REFLECTIVE INQUIRY ON STRATEGIC READING INSTRUCTION

A Thesis Presented by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this investigation to my family, especially to my son, parents and my husband who supported me with their patience and love. I want to share all my achievements with them.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank to my advisor, Diana Isabel Quinchía, for her guidance and patience during the development of this project. I also wish to express my gratitude to the participant students, because they were always willing to cooperate voluntarily in this project. I also want to thank the peer observer, her observations and transparency enriched my reflection process. Besides, I would like to express my thankfulness to the members of the Master's Program committee for their contribution in this study. Finally, I wish to thank the Universidad de Antioquia for the merit-based scholarship I was conferred.

ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study was focused on the way I improved my practice based on the reflective inquiry method. This method consists on dealing with a problematic situation to better understand it and find out a solution for it through a constant reflection on the practice. (Loughran, 2005, p. 5). This study first aimed to encounter solutions to the difficulties I had as a reading comprehension teacher, considering that I was educated as a translator, and second finding the best ways to help students become strategic readers. This reflective inquiry study was developed in an English reading comprehension course from a well-recognized public university in Colombia. The data collection method comprised: journal writing as a vehicle to keep all my reflection about my teaching, peer observations done by a teacher from the reading comprehension program and questionnaires completed by students of a reading comprehension course from the Physical Education program.

The findings from this investigation revealed that through a constant reflection on both teaching practices and experiences, it is possible to improve pedagogical practices and students' reading process thanks to the implementation of the Reflective Inquiry Method.

The general findings of this study included three main aspects. First, the positive changes that the reflective inquiry method brought to my instruction. Second, aspects of my

instruction that needed to be improved. Finally, the students' perception about the effects of strategic reading instruction regarding the use of the dictionary and the acquisition of vocabulary which as a consequence allowed them to be more strategic readers.

This investigation shows that any teacher with or without a pedagogical formation can improve his/her practice by applying this method while students also gain from teacher's improvement.

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Introduction

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) is one of the fastest growing educational fields in Colombia. Due to the *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extanjeras*, there are thousands of opportunities in all educative institutions for English teachers. This plan has two main goals. First, to include the English language in the educational programs in order to improve the students and teachers' competitiveness. And second, to give the future professionals the opportunity to be able to enter into a globalized world which requires well prepared people. Besides this common goal, this program has particular purposes for teachers and students. Teachers' objective is to be well trained in the use of the different teaching strategies in order to facilitate students' English language learning especially by implementing the ICT and also by improving their English language level. Likewise, this program wants the students both to improve their English knowledge and to maintain their English language level. (Colombia aprende La red del conocimiento) To develop this program, Colombia needs good teachers who can prepare professionals to achieve the goals proposed in terms of the English language level in the country. However, in Colombia there are still not enough well qualified teachers who can contribute to the development of this objective, for instance Sánchez (2013) reports that there are few graduated teachers with appropriate English knowledge in Colombia and due to teachers' low standards in English Language knowledge, students fail to meet the goals of the program (p. 21). And even though there are teachers with a good level of the English language, many of them might also lack the pedagogical formation to instruct students. As a strategy to promote the strengthening of

the future professional, the *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extanjeras*, offers the possibility to train English teachers of higher education institutions with the aim of reinforcing the language educational programs and improving both their level of English language and their pedagogy. Nevertheless, current teachers' level is not as good as expected and according to the surveys done by the program in 2013 from 6,495 evaluated teachers only 43% of the teachers are in B+, 30% in B1, 10% in A1 and 5% in Pre A considering that this call was for any English Colombian teacher. (CVNE Centro Virtual de Noticias de la Educación)

Being an English teacher is a much requested job not only in Colombia but in Antioquia. In this department, there are 6 public universities and 37 private universities located in Medellin, Bello, Caldas, Sabaneta and Santa Fe de Antioquia. Some of them have foreign language teacher education programs, Universidad de Antioquia, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana; Universidad Santo Tomas, Fundación Universitaria Luis Amigo, Universidad Católica de Oriente, and Corporación Universitaria Minuto de Dios – UNIMINUTO. However, these universities do not cover the high demand of English teachers needed in Colombia (Sánchez, 2013, p. 24). The Universidad de Antioquia offers two undergraduate programs: the Translation Program English-French-Spanish and a Bachelor program in Foreign Language Teaching. However, many graduated from the Translation program become English language teachers and work in the different private and public schools and universities of the region.

The Re-Accreditation Report of the Translation Program English-French-Spanish presented by Giraldo, J. et al. (2011) states that a translator can work in different fields such as translator, subtitler, terminologist, investigator in translation and teacher in a language program. However, the pedagogical training does not make part of the formation in the

Translation Program. This profession is not widely recognized and solicited in our city and in most companies and institutions where translators would be solicited to work; the employees already had the language knowledge; indeed, sometimes it is a requirement to be hired. Nevertheless, many translators work as freelance but in some cases this would not be a profitable business since in many companies use mechanical translators that most of the times supply their work. All these factors above mentioned displace the professional translator and motivate these professionals to work as educators, considering also that there is a huge demand of English teachers in educational institutions. As a result, many translators work as teachers with high proficiency in the English language but without any pedagogical preparation, which in most of the cases become a hard task for these translators who want to be prepared teachers and educate qualified students and professionals. Despite the fact that in Colombia there are many universities that offered English teaching programs, and that the *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extanjeras* needs well prepared teachers, the huge demand for English teachers is not covered by trained teachers; in fact, most of current teachers do not have the English language knowledge required for teaching (Sanchez 2013, p. 21) or are professionals in other areas without pedagogical training.

As a strategy to improve teachers and students level of English and based on the experiences obtained from the *Programa de Fortalecimiento al Desarrollo de Competencias en Lenguas Extanjeras*, the government started in 2014 a program called Colombia Very Well. This program is going to be developed until 2025 and intends to cover three components – to provide training and pedagogical material to teachers, to improve the teaching programs in universities in order to have better practices of English teaching and finally, to promote the learning of the English language in the productive

sector. (Centro Virtual de Noticias de la Educación. Ministerio de Educación Nacional and Colombia aprende La red del conocimiento)

Translators who work as English teachers in different educational organizations is a common situation, Universidad de Antioquia is an example of this. The number of translators who are teachers ascends to seven in the English reading comprehension program of the University, which is the program addressed to all university students. Besides, it is important to note that not all the teachers who teach reading comprehension in the program have the pedagogical formation, which is my case. I am a translator but I have been working as an English reading teacher for several years. Teaching reading courses through the use of strategic reading approach has become an individual challenge, since I do not possess a pedagogical formation which involves knowledge of how teaching and learning occur.

Being an EFL reading teacher at the university implies two aspects; one is to teach reading based on a strategic reading approach and second to give students a series of strategies to read an English text with ease. Reading in English has become an important task students have to face in the Universidad de Antioquia. At present, the School of Languages, especially Sección Servicios, is in charge of offering reading comprehension courses to the students of the University. These courses are structured into two levels of 80 hours each one which is offered to all the undergraduate community in the University. The main focus of the reading courses is to promote the development of reading strategies in students such as the identification of key vocabulary in a text, the adequate use of the dictionary, the analysis of the morphosyntactic structure of words, sentences and paragraphs organization; the recognition of main ideas and specific information through skimming and scanning and reference words, summarizing information, and getting a

general understanding of the text among others. Certifying the ability of reading texts in English is the requirement students must fulfill in order to graduate; these courses are one way of achieving this prerequisite.

In regard to the fact that in the program there are teachers who are not pedagogical trained in teaching and that students are required to use reading comprehension strategies to read texts in English, there were two aspects to consider. First, how teachers were doing in their classes with the teaching of reading strategies specially those who work in the reading program of the university and who do not have the pedagogical formation and second, how students used the reading strategies taught by these teachers. Therefore, the purpose of my study was to explore how I as a reading comprehension teacher who did not have the pedagogical formation, could advance in the instruction of reading strategies through a constant reflection of the work as an English reading teacher at the university level and also find out how students might become strategic readers after the implementation of the reflective inquiry method. This research project benefited my pedagogical process as an English reading comprehension teacher because the investigation proposed here aimed to improve my instruction, particularly, in a reading comprehension course of the Universidad de Antioquia through the implementation of the reflective inquiry method and determine what advances students might have in the use of reading compression strategies as a result of the application of this method.

Before conducting this investigation, I did a pilot study with seventeen undergraduate students registered in a reading comprehension course level 1. These students were from different academic programs. In this pilot study, I kept a journal as a means of data recollection. The journal helped me to connect the experience I have had as a teacher of reading strategies with what I wanted to improve. By conducting the pilot study,

I could identify my weaknesses as a teacher and how by means of a reflective process I could improve my teaching and students' learning process. This study comes from my desire of changing my old way of teaching and after many years of teaching reading comprehension without any pedagogical training made me think that I really needed to do something to improve my teaching practice. During the first years of experience as a teacher of reading comprehension strategies and after implementing the pilot study, I faced some difficulties. First, the teaching of the reading strategies was isolated, that is, I taught them separately without any connection among strategies. Second, the instruction of the reading strategies was very theoretical and when students tried to read and apply the strategy was difficult for them because I did not model the strategy, and even though students understood the concept of the strategy they failed to apply it when reading. Third, the reading material was sometimes inadequate because of its level of difficulty and was not related to their field of knowledge. Fourth, in the reading tasks, students limited to read a text, and answer open questions or simple select an answer from different options (Appendix A). Fifth, the class interaction was minimal; it consisted in question-answer socialization. As a result, students received little feedback; there was not socialization of students' doubts or text interpretation. In short, the lesson planning consisted in giving a theoretical explanation of a reading strategy, reading a text and checking answers to proposed questions.

Concerning the teaching of FL reading, the work that has been done in Colombia has been mainly focused on the students' use of reading strategies to read texts in English; however the role of teachers and reflection on strategy instruction has not been developed extensively. The studies conducted in this country predominantly gave attention to students and the use of reading strategies, but there were few studies which center on teachers. I

revised journals such as: *HOW, A Colombian Journal for Teachers of English, PROFILE Issues in teachers' professional development, Íkala, Revista de Lenguaje y Cultura, Colombian Applied Linguistic Journal, CALJ, and Lenguaje*.

In the journals *HOW* as well as *PROFILE,* I found that the research papers were related to the way students read and the strategies they used when reading a text. In the first journal there were three investigations. First, Di Ridolfo & Murillo (2007) centered their study on three aspects. The first concern was how students from a teaching program connected their context with the text they had to read in English. The second concern was the influence of the academic context on reading, and finally, the students' involvement in reading texts. The second study by Gómez & Avila (2009) showed how students improved their reading comprehension skills through reading strategies such as "Brainstorming, Graphic Organizer, KWL (Know-Want-Learn), Comparison-Contrast Charts, Question-Answer Relationships and Reciprocal teaching" (p.58), and how some external factors like culture and specific purposes for reading encompassed the reading comprehension process. Finally, the third study conducted by Camargo & Orbegozo (2010) focused on how students applied "Sight word strategy" and background experience to read text in English in order to understand another culture through reading. These studies reflected their focus on reading strategies and students.

In the *PROFILE* journal, studies such as those conducted by Lopera (2012) and Lopez (2001) also concentrated their investigation on the use of reading strategies and how students applied them in reading texts in English. In the first study, the author analyzed the effects of teaching reading strategies in a group of students in order to show the effects of using strategic reading instruction. And the second study presented how a group of students could improve their reading comprehension through the implementation of reading

strategies such as "looking for specific information or the general idea of a text; making predictions about the reading and so on" (p.42).

Another study from *PROFILE* journal explored how teachers implement their assessment practices in their reading courses (Muñoz, 2009). This researcher based his investigation on teachers' assessment practices not on how teachers instructed students through the use of reading strategies. Moreover, this study did not consider if the teachers had or not a pedagogical formation in teaching which was one of the foci of my investigation.

In *Íkala,* there were also two studies related to reading but with different purposes. The first project conducted by Osorno & Lopera (2012) implemented the use of web-based tools in a distance reading course based on four models of interaction: interaction with the content, the constructor, the students and the system. The second study carried out by Velásquez & Giraldo (2011) centered their investigation on how two pre-service teachers use reading strategies, being one of them a more successful reader than the other.

In *CALJ,* there were other three investigations related to the use of reading strategies by students. The first by Arismendi, Colorado & Grajales (2011) was about how law graduate students develop the reading comprehension through blended modality. The second study by Bogoya (2011) was not conducted at the university level but with fifth graders in a reading comprehension course; the investigator taught reading strategies to students through biology content based course; the general results of this study showed that students improved their reading comprehension. The last investigation by Vanegas (2010) reviewed studies about reading based on cognitive perspectives. This article, focused first on the influence of the language on reading in aspects such as historical and ideological practices, and on English readers as foreigners in the socio-cultural aspect. Second, formal

approaches on language are not sufficient for foreign language readers and third, that it is convenient to move from the cognitive perspective to the language awareness.

While there has been some research on different aspects of reading comprehension; for example, students using their background knowledge to read texts in English, reading to understand other culture, different assessment practices applied in reading comprehension, approaches students use to read texts through a virtual blended course; nothing has been done concerning the role of teachers, especially, how teachers lacking a pedagogical training improve their instruction and how this improvement has an effect on students' reading comprehension.

While the above investigations provide valuable information about what has been done regarding reading comprehension, it is also important to know about what has been done regarding the Reflective Inquiry Method. The following research studies show how reflection mainly on pre-service teachers improve their professional practice by means of a constant reflection on their practice.

Greene, W., Kin, Y., & Marioni, J., (2007) members of the faculty at the School of Education at Southern Oregon University in the United States examined how their participation in a "faculty-reflection group affected members' view of their teaching and the learning of their students." (Greene, W., Kin, Y., & Marioni, J., 2007, p. 42) To accomplish that, they based their study on three strategies: collaboration, collegial support and reflective inquiry in order to promote their professional growth and their students' maturity. In this study, their "students would be encourage to see reflection inquiry as a critical component of their own development as teachers." (Greene, W., Kin, Y., & Marioni, J., 2007, p. 44) The findings of this study showed that open reflective conversations promote critical self-reflection on participants. Collaboration, collegial

support and reflective inquiry are ways to promote equality among teachers and thanks to the reflections of the faculty members; they realized how they can make their faculty program better and how they can think on their students' needs.

Likewise, Tugui, C. (2011) conducted a study developed in a Romanian university. The participants were pre-service teachers; they wanted to have a pedagogical training to be foreign language teachers (English and German). The investigator considered that teaching pre-service teachers to implement the Reflective Inquiry Method in their early stages of their teaching program would help them to become efficient teachers. The goal of these students was to learn what they need to be effective educators. The training program offered by this university began "from the assumption that through guided reflection the students could bring their beliefs to a conscious level." (Tugui, C., 2011, p. 2) as a result of this research, the participants considered that reflecting on their teaching practice would help them to understand and be conscious of their weaknesses as teachers, to find ways to improve their teaching, to understand other teachers' and students' actions and to make right decisions about their teaching.

About this same topic, Jones, J., & Jones, K., (2013) conducted a research at Niagara University. The purpose of this study was to provide an example of how Reflective Inquiry can be fostered during initial phases in a teacher education program. The main purpose of this study was to promote long term reflective practice in novice teachers. In this investigation, reflection was taught in three ways: "1. By creating opportunities for students to generate a solution to problem. 2. By creating opportunities for students to critique a solution/provide feedback on a solution. 3. By creating opportunities for students to test an emerging hypothesis." (Jones, J., & Jones, K., 2013, p. 81) Reflections were placed according to everyday situations in the classroom activities. The investigators

expressed that reflection taught in earlier stages to pre-service teachers help them to "(a) generate solutions to a given problem, (b) critique solutions to a given problem, and (c) test their emerging hypothesis in novel contexts" (Jones, J., & Jones, K., 2013, p. 14)

Cirocki, A., Tennekoon, S. & Pena, A. (2014) conducted an investigation at an ESL classroom in Sri Lanka. "The study reports interesting findings, calling for a wide-ranging discussion on reflective inquiry in the language classroom as theory and practice seem to be a different tune." (p. 24) The main objectives of the study were first, to observe how the teachers from Sri Lanka carry out research in the classroom and consider themselves reflective practitioners; second, to determine if this is a difficult task for them and what are the causes of this difficulty, and finally, to investigate why or why not these teachers do research in their classroom and what do they do with the data gathered. However, the study shows "that the reflective practice has not made an impact on the ESL context in Sri Lanka." (p. 37) The researchers proposed that in order to improve the situation, some alternative should be promoted. First, offering research methods modules/sessions "in all ESL teacher education degrees as well as ESL training courses." (p. 37) Second, ESL teacher-trainees and qualified teachers should attend to different types of workshops and conferences to improve their knowledge in the field. And finally, "School authorities should also establish interest groups for ESL teachers." (p.37) To promote "classroom-based research projects, where teachers can be actively involved in reflective inquiry and its essentials." (Cirocki, A., Tennekoon, S. & Pena, A., 2014, p.37)

Hiebert, J., Carpenter, T., Fennema, E., Fuson, K Human, P., Murray, H., Oliver, A. & Wearne, D (1996) differs from the other investigations because this study centers on students not on teachers or novice teachers. This study promoted on students the ability of problem solving based on the Reflective Inquiry Method especially in the area of

mathematics to reform the curriculum and instruction. However, the researchers state that changes in the classroom begin with teachers' change and "Working out new orientations to a subject and changing classroom practices are not easy to do." (p. 19)

The previous studies show that the reflective inquiry is a method that pre-service, or novice teachers and/or faculty teachers can apply for improving teachers' practices and students' learning process. This method is for teachers who look for teaching changes and improvement. According to the above the information, this study was based on the way in which my instruction using a strategic reading approach in an EFL reading comprehension course improved through a reflective inquiry method. The most outstanding contribution of my investigation is reflected on two main aspects: first how teachers who do not have pedagogical formation in English language teaching or any teacher may improve their teaching practice through a reflective inquiry method and overcome teaching difficulties in the classroom. Second, how through constant teacher's reflection on strategy instruction he/she promotes the adequate use of reading strategies to help students to become strategic readers.

To accomplish this research study I proposed the following research question:

How does the implementation of the Reflective Inquiry Method help to improve both my instruction on the Strategic Reading Approach in an EFL reading comprehension course and the students' reading comprehension?

In the following section, I present the theories on strategic reading instruction and reflective inquiry method on which I supported this study. Afterwards, I give a description of the setting in which this investigation was conducted and the participants involved in this study. Then, I present the data collection methods implemented and the analysis of the data.

Subsequently, I explain the findings and interpretations of the data gathered, the study implications and limitation; and finally, I state the conclusions.

Theoretical Framework

This study was based on the way in which my instruction in EFL reading comprehension improved through a reflective inquiry method and the implementation of the strategic reading approach in reading comprehension courses. As a teacher in this field, I analyzed my instruction through a permanent self-reflection, which allowed me both to identify the aspects of my instruction which needed to be improved and how this instruction helped students to become strategic readers through the use of reading comprehension strategies. For this reason, it was then important to see the relationship between the ways I taught EFL reading comprehension strategies, and how the students applied the strategies to EFL texts. In order to accomplish it, I drew this study on cognitive theories supported by Grabe (2009), McNamara (2007), McEwan (2004) and Snow (2002). The main concepts that framed my project study are: reading in a second or foreign language, reading comprehension, reading strategies, cognitive reading strategies, strategic reading, strategic reading instruction, collaborative strategic reading, and reflective inquiry method.

Reading in a Second or a Foreign Language

According to Carrell, L (1988) "reading is by far the most important of the four skills in a second language, particularly in English as a second or foreign language." (p. 1) and it is necessary to understand that reading in L2 do not entail the same process as reading in L1 due to the fact that there are certain aspects that may interfere in the reading process. For instance, Grabe (2009) presents three main distinctions between reading in L1 and L2. These three main aspects are: "linguistic and processing differences, developmental

and educational differences and sociocultural and institutional differences." (p. 130) Regarding the linguistic processes, L1 readers processes the information differently since L1 differs from L2 in relation to "phonology, orthography, morphology, grammar, specific areas of lexical density, areas of only partial lexical overlap, idiomatic and metaphoric uses of language, an discourse-organization practices and principles." (p. 131). According to the developmental and educational differences in L1-L2 reading, it may be possible that skillful readers in L1 bring to L2 readers the same skills "identifying main ideas, drawing inferences, connecting main ideas and supporting ideas, focusing on key information," among others. (p.134) However, reading in L2 strategically also depends on L2 reading experiences. The sociocultural and institutional are factors that also mark the difference in L1 and L2 reading. According to Grabe (2009) these factors include "L2 linguistic resources, the educational experiences of the learner, and the developmental cognitive experiences of the learner. The wider societal and cultural context in which a learner is socialized also influences L1-L2 differences." (p. 137) These factors may impact considerably L2 reading making the reading process for L2 readers more difficult.

In addition, reading in L1 and L2 involves some different processes that range from the understanding of a word to the whole comprehension of a text. Grabe (2009) also remarks that L2 readers have variations in their lexicon, grammar structures and discourse knowledge. Besides this, the author states that the process of reading in L2 will take longer than reading in L1 because L1 readers when start reading, they already have a certain vocabulary knowledge that in some cases L2 readers lack. (p. 131)

As well as Grabe (2009), Alderson J., Hoapakanges, Huhta, A., Nieminen L., and Ullakonoja (2014) state that reading problems in L2 depends on aspects such as "type of

SFL text, the text topic, the reader's purpose, their knowledge of the world." These aspects may also vary from reader to reader (p.71)

Alderson, J. et al (2014) explain that there are two processes in reading in a second language: lower-level process and higher-level process. The former includes words recognition, syntactic analysis and encoding meaning for example proposition and working memory. This process is characteristic of L2 readers. (p. 75) The latter "involves one's ability to make mental connections across events and propositions in the text to create a coherent idea of what the text is about." In these processes, L2 readers need some reading strategies such as "goals and purposes; inferencing; the use of background, both consciously and unconsciously; and the monitoring of one's comprehension as one progresses through a text." (p. 76) Due to the fact that there are differences between L1-L2 reading, readers need to cope with some reading strategies that help them to solve reading comprehension problems and a clear instruction on the use of the reading strategies to facilitate their reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

According to Snow (2002), reading comprehension is a process in which a reader extracts information from a written text and constructs meaning by means of an interaction and involvement with the text. (p.11). By the same token, Grabe and Stroller (2002) conceive reading as the ability to convey meaning from a text and make an appropriate interpretation of the information contained in the text. These authors also define fluent reading as a process that should be: rapid, efficient, interactive, strategic, flexible, evaluating, purposeful, comprehending, learning and linguistic. In this case, there are "many cognitive processes working together at the same time." (Grabe & Stroller, 2002,

p.15). First, they state that reading is a rapid process because a reader needs to apply to the text various processing components simultaneously to make a rapid reading. Second, reading is an efficient process since the components involved when reading are coordinated and produced automatically. Third, reading is an interactive process due to two reasons; first, readers identify words, analyze the structure of sentences, build a main idea and monitor their comprehension simultaneously. Second, the linguistic interaction between reader and text interacts with readers' background knowledge. These two reasons make possible that readers are able to interpret a text. Fourth, reading is a strategic process because being a strategic reader means being flexible "with changing purposes and the ongoing monitoring of comprehension". (p. 18). Fifth, reading is an evaluation process as long as the text's information is coherent with the reading purpose. Sixth, reading is a purposeful process because any reader reads with a purpose or task previously fixed. Seventh, reading is a comprehending process since it entails understanding what is being read. Eighth, reading is a learning process due to reading is the most common way students use to learn new information. And finally, reading is a linguistic process in which if a reader "cannot understand any word, he or she [is] not going to comprehend the text." (Grabe & Stroller, 2002, pp. 9 - 19)

In addition, Grabe (2009), states that reading comprehension "is basically a combination of text input, appropriate cognitive processes, and the information that we already know." (p. 74) Macceca (2007) defines reading as "a complex act for humans," (p. 4) Dechant as cited in Macceca (2007) outlines that, "it is a visual process that begins with one's ability to use one's vision to interpret graphic symbols." (p. 4). Macceca (2007) also expresses that the essence of reading comprehension is to "comprehend what is read, reader must be able to cognitively process the words by drawing meaning from their own

experience and knowledge to understand the author's message." (p. 4). He also defines reading as

> a dialog between the reader and the author, and during this dialogue, the reader should generate questions to help anticipate meaning, search for information, respond intellectually and emotionally, and infer ideas from and explain further the content of the text. (p. 4)

From these authors' definition of reading comprehension it is clear that reading comprehension is the ability that a reader possesses to understand and interpret the main information from a written text using its cognitive capacities knowing when and how to use a reading strategy. Consequently, it is important that students consider what reading strategies are, what strategies they can use to read and what benefits they provide to them in order to understand the process of reading comprehension. Because reading is not only decoding words, readers need to understand that their cognitive abilities jointly with the use of reading strategies would benefit their reading comprehension of texts. So, if students acknowledge what is involved in the process of reading in the reading comprehension courses, their reading comprehension may improve.

Reading Strategies

Strategies in reading are important tools that help students to comprehend a text, a strategy is as McNamara (2007) affirms "a piece of knowledge stored in long-term memory that is periodically activated and recruited during integration." (p. 11).This integration is represented by the correlation between readers and the text they are going to read. According to Grabe (2009), strategies are consciously controlled by readers in three moments of the reading process (pre, during and after reading). They help students to solve problems when reading a text.

According to Barnett as cited in Gómez & Avila (2009), "reading strategies are conscious techniques or unconscious processes employed by readers in their attempt to make sense of the written text."(p. 55). These authors also refer to reading strategies as tools that students can use to assist reading. They categorize them as important elements that can help readers to comprehend any type of text without difficulty; they also emphasized on that when strategies are used by readers appropriately, readers "may get the most of the reading by making a minimal effort" (p. 58). According to Graesser as cited in McNamara (2009) there are three important reasons why reading strategies are relevant. First, readers use them to verify their reading comprehension. Second, reading strategies help readers to go deeper in the comprehension of the text going beyond than simply understanding words and sentences. And finally, reading strategies help readers to tackle a text that belongs to a specific field of knowledge. (p. 5)

Haris & Hodge as cited in Kirmizi (2010) define a reading strategy "as a systematic plan consciously adopted and monitored to improve one's performance in learning." (p. 47-53) Kirmizi (2010) notes that reading strategies are an essential part of reading with the purpose to understand a reading and different kinds of texts. (p. 4753). Routman as cited in Cogmen and Saracoglu (2009) describes reading strategies as "tools or plans for facilitating and extending comprehension," (p. 248) they also express that due to strategies readers can: "remember the key points, distinguish the necessary and unnecessary information, think about the main idea and comment on the subject matter." (p. 248)

Zhang as well as Barnett as cited in Shang (2011) assert that the proper use of the reading strategies may benefit readers. The first author emphasizes on reading strategies benefit non-native readers since they can serve readers to overcome language deficiencies and acquire a better reading achievement. (p.18). The second author refers to strategies as

"mental operations involved when readers purposefully approach a text to make sense of what they read" (p.19).

The use of reading strategies implies "the extraction and construction of meaning from text by teachers and students individually or by teachers and students jointly through the skillful and situational use of a repertoire of cognitive strategies" (McEwan, 2004, p.3). This jointly or individual task done by teachers and students can be done through what is called by Klingner and Vaughn as cited in Grabe (2009) as a Collaborative Strategic Reading. (p. 342), this concept will be explained later in this section. McNamara (2007) and Grabe (2009) explain that the use of strategies is a conscious cognitive process that readers use to control the reading comprehension process. As a result, the effective use of the reading strategies by students depends, to certain point, on the teacher's adequate instruction of the reading strategies; and the relation between the strategies used by the readers, their cognitive process, the text and activities selected by the teacher. Thus, when this type of interaction fails, students will not be able to understand and comprehend the text and it is at this point when teachers will give students appropriate tools to approach the text and thus comprehend it. Consequently, for an adequate process of reading, teachers need to provide appropriate instruction on reading strategies, students integrate them with their cognitive abilities and finally students adequately assist the reading process using strategies in order to comprehend a text in English. Once students have already processed the information, the process of comprehension starts to take place.

Cognitive Reading Strategies

Reading strategies are cognitive strategies "when it is a conscious thought or behavior used by reader to process a text" (McEwan, 2004, p. 13), they provide tools that

help students overcome reading comprehension problems, as McNamara (2007) states "a reading comprehension strategy is a cognitive or behavioral action that is enacted under particular contextual conditions, with the goal of improving some aspects of comprehension." (p.6). Therefore, students who are trained to apply a specific reading strategy based on a particular reading difficulty may overcome reading comprehension problems.

Reading comprehension is also a cognitive process that involves three relevant factors. First, it is necessary to consider the linguistic knowledge in English as a Foreign Language. Second; when reading, it is fundamental to know how readers apply reading comprehension strategies and background knowledge. And finally, it is basic to know how students keep an active and constant interaction before, during and after reading a text in order to construct meaning, as McNamara (2007) asserts:

> Cognitive strategies have commonly been described as strategies that a reader is trained to use, such as guessing form context, noting discourse organization, recognizing a transition phrase, skipping a word, identifying a known word part, forming a question about an author, or identifying a main idea (p.223).

It means that readers require different cognitive reading strategies in order to have a more effective reading process, a better way to comprehend a text. According to Almasi & Fullerton (2012) "strategies are deliberate and help one to attain a goal. While reading, the reader must intentionally choose to use strategies, and the intentional choice of a strategy is aimed at attaining a particular goal." (p.2)

The appropriate use of cognitive reading strategies varies from reader to reader since "the reader brings to the act of reading his or her cognitive capabilities (attention, memory, critical analytic ability, inferencing, visualization)" (Snow, 2002, p. 11). Carrel as cited in Ediger (2006) also mentions other cognitive abilities students need to become

strategic readers such as the attention capacity, memory, communication and learning. (p. 307). Therefore, these cognitive strategies will also facilitate students' reading comprehension process. These same authors state that

> Because strategies are controllable by readers, they are personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly. In addition, reading strategy use reflects both metacognition and motivation, because readers need to have both the knowledge and the disposition to use strategies. (p. 307)

Thus, it depends on the reader and how s/he uses the cognitive reading strategies to understand and comprehend a text in English.

Strategic Reading and Strategic Reading Instruction

Harvey & Goudvis (2007) define strategic reading as considering reading as a way that improves learning and understanding. They state that being strategic is "important or essential to a plan of action" (p. 23). It implies that if readers have a purpose in mind, they would have a better comprehension of the text because they would activate their background knowledge to better understand the text, they also would anticipate information from context and thus, they would focus on what they need from the text.

Afflerback et al. as cited in Almasi & Fullerton (2012) state that the strategic reading process becomes evident especially when readers are starting to read. They become strategic because "they are learning to identify letters, decode words, read orally, and comprehend" (p. 2). Becoming a strategic reader implies that readers need to take into account some specific actions. These include: have a purpose for reading, select the strategies that will help reader to achieve the purpose, be motivated, be able to monitor their comprehension and identify if the purpose is being obtained and "have the ability to make adjustments as needed to ensure that the goal is attained successfully" (p. 3).

Successful readers or strategic readers depend on teachers' instruction to some extend; and the understanding of the reading strategies by the students would provide them with some benefits when reading. O'Reilly and Boneteel (2012) mention some of the benefits students have once they apply reading strategies to any text. Strategies help students to make predictions, establish the rate in which they read the text, and identify important information among others. Reading strategies such as background knowledge activation, a quick skim or scan, cause-effect and contrast relationships in a text can equip students in order to read a text in English strategically. (p. vii).

Almasi & Fullerton (2012) affirm that "Explicit instruction is an important component of effective strategy instruction. By itself is not sufficient for developing strategic, self-regulated readers, but it is a necessary component of strategy instruction, particularly for struggling readers." (p. 45). Therefore, there is a need to give proper instruction on the different strategies that students use to read if they want to overcome the different problems presented before, during and after reading a text.

Instruction is then a key element in the process of teaching strategic reading because "Good instruction is the most powerful means of developing proficient comprehenders and preventing reading comprehension problems" (Snow, 2002, p. 29). To give an appropriate instruction to students is as important as being a better prepared teacher in accomplishing the professional task of teaching reading strategies. It is also important to note that students' understanding of reading strategies depends on a great deal on how instruction is carried out. Instruction entails a series of basic principles that help teachers to develop a proper teaching; these principles are explained and classified by Williams as cited in McNamara (2007) into: first, teachers need to gradually introduce the reading content from the simple to the complex; second, they should provide students with modelling and

scaffolding, third they should provide feedback and finally the reading materials should be clear and simple enough to facilitate students' comprehension. (p. 204). Likewise, Craigs as cited in McEwan (2004) also proposes other principles for strategic reading instruction which include "(1) direct instructing and planning, (2) modeling, (3) giving directions, (4) scaffolding, (5) coaching, (6) attributing, and (7) constructing meaning." (p. 20). This author refers to direct instructing and planning as explaining how the lesson will be developed; modeling is how the teacher shows students how they can apply a strategy; giving directions is how students are able to achieve a reading task from the beginning to the end; scaffolding helps students to solve reading task from the simplest aspect in reading to the most complex ones; coaching "refers to the things that teachers do to foster students' independence in learning" (p. 27), attributing is to communicate to students that their success in reading is the result of reading strategically; and constructing meaning refers to group interaction and the way teachers and students work collaboratively, interchanging opinions and constructing meaning from text.(McEwan, 2004, p. 21). These teaching principles help teachers to be better prepared to instruct students and teach them to become strategic readers showing them how to overcome reading comprehension problems.

Harvey & Goudvis (2007) state that the teaching of reading strategies should not be an isolated process in which teachers instruct them separately without cohesion, they emphasize that the students should find the instruction of the different strategies with specific purposes, facilitating the reading of any text in English with comprehension. Because of this, teachers show students "how strategies overlap and intersect. [Teachers] demonstrate how readers weave them together for a more engaged, rewarding read."(p. 23). Besides the implementation of strategic reading principles, teachers can also follow some

suggestions to improve the instruction of reading strategies. These authors describe them in order to have an effective instruction, some of them include:

- Teach with the end in mind
- Plan instruction that is responsive to the individual needs of students
- Model their own use of comprehension strategies over time
- Remind students that the purpose for using a strategy is to construct meaning and engage in the text
- Articulate how thinking helps readers better understand what they read
- View strategies as a means to an end with the goal of building a repertoire of thinking strategies
- Model their oral, written and artistic responses to the text
- Gradually release responsibility for using strategies to the students, always moving them toward independent reading and thinking
- Provide opportunities for guided and independent practice
- Show students how comprehension strategies apply in a variety of texts, genre, and contexts
- Help students notice how strategies intersect and work in conjunction with one another
- Build in large amount of time for actual text reading by the students
- Make sure students have many opportunities to talk to each other about their reading
- Provide opportunities for students to respond by writing and drawing
- Take time to observe and confer directly with students and keep records of those observations and conferences to assess progress and inform instruction
- Use students' work and talk to assess past instruction, guide future instructions, and assess and evaluate students' performance (Harvey & Goudvis, 2007, p. 31)

Woloshyn et al. and Van Ryzinn, as cited in in Almasi & Fullerton (2012) talk about the relevance of explaining students the importance and values that reading strategies have, it is not only to explain the students how strategies are applied to texts, it is to explicitly state students that they are really useful; thus, students will see their value. (p. 16). These authors also state that instruction should attain certain teaching goals. Teachers need to provide "instruction, modelling, and guided practice so that less proficient readers begin to understand how to read and process text strategically." (p. 10). Teachers need to accomplish a collaborative reading task especially with less skillful readers in order to help

them to better understand how to apply reading strategies when reading and in that way, students can improve their reading comprehension.

Collaborative Strategic Reading Approach

When students read in small groups with or without the help of the teacher, students would benefit from other students' knowledge since reading collaboratively may increase students' involvement in the text and help students to overcome reading comprehension problem. Schumm (2006) defines this approach as "a set of comprehension strategies that have been put together in a system to assist students who may be at different level, who have learning disabilities, or who may be English language learners (ELLs)." (p. 269). Likewise, Grabe (2009) draws on the importance of a collaborative work that is done between teacher and students working in group. (p. 233). This approach gives students the possibility for learning collaboratively since working in groups bring to the less skillful readers, especially students who have difficulties with the English language, opportunities to express their concerns and opinions. This approach also facilitates interaction among students because they can easily interchange information and most importantly solve doubts while or after reading and they can also give or receive correction.

According to Berne & Degener (2012), the collaborative strategic reading can be done through whole class, small group, pairs, and individual (p. 17) and depending on the reading instruction and purposes; the teacher can apply one of these grouping strategies. As first step, it is necessary that student do a collaborative work in small groups, pair or whole class and once they have obtained the strategies and the skills necessaries to read any text, they can endeavor and individual reading task. Doing a collaborative work is a useful strategy teachers can implement because working in groups is also a way of making

students responsible for their own learning. Moss as cited in Schumm (2006), Swanson (2012) and Schumm (2006) recommend that teachers should first instruct students on the use of the reading strategies by modelling them, providing students with enough opportunities to assimilate and familiarize with the strategies. Then, teachers should organize students into collaborative reading groups depending on the purpose of the reading activity in order to facilitate knowledge interchange among students. Thus, reading collaboratively, teacher and students or students in groups, will give students the possibility to advance in their process of becoming strategic readers and enhance their reading comprehension.

The process of gradually teaching reading strategies to students, giving time for students to assimilate the strategy and then facilitating the opportunity to interchange knowledge brought students great benefits in their reading comprehension process. The principal characteristic of the collaborative strategic reading, according to Grabe (2009), is that "students working in groups are taught to activate prior knowledge, make predictions, monitor comprehension difficulties, clarify information, restate important ideas, summarize the text, and form appropriate questions about the text." (p. 233). Even though reading is a process that everyone can perform and process in different ways, collaborative strategic reading which promotes students interaction when reading, would facilitate the assimilation of the reading strategies and the comprehension of the text, especially for those students who are less strategic readers and who find difficult to read in English. The success of the collaborative strategic reading may be due to the appropriate combination of reading strategies instruction and group work. If the former fails, it will influence students' apprehension of the strategies and as a consequence, the latter, the work student do in

groups may also be unfruitful. Therefore, teachers' instruction should be as understandable as pertinent to the reading strategy that is projected students to develop.

Reflective Inquiry Method

Reflection.

Stevens & Cooper (2009) defines reflection as "the process where we reconstruct and make meaning of our experience." (p. 3). Similarly, Zeichener and Liston (2014) define reflection as a process in which learning to teach is present in a teacher's entire career. They also express that the purpose of reflection is to allow teachers to reflect about their teaching process to become better teachers, to be responsible and commited with them and their profession. (p. 6). Besides, Boyd and Les as cited in Stevens & Cooper (2009) emphasize on that "Reflection is a complex and intentional intellectual activity that generates learning from experience." (p. 19). Additionally, Loughran (2005) defines reflection as a means to identify a problem, understand it and determine the best possible ways to reach a solution. Once a teacher has identified the problem to be solved, he or she investigates into his or her own thoughts and actions in order to implement a response to the problem. (pp.13, 20). According to Greene as cited in Zeichener & Liston (2014) "Reflection involves intuition, emotion, and passion and is not something that can be nearly packaged as a set of techniques for teachers to use" (p.10). Reflection is the action of thinking about one's actions in a specific situation; it is a thoughtful process in which one learns through experiences to solve any existing problem. Regarding the professional practice, it is a process that helps teachers to improve their learning by thinking resulting in decision-making to generate new changes and knowledge.

Reflective Inquiry.

Dewey as cited in Lyons (2010) refers to reflective inquiry as reflective thought. And he defines it as "the kind of thinking that consists on turning as subject over in the mind and giving it serious and consecutive consideration." (p.11). Teachers should consider reflective inquiry as a tool to evaluate their teaching practices, to have a good picture of what is occurring in their own development as teachers and also identify what is interfering on students' learning process. Lyons (2010) suggest inquirers to consider

> how we know, how we learn and ask us to be attentive to our own awareness, to become conscious of ourselves as knowers. Thus, our vision of the knowing and our own ideas of knowledge are intimately connected to engaging consciously in inquiry, to making investigation into some puzzle or problem we want to understand. (p.26)

Nevertheless, it is not only to reflect about the everyday doing as teachers, it is to make a decision and implement this decision to really improve teaching actions and acquire knowledge form experience as a teacher and promote students learning. Lyons (2010) takes one Dewey's example to describe reflective inquiry. This example consists on just asking simple questions that surrounds everyday thinking of people's life. He said that simple questions as "what is to be done? Do you walk rapidly, take the elevator or hop the subway?" (p.11) can exemplify what a reflective inquirer does. To be reflective is to think about any situation no matter how simple it is, to understand the context in which it occurs and determine necessary changes to advance as reflective teachers. Reflection is characterized mainly because it consists on a reflective cycle; Dewey as cited in Loughran (1996) explains that this reflective cycle is composed of five steps. These are: suggestions ("are the ideas or possibilities which spring to mind when one is initially confronted by a puzzling situation"), problems ("is when the puzzle is seen as a whole rather that a small or discreet entities on their own."), hypothesis ("is when a suggestion is considered in terms of

what can be done with it or how it can be used."), reasoning ("is when the linking of information, ideas and previous experiences allows one to expand on suggestions, hypotheses and tests, to extend the thinking about and knowledge of the subject.") and testing ("is the phase in which the hypothesized end result may be tested. "). (p. 5) These steps in the cycle do not need to follow an specific order. Contrary to other methods, such as action research, this is characterized "by a cyclical process represented by planning → acting and observing → reflecting → planning and so on (Richard, K., 2003, p. 24)" Reflective inquiry also differs from action research, because action research "involves collaboration with other educators and persons involved in the educational process. Practitioners involved in action research often work with others at the school, including other teachers, school psychologists, speech therapists, counselors, staff, or the school principal." (…); and the actions "might be as simple as changing an assignment for the next school year, or it might involve a rethinking of how students are graded." (Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle, 2006, p. 290) Therefore, the difference between reflective inquiry method and action research consists of the former promotes reflection on teachers who want to improve their professional practice while the latter search the change in an educational institution with the help of different members of the same institution.

Reflective Teacher.

Reflective inquiry benefits teachers' instruction and students' learning process. Being reflective means keeping track of what I do in class, and reflecting on what I should change or improve.

Reflective teachers set their own goals, analyze and understand the context in which instruction is developed. Zeichener and Liston (2014) affirm that teachers are reflective

when they examine their goals and values to direct their work, when teachers take into account the context where instruction develops and when the teachers analyze their own thoughts. (p.1). Being a reflective teacher is to consider the aspects that involve teaching and learning; for example, understand students' learning context and motivation to learn; identify their learning difficulties and find out the best ways to help them to improve as learners. It is also an issue of comprehending what I want as a teacher to have a better teaching practice and what knowledge I want to teach to students. Zeichener and Liston (2014) also suggest some characteristics that a reflective teacher should have, they state that a reflective teacher:

1. Examines, frames and attempts to solve the dilemmas of classroom practice;
2. Is aware of and questions the assumptions and values he or she brings to teaching;
3. Is attentive to the institutional and cultural context in which he or she teaches;
4. Takes part in curriculum development and is involved in schools changes efforts; and
5. Takes responsibility for his or her own professional development. (pp. 6,7)

Reflective teachers are professionals committed with their own will to advance as educators. Teachers who want to be reflective, they first need to recognize that there is an existing problem in their instruction or in students' learning process. One cannot be reflective if there is not recognition of a problem and once it is identified, teachers start to reflect and look for ways to solve it. For example, even teachers who are pedagogical trained; they may find problems in teaching such as: difficulties in planning, instructing, assessing students; these difficulties are the situations that make a teacher to become reflective. Thereby, the ultimate purpose of reflective teachers is to refine their instruction through reflection and this is possible by means of the reflective inquiry method.

Reflective Inquiry as a Method.

In order to understand the value of this method, it is important to establish the relation between reflection and inquiry. Inquiry is defined by Dana and Yendol (2008) "as systematic, intentional study by teachers of their own teaching experience." And "inquiring professionals seek out change by reflecting on their practice." (p. 2). Therefore, reflective inquirers look for a change in the practice by inquiring and this implies reflection on their experiences.

Cole & Knowles, (2000) define the reflective inquiry method as "an ongoing process of examining and refining practice variously focused on the personal, pedagogical, curricular, intellectual, societal, and/or ethical contexts associated with professional work […]" (p. 2). This method can give reflective teachers the opportunity to examine themselves as inquirers, to obtain insights of how their process of teaching improves through constant reflection about their own everyday doing in class; as well as "to search, reflect, and discover and then to use these discoveries as a way to inform [their] future practice" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 43). These authors refer to this method as a constant and cyclical process:

> Reflective inquiry method is cyclical process that begins with and returns to the self - the experiences and the meanings and assumptions derived from experience - and explores the connections between, for instance, elements of experience and context, and in turn of experiences and relationships within that context, and in relation to matters of professional development and future or possible actions as influenced and informed by the inquiry process (p. 113).

Marshall (2001) also conceives this method as being cyclical in which reflective inquires take "a step back and reflecting on what [they] have experienced and done, later moving on again to plan another cycle engagement." (p. 4). These authors agree on this method as cyclical, it is to be placed in context, going back and forward on what have

happened in our practice, plan an action and begin again. The reflective inquiry method "is also a dynamic social affair: it is, ideally, a democratic process designed to give meaning and value to our experiences." (Dewey as cited in Loewy, 2000, p.46). Therefore, teachers bring to teaching process their own values and experiences framed in an educational context with a need for change and improvement. This teaching process involves reflecting about puzzling situations, finding solutions and testing them to progress in the educational practice.

The reflective inquiry method helps teachers in their process of improving their practices, which is in turns it is related to learning from experience; that is, teachers can improve their instruction, taking advantages of the different issues that arise in class, making proper decisions in order to promote students' learning and adequate group work practices. Loughran (2005) states that teaching is connected with learning and this is linked to aspects such as: "the context, and the teacher's understanding of the content; the nature of the students and their experiences; and the temporal and physical characteristics of the setting." He also expresses that it is important that teachers reflect on the association between teaching and the experiences of learning. (p.14). Considering the author's ideas, it is important to consider these aspect in order to develop a proper reflective method, because one can not be reflective if there is an integrations of context where teaching take place, the content to be taught and the teacher understanding of the context and contet.

According to Lyons & LaBoskey (2002) the inquiry process is developed through narratives, in which teachers, students or researchers "integrate their teaching or research practice to construct meaning, interpretations, and knowledge of some aspects of teaching and learning". (p. 6). These authors refers to inquiry as a narrative process that involves a reflective process, "the actions of a group or learners interrogating their learning,

constructing and telling the story of its meaning, and predictions how this knowledge might be used in the future." (p.2)

In the next section, I provide concise information of the setting where I conducted this investigation. I also give the description of the students and the peer observer who voluntarily participated in the development of this study.

Setting

The study was carried out in the Universidad de Antioquia which is a public institution of higher education in Colombia, in the program called *Competencia Lectora*. This program offers two English reading courses, level I and level II, to all the undergraduate students at the university. Each course lasts 80 hours, 4 hours per week. As a final requirement for graduation, students must certify their competence in reading. One way to obtain this certification is that students are offered these two reading comprehension courses.

The core content of these courses is reading strategies. The main objective for level I is that students extract implicit and explicit information from cultural and scientific texts. The main reading strategies are based on: the analysis of morpho-syntactic structure of the word, the use of the dictionary, the identification of contextual clues, analysis of the structure of sentences, recognition of text organization, skimming and scanning, referent words. In the second level, students are supposed to read more strategically than in level one. Students put into practice the strategies studied in the previous course and also learn summarizing and elaboration of graphical organizers - mind and conceptual maps.

Students from the Institute of Physical Education participated in this research project. The research participants were undergraduate, male and female, who attended a level two English reading comprehension course. The number of students participating was 20. These participants' ages ranged from 21to 40 years old with different cultural backgrounds. In general, they did not have knowledge of the English language and they attended to reading comprehension courses, in most of the cases, to certify their competence in reading comprehension in order to fulfill the graduation requirement.

The teacher who participated in the study as the peer observer has been working with the program of Reading Comprehension for several years. She has worked and researched important aspects concerning English Reading comprehension strategies. She is especially interested on two aspects of reading; the first is inferences (i.e., when students previously elaborate thoughts and ideas about a topic of a reading that is familiar to them) and second, students' hypothesis; this consists on the thinking that students make when they are reading about a topic that is unknown for them.

I considered her a suitable teacher for collaborating in this investigation because of her experience as a teacher of reading comprehension strategies and also for her experience as a researcher. Her involvement as an observer enriched my constant process of reflection on my instruction.

My role in this reflective inquiry study was that of main investigator reflecting on my own process of becoming a more prepared teacher. My educational background, as the researcher of this investigation, includes a diploma from the Universidad de Antioquia as a Translator in English-French-Spanish. I have also received different certifications such as a Diploma in Didactics in Education, Diploma in Virtual Education, and an International Diploma in Investigation and Teaching Practice. I have been working as a teacher since 2000, I have taught reading comprehension strategies to undergraduate students at the university since that year. I have also experience in teaching reading comprehension to graduate students at the same university, including blended courses. I have also worked in other universities in Medellin.

In the following section I present first the data collection method. Then, I describe the data analysis process I took into account in this study. Finally, I refer to the trustworthiness of the study.

Methods

This investigation is framed in a teacher inquiry paradigm. Dana & Yendol (2008) state that traditionally there have been two paradigms; however, teacher inquiry emerged not as "just another educational fad" (p.5) but as a movement "highlighting the role classroom teachers play as knowledge generators" (p.3). Dana & Yendol (2008). These same authors define it "as systematic, intentional study of one's own professional practice" (p. 6). According to these authors, the aim of this paradigm is to look for a change by reflecting on the different teaching practices in the classroom attempting to make a change. Teaching inquiry is an activity that "has highlighted the primacy of the teacher's role, the importance of the educational context where it is done, and its systematic and transformative nature." (Nevàrez-La Torre, 2010, p. 121). Hence, the intention of this study was improve my pedagogical practice by means of a cyclical reflective process on my experiences in the classroom and provide students new knowledge and better learning opportunities in their reading comprehension process.

In order to develop this research project and motivated by in my desire to improve my teaching practice due to the lack of preparation in pedagogy, I applied a reflective inquiry method that helped me to understand myself as a learning teacher and refined my pedagogical practice. This method also served as a means to reflect about the problems I have as a teacher of reading comprehension strategies regarding planning, instructing and assessing students when they use reading strategies. It was through reflection that I learnt how to deal with problems related to teaching and learning. Reflection took place in different moments of teaching; for instance, "Reflection occurs, before, during, and after an

experience, and in each case that which is recognized as a problem situation may vary as will the reflective thinking and the subsequent learning" (Ibid as cited in Lyons (2010).

The reflective inquiry method was the most appropriate method that helped to refine my teaching process considering that my problem consisted on my lack of pedagogical formation. Through constant reflection about the daily difficulties I encountered in the classroom and finding the appropriate ways to instruct and facilitate students learning; motivated me to apply this method to obtain what I wanted as a teacher.

The reflective inquiry is a research method that "is situated within the context of personal histories in order to make connections between personal lives and professional careers and to understand personal (including early) influences on professional practice" (Cole & Knowles, 2000, p. 2). Teaching is a challenging task for someone who has not been prepared for it; experiences in classrooms, solving problematic situations and thinking on how to improve, became the tools I had to advance as a teacher. The reflective inquiry method helped me to consider my past and my present actions to generate new and different changes to my instruction in the future. Dewey as cited in Loewy (2000) affirms that "[a]s a deliberate and dynamic habit or practice in problem solving, reflecting inquiry is social through and thorough and encompasses past, present and future." (p. 46). It was my desire to become a more reflective teacher in the different aspects that teaching involves because this method opened new means to transform my old teaching style into new and more refined pedagogies that opened me opportunities to progress as a teacher.

Despite of the fact that I am a translator graduated from the University of Antioquia, and that I do not have a pedagogical formation; I have gained all my experience working with reading strategies in the reading comprehension program in the same institution. Through all these years, I came to realize that the Master's Program at the Universidad de

Antioquia could bring me the possibility to learn more about teaching and hence it could bring me positive changes in my instruction, specifically in teaching reading comprehension. The reflective inquiry method which involved learning from reflecting on experiences to transform teachers' instruction was the vehicle by which I developed this investigation. Hence, this method gave me the basis to use my own experience as a reading comprehension teacher with the purpose of enhancing my professional practice through a deep reflection on my teaching practice. And based on the difficulties I encountered in teaching reading strategies and the problems students had when learning reading strategies, I considered that it was time to implement changes in my pedagogical formation. In this respect, Cole & Knowles, (2000) states that "making sense of both prior and current educational experiences within the context of present practice may shed new, perhaps brighter, light on understandings of teaching" (p. 3).

Loughran (1996) states that the reflective inquiry method involves reflection and this embraces understanding a puzzling situation and finding ways to solve a problem in teaching and learning. Hence, the author refers to this method as a series of phases in reflection as a cycling process. These phases are: "suggestion, problem, hypothesis, reasoning and testing." That is, the individual identify first a problem, then form hypothesis to guide subsequent observations about the puzzling situation, then propose some suggestions for a possible solution and finally implement an action. This author states that individuals learn basically from experience. Likewise, he says that reflective teachers who want to apply this method need to consider "(1) the process of reflection; (2) the process of reflective thinking; and (3) the attitude necessary for reflective individuals." (p. 14)

Taking into account that reflection involves a series of phases and/or processes I considered important phases when applying this method. First, identifying a problem in my

teaching (in terms of class planning, instructing the reading strategies, and the evaluation process). Second, identifying students' learning context, especially their limitation in English language and reading competences. Third, reflecting on the causes of the problem of my teaching. Fourth, reflecting on the possible solutions to be applied. Fifth, reflecting while and after the solutions are implemented to see if other actions are required and finally, starting the phases again. Reflection takes place in every moment in the class; it consists on identifying both students' difficulties in learning reading strategies and my difficulties in teaching reading strategies.

As I mentioned above in the pilot study, the journal writing was the main tool to apply the reflective inquiry method. It was a means to take advantage of the reflection process and one of the first steps in my reflection was to think about the way I confronted the problems presented in class regarding planning, teaching and evaluating processes. Therefore, the different practices I experienced as a teacher helped me to think about what it could be done to benefit students and how I could improve my instruction by means of the reflection. Finally, the results of the changes implemented were corroborated by the students' progress in reading which was weighted through students' assessment and their own perception of their reading process.

Data Collection

The first step in the data collection process was the approval from the boss of Sección Servicios to develop my investigation in one of the reading comprehension courses I was in charge of. The second step was the students' permission to participate in this study; the participants signed a consent form allowing me to conduct the investigation in the course they were attending. This document included the purpose of my investigation, the

voluntary participation and its right to withdraw from the investigation as well as the protection of their identity. (Mack et al., 2005, p. 7) (Appendix B). The third step consisted of finding a peer who also taught in the program of reading comprehension at the same university and who agreed on participating in my investigation as an observer; once she accepted, she also signed the consent form (Appendix B). Finally, I started the process of data collection as I specified below.

Guided by my initial question, my instruction on reading strategies as an English reading comprehension teacher was the central theme of analysis of my investigation and in order to gather the data, I was the primary source. Nevertheless, the students were also part of this process as participants of this study. To conduct the investigation, I employed three different methods which were journal writing, peer observations done by a teacher observer from the Program, and questionnaires applied to the students who participated in this investigation.

Journal Writing.

According to Stevens & Cooper (2009), journals are sequential, they recorded events and ideas chronically, "which includes the personal responses and reflections of the writer (or writers) on those events and ideas." (p. 5). Journal writing has also received different names by scholars, for example: "journal, log, diary, didactical notebook, and workbook. (Mallon, 1984; Moon, 1990a, as in Stevens and Cooper). Keeping a journal can also be described as journaling, journal keeping, or journal writing." (Stevens & Cooper, 2009, p. 5)

The final purpose of my journal was to reflect about my own process as a teacher of reading strategies and have a better understanding of my practice (Cole & Knowles, 2000,

p. 49). These same authors define this method as a "vehicle for understanding oneself as a teacher." (p. 49). They state that "writing about who I am as learner and as teacher has allowed me to understand my actions in the classroom." (p. 29). In order to develop the journal, I wrote twenty entries between April 8th and July 15th. Through the journal, I registered information, in every class, about my own practice as a teacher of reading comprehension strategies. I included information related to the actions I took into account to develop the classes; basically the planning of the classes: date of the class, the reading strategy to be learnt, the selection of the material used by students, what I did before, during and after instructing students; how I assessed the students, their learning context and my reflections about what happened in class especially the negative aspects of the class that were puzzling situations related to my teaching and students' learning process. In the reflection section of the journal, I also included the positive aspects from my teaching and students' response to it.

The context in which students were instructed was of great relevance, since depending on the context and the students' needs I guided my instruction. The students' context was delimited by some aspects. Firstly, the understanding of students' problems and limitations they had with the language and their reading competence. Secondly, the importance students attributed to reading in English. Thirdly, the identification of students' conciousness about the advantages they would have from reading strategically and the applicability of the reading strategies to read texts in their field of knowledge. As soon as students' context was identified by means of a questionnaire,(Appendix C) I adapted the content of the course to satisfy students' knowledge needs in order to foster them an adequate learning enviromment. After analysing the learning context, the reflections process started. To start this process it was important to consider some questions . How

should I explain reading strategies in a simple way that they can understand them? What kind of texts would make them more interested in reading and learning? what kind of group work would be more suitable for developing a reading strategy? What kind of feedback would be better, whole group or individual feedback? What would be the most appropiate text for reading? And what kind of evaluating task should I apply to verify a reading strategy comprehension?

There were also some other important questions that helped me to frame my journal when writing it, these were: "1. what happened? 2. Why did I think things happened that way? 3. So what? What was significant to me? What have I learned? What questions remain? 4. Now what? What are the implications for action?" (Larrivee, 2006, p. 18). These questions guided me to reflect about the aspects of my practice that I improved in order to advance not only in my teaching practice but also in the way students learned the different reading strategies. Thus, the answers to these questions were some of the aspects that I considered in the journal writning as a tool of the reflective inquiry method.

Observations.

The purpose of the observation method was to improve my instruction on reading comprehension strategies based on the observations done by a non-participant observer. This person played the role of a critical friend "as an outsider process consultant" (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, p. 173) who helped me in the process of change and improvement (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010, p. 173).

These observations were done to a whole unit development of the reading comprehension course. She observed and took notes about how I instructed my students in the application of reading strategies to different written texts in FL. From the beginning of

the observations, the observer was provided with an observation protocol. This protocol included insights into "instructional strategies, learning activities (including performance assessments), the taught curriculum, and the types of teacher and students interactions that evolve throughout the course of instruction." (Zepeda, 2013, p.15). According to Spradley (1980) as cited in Richards, (2003), there are some key elements to consider when doing observation such as "space, actors, activity, object, act, event, time, goal and setting". (p. 130). There were other elements that the observer considered when accomplishing the observation. (Appendix D).

The class observations provided me with important information regarding my instruction on the different reading strategies and the interaction I had with the group when teaching. Through the feedback I could improve my reflections, enhance my teaching practice, and understand classroom practices. (Zepeda, 20139),

> Teachers learn to teach on the job through their experiences as they plan for instruction and interact with their students. When teachers have the opportunity to talk about teaching, to share their insight with someone else, and to reflect on what occurs in the classroom, their learning increases. This type of job-embedded learning is enhanced through the effort of the observant principal who facilitates opportunities for teachers to reflect and refine their practices through sustained feedback based on data from informal classroom observations. (Zepeda, 2013 p.4)

In short, even though there were four classroom observations, they somehow helped me to improve my practice and identify those aspects of teaching I had to reshape.

Questionnaires.

I administered three different questionnaires as a data collection method. According to Pawar (2004), "a questionnaire is a document consisting of close (forced choice) and/or open ended structured questions covering research objectives, questions and variables." (p. 21) in accordance with Brown as cited in Dörnyei &Taguchi (2010) they "are any written

instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers." (p.4).These same authors state that there are three types of data about respondents: factual questions which objective is to ask for the demographic information; behavioral questions, they ask about the participants' actions and the attitudinal questions are guided to identify what people think about a specific topic.

The final purpose of these three questionnaires, from students' point of view, were to know how my process as a teacher of reading in FL evolved and what value students gave to the different reading strategies they worked in class. The purpose of the first questionnaire was to obtain demographic information of the participants (gender, age, university program and semester to which they belong) and general information about the importance of receiving instruction on using strategies when reading in a foreign language, time devoted to reading in English before beginning the course, and the different strategies students used when reading a written text in English. This information was used to know about what strategies I had to focus my instruction on. This questionnaire was administered at the beginning of the course. (Appendix C). The second questionnaire was conducted in the middle of the course, it included questions regarding the importance of the reading strategies, how my instruction in reading strategies allowed the students to advance in the process of reading texts in English considering the reading strategies as the main tool for reading. The purpose of the last questionnaire was to know if students found my instruction on reading strategies understandable, comprehensible, appropriate, and clear; what strategies, from the ones I taught in the course, they considered the most useful and necessary when reading a text in English, and if they would apply reading strategies when reading texts in English.

All the students of the reading comprehension level II participated. The sessions took place in the classroom, at the Institute of Physical Education. However, the number of the students varied; normally the maximum number the students per class are between 30 and 40 people but the classes on average may end with around 15 students in total. However, this course ended with 20 students.

Data Process Analysis

I used the inductive and deductive approach in order to analyze the data gathered (Suter, 2012, pp. 346-347 & Guest, G., Namey, E. & Mitchell, M. 2013, p. 4). Before analyzing the data, I transcribed all the information from the journal, the questionnaires' answers and the peer's observation into a word processing program; the quantitative information from the questionnaires was first tabulated in Excel and then they were graphed. After all this information was ready, I uploaded this into the Data Management Software Nvivo 10 creating folders for each data gathered. Once this information was in the program, I followed the process suggested by Saldaña J. (2009) and Taylor-Powell Ellen & Renner M. (2003) by which first, I familiarized with the information gathered, then, I centered my analysis on what I wanted to discover according to my research question. And lastly, I started categorizing the information trying to identify relationships among categories and pattern coding providing also definitions for the categories and codes created.

Nvivo 10 provides the facility to drag the information from the folders which contain the different "sources of information" to the codes created facilitating the process of triangulation. (Guion, L., Diehl, D. & McDona, D. 2002 and Suter, 2012, p. 264)

After all the information was classified into Nvivo, I followed the next steps: first, I initiated to read again and study all the information to make a list of themes or categories that emerged from the data then "I search the data for the text that matches the themes" (Taylor-Powell Ellen & Renner M., 2003, p.3), second, these categories changed as I analyzed the data creating subcategories and redefining the categories. Third, I constantly reread the data to avoid a mismatching between the categories' definition and the data selected. (Taylor-Powell Ellen & Renner M., 2003). Fourth, among all the categories created, I started to look for interrelations among the categories (Saldaña, 2009, p. 5) reducing the categories and leaving only the most salient ones which helped me to explain the findings and gave an answer to the research question.

Research Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of this qualitative study, I considered some important strategies including: transferability, dependability, conformability and credibility (Suter, 2012 & Krefting 1991) developed as follows.

I started triangulating all the data gathered (Krefting, 1991, p, 219), that is, after implementing the different research techniques to gather information I stablished "an outcome that is supported by each of the approaches." In order to approach the triangulation some participants were selected, data was collected and analyzed, (McMurray, A., p. 263) a journal writing was kept, peer observations were done and questionnaires were implemented to students. Then I proceeded with an expert consultation, in this case my research advisor. She checked all the categories that emerged from the data as well as all the revealed findings as it is described by Merriam (2009) as cited in Suter (2012). Even

though this is a small investigation, I provided a complete description of the context of this investigation, the methods and findings obtained to be an example for those teachers who want to improve in their pedagogical practice or for further research studies in this field or those that could be carried out in other context or settings (Krefting, 1991, p 216).

In the following section I present the findings obtained after the process of gathering data and the analysis of the information gathered in the project.

Findings

In the following paragraphs, I will explain the major themes that emerged from the analyzed data. The first theme consists of the positive changes in my instruction on strategic reading. The second major theme is related to aspects of my instruction that needed to be improved and the last major theme is about the students' perception about the effects of strategic reading instruction.

Positive Changes in my Instruction on Strategic Reading

This study revealed three positive changes in my instruction on strategic reading. These are: changes in my lesson planning, change in reading texts proposed to students, and assessment to students. These findings will be explained and supported as follows.

Changes in Lesson Planning.

Planning a lesson provides clarity of the main objectives of the class letting the teacher and the students focus on what is being learnt and how a lesson is going to begin and end. Nevertheless, I did not know how to plan a lesson and the importance that it represented in teaching. Once I had the content of the reading course, I scheduled the reading strategies by class. My lesson plan lacked of specific objectives that guided the students from the beginning to the end of a lesson. As the strategies were scheduled by class, I attached to this schedule whether or not students understood the reading strategy. There was not a specific characteristic of the reading material, I just selected up to date readings without considering students' background and English knowledge. Once a strategy was explained, students presented a test. Feedback and students interaction were minimal, it was more an individual task.

The first change I introduced in my instructional practice started with the planning of the lessons, I decided to divide the class into three teaching actions. In the first teaching action, I gave the students a direct explanation of the reading strategy, and then I assigned the text for students to read and the activity they had to develop according to the reading strategy. In this teaching action, I also specified students which reading activities were for practicing and which ones were for grading. In the second teaching action, I gave the students the opportunity to discuss the topic of the reading in order to activate their background knowledge; then, they started reading the text and applying the strategy I had explained. The last teaching action served as means to assess students' reading comprehension, they could present what they had understood from the text through the use of a graphic organizer. Besides, I advised them on the aspects they had to improve as readers.

The planning of the first teaching action in the class allowed students to know from the beginning of the class what reading strategy they were going to learn as the following extract from the journal entry shows.

> (…) to start the class, I showed the students a concept map with the strategy that I was going to explain in the class. Through the map, I showed them the activities planned the type of text they had to read; how they would present their text comprehension and how many sessions they were going to be working on the strategy. (Journal, April 29th 2013)

The peer observer noted how, in the second teaching action, the students and I worked together. During the class, she also could observe how I spent time with the students listening to them and verifying the main ideas they have got from the reading.

> The teacher and the students work collaboratively; they construct the different ideas and meanings the text has. (Peer's observation, May 7th, 2013)

Using graphic organizers was part of the activities I implemented in the last teaching action. It was a useful strategy to foster students' meaningful learning of the reading strategies as well as to assess their reading comprehension. An extract of the way students presented their text comprehension was taken from the peer's observation.

> They make an oral presentation about the text they read, the reading strategy they applied to the text was skimming. They used a graphic organizer, a mind map, to present the main information from the text – topic of the text, main ideas and key words. (Peer's observation, May 7th 2013)

The reflections about my lesson planning allowed me to reexamine the lessons and see how I could prepare other classes and analyze what I did well or not, and also what I could do next. This could be evidenced in my journal.

> (…) the next class activity, the students will work in pairs and they will do the activity by themselves, that is going to be worthy for me if I check every group and in that way the quietest students would have the chance to participate in the small groups; I think this is a way to know if all the students have understood the strategy. (Journal, April 22nd, 2013)

When planning every class I found that I became a more confident teacher since I could convey my knowledge in such a way that students could comprehend the reading strategies with ease. From the questionnaires applied to students, I found that their answers harmonized with my thoughts about the way I instructed them.

> Classes are appropriately and adequately organized, she explains the objectives for every class encounter. (Questionnaire 3, participant 7, 2013)

The lesson planning played an important role in the process of instructing students in the use of the different reading strategies. This improvement was also reinforced by an adequate selection of reading texts which will be explained in the following segment.

Changes in Reading Texts Proposed to Students.

Proposing different types of texts to students helped them to be more concentrated on the reading text and to use the reading strategy. Since the participant students belonged to the School of Physical Education, I used texts related to this area of knowledge. Students were more interested in reading because the texts they read in class were familiar to their field of knowledge which influenced their learning of reading strategies and increased their interest in reading texts in English. The reflections I wrote in my journal and the comments from the peer observer validate this finding,

> I think that the reading text was adequate and interesting for them, I will continue bringing to class readings related to what they study, in that way, they will be interested not only in the text but also in the reading strategies they are learning, and as some of them have expressed, they can read a complete text without using the translators or using the dictionary all the time. (Journal, May 21st)

> The text used is important because it refers to the advantage of practicing aerobics, especially for health. It also explains cardiovascular advantages of practicing aerobics. Therefore the text used in class can be also interesting and appealing to other areas. (Peer's observation, April 30th 2013)

In addition to the influence that the selection of the reading text could have in the learning of the strategy, I noted that the students could easily activate their background knowledge, this in turns, was an important factor because students made connections from the information they already had about the topic to the one they found in the text. From my journal, I could observe that reading materials which are familiar to students allowed them to activate their background knowledge and therefore to improve their reading comprehension. As I expressed in the journal:

> The topic of the text helped a lot because it was a topic related to the field of knowledge of the students so they could activate their background knowledge easily and in that way, they could be more involved in the reading tasks and the activities proposed for the class and hence their participation in class is more active. I noticed that the students were involved in the activity, because I could see that they were working concentrated on the activity, they were developing the task I proposed and

> they were all the time asking me if what they were doing was correct or not. (Journal, April 30th)

The peer observer also noted that reading a text related to students' field of study allowed them to activate their previous knowledge easily; it also helped them to be more engaged with the reading and increased students' participation. She described this change in her observations.

> The material is appropriate to the students because it is relevant for their academic field and students considered them interesting and adequate to develop the reading activities the teacher proposes in class. (Peer's observation, April 30th 2013)

> The material is appropriate for the students. It was chosen according to their careers. Materials used in class, attending to activate background knowledge are important because students can participate actively from the reading. (Peer's observation, May 6th 2013)

In questionnaire 2, students answered that reading texts about their professional interest facilitated the use of the reading strategies and their reading comprehension. As the following extract shows.

> We can read easier, with a better comprehension, learning and understanding. (Questionnaire 2, participant 10, 2013)

The decision to use texts according to students' field of knowledge was intended to get the students closer to texts of their interests and in that way they would really find the reading strategies as a tool to assist their reading with easiness and comprehension. The following extract can evidence students' interest.

> First, the reading strategies taught by the teacher have helped me to better understand text in English. Second, I have been reading texts in English more frequently. Third, I have seen positive changes such as more security, acceptability and performance as a reader. (Questionnaire 3, participant 9, 2013)

The changes made in the lesson planning and in the texts I proposed to students also led to implement a new way to assess students' reading comprehension as I explain next.

Changes in Students' Assessment.

I found that the last positive change in my instruction was the way I assessed the students. As it was stated above, the last teaching action consisted of a presentation in which students socialized what they comprehended from the reading text using a graphic organizer. In order to assess students' progress, they developed two reading activities one was for formative purposes and the other was summative. The first reading activity was intended to practice the reading strategy and monitor students' learning in order to provide feedback and help them on the aspects they needed to improve; and the second activity was developed in order to grade/evaluate students' learning and performance (Richards, J. & Renandyia, W., 2002, pp. 17, 77. and Douglas, D., 2014, p. 1) in the use of the reading strategy and their reading comprehension. The use of feedback was an essential component of the assessment; I gave feedback to students in order to enhance their learning on the use of the reading strategies, to improve their reading comprehension and to grade/evaluate them in both the use of the strategy and their text comprehension as I explain as follows.

When students were practicing the reading strategy I always walked around the class checking students' reading activities and tutoring them on what they had to improve when applying the reading strategy to the text. From the journal I took an example of this.

> For the first activity I walked around the classroom visiting each pair or group work, checking their work and answering to their questions. (Journal, April 16th 2013)

When I gave feedback to the students, I tried to be as clear as possible to allow them to understand the aspects they had to correct or reinforce about the reading strategy. After

advising students, I noted that their understanding of the reading strategy improved as well as their reading comprehension.

> This group of students did a very good work the feedback was very little, I not only congratulated these students but all of them because of the work done with the reading strategies. I know that there are still students with some difficulties regarding some reading strategies but which can be improved with practice. (Journal, July15th 2013)

From the questionnaires applied to students, I found that they also acknowledged my interest in giving them a satisfactory explanation to their doubts when applying the strategy and facilitating their reading comprehension as it is exemplified in the extracts below.

> Not only explains, but also exemplifies and solves doubts to provide a maximum clarity. (Questionnaire 2, participant 7, 2013)

> I think and believe that the methodology implemented by the teachers facilitates the teaching and learning process, the tutoring sessions she gave, really clarify the learning process, besides the way she teaches the classes; we understand and comprehend very well. (Questionnaire 3, participant 10, 2013)

In addition, the peer observer also remarked my engagement to correcting students' activities and helping students to have a better reading process as the following extracts from the peer's observation shows.

> She corrects students' mistakes. It is a good strategy.
> The correction is well performed because she summarizes the strategy previously explained, reviewing what has been learned about the strategy and the text and how it is useful for future readings. (Peers' observation, April 30th 2013)

> She gives directions to the students (within) each group, for the purpose they achieve the specific task. (Peers' observation, May 6th 2013)

From the feedback I provided to students during every class I could notice that it was effective. Students learned what reading strategies can be applied to any text, and how those reading strategies would help them to improve their reading comprehension as well.

After students practiced the reading strategy I assigned them the evaluative activity. This activity was normally done in pairs or in groups of three students. To grade the students, they had to give a presentation which was normally done by means of a graphic organizer (cluster or mind map). I provided feedback to students about the aspects they had to improve when reading a text and applying the reading strategy. An example of the comments I gave to students after a presentation is expressed in the following extract from the journal.

> After each presentation, I provided the students feedback of the work they did. Among the recommendations I gave them were related to the way the information was presented in the map. Some of the students wrote full sentences and some others complete paragraphs. My advice was that in any graphic organizer they include only key words or phrases that represented the most important information. Second, this recommendation was related to the connector or markers; for this presentation they were required to present a concept map, to do this it is necessary to include markers. So the group did not include markers I explained again why they were important and that these words made the difference between concept maps and mind maps. Third, there were some students with problems writing summaries, so I explain again how they could have a good summary from the reading, in that moment they understood the explanation, I also told them that it was a matter of practice. These were basically the recommendations I gave them because most of the groups did a very good work there was not much to correct they all participated actively. (Journal, July15th 2013)

Providing feedback to students was a way to identify students' learning needs and improvement when they used different reading strategies. What I noticed as a result of the feedback I gave to the students was reflected in the presentation they did in which students took into account my advice and as a consequence, they produced a well-done reading activity. The following journal entry can evidence this.

> At the end of all the presentation, I told the students that I really liked not only the way they presented the assignment (the clusters were very clear, structured and organized) but also that I felt satisfied because they have understood the way the reading strategy was applied to the text and not only skimming but other strategies that they had to use when reading the text such as the use of contextual clues, sentence structure, the morpho-sintactic structure of the words, identification of key words. All the students presented different clusters and mind map organizers but

> even though they use different formats the content ideas of the text were constant in all the presentation. (Journal, May 7th, 2013)

Providing feedback to students allowed me to identify what aspects of the reading strategies students needed more explanation which in turns helped me to recognize what I had to improve in my instruction. The following comment from participants confirms this.

> To make more emphasis about the explanation of the subordinate ideas and supporting details. (Questionnaire 3, participant 8, 2023)

They also knew what aspects of the use of the reading strategy they had to improve or strengthen and more importantly they received the feedback once they needed. The students' comments can also evidence the way they improve their reading comprehension from the teaching process implemented in class.

> I consider that the teachers' methodology is assertive and very practical, allowing an excellent teaching and learning process that shows us many possibilities of applying reading strategies. (Questionnaire 3, participant 9, 2013)

Working collaboratively with students was very fruitful for identifying the aspects of the instruction I had to improve and apply different teaching strategies. The aspects to be improved will be explained in the next section.

Aspects of my Instruction that Need to be Improved

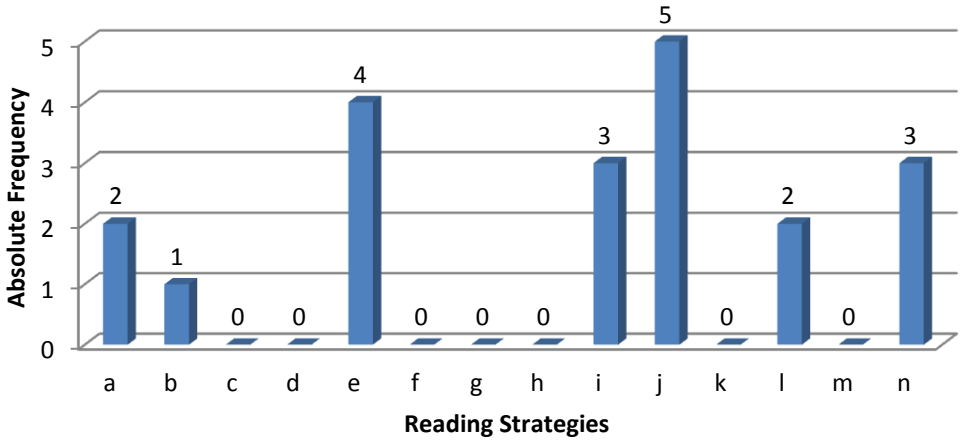
The Reflective Inquiry Method gave me the opportunity to improve my instruction through a constant reflection and thus help students better develop their learning of the different reading strategies. Based on this, the findings reflected two important aspects on my instruction that need to be improved. There were reading strategies that require more modelling and indeed more time to practice. Therefore, time management played an important role because it was a factor that influenced in somehow negatively my instruction.

As part of my instruction, I modelled the instruction of the reading strategies because it approached students to the way they would apply the reading strategies to any text. Some students could understand a reading strategy with ease but some others, on the contrary needed more modelling of a strategy to better understand how they had to implement it when reading.

I consider that all the students require the same opportunities for learning and for this reason modelling the strategies to the whole class was important because in that way the less skillful readers could understand how any particular reading strategy could be used. Even though I consider modelling the strategies an important aspect in my instruction, there were some strategies which required more modelling.

Figure 1 shows the reading strategies in which my instruction needs to be improved according to the 20 students who answered the questionnaire.

Figure 1. Reading strategies that instruction needs to be improved.



Reading strategies that students consider the instruction needs to be improved.
a. Use of bilingual dictionary.
b. Infer the meaning of a Word by identifying its parts (Affixes).
c. Identify cognates.
d. Use the context to identify the meaning of a Word.
e. Identify the components of sentence in a text.
f. Prediction by using the titles, subtitles and graph.
g. Identify the topic or theme of a text.
h. Identify the main idea in a text.
i. Identify the supporting details in a reading.
j. Identify the subordinate ideas in a text.
k. Identify specific information in text, Scanning (key words, figures, dates, name places, and authors.)
l. Identify referents in a text.
m. Use graphic organizers (clusters, mind maps and conceptual maps) to represent the most important information from the text.
n. Summarize a text.

These results indicate that I have to improve the modelling of three important strategies; these are the identification of subordinate ideas, the components of a sentence and summarizing information. The comments that students provided in the third questionnaire indicated that the identification of the subordinate ideas was the reading strategy that needed more exemplification as the following extract shows.

> Emphasize more the explanation of the subordinate and supporting details. (Questionnaire 3, participant 8, 2013)

In my journal, I also expressed that modelling the strategies to students is important because students can understand the strategy in a direct way and they would be more interested in reading.

> I think that, the following strategies I will explain to them, I will first work with the same reading for the whole class to model the reading strategy and then they will have the opportunity to work on a reading text chosen by them and apply the

> strategy I teach them for a later presentation as part of the evaluation. (Journal, April 8th 2013).

The peer observer also agreed that some strategies lacked modelling and that giving more examples of the reading strategy is important for a well comprehension of the strategy and the text itself as it is expressed below.

> She should demand for the comprehension of the text, their ideas, she should give more examples, because the way they (students) perceive it accounts for the most important part of a reading class; students' comprehension. In fact, comprehension of the reading denotes the understanding of the instruction given at the first part of the activity. Also, it is important to give a diverse group of examples pertaining to similar situations described on the text, aiming to extrapolate reading activities to other contexts. (Peer's observation, May 6th, 2013)

There are also other students that expressed that the lack of understanding of a reading strategy was not due to the lack of modelling or lack of a proper instruction of the strategy. It was, in some cases, the reader's inability to understand the strategy and the language itself as one of the participants commented.

> I think more in the user than the teacher's instruction because in my case, I did not know the parts of a sentence so it was difficult to understand the topic. (Questionnaire 3, participant 10, 2013)

Although there were some reading strategies that required more modelling, there was a general satisfaction among the students with the way I instructed the different reading strategies, this content is expressed by them as it is evidenced in the following extract.

> (…) I consider that the teacher's explanations are very clear and practical. Besides that, she handles very well every one of the previous options. (Questionnaire 3, participant 9, 2013)

> There is not much to correct, may be to teach a little bit more the realization of conceptual maps, dedicating more classes for that. (Questionnaire 3, participant 4, 2013)

Regarding the time I used to instruct the reading strategies to students, I had two aspects to consider: there were some reading strategies that required more time to study them in class and which needed more classes to learn them as it was the case of the differentiation between main ideas, supporting ideas and subordinate ideas; students had difficulties in identifying subjects, main verbs and transition words. They also had problems with the use of the different pronouns (subject pronouns, object pronouns and possessive pronouns) to identify the referent words. These strategies were fundamental to comprehend a text; however, most of the students did their best and tackled the strategy. The following extract from the journal entry can evidence my concern about the time.

> At the end of the class, I did not have time or the students did not have time to socialize the sentences they were constructing (main ideas, supporting details and subordinate ideas) and it would be ideal if the students would have had the time to finish the activity in class. Now, I realized that for the next time I explain this strategy, I need to have more control of the time I give the students to develop the activity or the activities. Nevertheless, I will start class tomorrow checking this activity, I think it is always important to verify the task students have because this is the opportunity to assess students' comprehension and in the same way I can know if my instruction was clear enough for the class. (Journal, April 29th 2013)

> I would like to have more time in class in order to work more on the topic, giving the students the opportunity to make their own examples and write them on their notebook and then to share those examples to the whole class but the class time passed very fast. I know that there are some students that are still confused with the difference between some pronouns; their faces did not show that they were so sure about the topic and that they did not understand completely the difference and use of the pronouns as reference words. Based on this, I think that I have to work more next class on this topic and pay special attention to those students that I consider are still confused about the use of some pronouns as referents. (Journal, April 15th 2013)

Besides that, the time devoted to these strategies limited the time to work with other reading strategies such as underlining, annotating, making marginal notations and mapping. Students did not have the enough time in classes to practice these reading strategies which in some cases were difficult for some students to comprehend. To overcome the difficulties

of the time, I sent all the information regarding the exemplification of these strategies to students by email, which meant that students had to study them by themselves as extra class work as I expressed in my journal.

> For this class, after the student socialized the reading strategies that are going to be included in their final task, I did not have time to show to the students examples of how they could apply the reading strategies. I think that it is vital to modeling the strategies and in this way students will know what they are going to do in their final work; for this reason. I think that I am going to send this information by email and then start next class with the modeling of these strategies. After that, they will start applying these strategies in the reading every student selected for the final work. (Journal, June 4th 2013)

> For next course, I know that I have to dedicate more time to the final task because in that way I would have the opportunity to work more on the strategies specially the new ones which are underlining, annotation, marginal notation, summarizing and mapping. I think that it is not the same to see examples of the strategies and give the opportunity to the students to practice by themselves these strategies. What I mean is that even though they are going to apply these strategies to the text and that I am going to be there to give feedback it would be great to practice these strategies with different readings as a sampling and modeling process but we are over time and there is no time to do it so they have to do it in their final reading text. (Journal, June 11th 2013)

Even though all the reading strategies that were proposed to work in the course were instructed, modelled and evaluated; the time management was a concern. Students coincided that the time was not enough to practice some strategies as they expressed it in the last questionnaire.

> Maybe, the lack of time was a concern for some items. (Questionnaire 3, participant 18, 2013)

> Haste of time/semester. Class absence, not topic understanding. (Questionnaire 3, participant 19, 2013)

It is also important to note that there were other factors that affected the optimization of the time that every strategy required such as holidays during the semester,

official admission exams in the university and basically that some reading strategies took more time than the expected to develop them completely; furthermore, I did not continue explaining other strategies if students did not understand the one we were working at that moment. In these cases, students had to do extra class work but for some of them it was difficult to learn a reading strategy without instruction, modelling and practice as the following excerpt evidences.

> (…) for next courses, I have to organize my class better in order to have the appropriate time to go deeper in the reading strategies, more time to practice and give feedback to students. The time management was an inconvenient due to the fact that there were some holidays, the admission exam of the university; so many classes were not thought because of this, and that is why I need to take into account this. Besides that, I did not go in depth in some topics because I took more time with other reading strategies than the time expected. (Journal, July 9th 2013)

Despite the previous circumstances, the peer observer and the students also expressed that the use of the time that some reading strategies had was good as it could be read in the following comments.

> She makes an adequate and proper use of every class session making clear what it is stablished for every class. (Questionnaire 3, participant 7, 2013)

> Time's distribution is ok in relation to the task proposed in class. But more time should be devoted to explain the strategy. If it's scanning for example, she should demand students to explain in their own words, what scanning is, what is important for, its uses, examples and so on with the purpose of finding the core of the strategy. (Peer's observation, April 29th, 2013)

Even though the time was a concern during the development of the course, I tried to instruct the students in a very clear way and giving them opportunities of learning. As a result, my instruction had some effects in the way students applied the reading strategies as it is going to be explained in the next section.

Students' Perception about the Effects of Strategic Reading Instruction

Despite the fact that there were some aspects of my instruction that needed to be corrected, I also found that my instruction on strategic reading instruction had positive aspects in the way students learnt to use the reading strategies and the way they read. Furthermore, I could say that there were basic aspects in which students were influenced by my instruction, for instance, the reduction in the use of dictionaries and mechanical translators, the development of students' vocabulary and finally, students' reading comprehension improvement. These findings will be explained below.

Reduction in the use of Dictionaries and Mechanical Translators.

Before students began to work with the different reading strategies, they stated that their knowledge about the reading strategies was scarce and in some cases they manifested that the use of the strategies were null. They also expressed that when reading a text in English they had to made use of the dictionary and mechanical translators as it is expressed in the following comments.

> I did not use any reading strategy, I only used mechanical translators. (Questionnaire 2, participant 15, 2013)

> Without strategies, I only identified cognates without knowing that they were cognates and I constantly used the dictionary and giving meaning to the sentences and paragraphs was complicating because it was a very slowly and complex procedure. (Questionnaire 2, participant 16, 2013)

Even though the use of the dictionary is a reading strategy or a tool that students have to assist reading just when necessary, the implementation of the dictionary and mechanical translator decreased considerably and students' reading process improved after they were instructed on the use of other reading strategies. I could evidence that they could read a text without first using a mechanical translator; second, they did not search for every

word in the dictionary and finally they did not translate every word. This was a slow process, but in every class we tried to work on every strategy. As we express next.

> I know that there are still students with some difficulties regarding some reading strategies but which can be improved with practice. Now that the course is finished, I can see that the process of reading of some students have improved considerably compared to when they started the course, when they translated every word and looked up every word in the dictionary. Now they can read a complete test knowing what words they really need to look up. It is satisfactory to see their progress in the process of reading. (Journal, July 15th 2013)

> I did not mark the dictionary because we only devoted little time at the beginning of the level I, just the appropriate time because the purpose was to use the dictionary with less frequency and the goal was to learn to interpret text in a practical way. (Questionnaire 3, participant 4, 2013)

> (…) this has helped us to not depend on mechanical translators as I did before, it has helped me to understand and comprehend text more easily. (Questionnaire 1, participant 15, 2013)

> Because in our profession exists very important bibliography in English, and translating a text with mechanical programs may translate out of context and this would not be the most useful way to understand a specific thematic. (Questionnaire 1, participant 12, 2013)

The use of the dictionary was a tool for students when they needed to look up those words that they did not understand and that were essential to comprehend the text. Nevertheless, there were other reading strategies that helped students to identify the meaning of words in context and improve their reading comprehension process such as the morphological structure of the word, the punctuation marks that define and exemplify words in context (e.g., comma, dash, parenthesis and colon), verbs that provide definitions or explanations of words (e.g., stand for, define, mean, refer to, i.e.,) and words that exemplify like e.g., or for example, namely, such as, and for instance. The students learned that before looking up every word in the dictionary, they can use reading strategies in order to make more fluent the process of reading comprehension.

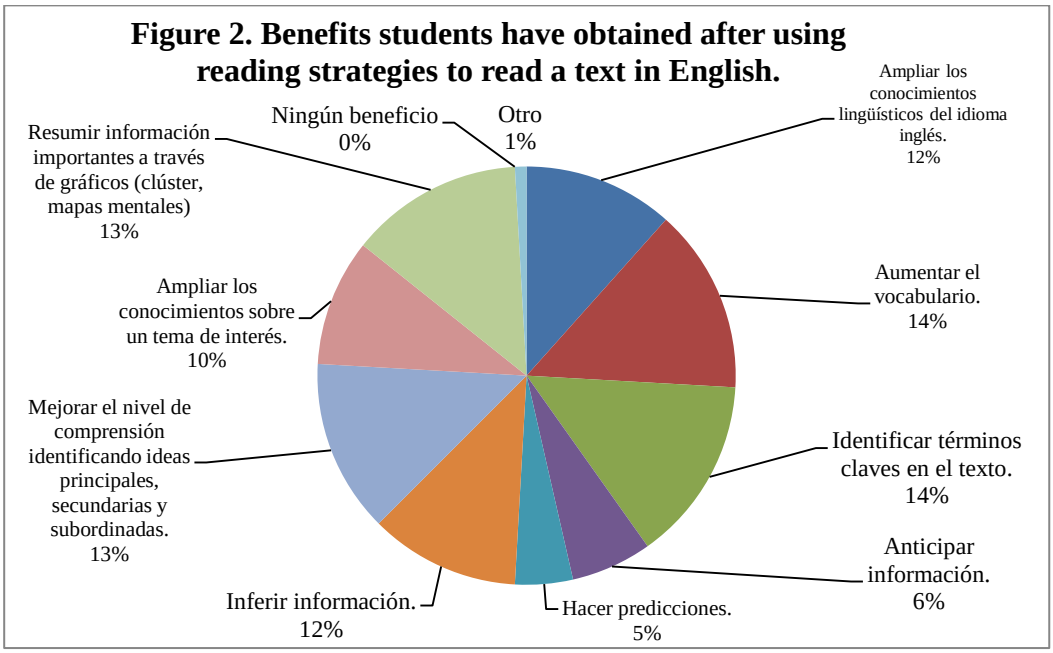
Development of Students' Vocabulary.

According to the second questionnaire applied to students the majority of the respondents (with a 14%) said that the most important benefits they received after using the different reading strategies were the increasing of vocabulary and the identification of key words in a text (see figure 3). This progress in vocabulary allowed students to improve their reading comprehension, because the more vocabulary threshold students have the more they understand texts and the less they have to use dictionaries and mechanical translators.

> My lexicon increased (words and meanings). I recognized connectors and contextual clues. (Questionnaire 3, participant 4, 2013)

Students become more interested in the text, and they identified key terms in a text easily. Due to the increase in the vocabulary knowledge, it was simple for students to understand what ideas a writer wants to convey.

Figure 2. Benefits students have obtained after using reading strategies to read a text in English.



This finding indicates that the students could build their vocabulary with the help of the different reading strategies. The following excerpts can evidence how the reading strategies help them when reading a text and build their vocabulary.

> (…) it helped us to read without depending on mechanical translators as I did before, it helped me to understand and comprehend English texts easier. (Questionnaire 1, participant 15, 2013)

The reading strategies that students learnt during the course such as the identification of cognates and using contextual clues to deduce meaning of words from context were key elements in the way students approached the texts. This led students to expand their vocabulary and reduce the frequency of the use of the dictionary. This can be supported by the comments of the participants.

> I this moment before reading a text I now know how to begin, what strategy I can apply and thus I better understand the text and learn more vocabulary in less time. (Questionnaire 2, participant 5, 2013)

> It is good because while I have been learning to use different reading strategies I have read English texts with easiness, which generates more interest and widen my vocabulary. (Questionnaire 2, participant 15, 2013)

It was through the use of the reading strategies that students started to identify new forms of reading and ways of learning new words without being dependent readers of dictionaries and mechanical translators.

> First, they looked at the general organization of the text to see what are the topics and the information they were going to find in the reading, second; they tried to infer the possible general ideas of the text. Third, they read the first paragraph and the first sentences of the next paragraph contained in the text, paying special attention to the different cognates and the words they already know and the contextual clues without using the dictionary. (Journal, April 8th 2013)

Through words authors express their ideas and feelings; but when students lack of vocabulary knowledge, the act of communication fails and the message is not transmitted. Because of this, it is important that students have a vocabulary threshold to better understand what a writer wants to communicate. By virtue of the different reading

strategies that students handled to build their vocabulary, they became more strategic readers, more active readers; they could read faster and with better comprehension, especially those struggling readers who required reading strategies that help them to handle the new vocabulary in context in order to comprehend a text.

Another important gain that students obtained as a result of the application of the reading strategies was their reading comprehension improvement which I will explain in the next segment.

Improvement of Students' Reading Comprehension.

After the questionnaires were applied, most of students (65%) strongly agreed that my instruction on the different reading strategies helped them to improve their reading comprehension. The other students (35%) agreed that my strategic reading instruction helped them to be better readers. These two percentages mean that most of the students in class did have a progress in their reading comprehension process. At the same time, these results indicated that my instruction on the use of the different reading strategies was appropriate to students; now they feel better readers than before. In the following quotes students expressed the benefits they received after being instructed on the reading strategies.

> Since I have acquired some broad techniques to be applied when reading and thus to facilitate the comprehension of a text in English. Off course they have allowed me to improve the reading comprehension, and because of learning this strategy, I have been interested in the documents that are written in English. (Questionnaire 2, participant 6, 2013)

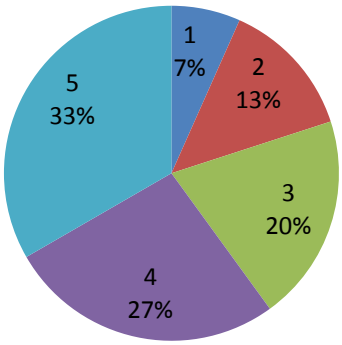
> This reading course provided me with significant teachings for the comprehension of texts in English, especially not very technical texts with a difficult comprehension. (Questionnaire 2, participant 9, 2013)

In the journal, I also commented how students had progressed in their reading process and as an effect of the instruction they had received, they understood the different reading strategies and they were also able to apply them when reading a text in English as the following extract shows.

> (…) the students were very pleased not only because they understood the strategy but also because they were able to read texts they liked in English. Some of them said that now they felt more enthusiastic about reading in English. (Journal, April 23rd 2013)

The questionnaires provided important information concerning the progress students perceived when reading texts in English by using the different reading strategies as it could be observed in Figure 4.

Figure 3. Students' Progress in English reading comprehension texts and reading strategies used. (1 minimum and 5 maximum)



These percentages suggest that students were satisfied with the process developed in the course and the improvement they obtained applying the reading strategies. Besides, the participants stated that their advancement in the reading comprehension process was significant as they expressed in the following comments.

> Very useful because my level of comprehension had a significantly improvement. (Questionnaire 1, participant 18, 2013)

> Not using the mechanical translators very often, but applying the knowledge acquired in class for a better understanding. (Questionnaire 1, participant 15, 2013)

Students' expressed that being instructed in the application of the different reading strategies equipped them with tools to cope with texts in English. This instruction really made a difference on students. They were more involved in reading text and thanks to the reading strategies they could also handle confusing paragraphs, connect previous information with the new one, summarize and recall important information from the text and have a better reading comprehension. The following citations reflect students' thoughts about the benefits they received in using reading strategies in their reading comprehension process.

> A better analysis of the reading, a better text comprehension from its structure by identifying main ideas, topic, contextual clues. (Questionnaire 1, participant 8, 2013)

> It improves due to the techniques and strategies in order to make the reading and its comprehension easier, because it is easier to identify certain aspects that provide the possibility to understand the reading than to translate everything to reach the same objective. (Questionnaire 1, participant 20, 2013)

> They are aides to understand, identify and comprehend what the author wants to say; without using the dictionary or other technological aides; besides that the strategies take part in the language learning. (Questionnaire 1, participant 10, 2013)

Students could experience that applying the different reading strategies favored their reading comprehension. They understood how texts were structured, how they could relate their previous knowledge with the new information, how they could tackle new vocabulary and finally, how they could construct the meaning from texts. The following extracts from questionnaires show how their progress in reading increased through the implementation of

the different activities proposed in class where students had the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned and what they needed to improve.

> The way to explain every strategy and every exercise to be done let us understand every strategy and use it in the correct moment and easily achieving the reading of texts in English. (Questionnaire 2, participant 2, 2013)

> Thanks to the teacher's precise instruction I have improved my reading comprehension in English. (Questionnaire 3, participant 7, 2013)

> The learning of every one of the reading strategies has contributed in a positive way my process as a reader that is why that I feel surer at the moment of reading. (Questionnaire 3, participant 9, 2013)

In the next section, I will discuss the findings of this study. First, how the implementation of the reflective inquiry method helped me to improve my instruction based on the strategic reading approach. Second, the way in which the journal keeping benefit my process of growing as a reflective teacher and finally, as a consequence of the first one, how the reading comprehension process of students enhanced through collaborative strategic reading.

Discussion

When I began the reading course and told the students what reading strategies we were going to be working in class, they expressed that they knew very little about them and looked worried. They described some of the difficulties they had when reading a text in English; these included: they read very few texts in English in their academic program and when they did, the complexities of some texts hinder their comprehension, they did not know how to differentiate main sentences from subordinate sentences and supporting sentences; it was difficult for them to read and comprehend a whole paragraph without translating word by word; besides that, they fail to read properly because of the lack of vocabulary knowledge, and their little knowledge of the English language. Furthermore, they felt very unsecure of how to tackle a text and how to deal with the comprehension problems they would encounter in the text. After listening to them, it was evident that students did not read texts in English and also their knowledge on reading strategies was very poor. In this regard, McNamara (2009) states that students' reading problems have numerous reasons; for example, words recognition, comprehension of sentences but the most influential fact is that "the students may lack the reading strategies necessary to overcome such challenges" (p. 34). Despite the fact that students lacked reading strategies knowledge and that their contact with text in English was scarce, they had the desire to overcome their reading comprehension difficulties and become skillful readers.

After months of investigating, gathering data, analyzing the information provided by the class encounters with students, my self-reflection and my own experience as a teacher of reading comprehension helped me to reveal three important findings:

1. The changes implemented in my lesson planning, texts selection and students' assessment benefited my instruction and students' reading process.
2. Aspects of my instruction that needed to improve to permit students' reading progress.
3. Benefits students obtained from the use of the different reading strategies, especially the improvement in vocabulary and the comprehension of the texts they read.

Reflective teachers learn that through constant reflection on their actions in the classroom they can contribute to the learning of the students. In order to facilitate students' an apprehension of the knowledge, reflective teachers need to rethink the way they plan their classes, the adequate selection of the materials and the activities the students will accomplish with the selected material. This might give the teachers the possibility to comprehend the importance of reflecting about their role as teachers and the influence their actions could have in the learning process of students.

Reflective teachers need not only to reflect about the possible aspects in their teaching that need to be changed, they require to act and convert their reflection into real actions in the classroom if they want to see and prove that the time they invest in reflecting is worthwhile and that students also experience an advance in the acquisition of a knowledge. Furthermore, teachers need to consider on how to give responses to the different problems presented when teaching because "Solutions from one context may guide thinking in another, but solutions are not necessarily universally appropriate or applicable." (Loughran, 2005, p. 13)

I have changed many aspects of my teaching practice regarding teaching reading strategies; and, these changes emerged from a deeper and systematic reflection on my

practice. In order to promote a better reading comprehension process in students I modified important aspects of my instruction. Those changes ranged from class planning, reading strategies instruction to students' assessment. The students' tasks are now different compared to the activities they did in my first year of experience as a teacher (Appendix E). These changes emerged from the desire to be a better prepared teacher and accomplish the task of transmitting new knowledge to student and the constant reflection on what I could do to improve my practice. This reflection contributed to transforming my traditional instructional practice into more productive actions in the classroom. I reflected about what instructional changes I could do to improve my instruction, what kinds of texts were more appropriate for students and what I could modify for next classes. The reflections I had after every class became the starting point for learning and improving some aspects of my instruction as a teacher. In this regard Larrivee (2006) expresses "While experience is the starting point for learning, learning does not occur without reflection on experience. The old adage that experience is the greatest teacher tells only half the story. We actually learn if we reflect on that experience." (p. 3). Now I could say that I actually initiated my learning process as a teacher when I began reflecting on my own experience obtaining important benefits not only academically but also a great personal satisfaction.

In this section, I will discuss how the implementation of the reflective inquiry method helped me to improve my instruction on strategic reading approach and how students also became strategic readers. The following are the three most important aspects I will develop in this section: Reflective inquiry method as a way to externalize my inner thoughts as a reflective teacher, journal writing as a means to become a reflective teacher, Strategic readers are the result of an adequate Collaborative Strategic Reading Instruction

and personal and professional growth are the effects of implementing the Reflective Inquiry Method.

Reflective Inquiry Method as a Way to Externalize my Inner Thoughts as a Teacher

One of the purposes of implementing the reflective inquiry method has to do with "responding to problem situations in teaching and learning" (Loughran et al, 1996, p.14), and in my case, finding solutions to the problems that involved strategic reading instruction in order to improve my practice and students' reading process. The changes I implemented in my instruction were placed in time and in specific context (Loughran et al, 1996, p.18), that is, once I considered the aspects I had to change or modify in my instruction, I tried to do it as soon as possible in order to have the possibility to improve my practice and give the students the opportunity to learn and practice the reading strategies adequately. "It involves working toward a better understanding of the problem and ways of solving it." (Loughran et al, 1996, p.14) and it was through the reflective inquiry method that I worked in order to find the solutions to the different problem situations I faced in every class encounter.

Becoming a teacher has been a determining choice in my life and also a decision-making process that not only affects my instructional practice but also the students' lives (Larrivee, 2006, p. 1). It all began when I decided to follow and develop my career as teacher in spite of the fact that I am a translator. I found in classrooms my project of life as a professional and when I started teaching, I realized that it was how I wanted to achieve my professional goals. However, as a translator, I had to recognize my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher. It was clear to me that it was going to be a path of many experiences to discover and learn about how to: manage a classroom, identify the best way to teach the reading strategies, select the most appropriate text to instruct students the

different reading strategies, identify when students had problems in understanding the reading strategy or when students find it complicated in applying the reading strategies to texts. However, the hardest parts were first, to realize when I had a problem in my instruction and find a way to solve it and second, to identify the most appropriate way to reach a solution to solve students' difficulties when reading and using reading comprehension strategies. But it was thanks to the reflective inquiry method that I encountered a path to the many difficulties I have as a teacher of reading strategies. And Even though it is a long route to follow, my main objective as a teacher of reading comprehension strategies has been to improve my instruction as a teacher, learn and reflect on my experiences and as a consequence of it produce a change in my instruction and help students to become strategic readers. With reference to this, Austin & Senese (2007) express

> Teachers should know how to articulate what they do and why they do it because they have a deep understanding of themselves. Without a deep understanding of themselves and the process of learning, teachers will never be able to grapple with the issues facing their own profession. (p. 1249)

I experienced a transformation from being a translator to becoming a teacher, I realized that I could study myself through the reflective inquiry method; because I found out that reflecting about my instructional practice would be a way to grow and to improve as a teacher; for this reason, this method gave me the possibility to experience, reflect and propose changes or solutions to existing difficulties in my instruction and help students in their learning process. Clarke & Erikson (2007) express "(…) teachers question common practice, approach problems from new perspectives, consider research and evidence to propose new solutions, implement these solutions, and evaluate the results, starting the cycle anew." (p. 55). Once I identified a problem, I analyzed the possible solutions, then I

took actions to solve it; and the cycle began again with a new puzzling situation found in my instruction.

The decision about becoming a teacher and left aside the career as a translator involved several years of reflecting about the actions I performed in every class; reforming aspects in my methodology and making decisions about how to better solve the different problematic situations I faced during the process of becoming a reading comprehension teacher. Every class was a new challenge, in which I wanted to search for my improvement as a teacher and provide students the best ways for enriching their learning. Teachers become reflective because they need to find a solution to a problem, identify what causes the problem and finally find out how to solve the situation thereby, "Reflection helps the individual to learn from experience because of the meaningful nature of the inquiry into that experience." (Loughran, 2005, p. 13)

We teachers also become reflective because we want to know, first what is actually happening in class, second what are the reactions of the students after being instructed; and finally provide the students a proper environment of learning possibilities. The process of observing and taking notes would give teachers the possibility to reflect about what is or not functioning in the class, Larrivee (2006) affirms "there are many reasons for teachers to develop as reflective practitioners" (p. 1). Among all the reasons teachers have to become reflective, I desire to become a teacher capable of sharing knowledge with students and facilitating them opportunities for learning when using the different reading strategies, take time to think about my actions in class, reflect on them and make effective decisions that respond to the necessities students have and the progress I want to have as a teacher. Considering the benefits of the reflective inquiry method, teaching is an everyday experience of growing in which I reflect about all the actions in class and the ones I have to

modify. The reflective inquiry method facilitated my process of becoming a reflective teacher because I could reflect about every aspect of my instruction and the students' learning process.

Journal writing is an example of the different narrative methods a teacher can use to self-reflect. (Clandinin and Connelly as cited in Kitchen and Stevens, 2009, "Methodology," para. 4). Writing the journal was the opportunity to consider the knowledge I had and the skills I needed to develop in order to improve my instruction and help students to become strategic readers. (Grant & Zeichner, 1984, p.103). This narrative method was the vehicle which I considered to record all the reflections and actions I experienced and which I discuss as follows.

Journal Writing as a Means to Become a Reflective Teacher

Larrivee (2006) and Bullough & Pinnegar (2001) agree on that among the different advantageous means to promote teachers' self-reflection journal writing is one of methods any teacher can use to record all the reflections about his or her teaching practices. The journal gave me the possibility to express and record all the experiences and challenging situations that occurred in the classroom. This journal provided me with the opportunity to write, think, and reflect about even the simplest action and decision I made as a teacher of reading strategies.

The journal was an essential method because in it I could verbalize all my thoughts and actions. Writing the journal, as an inquiry method tool, is one effective way to be a competent teacher through our own practice Kitchen and Stevens (2009) affirm. This method also contributed to my process from being a translator who did not have any pedagogical preparation into a teacher capable of advancing in the process of teaching

reading strategies to students in a course of English reading comprehension. The journal gave me the possibility to reflect on my past actions when I just started to be a teacher of reading comprehension strategies. It also gave me the possibility to think about my present ways of instructing students, and consider the actions I need to acknowledge in order to improve my future instruction. (Kitchen & Stevens 2005, "Methodology," para. 4).

There are numerous advantages journal writing provides to teaching, for instance, I could understand my role as a teacher, in addition, the journal gave me the opportunity to reflect on my everyday teaching process, and transforming previous experiences into new ones in which I could change my "ways of thinking, perceiving and interpreting classroom events." (Larrivee, 2006, pp. 8, 19). The journal was also a means I used to give value to the positive things I experienced as a teacher such as registering the favorable outcomes students had when they properly read a text in English and apply the reading strategies; and as a consequence understanding the texts in English. Also, when students manifested that they found useful the use of reading strategies.

It is clear to me that the reflection I verbalized in the journal could have immediate or futures consequences in others. It means that the changes I wanted to apply in my instruction, regarding the teaching of any specific reading strategy, could not be done immediately. There were some cases in which I considered modifying my instruction but for future actions in class, with the hope that the new practices implemented in teaching might positively facilitate learning in other students.

Keeping a journal is an instrument for those teachers that may be in my same situation, teachers without any pedagogical formation; who want to advance as professionals, share their knowledge about their experiences gained as reflective teachers. Hence, the journal becomes a useful tool in teachers' lives because we teachers can state

our thoughts, reflections and our constantly desire to develop our capacities as teachers and at the same time continue learning from our everyday experiences. (Zeichner & Liston, 2014, p. 17)

By virtue of the journal, I can go back and reread what I wrote, which gave me the opportunity to reflect about what happened in class concerning the instruction of the strategies, the activities proposed for the reading texts, the way students worked in small groups, and the feedback I provided to students. After rereading what I have done, I could also expand my ideas about what occurred in the classroom; express my feelings and appreciation of any specific situation. For example, why students reacted in the way they did or why I planned the explanation of any strategy but I changed it at the moment of teaching the strategy. Everet (2013) expressed that through the journal I can discover myself and find opportunities for my personal growth, it is also an opportunity to write and reflect. (p. 219). Journals not only could give the possibility to grow, and in my case to grow as a teacher of reading strategies, but also I could think about my future goals and identify the aspects that I have to improve in my reading instructional practice. (Everet, 2013, p. 219)

Through the journal, I could realize that my reading instructional practice influenced the way students read and use the reading strategies; it is something that I was not aware before since I was not educated as a teacher. The experience of writing the journal was satisfactory because I could implement in my instruction the changes I wanted, and even though it was difficult to keep the journal due to my lack of experience in writing and the limitation of time I had at the beginning, it gave me the expected results.

Writing the journal was the most important instrument that gave me the possibility to reflect on my practice and to understand that teaching is not only transmitting content to

students. Every aspect of teaching and learning conform a unit of knowledge acquisition. Writing about every class experience helped me to promote collective changes both to students in their reading comprehension and to my teaching practice. The reflective inquiry method helped me to comprehend the way I teach and how students can adequately acquire the reading strategies. Through this method, I understood that I can transform my practice by reflecting on challeging situations in the classroom. I learned to see these situations as an opportunity to step back, to reflect and then to act, looking for a change that will have consequences in my teaching and the development of students' reading comprehension.

Strategic Readers are the Result of an Adequate Collaborative Strategic Reading Instruction

The work I developed with students was based on a collaborative endeavor between students and me. I was more than the authority in the classroom; I was the mediator of knowledge. (Manzo, 1995, p. 34) Because of this, I needed first to take into account the context in which the teaching and learning of the different reading strategies took place. Besides this, I needed to consider students' English knowledge and the previous information they had about reading strategies, that is,

> Teaching is inextricably linked to learning. Teaching for understanding involves exploring the relationship between teaching and learning with the context of such things as: the content and the teacher's understanding of the content; the nature of the students and their experiences; and the temporal and physical characteristics of the setting. (Loughran, 1996, p.15)

Considering that the students' experiences in using reading strategies were very limited and that they also lacked certain knowledge in the English language, their reading comprehension problem became more apparent. However, one of the best ways to help students to overcome reading comprehension problems was instructing them in the use of

the different reading strategies (McNamara, 2009, p. 34), and mainly facilitating a collaborative work in class. This collaborative work gave the students the opportunity to activate their background knowledge, to share their ideas and to solve vocabulary doubts. My involvement with every group of students permitted to solve students reading doubts and help them to find the best ways to comprehend a text by using the reading strategies.

One of the advantages of working collaboratively was that I had the opportunity to listen to students' doubts closer, knowing everyone's difficulties in comprehension. This included the difficulty to understand a word in context, to comprehend the organization of the text, to differentiate main ideas from supporting and subordinate ideas, and to identify referents. Besides other critical situation including first, lack of students' learning capacity due to its deficiency of the English language knowledge and second, the little understanding of a reading strategies which could have been because my instruction may have not been clear enough to let students understand a reading strategy. (Reflective Teacher Education: Cases and Critiques Linda Valli, 1992, p.218). Working in groups was then a good way to identify students' problems in reading and once I identified a puzzling situation, I suggested possible solutions to benefit students' comprehension as well as the improvement of my instruction. Through the collaborative work done by students they obtained some advantages. These advantages were: students better solved reading problems, they were more involved in reading texts, they learned from other students' knowledge and interchange learning experiences. Working in groups was a complement for and individual and whole class learning.

Personal and Professional Growth as a Consequence of Implementing the Reflective Inquiry Method

The Reflective Inquiry Method provided me benefits not only in the instruction of reading strategies to students but also this method gave me the possibility to grow and professionally and personally. This method emphasizes "the idea of reflecting from practice puts emphasis on the manner in which reflection facilitates a reviewing of past action in order to perform better the next time." (Moon, J., 2013, p.92) As a reflective teacher I also had the necessity to go beyond my teaching practices and think about the essence of my personal growth "making judgments about whether professional activity is equitable, just and respectful of persons or not" (Hatton & Smith as cited in Farrell, T., 2014, p. 95)

I now feel a more confident teacher capable of sharing my knowledge with others and transforming the classroom environment. As a reflective teacher I am more confident about the decisions I have to make and I can account for my weaknesses in order to seek ways for self-improvement.

From implementing this method, I learnt that doing it is a lifelong learning activity that gives me motivation. Even though I gained a lot of positive improvements in this study in the way I instruct students, the way I changed my practice, the collaborative work carried out and the way students read strategically, I countered some limitations that are described below.

Limitations

Two paramount limitations emerged in this study after implementing the reflective inquiry method:

First, Lack of Experience in Writing Journals.

This was the first time I wrote a journal for a research purpose and I had to recognize that my inexperience in writing a journal could have influenced the data registered in my diary. In some cases, I felt giving more descriptions of what have happened in class than expressing my reflections and concerns about my teaching and students' learning process. My lack of experience in writing was also reflected on the moment I dedicated to write on the journal. I was not skillful enough to write down during class time. I found out that it was easier to me if I did it after class. However, because of my work load, I could only write my reflections in the journal just until one or two days later, and as a result, I could have possibly forgotten valuable information to register in my journal.

Second, Short Period of Classes Observed by the Peer Observer.

The peer only observed the development of one unit content; this was due to the fact that she had to attend other labor and academic duties. The few classes that were observed could have limited the interpretations of the data; it would have been ideal if she would have observed the whole course for a more complete data to be analyzed and interpreted.

This study could also lead to implications for some teachers those that require acknowledging the value of being reflective teachers and the consequences that reflections might have in our classes. Teachers, who can acknowledge it, can transform and improve not only their practice as teachers but also their students' learning process. When teachers understand the importance of reflection, they become more interested in intellectual challenges being more prepared to face teaching problems and finding solutions based on an inner conversation with their teaching experience.

Implications

English teachers who are translators and who do not have a pedagogical formation and any English teacher whose academic qualification is not in teaching need to be conscious about the benefits that the reflective inquiry method would provide them if reflection becomes part of their teaching process. This suggests that they need to consider reflection on experiences as a paramount stance in their life in which they need a continuous process of reflection to better understand their role as teachers. In addition, they need to know first that what they do for them as teachers could influence students' learning process; second, they could widen their knowledge on pedagogical practice and finally, they could become professionals capable of reflecting about their strengths and weaknesses and also generate a personal and a professional change which would also benefit their class environment.

The desire that teachers have to improve their instruction involves the willingness to reflect on the different experiences. Thus, one of the implicating aspects of being a reflective teacher entails the teachers' desire to advance in their professional career as teachers. Stevens & Cooper (2009) describe journals as a positive way to gain from reflection "This ancient tool is central to the pursuit of a more thoughtful life. In short, journal writing is a powerful form of reflection and a time-tested, well-established method for examining our lives." (p. 3). Such journal description provided by these authors evidences that through this valuable tool; we reflective teachers can apply in our professional life if our desire is to reflect on our different teaching concerns such as the way to improve our lesson planning, improve the way students are assessed and how to promote a better interaction among students in class.

If teachers want to support the effectiveness of the journal they need to answer certain questions as those proposed by Zeichener & Liston (2014). These authors state that "Reflective teachers evaluate their teaching by asking the broader questions, Are the results good? For whom? And In what ways? – not merely have my objectives been met?" (p. 13) Based on these questions, teachers would have the opportunity to: 1. reflect on their own practice. 2. Provide solutions on the aspects of their instruction they consider are failing. 3. Give possible solutions to the different problems that students face because of lack of comprehension about a specific strategy or concept explained in class.

In order to be reflective, teachers need to have some characteristics such as willingness, involvement, and capacity to recognize strengths and weaknesses in teaching, so that in the process of reflecting; they can experience a real and positive change in their life. As a consequence, teachers who lack those characteristics it is possible that they cannot improve their instruction.

A final implication for reflective teachers is that they need to consider that reflection is an ongoing and continuous processes as long as we want to gain some benefits, it is one step to promote personal and professional growth as teachers. For example, improve our instruction and help students' learning process.

In the following section, I will describe how this investigation answers the research problem and provide suggestions for further research.

Conclusion

The findings in this investigation unveiled that it is possible to improve one's pedagogical practices based on a permanent reflection about the different instructional processes carried out in class. The reflective inquiry method allowed me to reflect about the process of instructing students in the different uses of reading strategies in a reading comprehension course at a public university. This also permitted me to evidence the way these students advanced in their process of becoming strategic readers. Having conducted this study was an advantage as teacher of reading strategies because now I think more on my instruction, my own learning and the way students learn. I am a more responsible and committed teacher on the labor of preparing future professionals. I am more analytical of what happens in the classroom by observing, reflecting and then acting. It was a gain for both, me as a translator who enrolled in the transition of becoming a teacher and for students who were also influenced by the decisions I made related to the teaching of reading strategies.

In the reading comprehension courses there are well prepared teachers with knowledge in pedagogy but there are other teachers that in spite of their excellent English language level, lack the pedagogical formation in teaching. This absence of knowledge in pedagogy, forces these teachers to learn from their experience in the classroom, trying different ways of instructing students and more specifically learning from the problems they encounter in the task of teaching reading comprehension strategies. In order to have students with solid bases and well prepared professional it is necessary to be a qualified teacher able to respond to students' necessities of professional growth, as well as answer to their demands in language learning.

There were positive aspects to highlight concerning my instruction and students' reading process:

After experiencing the process of becoming a reflective teacher, the reflective inquiry method gave me the possibility to really think about my own experience. Through it, I could consciously identify solutions to existing problems in the process of teaching reading strategies as well as be more interested in identifying and helping students to become strategic readers and bringing them new knowledge. This represented a process of analysis of the context where teaching took place, the students' learning abilities and their difficulties in reading, and the objective I wanted to reach, the reflections and decision-making that influenced all the spheres of my teaching.

The most valuable instrument in my process of becoming a reflective teacher was the journal. Even though it was a time-consuming instrument, it gave me the possibility to register all the experiences as a teacher. The most significant contribution of the journal to my process of becoming a better teacher was that I could deeply reflect and find solutions on the many aspects of my instruction that I wanted to change for many years, such as the planning of the classes, the instruction of the reading strategy, the reading material selected for students and the way I assessed students. Journals represented one of the best instruments that teachers can use in order to implement the reflective inquiry method. However, it is to note that implementing this method requires a personal commitment and a great desire to advance in the pedagogical practices.

> This attitude of responsibility involves thinking about at least three kinds of consequences of one's teaching: (1) personal consequences – the effects of one's teaching on pupil self-concepts; (2) academic consequences – the effects of one's teaching on pupil's intellectual development; and (3) social and political consequences – the projected effects of one's teaching on the life chances of various pupils. (Zeichener & Liston, 2014, pp. 12, 13)

Based on the results of this project, and from these authors' perspective, my teaching brought three different consequences on students: pupils' self-concept, their intellectual development and their life changes.

First, despite the students' limitation in English language, they learned to read and extract important information from any text. This capacity motivated them to continue learning reading strategies and reading texts. They learned to recognize their limitations and strengths in reading and how they can overcome reading comprehension problems by interacting with other students in class.

Second, the academic consequences that my teaching brought on students involved the ability students had to assimilate reading strategies, they interacted more actively in class and they demonstrated to be more attentive, participative and committed with reading tasks. Students also became responsible and conscious of their own reading learning process. They learned that integrating their cognitive capacities and the adequate use of reading strategies, they could become better readers.

Finally, the changes introduced in my instruction influenced the way students read; this influence was evidenced by students who affirmed that their process of reading improved while they widened their vocabulary, used less the dictionary and could read and comprehend a text better, knowing the strategies they can use when reading. By becoming strategic readers, students have the possibility to access to different bibliographic sources in English with the purpose of obtaining valuable information that broaden their knowledge in their field of study and personal life.

The reflective inquiry method implemented in this investigation could also be applied by any English language teacher as many studies have reported. However, this investigation shows the experience of a translator whose wish is to become a better teacher.

Then, it was through the reflection of my own practice as teacher that helped me to find better ways to improve all the aspects related to teaching and students' learning process by reflecting on my practice.

Further Research

This study allowed me to understand how the reflective inquiry method can help teachers (Ahmed & Al-Khalili, 2013) to improve their teaching practices and promote students' learning. The main goal for teachers might be to improve despite the fact that there could be teachers who haven't had the opportunity for an appropriate educational background formation. The findings showed that students effectively learned, even though the course had external influences at the end when the objectives of the course were accomplished.

Further study in this area may include a comparison between the results of students having a teacher with pedagogical preparation and those without a teaching diploma. Collecting deeper data from different teachers in both sides will provide more accurate evidence in order to help them to fulfill their teaching gaps regarding the teachers' actions in the classroom.

A fascinating future investigation project is to implement the Reflective Inquiry Method as an alternative of professional development for teachers that have been teaching for a long time and who want to refine their practices.

Another interesting field of further study is to implement this method in language centers to promote reflection among teachers who do not have a pedagogical formation.

It would be interesting to apply the proposed method to teachers with a teaching background in order to find if the proposed method will help them to fulfill some gaps they

could have from their professional programs. The main purpose is to prove that this method will allow any teacher to improve their teaching skills.

In sum, regardless the limitations that this study had, it shows that the Reflective Inquiry is a useful method for teachers who desire to improve their teaching practices and to facilitate students' learning.

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APPENDIX A: STUDENTS' TASKS

This appendix shows a reading task developed in class before conducting this research investigation.

UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA
READING COMPREHENSION COURSE
TEACHER: SANDRA MARCELA TRUJILLO PINO
SKIMMING/SCANNING WORKSHOP

NAME: _____ DATE: _____ GRADE. ___

SKIM FOR MAIN IDEAS.

1. Explain the title, that is, why "Learning strategies: Basic characteristics and its relevance at school?

_____
_____

2. What are the three sections involved in the evolution and development of learning strategies?

_____
_____

3. What are the six definitions that the text gives to *learning strategies?* **Summaries them.**

_____
_____
_____

4. How does the text conclude the term *learning strategies?*

_____

_____

Scan for specific details.

5. How many times is *"learning strategy (ies)* repeated?

_____

6. What does APA stand for?

_____

7. How many articles about @ (learning strategy) are there by 1990?

_____

8. *"Intelligence is not one but multiple"* What are the two theories to name it?

_____

_____

9. According to the text what is a synonym of ***intentional?***

_____

10. Who control the learning strategies?

_____

UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA

ESCUELA DE IDIOMAS

SECCION SERVICIOS

COMPETENCIA LECTORA

TEACHER: SANDRA MARCELA TRUJILLO PINO

ENGLISH TEST

NAME: _____

DATE: _____ **GRADE:** _____

WHAT IS BUSINESS MODEL?

READ THE TEXT AND COMPLETE THE FOLLOWIN INFORMATION

A. USE CONTEXTUAL CLUES TO DEDUCE THE MEANING OF WORDS.

	WORD	**DEF. MEANING, EX…**	**CONTEXT CLUE**
1.	BUSINESS MODEL		
2.	BUSINESS MODEL		
3.	BUSINESS MODEL		
4.	BUSINESS MODEL		
5.	BUSINESS MODEL		
6.	BUSINESS MODEL		
7.	NEW/INNOVATIV E BUSINESS MODELS		
8.	TYPE OF MODEL		

B. WORD STRUCTURE. IDENTIFY MEANING, BASE WORD AND AFFIX.

COMPOUND WORD	MEANING	BASE WORD	AFFIX
9. BUILDING			
10. MAKING			
11. OPPOSING			
12. HELPFUL			
13. INJECTING			
14. MANAGEMENT			
15. UNDERSTANDING			
16. ORGANIZATION			
17. DESCRIPTION			
18. REPRESENTATION			
19. PROPOSITION			
20. COMMUNICATION			

C. IDENTIFY THE MAIN VERBS AMONG PARAGRAPH 1 AND 2. WRITE DOWN THE COMPLETE MAIN SENTENCE AND UNDERLINE THE MAIN VERB.

1._____

_____

2._____

_____

3._____

_____

4._____
_____

5._____
_____

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

This appendix contains the consent form that the peer observer and the students signed to voluntarily participate in the investigation.

UNIVERSIDAD DE ANTIOQUIA

Formato de Información de los Participantes y Formato de consentimiento.

Título de la Actividad: Investigación reflectiva sobre el desarrollo de estrategias de comprensión de lectura en un curso de competencia lectora de la Sección Servicios, Escuela de Idiomas.

Estudiante investigador: Sandra Marcela Trujillo Pino.

Información de contacto: Puede contactar a la profesora estudiante encargada quien informará y resolverá las dudas con respecto a esta actividad a realizar.

Profesora, estudiante investigadora: Sandra Marcela Trujillo

E-mail: sandymarcelatrujillo@gmail.com

Skype: marcela.trujillo27

Apreciado Participante:

Hoy lo invito a participar en el desarrollo de un proyecto de investigación de la Maestría en Enseñanza y Aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras de la Escuela de Idiomas de la Universidad de Antioquia.

A continuación daré cuenta del propósito de esta actividad y sus implicaciones en la participación en este proyecto investigativo.

PROPÓSITO DE LA ACTIVIDAD:

El propósito esta actividad investigativa es obtener información y reflexionar sobre los procesos pedagógicos que lleva a cabo el profesor con miras a buscar la mejor forma de impartir las estrategias de lectura y que los estudiantes puedan entender y hacer uso de ellas de la mejor manera posible. Para la recolección de los datos se implementaran diferentes actividades como grupos focales, estos serán grabados, observaciones de clase y elaboración de un diario por parte de la investigadora.

DURACIÓN DE LA ACTIVIDAD:

La actividad ha sido programada para realizarse en el tiempo que dura el curso.

BENEFICIO PARA EL PARTICIPANTE:

No habrá beneficios ni monetarios ni académicos.

CONFIDENCIALIDAD DE LOS PARTICIPANTES:

Los nombres de los estudiantes o participantes no se mencionarán en ningún momento pues se analizaran los procesos en general que se tienen en cuenta para el desarrollo una clase de competencia lectora basada en estrategias de lectura para leer un texto en lengua extrajera.

IMPLICACIONES POR LA PARTICIPACIÓN EN LA ACTIVIDAD

La participación de los estudiantes es voluntaria, el estudiante es libre de participar en dicho proceso. Esta actividad no tendrá ninguna implicación en la evaluación del curso.

La firma indica que el participante ha leído este formato, ha tenido oportunidad de hacer preguntas acerca de su participación en este proceso y acepta participar voluntariamente.

Nombre del participante (en letra imprenta): _____

Firma: _____

Fecha: _____

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES TO STUDENTS

This appendix contains the three questionnaires that students answered for this investigation.

Questionnaire 1.

Universidad de Antioquia

Master's in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Escuela de Idiomas

Strategic Teacher and Reader.

How does the implementation of the reflective inquiry method help me to improve in the instruction on strategic reading approach in an English Foreign Language reading comprehension course?

El propósito de este estudio de caso cualitativo, como estudiante de la maestría en enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés y profesora del programa de comprensión lectora, es contribuir al proceso de aprendizaje en la enseñanza de las estrategias de lectura por parte de los profesores que enseñan compresión lectora, que no tienen formación en docencia y que desean mejorar sus prácticas de enseñanza desde su misma reflexión como profesores. Además, de promover el uso de las estrategias de lectura en los estudiantes con el propósito de fomentar el interés en la lectura y contribuir al desarrollo de lectores estratégicos. En esta encuesta participaran estudiantes del curso de competencia lectora, nivel I. Su participación es complemente voluntaria. Habrá total confidencialidad, el análisis de los datos será codificado y los resultados se reportarán como un colectivo. Sólo te tomará unos poco minutos responder la encuesta. Tu opinión es de gran importancia para este proyecto.

Si tienes dudas acerca de esta encuesta y sus procedimientos puedes contactarme,

Profesora: Sandra Marcela Trujillo
E-mail: sandymarcelatrujillo@gmail.com
Muchas gracias por su tiempo y apoyo.

Todos los Campos son Obligatorios

1. **Sexo.**
   - Masculino

- Femenino.
- Otro

2. **Edad**.

□ Entre 15 y 20 □ Entre 21 y 25 □ Entre 26 y 30 □ Entre 31 y 35 □ Entre 36 y 40

3. **¿A qué programa pertenece?**

_____

4. **¿Qué semestre se encuentra cursando actualmente?**

_____

5. **¿Qué tan importante es leer textos en inglés en su programa de formación?**

□ Muy importante □ Importante □ Poco importante □ No importante

6. **¿Cuáles de las siguientes estrategias de lectura considera usted importantes al momento de leer un texto en inglés?**

□Uso de diccionario bilingüe adecuadamente.
□Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).
□Identificar los cognados en una lectura.
□Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.
□ Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.
□Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.
□Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.
□Identificar la idea principal de un texto.
□Identificar información específica en un texto (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).
□ Identificar los referentes en un texto.
□ Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto.
□Resumir un texto.

7. **Antes de iniciar el curso de competencia lectora en inglés, ¿Con qué frecuencia leía textos en inglés?**

□ Siempre □ Con frecuencia □ Pocas veces □ Nunca

8. **Antes de iniciar el curso de compresión lectora en inglés, ¿utilizabas las estrategias de lectura para comprender la lectura de textos en inglés?**

□ Siempre □ Casi siempre □ Con frecuencia □ Nunca

9. ¿Qué estrategias de lectura utilizaba usted para leer textos en inglés antes de recibir instrucción sobre las estrategias de lectura?

_____
_____

10. Considera usted ¿qué el curso de comprensión lectora contribuiría al mejoramiento en su comprensión de lectura de textos en inglés?

□ Si □ No **¿De qué manera?**

_____
_____
_____

11. ¿Por qué considera usted que la enseñanza de las estrategias de lectura son importantes a la hora de leer un texto en inglés?

_____
_____
_____

12. Con relación a las estrategias de lectura que se han enseñado en clase ¿Considera usted que han sido útiles en el momento de leer un texto?

_____
_____

13. ¿Cree usted que después de conocer las diferentes estrategias de lectura, las seguirá aplicando en la lectura de sus textos en inglés?

□ Si □ No **¿Por qué?**

_____
_____
_____
_____

MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU COLABORACIÓN.

Questionnaire 2.

Universidad de Antioquia

Master's in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Escuela de Idiomas

Strategic Teacher and Reader.

Instrucción Y Estrategias De Lectura

El propósito de este estudio cualitativo, como estudiante de la maestría en enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés y profesora del programa de comprensión lectora, es contribuir al proceso de aprendizaje en la enseñanza de las estrategias de lectura por parte de los profesores que enseñan compresión lectora, que no tienen formación en docencia y que desean mejorar sus prácticas de enseñanza desde su misma reflexión como profesores. Además, de promover el uso de las estrategias de lectura en los estudiantes con el propósito de fomentar el interés en la lectura y contribuir al desarrollo de lectores estratégicos. En esta encuesta participaran estudiantes del curso de competencia lectora, nivel II. Su participación es complemente voluntaria. Habrá total confidencialidad, el análisis de los datos será codificado y los resultados se reportarán como un colectivo. Sólo te tomará unos poco minutos responder la encuesta. Tu opinión es de gran importancia para este proyecto.

Si tienes dudas acerca de esta encuesta y sus procedimientos puedes contactarme.

Profesora: Sandra Marcela Trujillo
E-mail: sandymarcelatrujillo@gmail.com
Muchas gracias por su tiempo y apoyo.

El propósito de este cuestionario es obtener información acerca de la importancia de las estrategias de lectura, cómo mi instrucción en el uso de estas estrategias les ha permitido avanzar en el proceso de lectura de textos en inglés teniendo en cuenta las estrategias de lectura como herramienta principal en la lectura.

1. Después de haber estudiado diferentes estrategias lectura para la comprensión de textos en inglés:

¿Considera usted que las diferentes estrategias que la profesora ha trabajado en clase son?

Uso de diccionario bilingüe adecuadamente.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar los cognados en una lectura.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar la idea principal de un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar las ideas secundarias de un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar las ideas subordinadas en un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante

Identificar información específica en un texto, Scanning (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Identificar los referentes en un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto (clústeres, mapas mentales).	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante
Resumir un texto.	□ Muy Importante □ Importante □ Poco Importante □ Para Nada Importante

2. ¿De los siguientes beneficios cuál cree usted que ha obtenido después de haber utilizados las estrategias de lectura para leer textos en inglés? Puede marcar varias.

Ampliar los conocimientos lingüísticos del idioma inglés.

Aumentar el vocabulario.

Identificar términos claves en el texto.

Anticipar información.

Hacer predicciones.

Inferir información.

Mejorar el nivel de comprensión identificando ideas principales, secundarias y subordinadas.

Ampliar los conocimientos sobre un tema de interés.

Resumir información importantes a través de gráficos (clúster, mapas mentales)

Ningún beneficio

Otro

_____

_____

3. ¿Considera usted que mi instrucción sobre las diferentes estrategias de lectura le ha permitido mejorar su comprensión lectora?

□ Completamente de acuerdo □ De acuerdo □ En desacuerdo □ Completamente en desacuerdo

¿Por qué?

_____

_____

_____

4. **¿Antes de hacer uso de las estrategias de lectura como era su proceso de lectura?**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. ¿Cómo es su proceso de lectura en este momento?

6. ¿De 1 a 5, Qué tanto ha avanzado en la lectura de textos en inglés con el uso de las estrategias de lectura? Siendo un 1 el mínimo y 5 el máximo

____ 1 ____ 2 ____ 3 ____ 4 ____ 5

Comentarios generals

Gracias por su colaboración.

Questionnaire 3

Universidad de Antioquia

Master's in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Escuela de Idiomas

Strategic Teacher and Reader.

Instrucción Y Estrategias De Lectura

El propósito de este estudio cualitativo, como estudiante de la maestría en enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés y profesora del programa de comprensión lectora, es contribuir al proceso de aprendizaje en la enseñanza de las estrategias de lectura por parte de los profesores que enseñan compresión lectora, que no tienen formación en docencia y que desean mejorar sus prácticas de enseñanza desde su misma reflexión como profesores. Además, de promover el uso de las estrategias de lectura en los estudiantes con el propósito de fomentar el interés en la lectura y contribuir al desarrollo de lectores estratégicos. En esta encuesta participaran estudiantes del curso de competencia lectora, nivel II. Su participación es complemente voluntaria. Habrá total confidencialidad, el análisis de los datos será codificado y los resultados se reportarán como un colectivo. Sólo te tomará unos poco minutos responder la encuesta. Tu opinión es de gran importancia para este proyecto.

Si tienes dudas acerca de esta encuesta y sus procedimientos puedes contactarme.

Profesora: Sandra Marcela Trujillo
E-mail: sandymarcelatrujillo@gmail.com
Muchas gracias por su tiempo y apoyo.

El propósito de este cuestionario es obtener información acerca de la importancia de las estrategias de lectura y cómo mi instrucción en el uso de estas estrategias les ha permitido avanzar en el proceso de lectura de textos en inglés.

1. ¿Cómo considera usted la forma en que la profesora ha instruido las estrategias de lectura?

□ □ □ □ □

Apropiado Medianamente apropiado Neutral Medianamente inapropiado Inapropiado

2. Con relación a la metodología que la profesora utilizó para explicar las estrategias de lectura

2.1 ¿Cuáles estrategias de lectura considera usted que la explicación fue clara? Marque las que aplique.

□ Uso de diccionario bilingüe.

□ Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).

□ Identificar los cognados en una lectura.

□ Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.

□ Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.

□ Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.

□ Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.

□ Identificar la idea principal de un texto.

□ Identificar las ideas secundarias de un texto.

□ Identificar las ideas subordinadas en un texto.

□ Identificar información específica en un texto, Scanning (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).

□ Identificar los referentes en un texto.

□ Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto (clústeres, mapas mentales, mapas conceptuales).

Resumir un texto.En caso de que no haya marcado alguna ¿por qué considera que la explicación no fue clara?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Con relación a la metodología que la profesora utilizó para explicar las estrategias de lectura

2.2 ¿Cuáles estrategias de lectura considera usted que se debe mejorar la instrucción? Marque las que aplique.

□ Uso de diccionario bilingüe.

□ Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).

□ Identificar los cognados en una lectura.

□ Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.

□ Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.

□ Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.

□ Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.

□ Identificar la idea principal de un texto.

□ Identificar las ideas secundarias de un texto.

□ Identificar las ideas subordinadas en un texto.

□ Identificar información específica en un texto, Scanning (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).

□ Identificar los referentes en un texto.

□ Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto (clústeres, mapas mentales, mapas conceptuales).

□ Resumir un texto.

¿Por qué? En caso de que haya marcado alguna, ¿por qué considera que se debe mejorar?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. De las estrategias de lectura explicadas en clase, ¿Cuáles son las más útiles cuando estás leyendo un texto en inglés?

□ Uso de diccionario bilingüe.

□ Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).

□ Identificar los cognados en una lectura.

□ Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.

□ Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.

□ Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.

□ Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.

 Identificar la idea principal de un texto.

 Identificar las ideas secundarias de un texto.

 Identificar las ideas subordinadas en un texto.

 Identificar información específica en un texto, Scanning (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).

 Identificar los referentes en un texto.

 Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto (clústeres, mapas mentales, mapas conceptuales).

 Resumir un texto.

4. Después de conocer las diferentes estrategias de lectura para leer un texto en inglés ¿Cuáles de las siguientes continuarás utilizándola? Marque las que aplique.

 Uso de diccionario bilingüe.

 Inferir el significado de una palabra identificando sus partes (palabras formadas por afijos).

 Identificar los cognados en una lectura.

 Uso del contexto para identificar el significado de una palabra.

 Identificar los componentes de una oración en un texto dado.

 Utilizar los títulos, subtítulos y gráficas para predecir el tema de un texto.

 Identificar el tema o tópico de un texto.

 Identificar la idea principal de un texto.

 Identificar las ideas secundarias de un texto.

 Identificar las ideas subordinadas en un texto.

 Identificar información específica en un texto, Scanning (palabras claves, cifras, fechas, lugares, autores).

 Identificar los referentes en un texto.

 Elaborar gráficos para condensar la información más importante del texto (clústeres, mapas mentales, mapas conceptuales).

 Resumir un texto.

¿Por qué?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. ¿Se considera usted un lector más estratégico de lo que eran cuando empezó el curso?

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Desde el punto de vista de usted como lector ¿Qué cambios ha tenido?

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. Con relación a la forma en que la profesora enseña las diferentes estrategias de lectura ¿Qué le gustaría que la profesora mejorara o cambiara?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Gracias por su colaboración.

APPENDIX D: OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

This appendix shows the aspects that the peer observer took into account during class observations.

Peer observation protocol.

SELF-REFLECTIVE INQUIRY ON STRATEGIC READING INSTRUCTION.

Research question:

How does the implementation of the reflective inquiry method help me to improve in the instruction on strategic reading approach in an English Foreign Language reading comprehension course?

Date: _____Hour _____

Observer: _____

Teacher:._____

Class: _____

Number of students: _____

Cognitive strategy: _____

Reading strategy:				
	Before Reading	**During Reading**	**After Reading**	**Observations, comments, suggestions**
Strategy instruction: How does the teacher explain and develop the reading strategy?				
Grouping				
	Before Reading	**During Reading**	**After Reading**	**Observations, comments, suggestions**
What kind of activity/exercise does the teacher use to develop the strategy?				

Class material and strategies connection				**Observations, comments, suggestions**
Type of text reading				
Subject				
Text genre				
How appropriate is the material the teacher use in the class?				
	Before Reading	**During Reading**	**After Reading**	**Observations, comments, suggestions**
What kind of activity/exercise does the teacher use to develop the strategy?				
How was the transition between the topic explained and the activity to be developed?				

	Before Reading	**During Reading**	**After Reading**	**Observations, comments, suggestions**
How much time does the teacher spend in the topic explanation? How much time does the teacher give the students to develop the activity?				
How does the teacher promote students participation or how do the students participate actively?				
Student accountability-assessment	**Before Reading**	**During Reading**	**After Reading**	**Observations, comments, suggestions**
How does the teacher check the students' activity/exercise?				

APPENDIX E: STUDENTS' TASK, READING PRESENTATIONS AND STUDENTS' PRESENTATION

This appendix shows how I changed the way students are evaluated by means on reading presentation through graphic organizers.

Escuela de Idiomas
Sección Servicios.
Competencia Lectora Ingles I
Teacher: Sandra Marcela Trujillo
Final Assignment

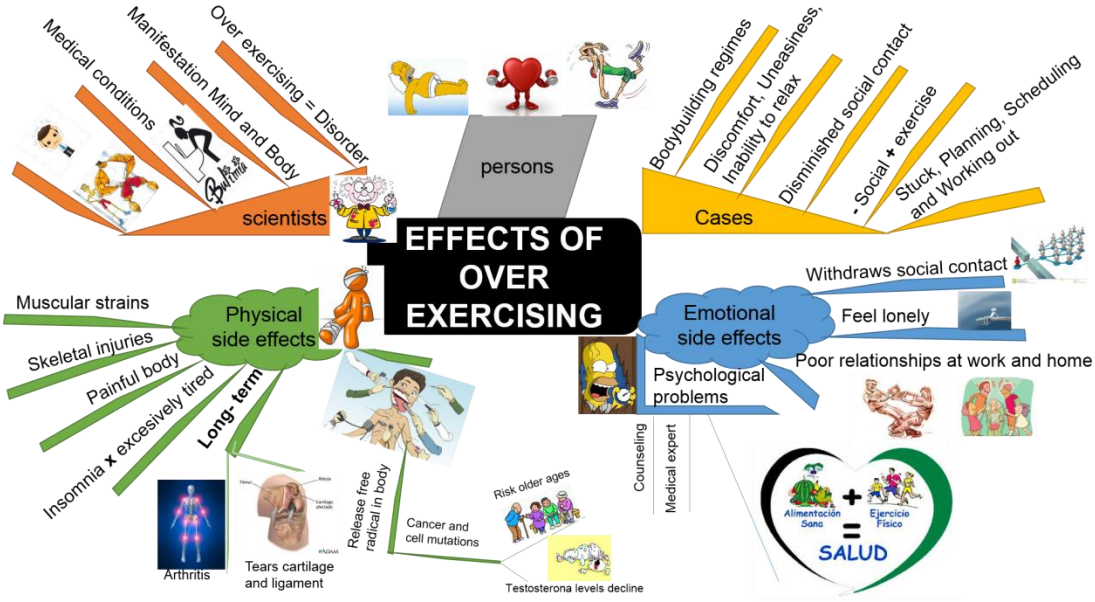
Student's name: _____ **I.D**.: _____

Date of presentations: Nov 30th **Room**: 5-212 **Time**: 7:00am

Groping: Individual task **Percentage**: 25% (class presentation)

Duration of the presentation: 10minutes per person.

Steps to follow the activity:

1. Choose a reading with the following characteristics:
   - ☺ A reading according to your field of study.
   - ☺ Choose a familiar topic to you in your area of knowledge.
   - ☺ No longer than a page or page and a half.
2. Identify the contextual clues, specify: what is the contextual clue, the word explained and the explanation.
3. Identify 5 referents in the text and its point of reference.

4. Apply SKMMING reading technique to the text; that is, the identification of the main ideas and the supporting detail and SCANNING reading technique; that is, the identification of the key words in those ideas.
5. Use a graphic organizer (CLUSTER-MIND MAP) to present your ideas DEC 7th .