



Implementing an Extensive Reading Program by Using a Virtual Library to Improve  
Vocabulary in Young Learners

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### Abstract

Recently there has been a considerable interest in the effect that Extensive Reading (ER) causes on second language acquisition. A growing body of literature has been done to determine its advantages in the development of young learners' vocabulary and motivation. The current study is an attempt to investigate how the implementation of online ER practices through *Edmodo* facilitated students' vocabulary enhancement. It also aimed at establishing what students' attitudes towards reading printed and online texts are. This research employed a mixed method, with an action research design. The research involved 21 seventh grade students from a public primary school in Machala. The data were collected through a focus group interview, the ATRS survey, and a section of the Cambridge Starters tests. Descriptive statistics and the effect size were used to analyze data. The results indicated that ER had a significant effect on learners' vocabulary and their attitudes toward reading, both traditional and online, were positive. Further studies are recommended to identify the effects of ER on reading comprehension and speed.

*Keywords:* ER, vocabulary, vocabulary strategies, Edmodo, students' attitudes

### Resumen

En los últimos años ha surgido gran interés sobre el efecto que causa la lectura extensiva en la adquisición de una segunda lengua. Una creciente gama de literatura se ha desarrollado con el fin de determinar las ventajas de la lectura extensiva en el desarrollo del vocabulario y la motivación en niños. El presente estudio tiene como finalidad determinar cómo la lectura extensiva digital, a través de Edmodo, ayuda a mejorar el vocabulario de los estudiantes. Además pretende establecer cuáles son las actitudes de los estudiantes hacia la lectura tradicional y online. Esta investigación empleó un método mixto, con un diseño investigación-acción. La investigación involucró 21 participantes del séptimo grado de una escuela pública de Machala. Los datos se recopilaron a través de un grupo focal, la encuesta ATRS y una prueba Cambridge Starters. Estadística descriptiva y el impacto de la innovación se utilizaron para el análisis de los datos. Los resultados mostraron un efecto significativo en la mejora del vocabulario de los estudiantes, así como una actitud positiva hacia la lectura tradicional y online. Se recomienda estudios adicionales para identificar los efectos de la lectura extensiva en el desarrollo de la comprensión lectora y velocidad.

*Palabras claves:* Lectura extensiva, vocabulario, estrategias de vocabulario, Edmodo, actitudes de los estudiantes.

## Implementing an Extensive Reading Program by using a Virtual Library to Improve Vocabulary in Young Learners

Reading is a cognitive-receptive ability and a complex, multipurpose, interactive, comprehensible, and flexible activity in which individuals interact with written texts. People read for different purposes, whether it is for enjoyment, information, research, or academic issues. Reading is key for learning and is extremely significant for second language learners and their language development (Bojovic, 2014). Reading is considered essential because it not only involves finding and decoding information, but also provides pedagogical opportunities to develop higher-thinking skills (predicting, deducing, inferencing, interpreting, etc.), acquire a language, and improve writing models, vocabulary, and grammar (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002).

The Ecuadorian EFL curriculum pays special attention to reading. It has been established as one of the five curricular lines. The main goal of the reading line is that learners are able to read a variety of authentic texts autonomously to find information, learn about the world, develop reading comprehension, and communicate. It also highlights and considers the importance of a literacy-rich environment, the use of ICT resources, and the inclusion of cross-curricular content to promote learners' interest and motivation (Ministerio de Educación, 2016).

Despite reading being crucial in learning, many Ecuadorian students have poor reading habits (Araujo, 2015; Velastegui, Sánchez, & Ramos, 2017). According to the Ecuadorian Institute of Statistics (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2012), only 28% of the population (age 16 and above) read books: 33% read for school, 32% read to learn something new, and there is no evidence of reading for pleasure. This confirms a lack of reading culture, due to the absence of authentic and meaningful reading materials. According to Jacobs (2014), young learners might hesitate to read if they do not have materials of their

interest and the less students read, the less they can build their vocabulary and language itself (Lee & Mallinder, 2017). If students are not exposed to reading in English and provided with good resources, they will demonstrate a limited vocabulary. Most students' reading habits are restricted to their typical course books which focus on language topics (Waring, 2011), without mentioning the limited time set in the curriculum for foreign language instruction (Cheetam, 2015).

Nuttal (1996) states there are two best ways to improve a foreign language; one is by living among its speakers, and the other one is by reading extensively. Likewise, experts (Dao, 2014; Day, 2011; Day & Bamford, 2004; Krashen, 1993; Nagy & Herman, 1987; Yamashita, 2013; Walter & Briggs, 2016) have corroborated the effectiveness and positive results of Extensive Reading (ER) in language acquisition. ER is an approach that promotes learners to read autonomously as much as they want texts within their linguistic competence to gain fluency (Lawrence, 2016). It has several advantages in the development of reading abilities: vocabulary growing; improvements in listening, speaking, and writing; as well as changes in motivation and the promotion of positive attitudes toward reading and language. Seyabi and Salwa (2016) point out that ER promotes language acquisition by exposing students to the target language in different written contexts, stimulating autonomy and a broader understanding of the world and culture through the use of diverse types of authentic texts.

Reading can be developed in different settings; for example, students can spend time reading printed books as well as reading from a screen. In the twenty-first century, information technologies have transformed traditional reading into digital, and have contributed to a significant increment of online reading through diverse web media sources (Sun, Shieh, & Huang, 2013). Day (2015) considers that the internet can be prominent for ER practices, becoming the main supplier of a large amount of reading material. The internet

can contribute to promoting students' extensive reading habits by using virtual libraries with a selection of diverse types of digital texts.

Although there is a large amount of literature in this field, there is little research about ER in a digital platform in Ecuador. To fill the gap, this study explored the process of young learners' vocabulary acquisition and their reading attitudes through online ER. This research attempted to answer these questions:

1. To what extent does extensive reading improve students' vocabulary?
2. What are students' attitudes towards reading online versus printed texts?
3. What are students' perspectives towards this innovation?

## **Literature Review**

### **Major Theories and Expert Ideas**

Many studies conducted (Day, 2011; Day & Bamford, 2004; Dao, 2014; Krashen, 1993; Nagy & Herman, 1987; Yamashita, 2013; Walter & Briggs, 2016) have shown the significance of ER in the improvement of students' attitudes and vocabulary on second language acquisition, including the impact of using vocabulary strategies to promote vocabulary retention. Furthermore, in this digital era there has been growing interest in how technology influences the way we read (Looi & Yusop, 2011; Mesureur, 2013; Kongchan, 2013; Al-Kathiri, 2015; Graham, 2016).

### **Second Language Acquisition Theory**

According to Krashen (2013), there are two ways to develop competences in a second language (L2). The first way is language *learning*, a conscious process to know about grammar, rules, and the language itself. The second way is language *acquisition*, a subconscious process in which acquirers pick-up the language and develop competences unconsciously. Individuals can acquire a foreign language in different circumstances, however, in Nuttal's view (1996) the two best ways to acquire a language are both immersion

and extensive reading. This assumption is aligned to Krashen's input hypothesis, which states that people acquire a language by comprehending what they read and understanding the message that contains structures slightly above their current level of competence. As much as people are exposed to the meaning of several messages, they incidentally and progressively acquire forms (Renandya, 2009).

In language acquisition, cognitive and affective factors are critical. The input hypothesis and the concept of affective filter are intrinsically related. Acquirers' performance differs depending on the level of their affective filter. Performers with a low affective filter (high motivation, self-confidence, good self-image, and low anxiety) have stronger levels of language achievement. It is important not only to provide comprehensible input but also to create an environment that promotes a low filter (Krashen, 1982). In his work, Dickinson (2017) affirms that ER has positive effects on students' emotional and intellectual dimensions by increasing their reading motivation and providing opportunities to read for meaning and pleasure. ER is a strategy that can be implemented for all language learners. Research conducted with young learners suggests that ER can be used as a means of enhancing children's vocabulary acquisition and enthusiasm to read (Cambridge University, 2018; Cheetham, 2015).

### **Extensive Reading (ER)**

Seyabi and Salwa (2016) describe ER as an approach characterized by reading autonomously large quantities of level-appropriate material outside the classroom in order to get a general understanding and promote pleasure. While intensive reading is still useful, ER is a reading curriculum complement (Cambridge University, 2018). The main goal of ER is to read within contexts that nurture a lifelong reading habit (Renandya, 2009).

Day and Bamford (2004) remark some specific characteristics of ER: reading material is easy; the level is appropriate and diverse; learners choose what and how much to read;

reading speed becomes faster; reading is individual, silent and is considered a personal reward; the purpose of reading is related to pleasure and general understanding; and, teachers are guides and role models of readers.

In the same vein, the Extensive Reading Foundation (2011) sustains that ER is good for language development because it builds vocabulary and improves spelling as well as increases motivation, confidence, enjoyment, and love for reading. In the same way, in Krashen's view (1993), ER affects reading comprehension, vocabulary, writing style, grammatical competence, and spelling. ER generates *meaningful* and *comprehensible input*, which enables individuals to acquire and deduce grammar rules as well as the different elements of language. In his work, Restrepo (2015) confirms that ER supports the acquisition of new lexical items.

In ER, **assessment is not formal** and **is done just to control** how much students read. Strategies for ER assessment include making posters, measuring speed, retelling, writing letters to the author, copying interesting words or phrases, sharing experiences and opinions. (Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011).

Some opposite points of views (Milliner & Travis, 2015; Restrepo, 2015) indicate that this method suffers from a series of pitfalls. One of the major drawbacks to adopting ER is the fact that teachers can face a lot of challenges during the implementation, not to mention the cost of building an ER library, time, students' responsibility, and commitment to the approach (Milliner & Travis, 2015). Restrepo (2015) points out that some issues that decrease ER success are those related to the understanding of the word context and learners' attention to the task. Al Damen (2018) also reports that some academics have had problems implementing ER programs because teachers are not trained in this area, have a teacher-centered view of learning, insufficient time and pressure to complete the study programs. Other teachers' concerns are reading control, effective ER testing and evaluation, and the

idea of providing students with meaningful constructive feedback and support (Cote & Milliner, 2015).

### **ER and Vocabulary**

Vocabulary is the foundation for any language and can be defined as the collection of single words, phrases, or chunks that have a specific meaning in someone's language (Lessard-Clouston, 2013). It is central for fluent second language use and constitutes the basis for learners to speak, listen, write, and read (Richards & Renandya, 2002). Vocabulary knowledge includes aspects of form (spelling, pronunciation, parts of the speech, etc.), meaning (definitions, concepts, associations, etc.) and use (grammar, collocations, frequency, etc.) (Pellicer-Sánchez, 2016). Although vocabulary is not the only element in language learning, communication cannot happen without having a wide range of vocabulary (Mediha & Enisa, 2014).

Lee and Mallinder (2017) state that vocabulary and reading have a reciprocal relationship. Under this circumstance, reading can provide plenty of opportunities for significant vocabulary growth. Research on young learners' vocabulary acquisition (Griva, Kamaroudis, & Geladari, 2009) points out that kids acquire most of their vocabulary when they are involved in daily conversations, listen to adults reading, and read extensively. Nagy and Herman (1987) highlight that ER increases students' range of vocabulary. In their investigation, they estimated that children from third to twelfth grade can pick up 3000 words per year by reading extensively. Despite the fact that ER fosters comprehensible input, some interactionist theorists (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Swain, 1999) believe that it is important but not enough. It has been suggested that ER may be combined with speaking and writing activities. In that way, students not only receive information from what they read but also develop other productive competences (Renandya, Rajan, & Jacobs, 1999). Particularly,

Min (2008) suggests that by combining ER with appropriate vocabulary strategies young learners can gain new words easier.

Vocabulary strategies play a key function in the construction of knowledge in terms of figuring out the meaning of new words, retention in long-term memory, recalling, comprehension, and production (Griva, Kamaroudis, & Geladari, 2009). For Grave (2016), teaching students word-learning strategies helps them to become autonomous vocabulary learners, and as a result they might double the words they learn. He lists some ways which can help students increase their vocabulary competence, some of which included the use of context clues, word parts, dictionaries, and students' personal commitment to build their own vocabulary. Regarding young learners, Agustín and Barreras (2007) add vocabulary development requires that children understand unknown words and use them correctly. Hence, teaching must be focused on meaning using concrete materials rather than abstract ones. Children understand the meaning of new words better by having specific references, including actions, body language, flashcards, photographs, drawings, or any type of visuals, to easily make connections and mental representations of new words. Different authors (Jiang, 2014; Mashhadi & Jamalifar, 2015; Rima, 2016; Sholihah & Waskita, 2009) agree that the use of visuals is an effective strategy to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention in young learners.

### **ER and Motivation**

ER influences learners' affective filter. Yamashita (2013) reports the positive effects of ER on L2 reading attitudes. It increases students' comfort to read and decreases anxiety. Similarly, Walter and Briggs (2016) made a review of 30 evidence-based studies and concluded that ER promotes positive attitudes and motivation toward L2 reading in young learners due to the diversity of reading materials, their authenticity, the promotion of a sense of autonomy, and the freedom to choose. Moreover, Sabet and Rostamian (2016) also

confirm that ER not only improve students' reading comprehension but also raises their self-confidence and decreases their stress. A profound body of evidence (Cote & Milliner, 2015; Gusweni, 2018; Banno & Curoe, 2016) also strengthens positive student perceptions towards ER and its benefits in language acquisition. In her study, Gusweni (2018) reports that students agreed that some factors that influence the success of ER are those related to the material, self-selection, teacher's role, and text difficulty. Banno and Curoe (2016) indicate their students perceived an increase in vocabulary, reading speed, and reading abilities in general. They strongly felt ER improved their language spelling. Same results were found by Rahmawati (2018) in his pilot ER project in which participants showed a positive perception towards reading after joining this project.

### **ER and Virtual Libraries**

Technology has changed education nowadays. Technological devices and the internet have the potential to recast and invigorate language learning and teaching. Undoubtedly, the internet has affected school libraries, switching them into automatic virtual ones, opening up new dimensions for reading. Digital texts have become popular, and research (McBride & Milliner, 2014) has shown that they are convenient, effective and attractive for ER practices and have a positive influence on learners' motivation. For instance, Mesureur (2013) remarks that students would engage more with ER if they used ebooks or virtual libraries because of their advantages such as portability, 24-hour access, availability of multimedia features, diversity, and flexibility. Nowadays there is a plethora of virtual libraries and learning environments available free on the internet. Research about Edmodo has highlighted its efficacy as a virtual learning environment (VLE) to assist reading (Graham, 2016) and encourage high motivation in EFL learning (Al-Kathiri, 2015; Looi & Yusop, 2011). In his study, Kongchan (2013) defines Edmodo as a free, private and safe learning platform with similar characteristics than Facebook. This platform was designed and developed by O'Hara

and Nick Borg in 2008 and it is suitable for students, teachers, and even parents. Teachers can create and manage students' accounts and via this website, they can keep in touch with students by sending and receiving messages, providing feedback, making comments, conducting polls, assigning grades and due dates, storing content, and adding files, links, quizzes, and assignments.

Nevertheless, some experts (Huang, 2013; Milliner & Travis, 2015) have stated disadvantages regarding digital reading like fatigue, distraction, and resistance. Huang (2013), in his research about e-reading, reveals that the participants complained of "tired eyes". Additionally, some students showed up still having the habit of reading traditional paper texts because of the satisfaction of reading until the last page of the book.

Because of the development of technology, the internet provides teachers with new opportunities to create virtual environments in order to support language teaching and learning. Edmodo is a learning platform which can be easily used to potentiate ER through the use of a diversity of digital texts to encourage young learners to read extensively, and plus the use of visual vocabulary strategies kids can enhance their vocabulary in an easier and better way. Condensing all three of these elements seems to be advantageous to elucidate and overcome children' difficulties regarding limited vocabulary and lack of motivation.

### **Innovation**

The innovation was implemented from December 2018 to January 2019 at a public primary school in Machala, Ecuador with the participation of 21 seventh graders who were beginner language learners (pre A1). The aim of the intervention was to expand students' vocabulary and foster positive reading attitudes, through an Extensive Reading program using both a physical classroom library with free printed online books and a virtual library created in Edmodo for students to read at home. Materials were selected and compiled based on students' reading level, which included picture-based and audio material texts from different

genres (stories, biographies, fiction, poetry, comics, and informational texts). The innovation had a duration of eight weeks divided into 16 teaching hours and 10 hours of autonomous reading outside the boundaries of the class. The intervention started with the application of a pretest to measure students' initial vocabulary level, surveys and interviews to explore students' reading preferences, attitudes and expectations.

The innovation combined in-class sessions with autonomous reading at home. The teaching hours blended the explanation of key concepts about reading and vocabulary, in-class-reading and the use of visual vocabulary-enhancement strategies. Regarding free reading, participants read independently outside the classroom as much as they wanted by selecting texts that they liked the most. During the first three sessions, the researcher introduced essential definitions of vocabulary, vocabulary-learning and reading strategies. The ER program, the virtual library, and its management were also introduced.

In the rest of the sessions, participants were involved in simple oral and written reports (see Appendix A) and in class-readings. To stimulate vocabulary acquisition and retention, follow-up vocabulary activities were added, such as graphic organizers, word wizard, Frayer model, and graffiti (see Appendix B). The final product was a poster presentation in which students chose their favorite text and demonstrated the new vocabulary learned. The poster was assessed through a rubric (see Appendix C).

The number of texts students read was recorded using a simple chart (see Appendix D). This was used to keep track of their progress as well. At the end of the implementation, the three students who read the most books received a certificate as the *Best Reader*. This intervention finished with a posttest to measure how much its impact was. See Appendix E for a complete detail of the innovation lesson plan.

### **Methodology**

The study was based on an action research and followed a mixed-method design. Mills (2003) defined action research as a systematic process conducted by educators to get information about school issues, teaching practices, and students' learning. Its purpose is to obtain insights, promote reflection, and propose alternatives to improve students' performance and educational practices in general.

Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and analyzed in an attempt to answer these three research questions:

1. To what extent does extensive reading improve students' vocabulary?
2. What are students' attitudes towards reading online versus printed texts?
3. What are students' perspectives towards this innovation?

### **Sample and Participants**

The participants of the study were 21 students who represented one of the two seventh grade classes from a public primary school located in Machala. The respondents were 12 boys and 9 girls whose average age was 11. Regarding technology access, only 19 participants reported to have technological devices at home. Concerning English proficiency, they are beginner language learners (pre A1). This group was selected due to the fact that the researcher was also their teacher.

### **Instruments**

Instruments for the study included a focus group interview guide, an adaptation of the Attitude toward Reading Survey (ATRS), and a reading test which was administered before and after the intervention.

### **Pre and posttests**

Part 1, 2 and 4 of a Starters Reading and Writing Test developed by Cambridge University was given to all the participants to assess vocabulary before and after the

intervention as a pretest and a posttest (see Appendix F). The test contained 15 items, 5 items per section. This instrument was geared towards answering question 1: To what extent does extensive reading improve students' vocabulary?

To guarantee the validity of data, two other colleagues from different institutions scored students' posttests. Their results were identical to those obtained by the researcher.

### **Attitude toward Reading Survey (ATRS).**

An adaptation of the Attitude toward Reading Survey (ATRS) created by Diedre Allen (2013) was applied to all the participants at the beginning of the intervention to determine students' preference toward reading printed versus digital texts. It has six items divided into two sections: reading from a book and reading from the internet. It has a picture format with Likert scales from *very bad* to *very good* (see Appendix G). This instrument was chosen to answer research questions 2: What are students' attitude towards reading online versus printed texts?

This survey was previously piloted by Allen (2013), who affirms this instrument is reliable and valid. Cronbach's alpha reliability indicated the items were reliable with moderate to high alpha score. In this research, the reliability of the ATRS survey was analyzed by using SPSS software and was given by Cronbach's Alpha. It showed that the reliability of data was minimally acceptable (0,670) due to the fact that the sample size was not large enough. Triangulation was employed not only to deepen the understanding of the phenomenon but also to increase validity of results.

### **Focus group.**

A focus group interview guide was used before the intervention to explore students' reading attitudes, habits, preferences, and opinions toward the implementation of a reading program using technology (see Appendix H). It contained eight open-ended questions. Ten interviewees, who were chosen randomly, took part in the focus group. The whole interview

was recorded. This instrument supported the quantitative results of the first and second questions. It was helpful in the construction of the virtual library. Finally, it answered question 2 and 3, regarding the perspectives of students towards this innovation.

### **Data Analysis**

Results of grades and surveys were entered into Excel spreadsheets. Then, they were imported to the IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) program version 22. This software was used to get descriptive statistics: minimum, maximum, means, and standard deviation. This statistical information was used to obtain the effect sizes from an online calculator. The qualitative instrument was coded and organized to be analyzed.

### **Ethical Standards**

Ethical issues were maintained during the whole process. Permission from the school and students' parents was required and granted. All students' responses were anonymous and kept confidential. Pre and posttests were scored and cross-referenced by two other teachers.

## **Results**

The results of the study are presented in this section in order to answer the three research questions.

### **Quantitative Data from Pre and Posttest and Survey**

*The effect of extensive reading on students' vocabulary.*

To determine the effect of extensive reading on students' vocabulary (question 1), participants completed a pretest and a posttest. The results are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for the Pretest and Posttest results*

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum Statistic</b>	<b>Maximum Statistic</b>	<b>Mean Statistic</b>	<b>Std. Deviation Statistic</b>
Pretest	21	5,0	11,0	8,429	1,6605
Posttest	21	11,0	15,0	13,524	1,3645
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>				

Table 1 pinpoints that the results of the posttest ( $M = 13.524$ ,  $SD = 1.3645$ ) show a noteworthy change in comparison with the results of the pretest ( $M = 8.429$ ,  $SD = 1,6605$ ). The first set of analysis proved the high significant effect (*Cohen's*  $d=3.35$ ) of ER on students' vocabulary range. Interestingly, for this remarkable value, it was found that each student read an average of 12 texts in five weeks. Another issue to consider is that students backed up all new words by using visual vocabulary-enhancement strategies. These results demonstrated that combining ER with vocabulary strategies helped students in their vocabulary acquisition and retention in a notable way.

*Students' attitudes toward reading online vs printed texts.*

To answer question 2, results were obtained from participants' responses to the ATRS survey and from the focus group interview. The survey attempted to measure how students felt about reading printed and digital texts. The results are showed below.

Table 2.

*Descriptive Statistics for Printed vs. Digital Texts*

	N	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic
Reading from a book	21	16,00	24,00	21,4762	2,11232
Reading from the internet	21	18,00	24,00	21,6667	1,65328
TOTAL	21				

As shown in Table 2, results showed a slightly better students' attitude toward online reading. Unexpectedly, the results of the focus group indicated that students found reading satisfying and felt good while they were reading, and these results remained the same regardless of whether the students read from a printed book or online.

Table 3.

*Descriptive Statistics for individual items on the ATRS*

Items	N	TRADITIONAL READING	ONLINE READING
		Mean	Mean
Reading to learn new things	21	3,571	3,714
Reading magazines	21	3,333	3,190
Reading to learn about something of interest	21	3,762	3,667
Reading about new authors	21	3,524	3,667
Reading different types of writing	21	3,714	3,667
Telling a friend about something read	21	3,571	3,762
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3,58</b>	<b>3,61</b>

Overall, students' attitudes toward reading in all categories were very positive and it can be inferred that the type of reading (traditional or online) did not affect students' attitudes. There is no high tendency or preference between printed or online texts.

#### **Qualitative Data from the Focus Group Interview**

Of the study sample, 10 participants took part in the focus group interview. Data collected was useful in the creation of the virtual library on Edmodo and in the identification of students' views and attitudes toward reading. The majority of respondents felt that reading was pleasant and important in learning. When subjects were questioned on the genre they are fond of, the majority commented that they liked stories and tales, for that reason the virtual library was mainly focused on offering a vast variety of texts of both genres. Concerning students' reading preference, ninety percent (90%) of those surveyed reported that they preferred digital texts instead of printed due to variety, accessibility and cost.

All respondents agreed that they could improve their vocabulary by reading extensively; as a result, they could not only improve their word repertoire and learn more but also be able to communicate in the foreign language. Generally speaking, they showed a

positive attitude and an optimistic perspective towards the implementation of the ER program and reading.

## Discussion

### **The Effect of Extensive Reading on Students' Vocabulary.**

Vocabulary is fundamental for communication and constitutes the starting point for reading, listening, speaking and writing in any language. Vocabulary can be acquired in different ways. However, previous studies (Griva, Kamaroudis, & Geladari, 2009; Krashen, 1993; Lee & Mallinder, 2017; Nagy & Herman, 1987; Nuttal, 1996; Restrepo, 2015) have proved that reading extensively can be used as a mechanism to help learners to pick up new words and as a result increase their vocabulary repertoire. As ER and vocabulary growing are connected, this study was focused on the development of young learners' vocabulary by means of online ER. As expected, the results of the innovation demonstrated that this method helped learners to improve their vocabulary in a significant way. Results of testing clearly support this claim by showing a large effect size (*Cohen's*  $d=3.35$ ), which means that this innovation had a high pedagogical impact in English instruction. This finding is directly in line with those found in previous studies wherein authors (Day, 2011; Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011; Krashen, 1993; Nagy & Herman, 1987) agreed that ER is effective in the development of vocabulary by promoting meaningful and comprehensible input.

The outcome obtained was probably the result of the utilization of a virtual library in Edmodo (Mesureur, 2013; Looi & Yusop, 2011; Al-Kathiri, 2015) and the use of visual vocabulary-enhancement strategies to promote vocabulary comprehension and retention. The use of these vocabulary techniques is consistent with Min (2008) and Grave (2016), whose research points out that vocabulary learning should be complemented with strategies that allow learners to infer the meaning of the words easily. In the case of young learners, they acquire vocabulary by having specific references. During the innovation, ER was

accompanied with visual-vocabulary strategies which helped students to make meaning of new words. This claim ties well with previous studies (Agustín & Barreras, 2007; Jiang, 2014; Mashhadi & Jamalifar, 2015; Rima, 2016; Sholihah & Waskita, 2009) and with what interactionist theorists (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991; Renandya, Rajan, & Jacobs, 1999; Swain, 1999) have stated that: ER gives better results when it is combined with other activities that provide a final product, whether oral or written.

Contrary to expectations, during the interview participants expressed some difficulties they might have while reading. One interviewee mentioned “do not understand the words, do not know the meaning of words”, another said, “do not know the pronunciation”. A similar finding was reached by Restrepo (2015), who concludes that one disadvantage of ER is linked to the understanding of words in contexts.

### **Students’ Attitudes toward Reading Printed versus Online Texts.**

Recent research (Cambridge University, 2018; Cheetham, 2015; Extensive Reading Foundation, 2011; Sabet & Rostamian, 2016; Walter & Briggs, 2016; Yamashita, 2013) has proved that ER also affects learners’ affective state by fostering positive attitudes toward reading in terms of comfort, autonomy, diversity of material, accessibility, and flexibility. This study also attempted to demonstrate if the type of text, whether online or printed, influenced students’ attitudes and preference. Regarding their attitudes, in both cases (ATRS and focus group), students mentioned they feel very good while reading. In their comments, they said “I feel good because reading is something important”, “I feel glad reading because in that way I can learn”. On the other hand, results from ATRS revealed no significant impact on students’ preferences. It showed that students tend to slightly prefer online texts. However, results from the focus group showed a different viewpoint, for example, 9 of 10 interviewees preferred digital texts. Students believed that reading from the internet is more enjoyable. This might be explained by the variety of sources that the internet offers, their easy

accessibility, and cost. A similar pattern of results was obtained by Looi and Yusop (2011), Mesureur (2013), Graham (2016), and Al-Kathiri (2015), who affirm that digital ER motivates students in such a way they enjoy and engage better in reading.

### **Students' perspectives towards this innovation**

Sometimes students are reluctant to change and get involved into new reading pedagogical approaches; they still prefer traditional reading (Milliner & Travis, 2015). However, ER seems to be a promising strategy to break down that barrier and change students' perspectives toward how beneficial reading is in their academic and language success. After interviewing the participants of this study, it was found that all of them agreed that they could learn a little more English by reading a lot. Remarkably, they commented "I can learn new words and communicate with others", and "I can improve my English to understand foreign people, music, and videos". Their points of view coincide with those found in Cote and Milliner's (2015), Banno and Curoe's (2016), and Gusweni's (2018) studies in which learners had a positive perception of ER. They perceived improvements in their vocabulary, fluency, and language abilities.

### **Conclusion**

This study was addressed to determine the impact of ER on young learners' vocabulary acquisition, students' attitude toward reading printed versus online texts, and their perspectives on the project. Since the sample size was not large enough, the findings may not be generalizable. The evidence from this research revealed that ER is an effective approach to complement language development and vocabulary achievement. Students showed vocabulary growth. The significance of supplementing ER with vocabulary strategies was also found, especially with those that require visual support. The findings of this study also point toward a preference by learners to online texts, but in terms of attitudes, their attitudes remain positive in both virtual and traditional reading. Results indicated that Edmodo was

effective in motivating and involving students in ER. In addition, students had a good posture throughout the innovation. The careful design of the ER digital platform with diverse level-appropriate materials, the sense of students' freedom to choose what and how much to read, and the use of visual vocabulary-enhancement strategies were fundamental to determine the success of the project.

In brief, this work so far has provided good reasons to argue this innovation is worthy to be replicated, due to the fact that there were notable improvements in young learners' vocabulary, attitudes, and willingness overall toward reading and this project

### **Limitations**

Although this study exposed significant findings, it clearly had some limitations. Nevertheless, this work could serve as a springboard for future research. The greatest problems lay in the sample size, internet access, and the date for implementation.

First, the sample size was too small to generalize the results to broader scenarios. Second, three participants indicated they had no internet at home so digital texts were printed for them. This produced an unexpected expense in the implementation of the innovation. Finally, the innovation was implemented in December during the last weeks of the school year when students did not have the same predisposition as during the beginning of the academic year. In addition, the sessions were not from week to week due to the holidays.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that more participants be selected for future research. Likewise, the innovation may be implemented during a longer period of time to foster a lifelong reading habit. It is also recommended to execute the program at the beginning of a study program. Conversely, further work needs to be carried out to determine the impact of ER on young learners' reading comprehension, speed and other reading sub-skills.

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Appendix A

Instant written book report

# Instant book report



**I read a book called \_\_\_\_\_.**

**It's a(n) \_\_\_\_\_**

*(mystery, science fiction book, love story, detective story, etc.)*

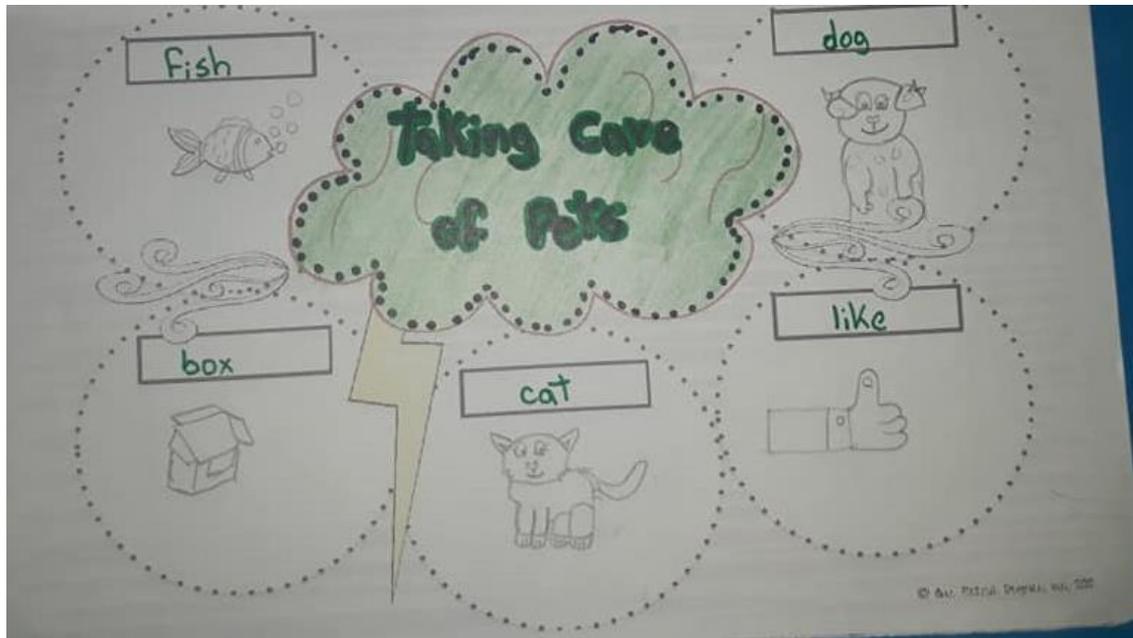
**It's about \_\_\_\_\_.**

**♥ I liked/ I didn't like it**

### Appendix B

### Vocabulary-Enhancement Strategies

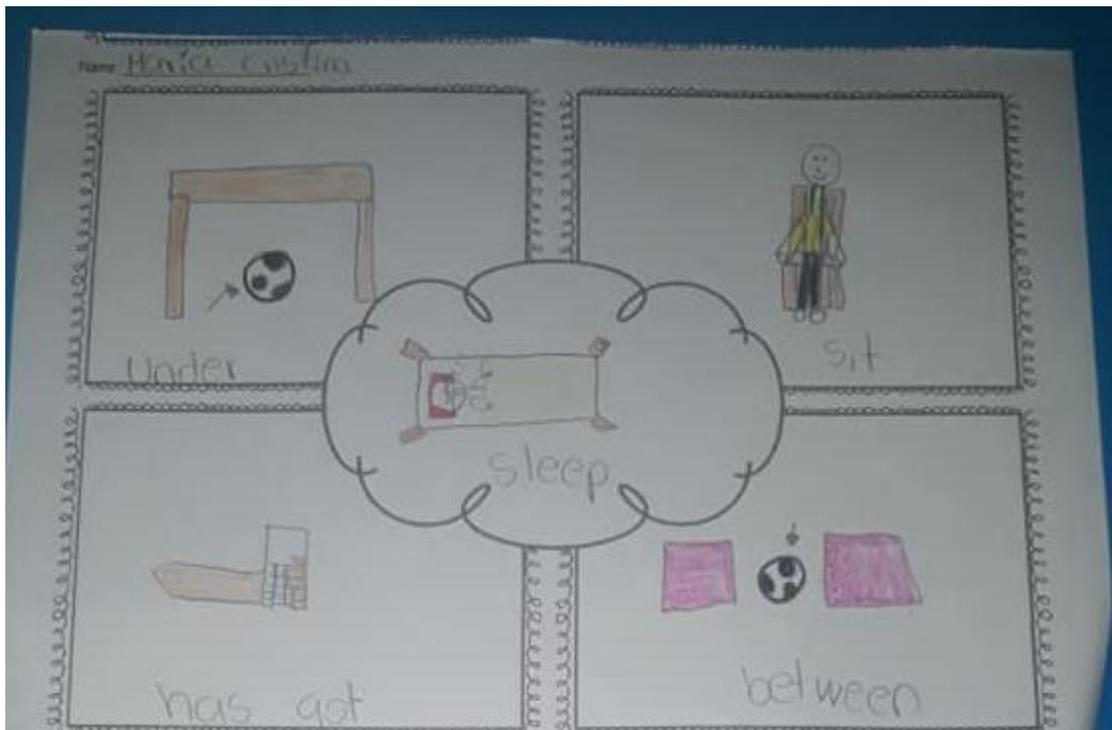
#### Graphic Organizer



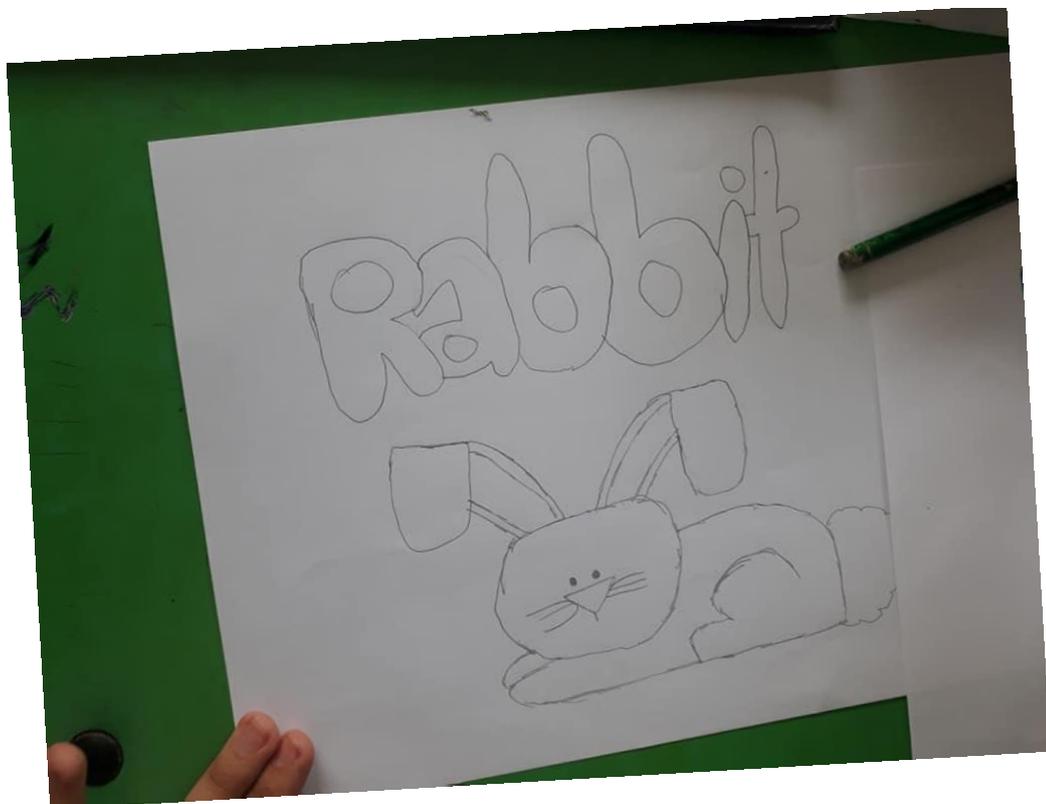
#### Word Wizard



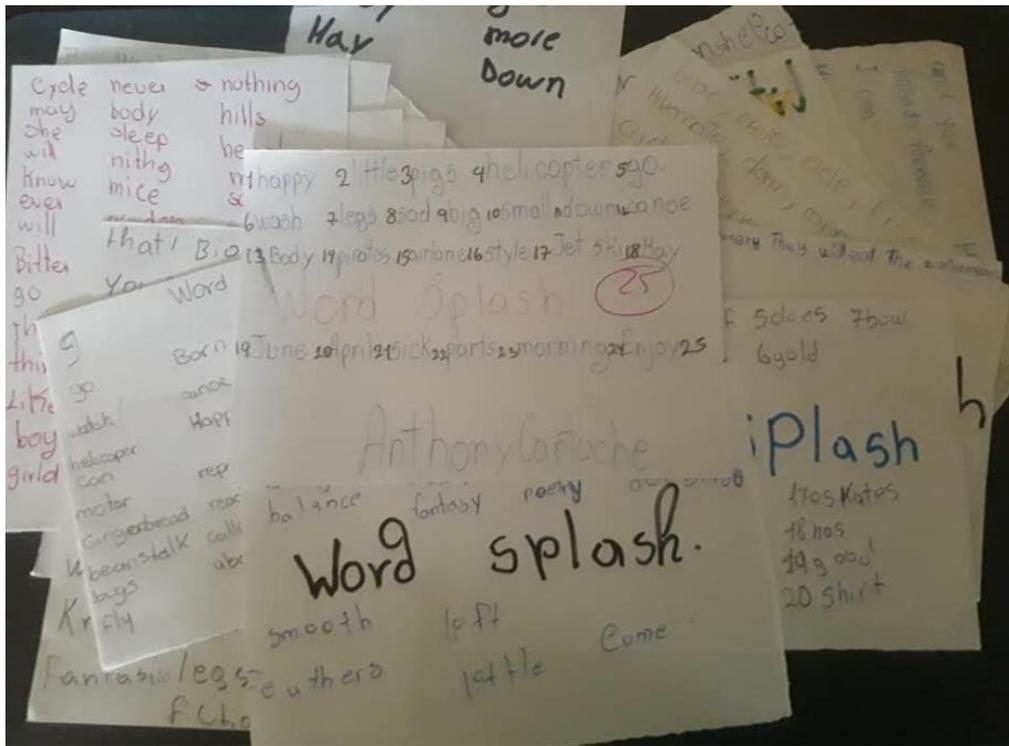
**Frayel Model**



**Graffiti**



### Word-Splash



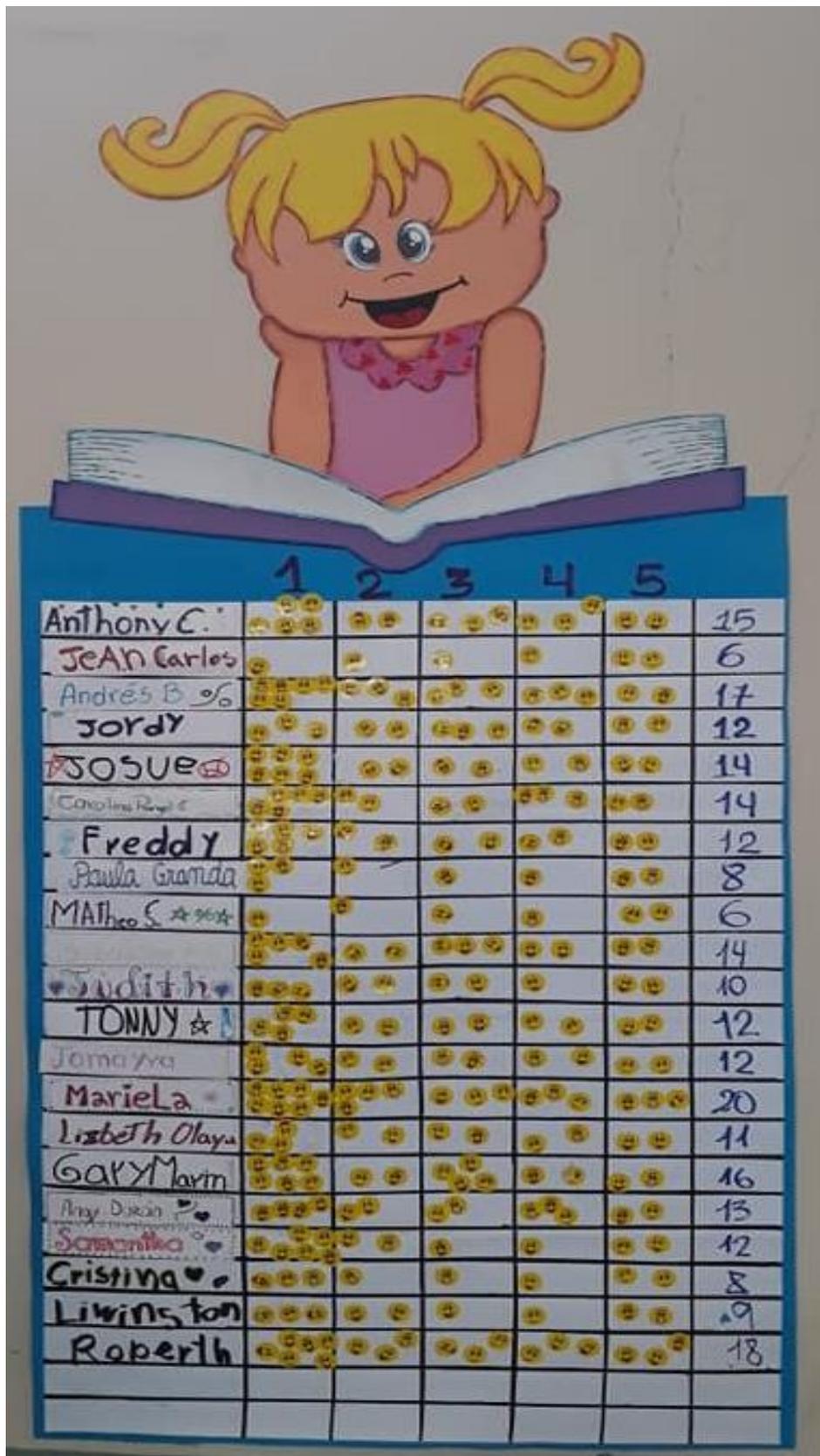
Appendix C

Rubric for Poster Presentation

Grading Criteria	 Fantastic <b>4</b>	 Really good <b>3</b>	 Okay <b>2</b>	 Not very good <b>1</b>	Score
<b>Content</b>	Details on the poster capture the most important vocabulary of the text.	Details on the poster capture some important vocabulary of the text.	Details on the poster capture little important vocabulary of the text.	Details on the poster have little or no connection with the text.	
<b>Pictures/ Drawings</b>	Pictures and drawings are clear and relevant.	Most pictures and drawings are clear and relevant.	Few of the pictures and drawings are clear and relevant.	Pictures and drawings are not clear and relevant.	
<b>Layout and Design</b>	The poster has an excellent design and layout. It is neat and easy to understand the content.	The poster has a nice design and layout. It is neat and easy to read.	The poster needs improvements in design, layout, and neatness.	The poster needs significant improvements in design, layout, and neatness.	
<b>Organization</b>	Words are well organized with clear labeling.	Words are organized with clear labeling.	Words are organized but labels are not clear enough.	Words appear to be disorganized.	
<b>Spelling</b>	The poster contains no spelling errors.	The poster contains 1-2 spelling errors.	The poster contains 3-4 spelling errors.	The poster contains more than 5 spelling errors.	
<b>Total Score</b>					

Appendix D

Chart for Reading Control



## Appendix E

### Design from Your Goals<sup>1</sup>

*Instructional design of units for transfer of learning to real life contexts*

**Institution:** Escuela de Educación Básica “Combate de Pilo ”  
**Year of study:** 2018 - 2019  
**Student description:** 21 Seventh graders  
**(include English Level)** Pre A1 level (CEFR)  
**Professor:** Lisseth Cabanilla García  
**Unit title:** Extensive Reading  
**Weeks:** 8  
**Hours:** 16 hours – 8 class sessions  
 10 hours – autonomous reading

#### I. Transfer Goal (Stage 1)

##### Standards the unit will work with:

Understand and identify simple informational, transactional, and expository texts—a single phrase at a time—picking up familiar names, words, and basic phrases and rereading as required.

##### Goal:

I want my students to learn **familiar names, words, and basic phrases by reading extensively different types of digital texts** so that, in the long run and on their own, they **can understand short and simple texts.**

#### Breakdown of transfer goal

A. If we see and hear them do this, they CAN transfer this learning.	B. If we see and hear them do this, then they CANNOT (yet) transfer:	C. What I will commit to doing differently in my classroom to ensure my results look like Column A.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understand familiar names, words and basic phrases in different types of texts.</li> <li>- Comprehend short simple instructions used in familiar contexts especially in illustrations.</li> <li>- Deduce the meaning of a word from an accompanying picture or icon.</li> <li>- Understand illustrated narratives.</li> <li>- Follow written directions.</li> <li>- Recognize basic grammar patterns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unable to understand familiar names and words.</li> <li>- Unable to understand basic information in short simple texts.</li> <li>- Infer the meaning of a word.</li> <li>- Struggle to comprehend written directions.</li> <li>- Get confused with grammar patterns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide modeling.</li> <li>- Use several strategies for vocabulary acquisition.</li> <li>- Choose level appropriate texts</li> <li>- Build a virtual library with different types of books.</li> <li>- Provide instant feedback.</li> <li>- Motivate them to read.</li> <li>- Use collaborative team work.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> This unit design process was adapted from the Guillot Design Process worksheet (2017) *Design from Your Goals* based on Wiggins-McTighe Backward Design.

**II. Summative Performance Assessment Task (Stage 2)**

<b>Goal</b>	To make a poster using the vocabulary learn from a reading.
<b>Role</b>	A book reporter
<b>Audience</b>	School community
<b>Situation</b>	You have to participate in a poster session by creating a poster about a recent book you have read
<b>Performance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Design a poster</li> <li>- Use pictures to report vocabulary learnt</li> </ul>
<b>Standards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Well organized poster</li> <li>- Use the vocabulary learnt</li> <li>- Well-written words</li> <li>- Appropriate use of visuals</li> <li>- Creativity</li> </ul>

**III. Knowledge and skills** the students need to succeed in the assessment. (Stage 1)

<b>What students will need to know</b>	<b>The skills students will need to be able to do</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiar names, words and basic phrases.</li> <li>- Basic instructions.</li> <li>- Simple grammar patterns.</li> <li>- Vocabulary enhancement strategies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read a diversity of text types.</li> <li>- Understand familiar names, words and basic phrases.</li> <li>- Apply vocabulary strategies in readings.</li> <li>- Comprehend basic information in short simple texts.</li> <li>- Spell words appropriately.</li> </ul>

**IV. Essential Questions** (Stage 1)

<b>Essential questions support the transfer goal, signal inquiry, guide instruction, and can be asked over and over throughout the unit without reaching a final answer.</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What can we learn from reading?</li> <li>2. Why is reading important in our lives?</li> <li>3. What are the benefits of reading a lot?</li> </ol>

**V. Learning Activities** (Stage 3)**Transfer goal:**

I want my students to learn **familiar names, words, and basic phrases by reading extensively different types of digital texts** so that, in the long run and on their own, they can understand short and simple texts.

**Abbreviated Performance Task:**

You will have a poster session in your school. You will choose an e-book and report what you read through a poster using pictures.

<b>Learning Activities</b> (from student's perspective)	<b>Intention</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>T</b>
<b>Week 1 – (80 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pre-test</li> <li>- Focus Group</li> <li>- ATRS Survey</li> <li>- Students have to answer the questions</li> </ul>	Data collection			<b>x</b>
<i>What is Vocabulary?</i>	Data collection			
<i>Why is Vocabulary important?</i>	Data collection			
	Hook		<b>x</b>	
				<b>x</b>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The teacher writes three rules of Extensive reading on the board and has students write them onto a sticky note. Enjoy! Enjoy! Enjoy!</li> <li>- Teacher presents two pictures: one about online and the other about traditional reading. Students discuss them.</li> <li>- Teacher will presents the virtual library on Edmodo and explain how it works.</li> </ul> <p>Autonomous reading at home - Read at least one text from the virtual library during the week.</p>		x	x	x
<b>Week 4 (80 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will report their experiences reading at home to a peer by saying: <i>"I read a good book the other day. Its name is.... It is about...."</i></li> <li>- Student will fill in a brief Instant Book Report.</li> <li>- Researcher will explain and model the technique semantic map.</li> <li>- Students will select a text, read it, and create a graphic organizer with 5 new words they found in the text using pictures.</li> <li>- They will share and report the word they chose by showing their visuals.</li> <li>- Autonomous reading at home – Read at least one text from the virtual library during the week and apply the technique learnt in class.</li> </ul>	Developing	x	x	x
<b>Week 5 – (80 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will make a Wordsplash by writing on a piece of paper as many words they remember from the texts they have read. See Appendix B</li> <li>- Students will report their experiences reading at home to their peers.</li> <li>- Student will fill in a brief Instant Book Report. See Appendix A</li> <li>- Researcher will introduce and model the technique the Frayel model. See Appendix B</li> <li>- Students will select a text, read it, and make at least five Frayel model cards with 5 selected words they have found in the text.</li> <li>- They will report what they read in groups by showing their visuals.</li> </ul> <p>Autonomous reading at home – Read at least one text from the virtual library during the week.</p>	Assessment  Developing	x	x	x
<b>Week 6 – (80 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will report their experiences reading at home to a peer.</li> <li>- Student will fill in a brief Instant Book Report.</li> </ul>	Developing			x

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Teacher will introduce and model the technique Word Wizard (a jigsaw strategy). See Appendix B.</li> <li>- Students will make groups, read a text, select 5 words from the text and illustrate them.</li> <li>- Groups are mingled and students share the new words they learnt. Each group member has to write down the new words that they learn from each member. Finally, students go back to their original groups.</li> <li>- Autonomous reading at home – Read at least one text from the virtual library during the week and apply the strategy learnt.</li> </ul>		x	x	x
<b>Week 7 – (80 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will write on a piece of paper as many words they remember from the readings.</li> <li>- Students will report their experiences reading at home to a peer.</li> <li>- Student will fill in a brief Instant Book Report.</li> <li>- Teacher will introduce and model the graffiti vocabulary technique. See Appendix B</li> <li>- Students will read a text and select 3 words. They have to write the new word using bubble letters and draw 3 images representing each term.</li> <li>- Students work in groups and share their graffiti.</li> </ul> <p>Autonomous reading at home – Read at least one text from the virtual library during the week and apply the strategy learnt.</p>	Developing	x	x	x
<b>Week 8 – (120 minutes)</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Students will fill in a brief Instant Book Report.</li> <li>- Students will select a text of their interest that they have read and will make a poster reporting at least 5 words they have learnt.</li> <li>- Students will present their poster to the class.</li> <li>- Students work in groups and share their experiences through the process of the project.</li> </ul> <p>Survey Post-test</p>	Data collection  Formative assessment			x  x  x  x

Learning process: A = Acquisition, M = Meaning Making, T = Transfer

Intention: Hook, **formative assessment**, initiating, developing, review, closure, **research**, other.

**VI. On-going Self-Assessment**

**As I reflect on student learning, what will I do if my plan is not yielding my expected results?**

If the plan is not yielding my expected results, I will provide modeling and implement new strategies. I will also add extra time to reinforce what is not clear.

**Appendix F**

**Reading Pre and Posttest**

**Part 1**

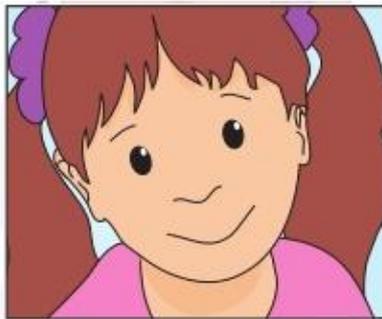
– 5 questions –

Look and read. Put a tick (✓) or a cross (X) in the box.  
There are two examples.

**Examples**



This is a camera.

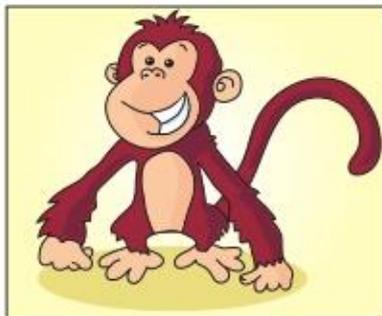


This is a foot.



**Questions**

1



This is a monster.

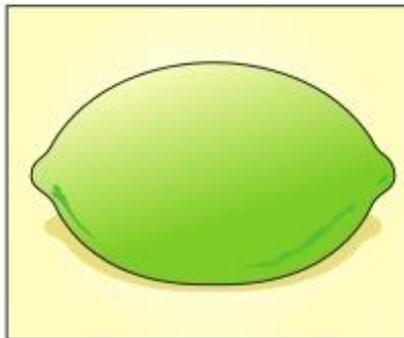


2



This is a jacket.

3



This is a lamp.

4



This is a mirror.

5



This is a helicopter.

**Part 2**  
- 5 questions -

Look and read. Write **yes** or **no**.



**Examples**

The man is sleeping. yes  
.....

There are five fish. no  
.....

**Questions**

1 The bird is eating a pineapple. .....

2 The children are playing with a ball. .....

3 A woman has got white socks on her feet. .....

4 A young boy is wearing a watch. .....

5 There is a small boat on the big boat. .....

## Part 4

- 5 questions -

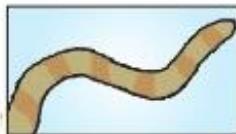
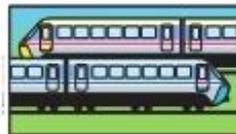
Read this. Choose a word from the box. Write the correct word next to numbers 1-5. There is one example.

### A kitchen



I am a room in a house. I am between two rooms: the dining room and the (1)..... On one wall, there is a big (2)..... of some flowers. A family sits on four (3)..... at a table. They listen to the (4)..... and they eat breakfast, lunch and (5)..... in me.

What am I?  
I am a kitchen.

example			
			
house	painting	tail	trains
			
chairs	dinner	radio	hall

Taken from Cambridge University (2009). Cambridge Young Learners English Test: Starters.

Reading and Writing part.

Appendix G

**ATRS – Attitude toward Reading Survey**

For numbers 1-4, please circle yes or no.

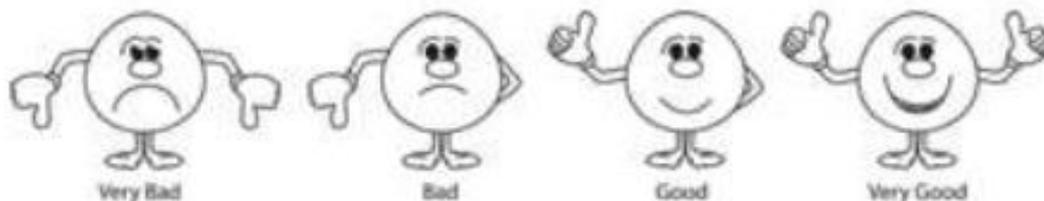
- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 1. Do you have a computer in your home?<br><i>¿Tienes computadora en casa?</i>  | Yes | No |
| 2. Is there a computer you are allowed to use when you are outside of school?<br><i>¿Hay alguna computadora que puedas usar cuando estás fuera de la escuela?</i> | Yes | No |
| 3. Do you have a computer at school?<br><i>¿Tienes computadora en la escuela?</i>   | Yes | No |
| 4. Are you able to use it?<br><i>¿Puedes usarla?</i>  | Yes | No |

For numbers 5-7, please circle the answer to each question about yourself.

- |  |     |          |
|--|-----|----------|
| 5. What grade are you in?<br><i>¿En qué grado estás?</i> | 7 A | 7 B      |
| 6. Are you a boy or a girl?<br><i>¿Eres niño o niña?</i> |     | boy girl |
| 7. How old are you?<br><i>¿Cuántos años tienes?</i>      | 10  | 11 12    |

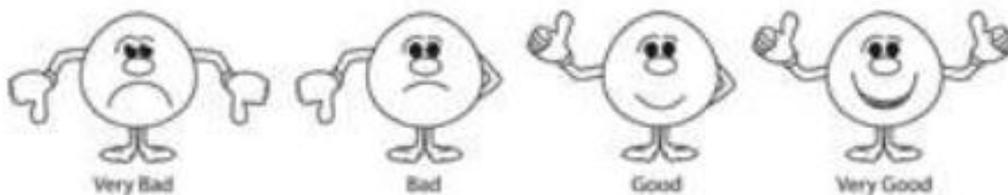
For numbers 8-13, read each question and circle how you would feel. Please respond to both sections of each question: printed books, and the internet.

8. a. How do you feel about reading to learn new things from a book?  
*¿Cómo te sientes cuando lees un libro para aprender cosas nuevas?*



*muy mal mal bien muy bien*

- b. How do you feel about reading to learn new things from the internet?  
*¿Cómo te sientes cuando lees para aprender cosas nuevas en internet?*



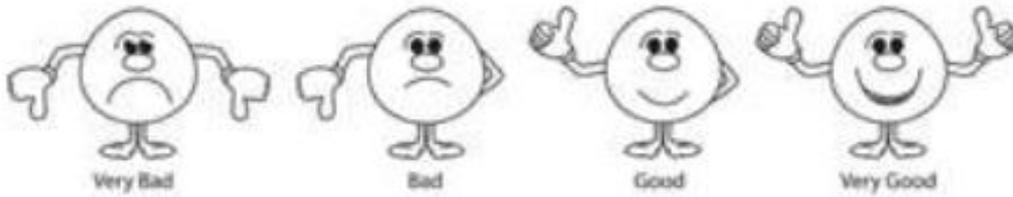
*muy mal mal bien muy bien*





**13. a. How do you feel about telling a friend about something you read from a book?**

*¿Cómo te sientes al compartir con un amigo algo que leíste en un libro?*



*muy mal*

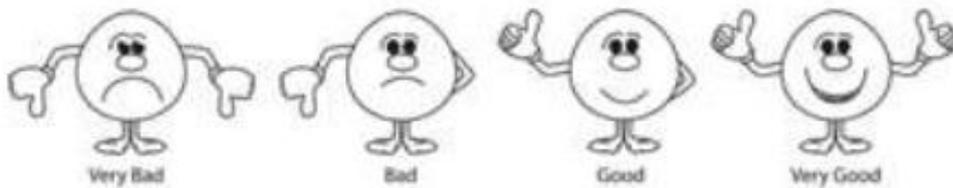
*mal*

*bien*

*muy bien*

**b. How do you feel about telling a friend about something you read from the internet?**

*¿Cómo te sientes al compartir con un amigo algo que leíste en internet?*



*muy mal*

*mal*

*bien*

*muy bien*

*Adapted from the Attitude toward Reading Survey (ATRS) created by Diedre Allen in 2013.*

**Appendix H**

**Focus Group: Interview Guide**

**1. GOALS**

TOPIC
Implementation of an Extensive Reading program by using a virtual library to improve vocabulary in young learners.
INVESTIGATION GOAL(S)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To determine the impact of extensive reading in the improvement of vocabulary through the implementation of a virtual Extensive Reading program.</li> <li>• To examine students' attitudes towards reading printed versus online texts.</li> <li>• To identify students' perspectives toward the innovation.</li> </ul>
FOCUS GROUP GOAL
To explore students' reading attitudes, habits, preferences, and opinions toward the implementation of an ER program using Edmodo.

**2. MODERATOR ID**

MODERATOR'S NAME:
OBSERVER'S NAME:

**3. PARTICIPANTS**

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS	
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	

**4. QUESTIONS**

1	<p>How do you feel about reading?  <i>(¿Cómo te sientes al leer?)</i></p>																						
2	<p>How much time do you spend reading per week? In your first language? In English?                  (Printed books – from internet)  <i>(¿Cuánto tiempo lees por semana? En tu lengua madre? En inglés? Libros impresos, libros de internet)</i></p>																						
3	<p>What type of book do you prefer? Digital or printed ones?  <i>(¿Qué tipo de libros prefieres? ¿Digitales o impresos?)</i></p>																						
4	<p>What kind of readings would you prefer?  <i>(¿Qué tipos de textos prefieres leer?)</i></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr><td>Picture – books</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Short stories</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Funny stories</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Comics</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Fairy Tales</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Fiction books</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Non- fiction books</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Magazines</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Recipes</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>How to do texts</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>Others</td><td></td></tr> </table>	Picture – books		Short stories		Funny stories		Comics		Fairy Tales		Fiction books		Non- fiction books		Magazines		Recipes		How to do texts		Others	
Picture – books																							
Short stories																							
Funny stories																							
Comics																							
Fairy Tales																							
Fiction books																							
Non- fiction books																							
Magazines																							
Recipes																							
How to do texts																							
Others																							
5	<p>What do you think about reading from the internet?  <i>(¿Qué piensas acerca de leer desde internet?)</i></p>																						
6	<p>What do you think about the implementation of a reading program using the internet as an extra class activity?  <i>(¿Qué opinas sobre implementar un programa de lectura usando el internet como una actividad extra clase?)</i></p>																						
7	<p>Extensive reading is a method in which you decide when, how much, and where you read. You select texts of your interest. Do you think reading extensively would help you learn new vocabulary in English?  <i>(La lectura extensiva es un método en el cuál tú decides qué, cuánto y donde leer. Tú seleccionas los textos de tu interés. ¿Piensas que leyendo extensivamente te ayudaría a aprender nuevas palabras en inglés?)</i></p>																						
8	<p>What difficulties do you think you might have with reading in English?  <i>(¿Qué dificultades piensas que podrías tener cuando lees en inglés?)</i></p>																						