



**Unlocking reading comprehension: Vocabulary-based minilessons for reading
comprehension of 9th grade EFL students.**

Diego Armando Vásquez Ramírez

Submitted as a requirement for the Bachelor of Education in Teaching Foreign Languages

Thesis and Research Advisor

Cristian David Londoño Arroyave, M.A. in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Practicum Advisor

Natalia Arias Patiño, M.A. in Foreign Language and Learning

Universidad de Antioquia

School of languages

Foreign Language Teaching Program

Medellín

2024

VB Mini-lessons for Reading Comprehension Skills Improvement of 9th grade EFL Students 2

Cita	(Vásquez Ramírez, 2024)
Referencia	Vásquez Ramírez, D.A., & (2024). <i>Unlocking reading comprehension: Vocabulary-based minilessons for reading comprehension in 9th grade EFL students</i> . [Thesis proposal]. Universidad de Antioquia, Medellín, Colombia.
Estilo APA 7 (2020)	



Biblioteca Carlos Gaviria Diaz

Repositorio Institucional: <http://bibliotecadigital.udea.edu.co>

Universidad de Antioquia - www.udea.edu.co

The content of this study reveals the points of view and opinions of the author and not the one of the Universidad de Antioquia. The author is responsible for the copyright.

Dedication

Dedicated to my grandmother Nohemy Escobar de Ramirez.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I dedicate this work to my beloved grandmother, Nohemy, who passed away last year (2023). Her constant support and love have been a constant source of strength for me in this academic journey and throughout my life.

I would also like to offer my deepest gratitude to my mother, Ruelia, who has always been a great inspiration to me and has encouraged me to pursue my academic goals.

I would like to also thank my father, Jorge, who passed away in 2020. His memory continues to motivate me every day.

I am greatly thankful to my research advisor, Cristian, whose investment, support, and invaluable feedback have been instrumental throughout my time at the university and the writing of this paper.

My heartfelt thanks go to my practicum advisor, Natalia, for her constant support, her wide knowledge, and her kind attitude towards me and my colleagues. Her guidance has been indispensable and incredibly useful.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge all my friends and acquaintances who have positively impacted my life in countless ways. Your support and friendship have been a significant part of my journey.

To all of you, I am deeply grateful.

Table of contents

Unlocking reading comprehension: Vocabulary-based minilessons for reading
comprehension of 9th grade EFL students..... 1

Dedication 3

Acknowledgements..... 3

Table of contents 4

List of tables..... 7

Table of figures 8

Acronyms and abbreviations..... 9

Abstract 10

Resumen.....11

Introduction..... 13

Description of the Context 15

 The setting 15

 Participants 16

 Cooperating Teacher..... 17

Statement of the problem 18

 School situation..... 18

 Classroom situation..... 18

 Constant interruptions 18

 Pedagogical needs 19

Theoretical Background..... 20

EFL Lessons	20
EFL Mini Lessons	21
PPP for Mini lessons	22
Vocabulary Development	23
Reading Comprehension	24
Research Question	25
Objectives	25
General Objective.....	25
Specific Objectives.....	25
Methods.....	26
Diagnosis test and output test.....	26
Pre-service teacher journals	27
Students' artifacts	27
Student questionnaire	27
Action plan.....	28
Development of Actions	29
Data Analysis	30
Findings and interpretations.....	32
Diagnosis findings.....	32
Recognize main ideas within a text.....	33
Content gains.....	42
Literal WH questions (ALWQ).....	43

PPP Effects on vocabulary acquisition and RC.....	43
Limitations in opinion questions (CAOQ).....	45
Conclusions.....	46
Effectiveness of vocabulary-based mini lessons.....	46
Main idea gains.....	46
ALWQ and RSI gains.....	47
Challenges in expressing opinions CAOQ.....	47
Recommendations.....	48
Final Reflection.....	49
References.....	50
Appendix A.....	51
Appendix B.....	53
Appendix C.....	55

List of tables

Table 1. Action plan.	28
Table 2. ML unit improvements before and after.....	46

Table of figures

Figure 1. RC skills rubric.....	31
Figure 2. RC skills Rubric	31
Figure 3. DT Students sample.....	35
Figure 4/ Artifact 1 Sample.....	36
Figure 5. Artifact 3 sample.....	37
Figure 6. FT part 1 sample.....	38
Figure 7. FT part 2, sample.....	39
Figure 8. FT part 3, sample.....	40
Figure 9. FT part 4, sample.....	41

Acronyms and abbreviations

ALWQ: Answers literal WH questions

ARMI: Able to recognize main idea inside a text

CAOQ: Can answer opinion questions

CT: Cooperating Teacher

DT: Diagnosis test

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

FT: Final test

ISCAD: Identifies specific content to answer descriptively

ML: Mini lessons

RC: Reading comprehension

RSI: Recognizes sequences of ideas

UWHQ: Understands WH questions

Abstract

This action research paper looks to examine the potential gains and challenges in reading comprehension generated by implementing a vocabulary-based mini lessons framework with 9th grade EFL students. Using a PPP lesson structure, the mini lessons framework focuses on vocabulary acquisition as the main aspect to improve reading comprehension among the study subjects.

This paper used various methods of collection to examine the gains and challenges that might arise during the implementation of the mini lessons' framework; a diagnosis and a final test to measure the initial and final state of students' reading comprehension; teacher journals to provide qualitative evidence of pedagogical instruction, classroom insights and dynamics, while student artifacts have yielded data on changes in students' reading comprehension skills as well as learning outcomes.

By analyzing these emerging gains and challenges, this paper aimed to account for the impact of a PPP mini lesson framework in a unique context that may also help other educators that could face similar challenges.

The study results suggest that the concise and quick nature of PPP mini lessons can help enhance the reading comprehension skills when targeting instruction of vocabulary and content. Also , it can be recommended as an effective didactic proposal for contexts that face similarly found issues within public education.

Key words: Mini lessons, vocabulary development, reading comprehension, PPP approach, familiar content in EFL, vocabulary-based mini lessons, vocabulary strategies, reading strategies.

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación-acción busca examinar los potenciales beneficios y desafíos que pueden surgir al implementar una unidad de “mini lecciones” basadas en vocabulario, en un grupo de estudiantes de noveno grado en una institución pública. Utilizando el modelo de clase PPP (presentación, practica, producción), esta unidad de “mini lecciones” se centra en la adquisición de vocabulario como principal estrategia para mejorar la comprensión lectora en el grupo de estudio.

Este trabajo de investigación utiliza varios métodos de recolección de datos para examinar las mejoras y los desafíos que podrían surgir durante la implementación de la unidad de mini lecciones; un diagnóstico y una prueba final para medir el estado inicial y final de comprensión lectora de los estudiantes; diario de campo del profesor, para proporcionar evidencia cualitativa de la instrucción pedagógica así como las dinámicas del aula; mientras que los productos de los estudiantes se utilizaran para medir la información de manera cuantitativa, el uso del vocabulario y habilidades de comprensión de lectura, así como resultados del aprendizaje.

Al analizar las posibles mejoras y desafíos emergentes en comprensión de lectura, este documento pretende dar cuenta del impacto que una unidad de mini lecciones en conjunto con el modelo de clase PPP, puede tener en un grupo de estudiantes de noveno grado en una institución pública, el cual potencialmente podría ayudar a otros educadores que enfrentan situaciones similares.

Los resultados del estudio sugieren que la naturaleza concisa y rápida de las mini lecciones PPP puede ayudar a mejorar las habilidades de comprensión lectora de un grupo objetivo en una institución que enfrenta problemas comunes dentro de la educación pública.

Palabras clave: Mini lecciones, desarrollo de vocabulario, comprensión lectora, enfoque PPP, contenido familiar en EFL, mini lecciones basadas en vocabulario, estrategias de vocabulario, estrategias de lectura.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a necessary skill for high school students in Colombia, especially for 9th grade students at Institución Educativa la Esperanza, who will be evaluated by the state by *Pruebas Saber 9*. Thus, enhancing reading comprehension is necessary for them to progress in their studies. Besides, students in this context have limited class time due to institutional scheduling issues. This research paper explores the gains and challenges that may arise from a vocabulary-based mini-lessons framework for reading comprehension skills of 9th-grade EFL students at *Institución Educativa La Esperanza*.

This study aimed to understand how vocabulary-based mini lessons can improve reading comprehension of students. Oakhill et al.(2015) state that “(...)

Although word reading and language comprehension are largely separate skills, it should always be kept in mind that successful reading demands the interplay of both of these skills, and so they both need to be encouraged and supported from the onset of reading instruction” (p. 12).

EFL lessons are usually structured with a warm-up, a presentation phase, practice activities, and production activities. This structure can be easily integrated with PPP vocabulary-based mini-lessons. Clayton (2021) highlights the importance of minilessons in the sense that “(...) *During mini lessons, you can teach procedures, model strategies and techniques, reinforce previously taught strategies, and teach specific skills.*” (p. 2)

This study uses the Presentation, Practice, and Production (PPP) class methodology to implement the mini lessons “*The presentation-Practice-Production model of activity sequencing (PPP) is the traditional activity sequencing pattern on which many Foreign Language Teaching [FLT] course books have relied, and its presence can still be appreciated today.*” (Criado, 2013)

. This method was chosen due to its straightforward structure and effectiveness to provide quick classes when time constraints are present and for focalized subject instruction.

The general objective of this paper is to examine how a framework of vocabulary-based mini-lessons produced gains on the reading comprehension skills of 9th-grade EFL students. Specific objectives include determining the initial and final states of students' reading comprehension skills, implementing a vocabulary-based thematic unit of mini-lessons, and recognizing the reading comprehension skills developed during the implementation.

Description of the Context

The setting

This Action Research study was conducted at *Institución Educativa La Esperanza*, a public school located in the neighborhood of Castilla in Medellín, Colombia, characterized by a working-class community. The institution aligns its practices with national standards, including Project-Based Learning (PBL) (*Aprendizaje Basado en Proyectos -ABP-*) as their current pedagogical model. Given that PBL projects span for an entire academic year, the duration of this research was insufficient to complete the projects in their entirety.

The EFL program at the institution has been designed to meet the requirements of Colombian educational standards, including “*Derechos Básicos de Aprendizaje*” (DBA). However, despite these efforts, challenges such as limited class time and scheduling issues persist, thus hindering the institution's ability to fully realize its educational aspirations. The philosophy at the institution is that of helping students through their mid and high school efforts in alignment with their values such as “Equity, Loyalty, Teamwork, Transparency” to subsequently join the work force: “*La Institución Educativa la Esperanza, centra su filosofía en ofrecerle a los niños y jóvenes los conocimientos y elementos requeridos para elevar su dignidad y satisfacer las necesidades del entorno a través de su formación y posibilidad de interacción con el medio social y laboral*” (PEI IE La Esperanza, 2018.).

The intensity of English classes was 3 hours a week, one of those hours was invested at a computer's room, wherein students did mostly digital exercises and fill in the gap activities. English classes were usually taught at a traditional room with insufficient chairs, a broken TV screen, a chalkboard, and the materials for students come from a textbook named “English Please”, provided by the Colombian government in 2016.

Participants

The first cycle involved a group of 8th grades. In the second stage, the students were in 9th grade, between the ages of 13 and 15, from Castilla, and neighboring areas like Robledo, 12 de Octubre, and Bello. Some students came from rural areas and one of the girls was from an indigenous community. During the first action research cycle in the second semester of 2023, students would follow CT instructions, which usually came in the form of a task which required them to find a page inside a book and work on the exercise mandated.

Their attitudes toward English were mixed, some students liked the subject while some others seemed uninterested and distracted during English classes. Their reading skills were not very prolific, they did not know how to identify key words, or how to answer WH questions in which ideas must be found or reported. They could not use vocabulary to aid their reading comprehension as they were unable to answer questions altogether.

Students show respectful behaviors before the CT, although they used to walk around frequently in the classroom during class activities. Classroom management didactic strategies derived from diverse activities although materials other than one outdated English book and the chalkboard were rarely seen.

In the second cycle in 2024, some students were no longer in the group as they moved to a different one while some others have left the institution. Also, new students joined the group, either from the institution itself, or newcomers from different institutions, different cities, and different regions. These changes are worth mentioning given the potential variables affecting the implementation. All these context variables supposed a challenge for this research. There were inevitable changes within the group, but at least 50% of the participants remained the same.

Cooperating Teacher

The cooperating teacher (CT) is a full-time schoolteacher with over 20 years of teaching experience and was helpful and receptive to the preservice teacher. He holds a master's degree in Foreign Language Teaching and Learning. His style of teaching was focused on writing activities, in which he usually asked the group to do exercises found within the book "English, please" which is provided by the Colombian state.

It was observed that he plans his lessons well and follows strictly the syllabus of the institution. His focus was on written production of reports and narratives, rather than listening, speaking, or reading. He managed the classroom well and students recognized him as an authority. His style of teaching leans towards a very strict style, since he believes it to be effective in a public institution. He used to have full control of the classes and to maintain discipline inside the classroom. His classroom management is strict while teaching. His classes usually followed a two-step cycle characterized by a warmup activity, which is always the prayer "Holy father" then he proceeds to check attendance. After doing that, the CT picks an activity from the book "English please" which is usually in alignment with the school syllabus. They are usually reading activities which require students to write little reports at the end or to answer multiple choice questions as well as basic comprehension questions. After this, he provided instruction on what the final activity would be like (e.g., questions, written summary), and after this, students were expected to complete the activities on their own.

Statement of the problem

School situation

Within *Institución Educativa La Esperanza*, 9th-grade EFL students faced significant challenges related to language proficiency and reading comprehension. Also, scheduling issues arose from different institutional situations which included lunch breaks, teachers' administrative tasks, and sporting events. Since they are evaluated by the Colombian state during 9th grade, one of the most pressing issues these students face is the imperative need to boost their reading comprehension skills with a focus on vocabulary. Moreover, production skills were demanded with little focus on comprehension and lexical knowledge of the language.

Classroom situation

According to observations and journals, it was shown that a considerable number of the students struggled with the tasks administered by the teacher. While a small group of students was able to accomplish these tasks, most of the class had trouble finding words in a dictionary or identifying key words within a text so they would opt for external resources such as phones and the digital aids they provide (Translators, Google, AI's) (Class observation #3, 2023). Although most of them used their phones to look up words, it took them a significant amount of time since they had little to no instruction, which they were usually expected to do independently. Students then struggled with reading comprehension, this was reflected in their low grades and the reliance on external resources to complete assignments as evidenced in class observations. (Class observation #3, 2023)

Constant interruptions

Several factors further impact this issue: scheduling conflicts, where English classes coincide with lunch breaks, resulting in missed instructional time; administrative interruptions, as

teachers occasionally must attend administrative matters during English classes, which negatively impacts teaching time; and institutional schedule changes, which frequently cause English classes to be missed completely (Class Observation #2, 2023). Also, sport events play a role in missing instruction time. Students are allowed to leave the classroom to attend football matches. Because of institutional policies, sport events have higher priority over instruction time.

Pedagogical needs

The need to enhance reading comprehension skills is further emphasized by the observation that many assigned activities heavily rely on this cognitive ability as well as upcoming state tests that students must take while coursing 9th grade, as these tests rely heavily on reading comprehension (Observation #5, 2023) Given the school situation, the classroom situation, and the pedagogical needs, a more agile teaching method was a good idea to counter these issues.

Considering all these circumstances, this action research aimed to explore the potential of mini lessons as a pedagogical proposal, based on one PPP class structure method. Therefore, this study focused on the potential of mini-lessons as a pedagogical intervention to address the specific reading comprehension needs of 9th-grade EFL. In order to strengthen the potential of mini-lessons, a vocabulary-based approach was proposed.

Theoretical Background

EFL Lessons

Lessons are special events that take place in particular settings. They can be of any kind of subject and can be taught in all sorts of different ways. They follow a structured development and include an array of activities that are easily recognized for teachers in general. For instance, Richards and Lockhart (1994) explain that:

“Lessons take place in a particular setting (e.g., a school or classroom), they normally involve two kinds of participants (the teacher and students), and they normally consist of recognizable kinds of activities (e.g., the teacher lecturing at the front of the class, the teacher posing questions and calling on students to answer them).” (p. 113)

Language lessons are of particular interest for this research paper, with a focus on EFL lessons. An EFL lesson, or English as a Foreign Language lesson, is a structured learning event designed to teach English to students in a country where it is not the dominant language. Unlike ESL (English as a Second Language), which caters to individuals already living in an English-speaking country, EFL focuses on providing students with the foundation and tools to understand and use English effectively, even with limited exposure outside the classroom. Harmer (1983) highlights that:

“For many years, scholars and teachers have made a distinction between EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language). EFL described situations where students were learning English in order to use it with any other English speakers in the world.” (p. 13)

EFL lessons typically follow a structured approach: a warm-up , followed by the presentation of new language or skills and examples. Practice activities solidify understanding

through controlled exercises, while production tasks encourage creative application in writing, speaking, or projects. Finally, a wrap-up summarizes key points and checks for understanding. This structure, along with differentiation, assessment, and cultural integration, forms the foundation for EFL. Ellis (1994) recommends incorporating a brief review of the lesson's main activities and outcomes in the closing segment to reinforce learners' understanding and retention of new language forms and concepts (p. 611)

EFL Mini Lessons

Mini lessons are designed to provide a potential aid to enhance language proficiency and learning outcomes. *“Mini lessons are a pedagogical approach designed to address specific learning objectives in a concise and targeted manner. They focus on essentials and are delivered in a way that is clear and concise”* Clayton (2021) (p.2). In the context of language education, mini lessons provide a valuable tool for educators to foster language proficiency and reading comprehension skills. These brief instructional sessions focus on isolated language skills or content, allowing students to grasp essential concepts quickly. Building upon the structured learning experiences offered by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) lessons for students in non-dominant English-speaking countries, EFL mini lessons offer a focused approach within that framework. As Harmer (2015) notes, EFL contexts involve students learning English “to use it with any other English speakers in the world” (p. 21). Mini lessons, as described by Clayton (2021), function as pedagogical tools designed to address specific learning objectives in a concise and targeted manner. In the context of EFL, they provide valuable tools to foster language proficiency and reading comprehension skills. These brief instructional sessions isolate specific language skills or content, allowing students to grasp essential concepts quickly and efficiently, making them particularly effective in teaching environments where time is a constraint. This

targeted approach could potentially allow teachers to integrate mini lessons seamlessly into their existing curriculum, providing additional support and opportunities for skill development without sacrificing valuable instructional time.

PPP for Mini lessons

For the purposes of the study, I will develop the mini lessons using the PPP approach (Presentation, Practice, Production) This structured method is a well-known approach on EFL teaching. It provides consistency throughout instruction, and it can be adapted to environments in which it is required to improve targeted language skills gradually. Li states that PPP “pays special attention to specific linguistic forms of the target language and emphasizes accuracy rather than fluency in the learning process” (p. 1). So, the PPP class model will be applied throughout the implementation of the mini lessons, contextualized for vocabulary teaching.

Li (2020) indicates that PPP is favorable to form habits, practice and the internalization of rules (p. #). Which makes PPP an appropriate method to carry out mini lessons as a reinforcement strategy and provide consistency through the implementation. *“When there are established structures, routines, and procedures in place, teachers can focus on teaching, assessing, and coaching students and students can spend their time in productive ways* (Clayton, 2021, p. 2).

During the first stages of class (Presentation) key words were introduced in the form of quick activities such as crosswords, scramble, Synonyms & antonyms, definitions, matching words and so forth. According to Li (2020): *“...At the first stage, the teacher acting as provider and informant of input presents the new language, while students listen to and comprehend what the teacher presents”* (p.247). During the practice phase, students will be prompted to interact with the text, by highlighting unknown words, familiar words, extract sentences that they don't understand and solve inquiries with the help of the teacher so that they can later achieve the

expected RC gains in production phases. Criado writes: *“These activities are aimed at achieving accuracy of forms so that fluency can be later achieved in production activities”* Also, during this phase, there will be a strong emphasis in word reinforcement, encouraging the students to guess word meaning, identifying words in context, and exploring vocabulary within a simple text. During the production phase, which according to Criado (2013, p. 100) *“Production activities aim at increasing fluency in linguistic use, precisely through ‘autonomous activities’”*. Thus, students were asked to answer reading comprehension questions with increasing difficulty throughout the different sessions. These reading comprehension questions aimed to measure the students’ performance in new vocabulary acquisition, word retention, and understanding of a text.

Vocabulary Development

A strong vocabulary is crucial for understanding the meaning of words and phrases in a text. As stated by (Oakhill et al., 2015) *“reading comprehension is necessarily dependent on at least adequate word reading: readers cannot understand a whole text if they cannot identify (decode) the words in that text”* (p.1). Highlighting the importance of a wide vocabulary. Readers should be able to recognize and comprehend both common and specialized vocabulary. Vocabulary plays a fundamental role in reading comprehension; *“good reading comprehension will depend on good language understanding more generally. This requires comprehension of the individual words and the sentences that they form”*. (Oakhill et al., 2015, p.1). A robust and diverse vocabulary enables readers to comprehend the text with greater ease. Vocabulary development goes hand in hand with reading comprehension, as the reader's familiarity with words directly impacts their ability to grasp the text's meaning. Readers should be capable of recognizing and comprehending both common and specialized vocabulary. The richness of one's vocabulary enhances the reader's ability to decode the text, infer meanings from context, and engage in more

profound analytical thinking. Therefore, the acquisition and mastery of vocabulary are pivotal components of any strategy aimed at improving reading comprehension.

Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension requires the reader to navigate through a vast array of vocabulary, ranging from everyday words to domain-specific terminology. As stated by Oakhill et al. (2015) *“to comprehend well, readers need to coordinate a range of skills. These include word reading ability, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic skills, memory, and discourse level skills such as the ability to make inferences, knowledge about text structure and metacognitive skills”* (p. 2). Reading comprehension is a multifaceted skill that encompasses the ability to understand, interpret, and critically engage with written texts.

It relies on various cognitive processes, including decoding, vocabulary recognition, and higher order thinking skills. It also implies the reader's capacity to extract meaning from the text by making connections, inferences, and evaluations. Although understanding single words is important as stated by (Oakhill et al., 2015, p. 3) *“Effective reading comprehension goes beyond recognizing individual words and phrases; it involves understanding the text's overarching structure, identifying the main idea, and deciphering the author's intentions”*.

Research Question

What gains and challenges does a vocabulary-based mini-lessons framework generate in a group of 9th grade EFL student's reading comprehension skills?

Objectives

General Objective

To examine how a framework of vocabulary-based mini-lessons impact the reading comprehension skills of 9th-grade EFL students.

Specific Objectives

To determine the initial and final states of students' reading comprehension skills.

To implement a vocabulary-based thematic unit of mini-lessons to develop students reading comprehension skills.

To recognize the reading comprehension skills developed during the unit.

Methods

This action research study was a small-scale research project devoted to tackle an issue identified at classroom level (Creswell, 2015), and aimed to examine how a framework of vocabulary-based mini-lessons produces gains or evince challenges on the reading comprehension skills of 9th-grade EFL students. A set of research instruments will be utilized for this purpose: One diagnosis test, one final test, pre-service teacher journals, students' artifacts and a student's questionnaire. These methods will provide a wide perspective of students' reading comprehension skills before, during, and after the implementation of the mini lessons. These instruments were chosen to provide reliable research backing of how quick vocabulary instruction may influence students' ability to better understand texts, providing valuable information about the gains and challenges found on the teaching strategies used.

Diagnosis test and output test

Specifically designed written tests, with vocabulary exercises aiming to boost reading comprehension, vocabulary-related questions or open-ended questions in the form of WH questions, which will require the use of learned vocabulary. The initial diagnosis test will assess students' current reading comprehension abilities and the output test will measure the impact of the mini lessons on their ability to understand and utilize vocabulary in context after the implementation phase is over. These two instruments combined allowed the analysis of students reading comprehension before the mini lessons unit, vocabulary usage throughout it, their ability to effectively grasp ideas off texts based on their enhanced vocabulary knowledge and the final form after the unit is concluded.

Pre-service teacher journals

Teacher journals helped with regular documentation of observations, student learning and gradual impact of the mini lesson's unit. Tracking the impact of mini-lessons and their effects compared to normal lessons can reveal differences in dynamics and nuances related to vocabulary learning and its impact on reading comprehension. These journals were crucial to document every step of the unit implementation as they were the primary source of evidence at the very moment of interaction of students with the teaching strategies.

Students' artifacts

As the implementation took place, students produced multiple artifacts in the form of reading comprehension sheets, with multiple vocabulary acquisition strategies as well as reading comprehension strategies in them. These artifacts were used to measure the gradual impact of the lessons through a system of percentages and grades which showed the progress of students during the implementation phase, as well as their ability to pick up some of these strategies to impact their reading comprehension skills and performance.

Student questionnaire

A questionnaire for students was conducted to serve as an additional method to collect qualitative data on students' experiences and perceptions after the implementation of the action plan. The purpose of the questionnaire was to understand how students felt after the implementation of the mini lessons, whether they liked the activities or if they were comfortable while doing them. The questionnaire aimed to gather feedback from students and their perceptions on their own learning outcomes (See appendix C)

Action plan

Table 1. Action plan.

Week	Objective	Actions	Data collection instrument
1	Measure initial state of reading comprehension abilities of students. Students will conduct diagnosis test related to the Olympic games, in alignment with the institution syllabus.	Conduct diagnosis tests. Introduce vocabulary related to the Olympics. Vocabulary activities. (Synonyms and antonyms) Use of WH questions.	Diagnosis test Journal
2	Apply vocabulary strategies in reading comprehension activities and exercises.	Implementation of mini lessons unit starting with sheet #1 (Mariana Pajon) Vocabulary activity during presentation and highlighting context clues for vocabulary; explicitly and implicitly. Practice: Athlete routine Production: Use of short texts about her routine and accomplishments.	Journal Students' artifacts
3	Reinforce vocabulary building activities and apply vocabulary strategies to answer reading comprehension questions.	Mini lesson unit, sheet #2 "BMX" Text about this Olympic sport discipline. Vocabulary activities, presentation. Practice: Read along, with vocabulary discussion. Production: WH questions, about routine, sequencing, main ideas.	Journal Students' artifacts
4	Demonstrate understanding of vocabulary usage through vocabulary acquisition work and reading activities.	Mini lesson unit, sheet #3 "Rigoberto Uran" Text about this Colombian Athlete. Presentation: Vocabulary activities, Practice: Text skimming. Production: WH questions. Main idea questions.	Journal Students' artifacts
5	Students will use vocabulary related to the Olympics to independently work on reading tasks using vocabulary skills.	Mini lesson unit, sheet #4 "Cycling" Text about this Olympic sport discipline. Presentation: Vocabulary activities. Practice: Text analysis and discussion. Production: WH questions. Main idea questions. Inferring questions	Journal Students' artifacts
6	Use of acquired vocabulary to answer reading comprehension questions. Reinforcement of vocabulary to improve reading skills.	Mini lesson unit, sheet #5 "Caterine Ibarquen" Text about this Colombian Athlete. Vocabulary activities, Practice: Analyze key words inside text. Production: WH questions.	Journal Students Artifacts
7	Measure final state of students reading comprehension skills with output test to determine impact of unit implementation.	Implementation of output test. Reading about the Olympics, like diagnosis test, but with slight changes to measure effective use of acquire vocabulary and reading comprehension skills.	Journal Output test Students questionnaire

Development of Actions

To conduct this research, I started collecting data with the aid of a journal and observations. Then, the data was organized in the form of reports inside the pre-service teacher journals to help solidify the reading comprehension issues that were found.

The implementation of the action plan had many difficulties due to the issues already presented in the context description. It had to be updated, revisited and rearranged several times, to achieve the proper implementation of the mini lesson's unit. Due to the challenges that commonly occur at *Institución Educativa La Esperanza*, the final action plan had to dispose of one of its previously considered sheets to finish the implementation. Luckily with the advice and feedback provided by both my advisors, the research implementation was conducted in a way in which enough data was gathered to adequately measure both gains and challenges on reading comprehension after the unit was implemented.

The implementation of the mini lessons followed strictly The PPP (Presentation, practice production) teaching methodology model (Appendix B). This model aligned well with the flow of mini lessons due to its easy-to-follow structure, which can be applied quickly and effectively to achieve results in a concise manner. For instance, a presentation stage may consist of a quick crossword activity to learn new vocabulary, then, a practice stage may involve the teacher reading along with the group of students, and immediately after, a set of reading comprehension questions to measure the impact of the previous stages. This can be done quickly and orderly in these 3 steps, which is way this class teaching methodology was chosen for this qualitative research.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed using a rubric containing RC skills and categories that were measured through the length of the implementation. The rubric aimed to measure students results quantitatively for both the diagnosis and final tests, as the implantation of the mini lessons unit. The skills considered in the rubric were: Understands WH - comprehension questions (UWHQ), Answers literal WH- questions (ALWQ), Can answer opinion questions (CAOQ), Identifies specific content to answer descriptively (ISCAD), Recognizes sequences of ideas (RSI), and Able to recognize main idea (ARMI). These RC skills were grouped by the rubric to measure quantitatively the performance of the students, as well as vocabulary skills, and then translate them qualitatively with the aid of preservice teacher journals, reflecting the implementation effects of the pedagogical framework. These journals were coded to identify emerging learning patterns from instruction, to be later compared with the results produced by each of the artifacts of the students and the gains on RC. Finally, a student questionnaire (Appendix C) was provided to the students to gather a personal perspective from the students and their perceptions after the implementation was concluded. The data collected was triangulated to find gains and challenges emerging from the VB mini-lessons using the PPP instructional strategy while trying to answer the research question.

VB Mini-lessons for Reading Comprehension Skills Improvement of 9th grade EFL Students 31

Figure 1. RC skills rubric

Students names	Able to read and understand definition of words and perform matching activities. ARUDW	Understands WH-comprehension questions. UWHQ	Answers literal WH questions. ALWQ	Can answer opinion questions. CAOQ	Identifies specific content to answer descriptive, for instance text subject info. ISCAQ	Recognizes sequences of ideas. RIS	Able to recognize main idea inside a text. ARMI	Total
		3	3	3	7	7		23
		8	7	9	8	7		39
		8	6	8	6	8		36
		6	4	7	5	5		27
		6	6	5	6	6		29
		8	7	7	7	8		37
		8	8	8	8	8		40
		8	9	8	8	9		42
		8	7	7	8	9		39
		7	7	8	7	8		37
		8	8	8	8	9		40
		7	7	7	7	7		35
		8	8	7	8	7		38
		8	6	7	5	5		28
		8	8	8	8	8		40
		5	4	5	5	4		23
		9	8	9	8	8		42
		7	6	8	7	6		34
		8	8	8	8	7		39
		8	9	8	8	9		42
		7	7	7	7	7		35
		8	8	7	8	7		38
		8	8	7	8	8		39
		9	8	8	9	8		42
		6	5	4	6	4		25
		8	7	8	7	8		38
		8	8	8	7	8		39
								0
		8	8	7	9	9		41
		8	8	8	8	8		40
		8	7	6	7	7		35
		7	6	5	5	6		29
			2					2
		8	7	7	6	8		36
		8	8	7	7	8		38
		7	7	8	7	6		35
		6	6	6	6	6		30
		0	257	246	248	248	253	0

Figure 2. RC skills Rubric

Student's names	Able to read and understand definition of words and perform matching activities. ARUDW	Understands WH-comprehension questions. UWHQ	Answers literal WH questions. ALWQ	Can answer opinion questions. CAOQ	Identifies specific content to answer descriptive, for instance text subject info. ISCAQ	Recognizes sequences of ideas. RIS	Able to recognize main idea inside a text. ARMI	Total	
			1	1	1	2	0	5	
			3	2	3	2	0	10	
			5	3	4	3	0	15	
			2	2	3	2	0	9	
			6	5	5	4	0	20	
			8	6	7	6	5	32	
			8	7	7	7	4	33	
								0	
			7	5	5	6	0	23	
			7	4	5	5	0	21	
			1	1	1	2	0	5	
								0	
			6	5	6	5	0	22	
			5	6	5	5	0	21	
			3	3	5	5	5	21	
			5	6	5	7	0	23	
			8	6	6	7	5	32	
			6	4	4	3	0	17	
			6	7	6	6	0	25	
			7	6	5	7	0	25	
			4	3	2	2	0	11	
			5	3	4	2	0	14	
			4	3	4	3	0	14	
			7	6	5	4	0	22	
			1	1	2	2	0	6	
			6	5	4	5	0	20	
			3	2	2	3	0	10	
			6	5	5	5	0	21	
			6	5	5	6	0	22	
			7	5	6	4	0	22	
			6	6	5	6	0	23	
			6	5	6	4	0	21	
								0	
			3	3	4	3	0	13	
								0	
			6	6	7	7	0	26	
			1	1	1	1	0	4	
			0	0	165	138	145	141	19

Findings and interpretations

Diagnosis findings

Before implementing the mini lessons unit, a reading comprehension diagnosis was conducted to determine the general state of reading comprehension amongst the research subjects.

The targeted skills to measure were:

- 1) **UWHQ:** Understands WH questions
- 2) **ALWQ:** Answers literal WH questions
- 3) **CAOQ:** Can answer opinion questions
- 4) **ISCAD:** Identifies specific content to answer descriptively
- 5) **RSI:** Recognizes sequences of ideas
- 6) **ARMI:** Able to recognize main idea inside a text

For the purpose of this research, the diagnosis was designed considering the following aspects: Understanding of WH questions, a set of true and false questions, main idea questions, synonym and antonym activity and a summarizing question (Appendix A).

It was found that most students (72%) answered WH questions incorrectly over 50% of the questions.

The remaining 28% struggled in identifying specific information. After analyzing the results of the diagnosis, it was found that some students had trouble understanding WH particles (e.g., ‘what’, ‘when’, ‘where’), which made it difficult for them to answer specific questions. Due to these difficulties, these students were unable to fully complete this part of the diagnosis, some answered a few questions, and some did not answer at all.

In the “True or False” section, the completion ratio was 20/33 (60%), 20 students fully completed the part with mistakes; they easily responded to “Athletes from different countries compete against each other in the Olympic Games” and had slight difficulties with the questions “The Olympic games were held only once in history”. They were able to distinguish nouns and adjectives as well as keywords to answer with accuracy. The remaining 13 students (40%) answered some of the questions while leaving some of the blanks unfilled.

For the synonyms and antonyms activity, “Specify which ones”, the rate of completion was 21/33 (63%), showing vocabulary inference and the ability to identify key vocabulary, while the remaining 12 (27%) fluctuated between half to full completion, while some students did not write at all leaving the blank spaces empty.

When analyzing the main idea sections of the diagnosis, the results were underachieving with a completion rate of only 5/33 (15%), meaning that 85% of the students had difficulties to understand a text globally, identify a topic within a text and understanding order of ideas. The 15% that answered this section had short responses like “yes”, “no”, “Greece”, with understandable answers.

Recognize main ideas within a text

Artifacts and journals showed that PPP helped students learn to identify main ideas within a text. When comparing the diagnosis test and the output test, the results showed an improvement in identifying keywords, specific information, and ideas sequence recognition.

Journals show evidence in which Presentation and Practice stages had effects on the vocabulary of students. In Presentation events, students recycled words in crosswords, synonyms and antonyms, word definitions, and word meanings from previous workshops, subsequently improving the way they answered Main Idea questions, with aid of the newly acquired vocabulary.

Asking questions about the local athletes presented in each lesson suggests that Presentation events introduced students easily to the new content in a more familiar way, thus facilitating RC in Production events. Repeating patterns during presentation phases helped with vocabulary retention to improve RC, aiding understanding of structure and meaning of texts.

During practice phases, reading aloud sessions, in which students followed the text along with the teacher had a positive impact on RC. During production phases, asking students to revisit their own highlighted words and unfamiliar sentences, reflected in positive results identifying, main ideas and answering RC questions. Whole-class response to questions generated a wider understanding of the text, its sequencing and main idea content during production phases.

Workshops evinced that a cycle of vocabulary activities at the presentation stages of each PPP mini lesson greatly improved students' performance during the production phases. This seemed to facilitate students' text navigation and information identification, helping them improve the quality of their answers in relation to main idea. Vocabulary activities which relayed on previous knowledge and related to renown local athletes resulted in students quickly grasping the texts content and order of ideas.

Moreover, artifacts A2, A3, A4 required students to answer main idea questions. To do this, students used vocabulary and recurring verbs they were taught in the lessons. This constant cycle of sports-related main idea questions and content words reinforcement showed improved performance in RC during the practice and production phases. Activities such as crosswords, synonyms and antonyms helped reinforce vocabulary for answering WH questions. The responses in these artifacts show more and better their responses. The presence of definitions of words and highlighted parts of the text within the workshops improved students' skills to connect ideas within the upcoming readings usually found in production phases, as shown in artifacts A2, A3 and A4.

Student progress:

Figure 3. DT Students sample.

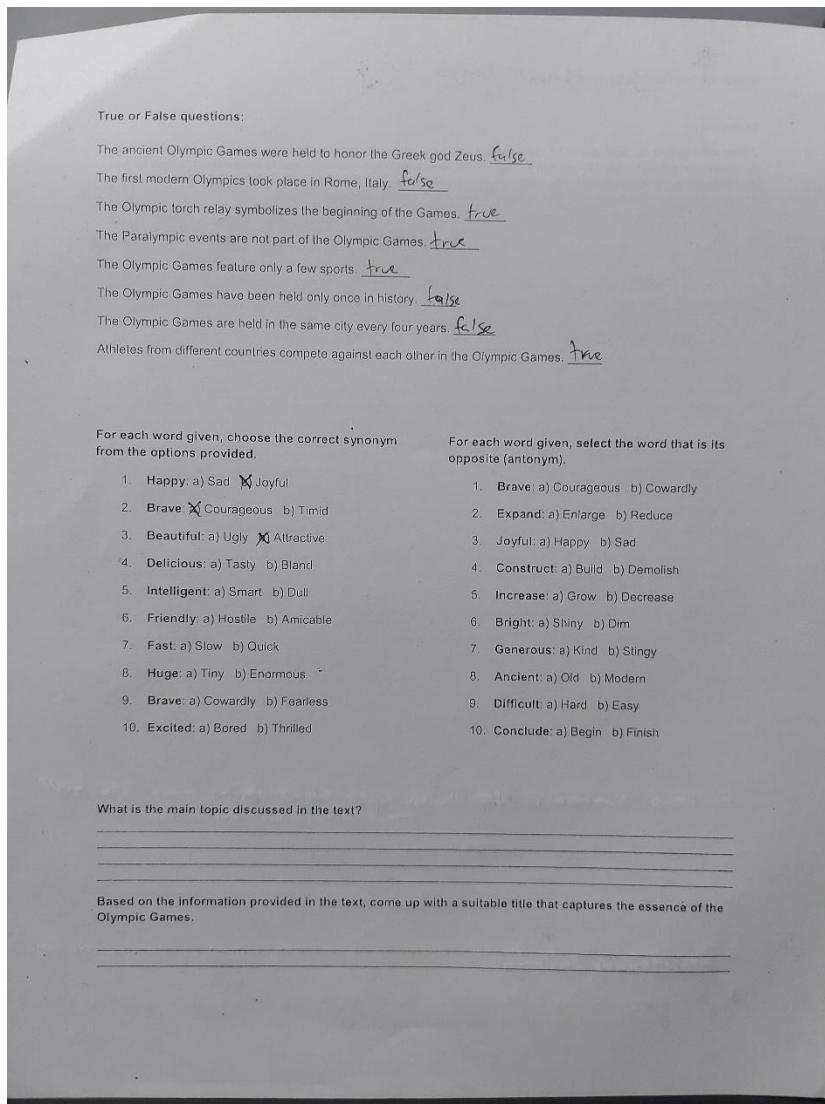


Figure 4/ Artifact 1 Sample.

ASUS Vivobook

Activity 2

Meet Mariana Pajón: The BMX Champion

Mariana Pajón is a BMX champion from Colombia. She was born in Medellín on October 10, 1991. Mariana loves BMX racing, and she's really good at it!

Every morning, Mariana wakes up early with a big smile on her face. She usually starts her day by stretching and doing warm-up exercises. After that, she heads to the BMX track to practice. Mariana spends a lot of time training because she wants to be the best. She practices going fast, making sharp turns, and jumping over obstacles. Sometimes, she practices with her friends, which makes training even more fun!

Mariana works really hard, but she knows it's important to take breaks too. She often rests and relaxes after a tough training session. Mariana also makes sure to eat healthy food to keep her energy levels up.

During the week, Mariana trains hard almost every day. On weekends, she sometimes takes it easy and spends time with her family. She loves visiting new places and trying new things. However, no matter where she goes or what she does, Mariana always carries her love for BMX racing with her.

Mariana has won many races and received lots of medals. She's even won gold medals at the Olympics! Mariana loves standing on the podium after a race, feeling proud of her achievements. She enjoys the thrill of victory and the excitement of competing against other athletes.

Mariana Pajón is a true BMX champion. She's fast, determined, and always gives her best. With her passion for cycling and her dedication to training, Mariana continues to inspire people all around the world.

Activity 3

ANSWER:

<p>1. Where is Mariana Pajón from? <u>She is from Medellín Colombia</u></p> <p>2. What is Mariana Pajón's favorite sport? <u>Mariana loves BMX</u></p> <p>3. What does Mariana do in the morning to start her day? <u>stretching and doing warm-up exercises</u></p> <p>4. Where does Mariana go after doing warm-up exercises? <u>she heads to the BMX track to practice</u></p> <p>5. Why does Mariana spend a lot of time training? <u>wants to be the best</u></p>	<p>6. Who does Mariana sometimes practice with? <u>she practices with her friends</u></p> <p>7. Why does Mariana rest after training sessions? <u>works really hard</u></p> <p>8. What does Mariana do on weekends? _____</p> <p>9. What has Mariana won many of? _____</p> <p>10. How does Mariana feel when she stands on the podium after a race? _____</p>
--	--

Figure 5. Artifact 3 sample.

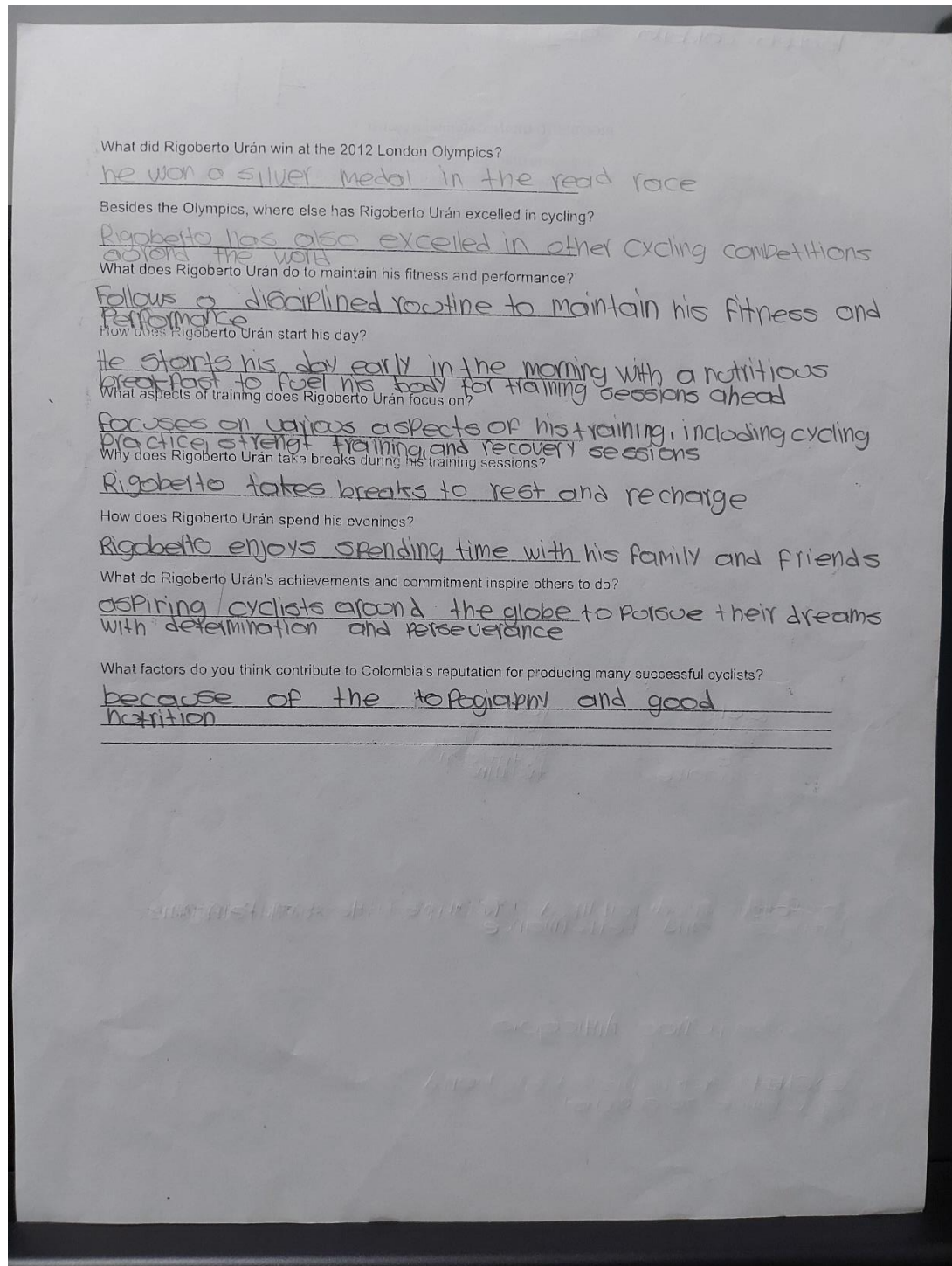



Figure 6. FT part 1 sample.

Personal presentation activity:
Write down your personal details and information:

- My name is Kabela
- I am 14 years old.
- I live in Castilla
- I go to the school la esperanza
- My favorite subject in school is physical education
- I have 2 brothers and 2 sisters.
- My favorite hobby is To sleep
- I like to eat The Pasta
- My best friend's name is Kevin
- I usually go to bed at Nine o'clock wings
- My favorite sport is valleyball
- On weekends, I like to going out with my friends
- My favorite color is White
- I have a pet dog named Max
- I was born in January on 2010 (date)



Routine activity:
Write a paragraph describing your daily routine:

My daily routine is to wake up at 4:40 to organize myself to go to school at 6:15, then I study from 6:30 to 7:20, then I get home to organize my room and rest a little to start doing my homework, then I exercise, take a bath and go to sleep at 9:00 o'clock


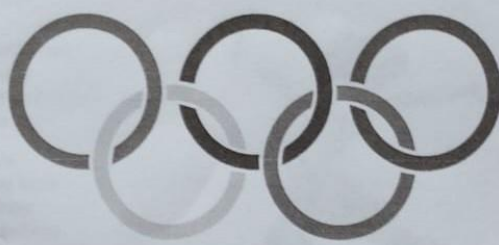


Figure 7. FT part 2, sample.

The Olympics: A Celebration of Sports

The Olympics are a big sports event that happens every four years. Athletes from all around the world come together to compete. The modern Olympics started in 1896 in Athens, Greece. Since then, the Olympics have become very popular and exciting.



The Olympics have many sports, like running, swimming, cycling, and BMX racing. BMX racing is a thrilling sport where cyclists race on tracks with jumps and sharp turns. Athletes like Mariana Pajón from Colombia have won many medals in BMX racing.

There are two types of Olympics: The Summer Olympics and the Winter Olympics. The Summer Olympics have sports like gymnastics, basketball, and soccer. The Winter Olympics have sports like skiing, ice skating, and snowboarding.

To be part of the Olympics, athletes train very hard. They follow strict routines to stay fit and improve their skills. They practice every day, eat healthy food, and get enough rest.

Winning a medal at the Olympics is a big honor. Athletes can win a gold, silver, or bronze medal. Standing on the podium with a medal is a proud moment for any athlete. It shows their dedication and hard work.

The Olympics are not just about sports. They are also about bringing people together. Athletes from different countries meet and make new friends. The Olympics promote peace and friendship among nations.

Answer: True or False?

The Olympics happen every two years. false

The modern Olympics started in Athens, Greece. true

There are only Summer Olympics. false

BMX racing is a sport in the Olympics. true

Athletes do not need to train hard for the Olympics. false


Winning a medal at the Olympics is a small honor. false

Athletes can win gold, silver, or bronze medals. true

The Winter Olympics include sports like skiing and snowboarding. true

The Olympics are only about winning medals. false

The Olympics promote peace and friendship among nations. true



What is the main idea of the text?

The main idea of the text is to explain what the Olympic games are like, what sports are the most recognized in it, the two types of Olympics, what there is and that the Olympic games are not just about sport.

Why do you think the Olympics promote peace and friendship among nations?

the Olympic games promote peace and friendship between nations by promoting sports spirit, sport diplomacy, the Olympic torch and by serving as a global celebration that brings together people of different nationalities in an atmosphere of peaceful competition.

Figure 8. FT part 3, sample.


Simone Biles – An Olympic Gymnast

Simone Biles is one of the most accomplished gymnasts in the world. Born on March 14, 1997, in Columbus, Ohio, Simone began her gymnastics training at the age of six. Her talent was evident from a young age, and she quickly advanced through the ranks of competitive gymnastics.

Simone's breakthrough came in 2013 when she won her first World Championship gold medal. Since then, she has become a dominant force in the sport, winning multiple World Championship titles and Olympic medals. At the 2016 Rio Olympics, Simone won four gold medals and one bronze, making her one of the most successful gymnasts in Olympic history.

Simone is known for her incredible strength, agility, and precision. She performs routines that are extremely difficult, often adding new elements that no other gymnast has done before. Her dedication to training and her passion for the sport have made her an inspiration to many young athletes around the world.

Outside of gymnastics, Simone is also known for her advocacy work. She speaks out about the importance of mental health and encourages young people to take care of their well-being. Simone's commitment to both her sport and her community makes her a true role model.



Where was Simone Biles born?

- a) New York City
- b) Los Angeles
- c) Columbus, Ohio**
- d) Houston, Texas

How many medals did Simone win at the 2016 Rio Olympics?

- a) Three
- b) Four**
- c) Five
- d) Six

At what age did Simone begin her gymnastics training?

- a) Four
- b) Six**
- c) Eight
- d) Ten

What is Simone Biles known for in her routines?

- a) Flexibility**
- b) Speed
- c) Difficulty and new elements
- d) Music selection

When did Simone win her first World Championship gold medal?

- a) 2010
- b) 2013**
- c) 2015
- d) 2016

What does Simone advocate for outside of gymnastics?

- a) Physical fitness
- b) Mental health**
- c) Environmental issues
- d) Animal rights

Figure 9. FT part 4, sample.

How has Simone inspired others?

- a) By winning the most Olympic medals ever
- b) By adding new elements to her routines
- c) By encouraging young people to pursue their dreams**
- d) All of the above

What qualities make Simone Biles a role model?

- a) Her height and weight
- b) Her strength and agility**
- c) Her dedication to training and community
- d) Her ability to speak multiple languages

What is the main idea of the text?

- a) Simone Biles' childhood in Columbus, Ohio
- b) The history of gymnastics in the Olympics
- c) Simone Biles' achievements and influence as a gymnast**
- d) Different gymnastics routines

Why might Simone Biles' advocacy for mental health be important to her?

- a) Because she wants to become a psychologist
- b) Because she has faced challenges related to mental health herself**
- c) Because it's a popular topic among athletes
- d) Because it helps her win more medals

UNIT CROSSWORD:

The crossword puzzle grid contains the following handwritten answers:

- 1 Down: H, e, t
- 3 Across: r, i, d, e, r
- 4 Down: a, l, c, k
- 5 Across: o, l, y, m, p, i, c
- 6 Down: r, a, c, e
- 8 Across: s, p, r, i, n, t
- 9 Down: k, i, n, e
- 11 Across: c, o, l, o, m, b, i, a
- 12 Down: n, e, a
- 13 Across: c, y, c, l, i, n, g
- 14 Down: r
- 15 Across: a, t, h, l, e, t, e

ACROSS

- 3. A person who rides a bike, horse, motorcycle, etc.
- 5. Relating to the Olympic Games, a major international sporting event.
- 8. A short, fast race in running, cycling, etc.
- 11. A country in South America known for producing many talented cyclists.
- 13. The sport or activity of riding a bicycle.
- 15. A person who competes in sports.

DOWN

- 1. An award, usually made of metal, given to winners in competitions, especially in the Olympics.
- 2. Skilled actions or moves performed by athletes, especially in BMX and skateboarding.
- 4. A regular way of doing things, especially as part of training.
- 6. Repeated exercise in or performance of an activity to improve one's skill.
- 7. A short term for bicycle, a two-wheeled vehicle that you ride by pedaling.
- 9. How well an athlete does in a sport or competition.
- 10. The process of practicing and exercising to improve in a sport or activity.
- 12. A protective headgear worn by athletes to protect the head from injuries.
- 14. A sloped surface or incline used for performing jumps and tricks in BMX.

Content gains

Journals and artifacts showed that the PPP mini lessons had significant gains on RC skills. Initiating classes with vocabulary activities (synonyms and antonyms, word definitions, crosswords) during all presentation phases positively yielded gains on RC skills. Students that consistently completed vocabulary activities during the presentation phases had a higher rate of success during the practice and presentation phases. The inclusion of previously acquired vocabulary helped reinforce their current and previous knowledge which benefited them in upcoming RC activities. Skills ALWQ and ISCAD greatly benefitted from repetition of vocabulary, helping students answer descriptive questions (e.g., routine or sequences of actions), improving the quality of their RC skills and WH questions performance.

Repeating cycles of vocabulary strategies (Teacher Journals 1, April 2024. 2, April 2024, 3, April 2024, 4, April 2024 & 5, may, 2024) and activities provided lexical gains, which students would later use for practice and production phases. During practice moments, reading along activities contributed valuable information that made students familiar with the content of the text, subsequently improving their vocabulary repertoire when answering WH questions during the production phase. The recurrent content also helped students to finish tasks more accurately, it also helped them identify specific content inside the text with ease to better understand flow of texts and improve RC skills.

Sets of WH questions found throughout workshops 1-5 helped students practice this skill constantly, by answering different WH questions during production phases. WH questions were repeated constantly with similar characteristics to help students build their ability to identify key information when needed. Students were required to write short paragraphs in some of the workshops as well as the diagnosis and final texts. Although results were mixed during the

diagnosis, Workshops A3 and A5 had better results, showing a significant improvement after vocabulary strategies and RC strategies were reinforced during instruction. The final test showed even better results, with a high percentage of students writing these paragraphs with correct use of the vocabulary and strategies they had practiced.

Literal WH questions (ALWQ)

After the DT, it was observed that most students struggled with WH questions. (Journal 1) Then, an additional lesson on WH questions was taught to contribute to students' improvement on RC skills by answering literal questions, content questions, and routine questions. When this lesson was taught students immediately showed an improvement on their abilities to better understand texts by answering WH questions focusing on specific information inside the readings.

As the implementation of the unit progressed, it became clear that the WH questions class made it easier for students to navigate texts, ask better questions and it also helped identifying key details from the presentation phases that would ultimately be useful in both practice and production stages. For instance, by asking them questions like "Who is this athlete" "Where is she from" students already had a solid starting point for further questions during production phases that would eventually help with overall RC. Also, WH questions also became a pattern that further helped them reinforce vocabulary in upcoming lessons as well as retain information from previous lessons, thus serving as smooth transitions from a final production phase in one lesson, to the next presentation phase in the upcoming one.

PPP Effects on vocabulary acquisition and RC.

The PPP class structured method had a positive impact in RC gains due to its simple structure and flexibility to adapt to the proposed mini lessons unit. Helping students identify relatable recognizable athletes helped them connect vocabulary to their previous knowledge and

upcoming activities. During presentation phases, vocabulary activities like crosswords, matching words, synonyms and antonyms, aided students with acquisition as well as providing context for the duration of the lesson. This helped them complete the activities in an easier way thanks to reinforcement and repetition. Also, due to the quick nature of the mini lessons, the vocabulary presentation phases worked well with the issues that usually arise within the class, providing useful and quick instruction to finish the class successfully.

For the practice stages, RC activities such as skimming, finding key words, key information, highlighting, reading along with the teacher, all fitted well within the mini lesson model and flowed well with the way the lessons were planned. Students could better reinforce concepts and ideas within the text to later apply them as the lesson progressed. This gave them the ability to quickly adapt to a familiar structure and absorb concepts within the text quickly and effectively. The practice phase provided enough repetition and reinforcement of RC strategies so that students were prepared for the production phases.

Production phases required students to answer WH questions on a regular basis, which continued to consistently improve their skills to infer details, identify main ideas and find key details and information to answer well. Their performance gradually increased as the PPP minilessons progressed showing that the structure aligned well with the teaching method.

It was also found that the PPP heavily emphasized on key words, specific information, vocabulary acquisition and RC. The focus was on answering WH questions designed to identify explicit content rather than fostering other thinking skills like opinions or viewpoints. While students did well to find specific information to answer WH questions, most of them showed little or no improvement as personal opinions were left out of lesson planning or goals.

Limitations in opinion questions (CAOQ)

Despite the implementation of several RC and vocabulary strategies, CAOQ did not show any significant changes, nor did it decrease either. My action plan left out PPP or activities to help develop RC for opinions. Instead, lessons focused on focused on vocabulary activities, during presentation phases, analysis of texts, skimming exercises, specific information identification, and literal WH questions, and global understanding.

The expression of opinions is subjective and personal. The mini lessons were rather focused on activities, text analysis, and resolution of workshops. The level was focused on literal aspects and basic inferences from texts. In fact, the analysis of input and output products show little or no improvement in this aspect. The focus was on key information and specific details. This was effective to build vocabulary and RC skills, but it did not impact personal ideas and opinions. Therefore, the teaching actions did not have a particular impact on opinions about the workshops and students might have relied more on memory than subjectivity or personal knowledge.

Conclusions

Effectiveness of vocabulary-based mini lessons

The implementation of a framework of PPP vocabulary-based mini lessons was effective in helping students improve their RC skills. By following a structured approach, students were able to improve their vocabulary repertoire during presentation phases which was beneficial to better comprehend the texts within the workshops. Activities such as crosswords, matchmaking, synonyms and antonyms provided students with context words and lexical tools to help them increase how they perform during practice stages when they had to find specific content inside the texts, highlight unknown vocabulary and reading aloud by focusing on repetition and recycling words. Production phases benefited from this as well, as students built a wider vocabulary, with content that was specific to those readings, helping them retain vocabulary and ideas that would stick permanently to apply later inside the workshops and improve RC.

Table 2. ML unit improvements before and after.

Reading comprehension skills	Before diagnosis	After diagnosis	Improvement
ARMI	11%	100%	89%
UWHQ	60%	90%	30%
ALWQ	70%	90%	20%
ISCAD	60%	95%	35%
RSI	50%	80%	30%
CAOQ	50%	52%	2%

Main idea gains

The study was able to show that there was a significant gain in the student's ability to recognize the main idea inside a text. These gains can be attributed to the way in which lessons were structured and how they learned specific vocabulary through the presentation phases to then reinforce recognition of key words within texts to get better understanding of main ideas.

Also, the repetitive nature of the mini lesson unit, as well as contextualized content, was fundamental to help students grasp concepts easily improving retention and RC. The structure of PPP class methodology made it easier for students to recognize a pattern of instruction, allowing them to focus on tasks rather than understanding instruction at the beginning of lessons. Also, PPP provided a scaffolded instruction to allow them to improve their RC skills gradually by increasing the level and difficulty of the lessons progressively.

ALWQ and RSI gains

Using PPP mini lessons showed gains in how students answered WH questions and recognizing sequences of ideas within texts. The mini lessons were heavily focused on WH questions during production phases, this process helped students to progressively improved their abilities to understand questions involving “Who, What, Where, When and Why” as well as improving their performance on questions requiring identifying specific information.

Constantly practicing how to identify key words and specific details inside a text helped students to improve their understanding of the ideas inside the text and its sequence. The reinforcement of these skills helped students greatly to improve their general RC performance.

Challenges in expressing opinions CAOQ

Although opinion questions where present in some of the workshops, there was no particular focus on improving this skill, which resulted in poor development of the students’ abilities to express opinions. This instructional gap led to minimal improvement on CAOQ due to the activities not aiming at improving this skill.

Recommendations

Instead of focusing the mini lessons on key details, key words, or vocabulary strategies, future mini lessons could be designed to target skills such as articulating opinions or generating small debates so that students could improve CAOQ. This could reinforce the production of opinions and personal ideas. The mini lessons could also encourage students to think for themselves and provide them with tools to express their ideas about the texts in any PPP stage. Activities that may help achieve this could include debates, socialization of simple ideas and concepts, which may promote critical thinking and personal responses among the class. These additions could build stronger reading comprehension skills and also help students develop abilities, which will aid them to express their viewpoints and their different perspectives.

The strategy of using relatable content to teach vocabulary and comprehension (local athletes) should remain. It was shown that students were able to quickly relate to familiar content, making instruction easier. Including more topics that could catch their attention and aim at the interests could help in this regard also.

Using the PPP model proved helpful to align with the mini lessons structure. This method worked well with how the development of actions was initially proposed and it can be helpful to within school contexts in which scheduling issues are present. Regular practice cycles and repetition of reading exercises were also key, students showed steady progress throughout the implementation.

Final Reflection

As this research process comes to an end, I would like to share my final thoughts on what this process has taught me and the things I have learned during this experience.

I was always scared of research, I truly was. It is a process that requires the utmost compromise, hard work and discipline. By writing this paper, I found that, although most my fears became real when I faced the hardships of conducting a research process, I must admit that without it, I would have missed all the beautiful things I learned about myself, about young learners and the life of a day-to-day teacher. Research was not just about trying to figure out some random issue and try and fix it, but it was about an effort to work and connect with others, trying to improve ourselves and how we relate with our students and colleagues. It was such a rewarding experience to realize that the proposals in which we invested so much time and effort, had a positive impact on those who need it the most, that I will hardly ever forget. As I wrote this, I realized I am reaching the end of a long process I started years ago, and I have a strong feeling of achievement that I know will stay with me for years to come. So, for all of those who might be starting their own research projects, do not fear, it will be hard at times, but I guarantee the end result will always be worth your time and effort. I deeply thank Cristian and Natalia, my research advisors, without you, this would never have been possible.

References

- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (2000). *Teachers Investigate their Work: An introduction to the methods of action research*. Routledge.
- Clayton, H. (2021). Planning and Teaching Mini-lessons. Just Ask. <https://justaskpublications.com/just-ask-resource-center/e-newsletters/msca/planning-and-teaching-mini-lessons/>
- Criado, R. (2013). A critical review of the Presentation-Practice-Production Model (PPP) in Foreign Language Teaching. In R. Monroy (Ed.), *Homenaje a Francisco Gutiérrez Díez* (pp. 97-115). Murcia: Edit.um. ISBN: 978-84-15463-55-9
- Creswell, J. (2015). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative*. Pearson.
- Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching*.
- Institución educativa la esperanza. (n.d.). *PEI (PROYECTO EDUCATIVO INSTITUCIONAL)*. https://modulo.master2000.net/recursos/uploads/58/DEMOCRACIA/PEI_JUNIO_2018-output.pdf
- Li, Si. (2020). Research on the Feasibility of Implementing PPP in the Chinese Secondary School EFL Context. 10.2991/assehr.k.200425.055.
- Oakhill, Cain, & Elbro. (2015). *Understanding and Teaching Reading Comprehension* (1st ed., Vol. 1). Routledge. ISBN: 978-0-415-69830-6
- Richards, J.C., & Lockhart, C. (1994). *Reflective teaching in second language classrooms*. Cambridge University Press.

Appendix A

Appendix 1. Diagnosis test

Explanation:

- ✓ Esta actividad no es calificable.
- ✓ La actividad la debes realizar **individualmente sin ayuda** de ninguna otra persona ni del celular o el profesor.
- ✓ Esta actividad es solo un **diagnóstico** para conocer cómo está tu comprensión lectora en este momento. Y así, identificar qué se debe trabajar en las próximas clases.
- ✓ Con esta actividad yo voy a analizar las mejoras que tendrás en la comprensión lectora a lo largo de la investigación.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions

Read the text and answer the questions:

Exploring the Olympic Games

The Olympic Games, often referred to as the Olympics, are a global sporting event that brings together athletes from around the world to compete in various sports. The history of the Olympic Games dates to ancient Greece, where they were held as part of religious festivals to honor the gods. The modern Olympic Games were revived in the late 19th century by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, with the first modern Olympics taking place in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

The significance of the Olympic Games goes beyond mere competition; it promotes peace, unity, and friendship among nations. Athletes from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together to celebrate their shared love for sports and competition. The Olympic Games also serve as a platform to showcase the talent, skill, and dedication of athletes from different parts of the world.

One of the most iconic aspects of the Olympic Games is the Olympic torch relay, where the Olympic flame is carried from Greece to the host country, symbolizing the spirit of the Games. The opening ceremony marks the beginning of the Games, featuring performances, cultural displays, and the Parade of Nations, where athletes march into the stadium representing their respective countries.

The Olympic Games feature a wide range of sports, including athletics, swimming, gymnastics, and many others. Athletes compete for medals in various events, aiming to achieve their personal best and make their countries proud. The Games also include Paralympic events, providing opportunities for athletes with disabilities to showcase their talents on the world stage.

As the Olympic Games continue to evolve and grow, they remain a symbol of hope, inspiration, and excellence. Whether it's breaking records, overcoming obstacles, or inspiring future generations, the Olympic Games have a profound impact on athletes and spectators alike, transcending borders and uniting people from all walks of life.

Comprehension questions:

- ❖ Who is credited with reviving the modern Olympic Games?

- ❖ Who is credited with reviving the modern Olympic Games?

- ❖ Where were the first modern Olympic Games held?

- ❖ What is the significance of the Olympic torch relay?

- ❖ When did the ancient Olympic Games take place?

Explanation:

- ✓ Esta actividad no es calificable.
- ✓ La actividad la debes realizar **individualmente sin ayuda** de ninguna otra persona ni del celular o el profesor.
- ✓ Esta actividad es solo un **diagnóstico** para conocer cómo está tu comprensión lectora en este momento. Y así, identificar qué se debe trabajar en las próximas clases.
- ✓ Con esta actividad yo voy a analizar las mejoras que tendrás en la comprensión lectora a lo largo de la investigación.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions

Read the text and answer the questions:

Exploring the Olympic Games

The Olympic Games, often referred to as the Olympics, are a global sporting event that brings together athletes from around the world to compete in various sports. The history of the Olympic Games dates to ancient Greece, where they were held as part of religious festivals to honor the gods. The modern Olympic Games were revived in the late 19th century by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, with the first modern Olympics taking place in Athens, Greece, in 1896.

The significance of the Olympic Games goes beyond mere competition; it promotes peace, unity, and friendship among nations. Athletes from diverse backgrounds and cultures come together to celebrate their shared love for sports and competition. The Olympic Games also serve as a platform to showcase the talent, skill, and dedication of athletes from different parts of the world.

One of the most iconic aspects of the Olympic Games is the Olympic torch relay, where the Olympic flame is carried from Greece to the host country, symbolizing the spirit of the Games. The opening ceremony marks the beginning of the Games, featuring performances, cultural displays, and the Parade of Nations, where athletes march into the stadium representing their respective countries.

The Olympic Games feature a wide range of sports, including athletics, swimming, gymnastics, and many others. Athletes compete for medals in various events, aiming to achieve their personal best and make their countries proud. The Games also include Paralympic events, providing opportunities for athletes with disabilities to showcase their talents on the world stage.

As the Olympic Games continue to evolve and grow, they remain a symbol of hope, inspiration, and excellence. Whether it's breaking records, overcoming obstacles, or inspiring future generations, the Olympic Games have a profound impact on athletes and spectators alike, transcending borders and uniting people from all walks of life.

Comprehension questions:

- ❖ Who is credited with reviving the modern Olympic Games?

- ❖ Who is credited with reviving the modern Olympic Games?

- ❖ Where were the first modern Olympic Games held?

- ❖ What is the significance of the Olympic torch relay?

- ❖ When did the ancient Olympic Games take place?

VB Mini-lessons for Reading Comprehension Skills Improvement of 9th grade EFL Students 52

❖ Why are the Olympic Games considered a symbol of unity and peace?

❖ Why are the Olympic Games considered a symbol of unity and peace?

True or false questions:

	True	False
The ancient Olympic Games were held to honor the Greek god Zeus.		
The first modern Olympics took place in Rome, Italy.		
The Olympic torch relay symbolizes the beginning of the Games.		
The Paralympic events are not part of the Olympic Games.		
The Olympic Games feature only a few sports.		
The Olympic Games have been held only once in history.		
The Olympic Games are held in the same city every four years.		
Athletes from different countries compete against each other in the Olympic Games.		

True or false questions:

	True	False
The ancient Olympic Games were held to honor the Greek god Zeus.		
The first modern Olympics took place in Rome, Italy.		
The Olympic torch relay symbolizes the beginning of the Games.		
The Paralympic events are not part of the Olympic Games.		
The Olympic Games feature only a few sports.		
The Olympic Games have been held only once in history.		
The Olympic Games are held in the same city every four years.		
Athletes from different countries compete against each other in the Olympic Games.		

For each word given, choose the correct synonym from the options provided.	For each word given, select the word that is its opposite (antonym).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sad b) Joyful • Brave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Courageous b) Timid • Beautiful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ugly b) Attractive • Delicious: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tasty b) Bland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hostile b) Amicable • Fast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Slow b) Quick • Huge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tiny b) Enormous • Brave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Courageous b) Cowardly • Expand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enlarge b) Reduce • Joyful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Happy b) Sad • Construct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Build b) Demolish • Bright: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shiny b) Dim • Generous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Kind b) Stingy • Ancient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Old b) Modern • Difficult: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Easy b) Finish

For each word given, choose the correct synonym from the options provided.	For each word given, select the word that is its opposite (antonym).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sad b) Joyful • Brave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Courageous b) Timid • Beautiful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ugly b) Attractive • Delicious: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tasty b) Bland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Hostile b) Amicable • Fast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Slow b) Quick • Huge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tiny b) Enormous • Brave: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Courageous b) Cowardly • Expand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Enlarge b) Reduce • Joyful: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Happy b) Sad • Construct: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Build b) Demolish • Bright: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Shiny b) Dim • Generous: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Kind b) Stingy • Ancient: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Old b) Modern • Difficult: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Easy b) Finish

a) Tasty	a) Cowardly	a) Build	a) Hard
b) Bland	b) Fearless	b) Demolish	b) Easy
• Intelligent:	• Excited:	• Increase:	• Conclude:
a) Smart	a) Bored	a) Grow	a) Begin
b) Dull	b) Thrilled	b) Decrease	b) Finish

a) Tasty	a) Cowardly	a) Build	a) Hard
b) Bland	b) Fearless	b) Demolish	b) Easy
• Intelligent:	• Excited:	• Increase:	• Conclude:
a) Smart	a) Bored	a) Grow	a) Begin
b) Dull	b) Thrilled	b) Decrease	b) Finish

What is the main topic discussed in the text?

What is the main topic discussed in the text?

Based on the information provided in the text, come up with a suitable title that captures the essence of the Olympic Games.

Based on the information provided in the text, come up with a suitable title that captures the essence of the Olympic Games.


Appendix B

Appendix 2. Lesson plan.

UNIVERSITY OF ANTIOQUIA – SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES PRACTICUM SEMINAR II	
LESSON PLAN	
School/Institution: La Esperanza	
Term: 1	Dates: April 10 and 11
Class/level: Ninth	Times:
Research question: What impact do vocabulary-based mini-lessons have on the improvement of reading comprehension skills, among a group of 9th-grade EFL students?	
Research objectives: To determine the impact of vocabulary-based mini-lessons as a pedagogical approach in enhancing the reading comprehension abilities of 9th-grade EFL students. ★	
Language and Content Objectives: Language Objective: Students will be able to comprehend and retell key information about Rigoberto Uran and his achievements at the Olympics using simple and familiar vocabulary. Content Objective: Students will use words related to Rigoberto Uran's background, his participation in the Olympics, and his success in winning silver medals in the road cycling event, while representing Colombia.	Syllabus addressed (content from the syllabus that you are addressing in this lesson): 1. Olympics 2. Routines 3. Personal Opinions
Timing and Sequencing	Description of Activities Describe the series of activities necessary for the achievement of the language and content objectives. If the lesson is part of your action plan of your research, ensure that the activities stay in close relationship with the research question and objectives.
	Journal Pedagogical reflection: questions, wonderings, connections, points of concern, interests, your personal opinions regarding your teaching practice. Research notes: class descriptions of students' responses to activities and participation. Include everything that helps you answer your research question (how vocabulary-based mini-lessons are influencing students' reading comprehension). Include an explanation of why happened what happened. Support these ideas with theory.

Presentation (15 mins)	<p>Vocabulary strategy: Identifying key vocabulary. Present subject and work text: Athlete Rigoberto Uran. Ask students what they know about Rigoberto Uran and his personality quirks. For what reasons, other than a professional cyclist is he known? Do they know where he is from? Distribute sheets with the help of one of the students. Ask students to skim the text and underline/highlight the words they don't know. Tell students that there are highlighted words that will be used in the first activity. Write these words on the board and help them figure out the new vocabulary, either by the students themselves, or the teacher.</p>	<p>Pedagogical reflection: There is always an issue at the institution, either problems with scheduling, sportif events, lack of chairs or student absenteeism. At the beginning of the class, it is now commonplace that students must search around other classrooms for available chairs.</p> <p>I must be careful with how the sheets come out after printing them, the highlighted words were not easy to identify.</p> <p>At this moment, students are given a report of their overall notes by the CT, this takes up a significant portion of the class. About 20 minutes.</p> <p>Research notes: I start the class writing "Famous Colombian cyclist" on the board and immediately at almost unison, everyone already knew the class was about Rigoberto Uran. I did this to activate their previous knowledge and to create familiarity with the text. They were able to identify words that have been present on previous lessons, such as "Routine, Medal, Training, Race, Cyclist, etc."</p> <p>I asked the students if they knew where Rigoberto Uran was from, they yelled "Urrao"? A female student said in Spanish he is "El man de la Novela." Another student said, "He's from Urrao" They reacted positively to the subject of the lesson, being a familiar personality for them.</p> <p>After the first input, I explained what the first activity was going to be like while distributing the sheets with the help of one student. Students began reading and scanning the text right after they received their sheets. They already understood what the activity was going to be likq, based on the previous sessions.</p>
-------------------------------	---	--

VB Mini-lessons for Reading Comprehension Skills Improvement of 9th grade EFL Students 54

<p>Practice (10 mins)</p>	<p>Read the text out loud to the students so they get familiar with the body and flow of it.</p> <p>Ask the students if there are passages of the text they don't understand and let them try deducing by themselves, with a little help from the teacher.</p>	<p>I told them about the highlighted words that will be used for the unscramble activity. I noticed that the highlighted words were very hard to tell from the actual text, so I wrote the words on the whiteboard. Then I asked them to skim over the text to get an overall first approach to it. While doing so, they managed to get an overall understanding of what the text is about. This is evident when all the class could solve the unscrambled activity with almost no mistakes. They also answered the question "Which of the aspects</p>
		
	<p>Ask the students to read the text thoroughly and unscramble the words that are highlighted within the text.</p>	<p>from the text do you think is most important to be a good cyclist?" easily identified the cues within the text.</p> <p>At least 4 or 5 students asked about the unscramble activity, because they didn't understand very well. I pointed out one of the words was already in the right order, so they got what the activity was about. They didn't understand what "unscramble meant" I explained to them that it was a word arranged in a disorderly manner, provided an example, and then they proceeded to fulfill the task successfully.</p> <p>I observed that more than 80% of the students performed well in this activity. The remaining 20% managed to finish the activity on time.</p> <p>After this, I asked them to fully read the text this time and answer the questions at the bottom. At this moment, we were about to run out of time, students complained about not being able to finish on time, so I gathered back the sheets and told them we will continue the next session.</p>

<p>Production (15 mins)</p>	<p>Ask the students to read the text once more and answer the questions. After the questionnaire activity has concluded, ask the students to answer the final question.</p>	<p>Pedagogical reflection: During the second session, I asked the students to thoroughly read the text to answer the reading comprehension questions. 90% of the class could answer the questions easily, they already knew how to identify key words inside the text to find the areas where the answers were more likely to be. This is due to the multiple vocabulary strategies they are familiar with already.</p> <p>Research notes: Students readily participated when the teacher activated their background knowledge by mentioning a famous Colombian cyclist, they were able to identify Rigoberto Uran and relevant vocabulary related to cycling, this was accomplished by successfully activating their previous knowledge and the use of a personality that was familiar for them, making the content relevant. Based on previous lessons, students grasped the activity format quickly, since sheets were always used and -for the purposes of this research- they were always reading comprehension based, facilitating task instruction understanding. Over 80% of the students performed well in the unscramble activity, demonstrating comprehension of the text and the task instructions. The remaining 20% were able to finish within the allotted time after clarification. This is a high successful rate of completion.</p>
------------------------------------	---	---

Appendix C

Appendix 3. Student questionnaire.

