Do you like to read?

Yes () No ()

2. Have you ever worked with Reader's Theater Strategy?

Yes () No ()

3. Do you think that Reader's Theater help you to improve reading fluency and comprehension?

Yes () No ()

4. Does the teacher apply Reader's Theater to work on reading comprehension and fluency in the English classes?

Yes () No ()

5. Enhancing reading fluency and comprehension with Reader's Theater Strategy is?

Interesting ()

Funny ()

Boring ()

6. How often do you read?

Always ()

Almost always ()

Sometimes ()

Thanks for your collaboration!

Pre - Test

Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1

Teacher: _____ **Grade:** ____ **Course:** ____
Student: _____ **Date:** _____

Reading Comprehension

- 1. Read the dialogue and answer the questions. (Lea el diálogo y responda las preguntas) (2,8pts)**

Introducing yourself

Elizabeth: Good morning, I am Elizabeth.

David: Hi Elizabeth, I'm David. Nice to meet you!

Elizabeth: Nice to meet you too. And how old are you?

David: I am thirteen years old and you

Elizabeth: I am twelve years old. Where do you study?

David: I study at “Juan Montalvo” School. And you?

Elizabeth: I study at Lauro Damerval Ayora School. What class are you in?

David: I'm in ninth basic year, and you

Elizabeth: I am in eighth basic year. What time do you start classes?

David: I start classes every day at seven and five in the morning. And what time do you start classes?

Elizabeth: I start classes at seven and five too. Who is your best friend?

David: My best friend is Juan. What is your best friend's name?

Elizabeth: My best friend is Alice, but she is shy. Is Juan an open person?

David: Oh! Of course, he is so funny. By the way I'm meeting him in five minutes. See you later.

Elizabeth: Ok, see you, have a nice day.

How old is David?

David is _____

How old is Elizabeth?

She _____

Where does Elizabeth study?

Elizabeth studies at _____

Where does David study?

David studies _____

What time do Elizabeth and David start their classes?

They start classes at _____

Who is David's best friend?

David's best friend is _____

Who is Alice?

Alice is Elizabeth's _____

2. Complete the spaces with the correct word or form of the verb (3,2pts)

She **(are/is)** ____ Elizabeth, she **(is/am)** ____ twelve years old. She studies at "Lauro Damerval Ayora" School. She **(am/is)** ____ in eighth basic year. **(His/Her)** ____ best friend **(is/are)** ____ Alice. Alice **(is/am)** ____ shy.

He **(are/is)** ____ David. He **(is/am)** ____ thirteen years old. He studies at "Juan Montalvo" School. He **(am/is)** ____ **(in/at)** ____ ninth basic year. **(His/Her)** ____ best friend **(are/is)** ____ Juan. Juan **(is/am)** ____ **(a/ an)** ____ open person.

Reading Fluency

Individually, read the following paragraph (4pts):

Good morning, madam! My name is Roberta Smith. I'm twelve years old. I'm a student. I go to school every day at 7:00 am. I finish my classes at 1:00 pm and I go to my house. I have lunch and do my homework. I'm reading an interesting book; it is "Los Aristogatos". I play with my siblings. I take a shower. I help my mother to prepare dinner. We eat and then I go to bed.

Reading Fluency Rubric

	Needs to read more often 1-2pts	Doing Well 2.1-3pts	Excellent 3.1-4pts
Accuracy	Student makes numerous errors or asks for help. Errors are not self-corrected.	Student makes some errors that do not affect meaning. Other errors are few. Some miscues are self-corrected.	Student makes zero errors. All miscues are self-corrected.
Rate	Student reads slower than normal speech. Many pauses.	Student reads text either too quickly or with uncomfortable pauses. Many words are sounded out.	Student reads text with smooth, conversational, comfortable rate. It is enjoyable to listen to the story.
Phrasing	No evidence of phrasing. Student reads word-by-word or sounds out the majority of words.	Student reads in 2-3 word phrases.	Student reads longer phrases smoothly. The student varies the length of phrases appropriately for impact.
Expression	Student reads familiar texts in a monotone voice. Little evidence of attention to punctuation. Doesn't read with much expression	Student pays attention to punctuation. Tone of voice is consistent throughout text	Read with enthusiasm. Student pays close attention to punctuation. The student varies voice or pitch to match text.

Adapted from anoteofmusic on

<http://www.rcampus.com/rubricshowc.cfm?code=R727B7&sp=true&>

Grading Scale for Reading Comprehension

Literal Comprehension		
Points	Description	Level
1 - 2	Students are not able to understand straightforward information from the text.	Regular
2.1 - 4	Students understand some straightforward information from the text.	Good
4.1 - 5	Students understand the majority of straightforward information from the text.	Very Good
5.1 - 6	Students understand all the straightforward information from the text.	Excellent

Created by the researcher.

Total expected level before and after the intervention plan 8/10

Researcher Field Diary

Lesson			
Activity			
Objective			
Materials			
Timing			
Procedure			
Grouping			
Do students like it?	Yes	For a while	Not really
Are they bored	Yes		No
Do they make an effort?	Yes		No
Comments			

Post-Questionnaire

As an undergraduate of the English Language Career, the researcher is doing an action research work about Reader's Theater strategy. This study will help you to improve your reading fluency and comprehension of the English Language learning. For that reason; I ask you politely to answer the question in a real and responsible way.

Student's name: _____

Date: _____

1. Do you like to read?

Yes () No ()

2. Did you like to work with Reader's Theater strategy?

Yes () No ()

3. Do you think that Reader's Theater help you to improve reading fluency and comprehension?

Yes () No ()

4. Would you like your English teacher to work with reader's theater strategy during the English classes?

Yes () No ()

5. Enhancing reading fluency and comprehension with Reader's Theater strategy was?

Interesting ()

Funny ()

Boring ()

6. How often do you read?

Always ()

Almost always ()

Sometimes ()

Thank you for your collaboration!

Post - Test

Unidad Educativa “Lauro Damerval Ayora” N°1

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____ Course: _____
Student: _____ Date: _____

Reading Comprehension

1. **Read the dialogue and answer the questions. (Lea el diálogo y responde las preguntas) (2,8pts)**

Introducing yourself

Elizabeth: Good morning, I am Elizabeth.

David: Hi Elizabeth, I'm David. Nice to meet you!

Elizabeth: Nice to meet you too. And how old are you?

David: I am thirteen years old and you

Elizabeth: I am twelve years old. Where do you study?

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Elizabeth: I am in eighth basic year. What time do you start classes?

David: I start classes every day at seven and five in the morning. And what time do you start classes?

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Elizabeth: My best friend is Alice, but she is shy. Is Juan an open person?

David: Oh! Of course, he is so funny. By the way I'm meeting him in five minutes. See you later.

Elizabeth: Ok, see you, have a nice day.

How old is David?

David is _____

How old is Elizabeth?

She _____

Where does Elizabeth study?

Elizabeth studies at _____

Where does David study?

David studies _____

What time do Elizabeth and David start their classes?

They start classes at _____

Who is David's best friend?

David's best friend is _____

Who is Alice?

Alice is Elizabeth's _____

2. Complete the spaces with the correct word or form of the verb (3,2pts)

She **(are/is)** ____ Elizabeth, she **(is/am)** ____ twelve years old. She studies at "Lauro Damerval Ayora" School. She **(am/is)** ____ in eighth basic year. **(His/Her)** ____ best friend **(is/are)** ____ Alice. Alice **(is/am)** ____ shy.

He **(are/is)** ____ David. He **(is/am)** ____ thirteen years old. He studies at "Juan Montalvo" School. He **(am/is)** ____ **(in/at)** ____ ninth basic year. **(His/Her)** ____ best friend **(are/is)** ____ Juan. Juan **(is/am)** ____ **(a/ an)** ____ open person.

Reading Fluency

Individually, read the following paragraph (4pts):

Good morning, madam! My name is Roberta Smith. I'm twelve years old. I'm a student. I go to school every day at 7:00 am. I finish my classes at 1:00 pm and I go to my house. I have lunch and do my homework. I'm reading an interesting book; it is "Los Aristogatos". I play with my siblings. I take a shower. I help my mother to prepare dinner. We eat and then I go to bed.

Matrix

THEME: READER’S THEATER AS A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE READING FLUENCY AND COMPREHENSION AMONG 8TH YEAR STUDENTS OF BASIC EDUCATION, AT UNIDAD EDUCATIVA “LAURO DAMERVAL AYORA” N°1 IN LOJA CITY, DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR 2014-2015.

PROBLEM	OBJECTIVES	THEORETICAL FRAME	METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN (ACTION RESEARCH)	INSTRUMENTS
<p>Main research Problem</p> <p>How does Reader’s Theater strategy enhance reading fluency and comprehension?</p>	<p>General</p> <p>To enhance reading fluency and comprehension through the implementation of Reader’s Theater strategy among eighth year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1 in Loja city, during the school year 2014 – 2015</p>	<p>What is reading?</p> <p>Reading Fluency</p> <p>Comprehension</p> <p>Skills, Strategies & Best Practices</p> <p>Developing Reading comprehension</p> <p>questions.</p> <p>Teaching Reading</p>	<p>Preliminary investigation</p> <p>Observation of the English classes.</p> <p>Stating the background of problem.</p> <p>Describing the current situation.</p> <p>Locating and reviewing the literature.</p> <p>Creating a methodological framework for the research.</p> <p>Preparing an intervention plan.</p>	<p>Questionnaire</p> <p>Tests</p> <p>Rubric</p> <p>Field Diary and notes</p>

Sub- problems	Specifics		Presentation of Research findings.	
<p>What kind of theoretical references about Reading skill and reader's theater are useful for the eighth year students of Basic Education, at Unidad Educativa "Lauro Damerval Ayora" N°1, during the school year 2014 – 2015?</p>	<p>To investigate the theoretical references about reading skill and reader's theater strategy to help students to build their reading fluency and comprehension.</p>	<p>Strategies for developing Reading skills. Reader's Theater What is reader's theater Reader's theater: oral language enrichment and Literacy. Development for ELLs Reader's Theater</p>	<p>Reflecting, analyzing and answering the proposed inquiries. Organizing the final report.</p>	
<p>What are the factors do not permit students' progress on their reading skill?</p>	<p>To detect students difficulties to improve their reading skill, through observations.</p>	<p>Giving students a reason to read aloud Improving oral reading fluency through reader's theatre</p>		
<p>What are the main phases of the intervention plan that address the</p>	<p>To arrange a plan which allows students improve</p>			

<p>current issues of reading fluency and comprehension through the use of Reader's Theater of the eighth year students of Basic Education.?</p>	<p>their reading skill through Reader's Theater strategy.</p>	<p>About Readers Theatre Reading Comprehension Test</p>		
<p>How is Reader's Theater strategy implemented to enhance reading fluency and comprehension?</p>	<p>To execute Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity to develop reading skill.</p>			
<p>How does Reader's Theater strategy as a scholarly activity solve the issues of students' reading fluency and comprehension?</p>	<p>To verify the success or failure of the application of Reader's Theater as a strategy to improve students' reading fluency and comprehension.</p>			

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