Summarizing Stories Using a SWBST Chart to Improve Reading Comprehension

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Implementing the habit of reading is an important part of intellectual development and human growth, which is acquired through experience. Learning this skill must be taken as a fundamental part to acquire new knowledge that will eventually broaden creativity (Freire,1983). This is showed in a research study about pleasure reading in young adults from Canada which found improvement in three areas: in the academic, social engagement, and personal development. Pleasure reading is searching information from everyday life to develop maturity, values, and cultural identity (Howard, 2011).

The reading comprehension strategies help the readers to build the meaning of the text easily, one of this is the use of semantic mapping or clustering which allows the readers to provide some order to the chaos prior to understand the ideas conveyed in a text (Purwandani, 2015). Using SWBST[1] is simple and understandable for most of students. Through this chart they are able to remember the most relevant events of a story, and enables them to write summaries (Hathaway, 2014). Students show understanding of a story or narrative through summarizing, including the main important aspects of it, such as: the characters, the problem, and the setting (Barreiro, 2019).

Uzer (2013) obtained in his research that teaching reading comprehension by using summarizing strategy to the eleventh-grade students of the State Senior High School was effective. Sanchez (2021) showed that twelve students with different English levels of proficiency, from elemental until intermediate level got good results in the innovation of summarization as a strategy to enhance reading comprehension of narrative stories. Asnawi (2020) affirmed that teaching reading comprehension using

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[1]Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then

summarizing activity through SWBST can improve this skill, the population was all eight-grade students in Banda who were not able to read.

The same problem that is being researched internationally has been detected in this group of local students from this public institution in the city of Guayaquil. Evidence in class shows that their reading skills are poor due to the low rates of comprehension, summarizing, fear to read a text, which lead to the absence of continuous reading. So, the improvement of reading comprehension and student's performance by using a SWBST chart is the desired goal.

Many students from this public school cannot even summarize a story or a narrative even if it is fiction or not fiction. The problem relays in that they find difficulties to identify the main events, for example: The characters, what did the main character want? what happened in the story? How was the conflict solved? Students that study English as a foreign language (EFL) have had issues in the reading comprehension due to the lack of the next factors: vocabulary, use of grammar and poor reading strategies which are very essential to reduce this difficulty (Davudi, 2017).

Finally, this problem needs to be addressed in this local context. That is why this study seeks to improve readers' comprehension through the use of a SWBST chart to summarize stories using some key questions in this group of students in the city of Guayaquil.

Literature Review

Reading Comprehension

In this section the reader is going to read different definitions by some authors about reading comprehension, skills that are necessary for the reading and, the strategy that can be useful to improve students' comprehension of texts.

Reading is the action of communication by which a graphically message is transmitted among people (Kingston, 1967). While, Snow (2002) referred to it as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language. Elleman and Oslund (2019) mentioned that reading comprehension is one of the most complex cognitive activity in which human beings participate, making it hard to research, measure and teach.

Furthermore, reading is a receptive skill which needs to be acquired in the earlier years for many reasons: First, students need this skill for academic purposes due to the fact that there are many books written in English. Second, for the daily life to get-to-day information from different resources. Third, to improve the learning of the foreign language (Purwandani, 2015).

Decoding is the ability to apply the knowledge of symbol-sound relationship to make sense of the word in print and it is essential in the development of any language. Some researchers have found that orthographic awareness, morphological awareness and phonological awareness must be developed before a child can read (Wang, 2011).

To read fluently, kids need to recognize words by reading a lot of books that corresponds to their level. Also, the more words are exposed to, the richer the vocabulary become so, telling jokes and playing games is a fun way to increase vocabulary length. Sentence construction and cohesion, and knowing how to link up the ideas is necessary. Teacher can help students on connecting two or more thoughts

through writing and reading. Spöre, et al., (2009) affirmed, that with reasoning and background knowledge, students can build knowledge through life experience and through working memory and attention, students can integrate games or everyday activities that can build working memory without children even knowing it.

Summarizing Stories using a SWBST chart

Summarizing stories using a SWBST chart can be a useful option to help students to understand the main ideas of reading. This strategy was designed by Macon, Bewell, and Vogt in 1991. This is an optimal strategy which helps students to summarize a text in a quick way. It has a chart or framework to organize the information that should be summarized (Asnawi, 2020).

Hathaway, (2014) said that a question framework is designed to differ some types of questions. Using Bloom's Taxonomy to evaluate students learning can enhance comprehension since this strategy improves students' reading comprehension.

In addition, Romano (2012) said that the SWBST chart helps students make summaries of a story, identifying the main elements of a story, so they can come to a conclusion with some questioning guides based on the text. Marzano, (2016) said that summarizing and taking notes are skills that help students in their comprehension tasks. Summaries integrate three beneficial points. First, students read with a concise, general version of the original information. Second, students' evidence that they have understood the general context; and, third, summarizing and taken notes enable students to get a better comprehension of the material.

Furthermore, McCune (2015) confirmed that SWBST is a strategy designed to help students analyze the stories they read or create and complete stories on their own. This seems as a simple strategy to aid creativity. Spending time analyzing the stories,

read aloud or in a group guided by the teacher will promote the students' understanding

of the five elements that are "Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Then" and how these

elements interact.

SWBST can be applied in non-fiction or fictional stories since this strategy

assists to identify the key elements of the text that are: Somebody = Who is the main

character? Wanted = What did character want? But = What is the problem? So = How

did the character try to solve the problem, Then = What was the resolution to the story?

These steps make a good summary to achieve a reading comprehension and at the same

time develop critical thinking skills (Ellis, 2016).

Besides, this strategy introduces an essential component of students' English

Foreign Language (EFL). This input component is the model language in which learners

are exposed to, including all the English skills that students already have developed

through reading and listening (Lessard, 2018).

Communicative Learning Teaching (CLT)

According to Walia (2012), CLT promotes meaningful and genuine

communication, and fluency is one of the more essential characteristics of

communication inside the classroom. One of the major concepts of CLT, according

to Wu (2008), is that students must engage in meaningful conversation to attain

acceptable fluency in ESL. Finally, Walia (2012) noted that CLT is a creative

process of creating learning, and it includes trial and error.

Backwards Design

Backward design is the lesson plan, and according to Wiggins and McTighe,

(1998), backward design is the process in which the objectives are the work grounds

to achieve the goal rather than the activities in the book. Classes must begin at the

end with the desired outcomes or objectives. Teachers must plan their units with the

end goal in mind. They arrange all the learning experiences that are directed toward the aims of transferring, meaning creation, and acquiring the desired competencies. When teachers use backward design, students can truly apply what they've learned in the classroom to different situations in their daily lives. (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998)

Research questions

1) To what extent does a SWBST chart improve students' reading comprehension?

2) What are students' perspectives towards the use of the SWBST chart?

Innovation

This innovation or lesson plan will be applied in a public school. The aim is to show how the strategy SWBST chart improves students' reading comprehension. The lesson plan (See Appendix A) for this innovation will last 18 hours during six weeks, and three hours per class.

The first activity will be introduced by the teacher. It emphasizes certain items like: Warm up, last content reviewed in the last class, new vocabulary, introduction of the topic and its discussion. The second activity, students read the topic from the white board and give ideas of what it may be about (Brainstorm) and the teacher will explain specific things related to the topic. After that, Students will watch a video related to it, verifying their ideas and writing notes.

The third activity, students will receive a worksheet by the teacher including a story, for example: Cinderella, Pinocchio, Titanic and the three little pigs. Then, students are given a rubric so they know how the activities will be graded and which the categories that are taking into count are.

In the fourth activity, students will take a look again at the rubric, before writing a summary of five lines of the story. And in the last activity, students work in pairs to compare if they have the same answers meanwhile the teacher monitors students' work and give feedback.

At the beginning of the proposal, a pre reading comprehension exercise using the text**,** (See Appendix B) related to the first activity will be taken in order to know what students can understand and know about this skill, before applying the innovation.

While doing the implementation, the teacher will give the introduction to the practice of the evaluation stage and will explain the final evaluation making students take a look of the rubric (See Appendix C).

In the last class, a post reading comprehension exercise using the text, (See Appendix B) to prove if students improve in this skill. Also, an interview will be taken (See Appendix D) to know what perspectives students have about the strategy.

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Methodology

This study will have a mixed type of methods, quantitative research which collects and analyze numerical data; Babbie (2010) defined "quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques" (p. 34). And, a qualitative research which collects and analyze non numerical data. Guerrero (2016), defined "qualitative researchers often consider themselves "instruments" in research because all observations, interpretations and analyses are filtered through their own personal lens" (p. 23). The quantitative method will use pre- and post- reading test. Data will be obtained from the rubric to answer to what extent a SWBST chart improve students reading comprehension. And, the qualitative instrument will be an interview to answer the question, what are students' perspectives towards the use of the SWBST chart?

Participants

A sample of 80 children between ages 7-9 years old, corresponding to the fourth grade. They are 40 in section A and 40 in section B, 50% of the students are male and the other half are female. All of them are from a public school, situated in Guayaquil. They have A2 40% of students and, 50% are A1 level according to the Common European of Reference (CEFR) according to the last English test taken from the English School before the covid 19 pandemic. Their native language is Spanish and they are studying English as a foreign language. Their social economical background is really poor. In most of the cases both parents are unemployed.

Instruments

To answer the first research question: To what extent does a SWBST chart improve students reading comprehension? a pre- test will be taken before the innovation. The reading test will have reading comprehensions activities with multiple choice answers (see Appendix B) contain comprehension exercises related to the lion and the ugly duckling (see Appendix E) to determine their reading skill level. It will show if they have knowledge of the different elements of narrative texts. A post – reading test also will be taken after the innovation to measure reading comprehension which is the objective of this study, to prove if students can identify the key elements of the story and if they have improved their reading comprehension.

To answer the second research question; what are students' perspectives towards the use of the SWBST chart? A semi-structured interview will be conducted with four open-ended questions about general feelings of students' perspectives about the innovation and challenges during the implementation of it. To know if the research study helps to improve reading comprehension.

1) How did you feel when using a SWBST chart in the reading activity?

2) What is your perspective towards the use of the SWBST chart?

3) What challenges did you find during the activity?

4) Do you believe that your reading comprehension improved by using a SWBST chart?

Each interview will take approximately 5 to 10 minutes. It will be recorded with the responses of each student. This interview will be taken during the on-line English classes.

Data Analysis

Data from the innovation will be analyzed related to two research questions explained below: RQ#1: To what extent a SWBST chart improve students' reading comprehension? A pre and posttest will be graded to evidence if the students improve the reading comprehension. Showing their levels of it, at the beginning and at the end of the innovation. The information will be registered in an excel sheet and then exported to the SPSS program in order to obtain the descriptive data.

RQ#2: What are students' perspectives towards the use of the SWBST chart? A survey will be applied to fifteen students who will be chosen considering their highest scores in the post-test, students with the middle scores, and students with the lowest scores in order to have perspectives from students with different levels of progress and to be able to improve the innovation (See Appendix A). This interview will be applied in week six. It will be transcribed into paper. It would allow the researcher to get a clearer idea of the point of view of the learners on creativity. The interview is written in English and Spanish, because of the experience of the learners.

Ethical Considerations

To avoid future problems, this research study will be explained to the parents and the authority of the institution by the researcher. Letting them know the reasons and benefits of it. The authority signed a letter giving authorization for the realization of this innovation. The participants were fourth grade students and names were not revealed since participants were assigned a number to maintain anonymity of their identities as well as their participation. The results of the data analysis will be presented in charts along with the conclusion that SWBST charts help improve the reading comprehension using non fictional stories. As a recommendation higher comprehension reading stories must be used in other to show better improvements.

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Appendix A

Lesson Plan

Available upon request.

Appendix B

Pre and posttest reading comprehensions exercises

Available upon request.

Appendix C

Pre-Post Rubric for Grading Reading Comprehension.

Available upon request.

Appendix D

Instrument: An interview to get opinions from students.

Available upon request.

Appendix E

Examples of reading comprehension activities.

Available upon request.