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**for the degree of Magister in Teaching English**

**THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO IMPROVE READING  
COMPREHENSION SKILLS WITH STUDENTS OF I-II INTENSIVE COURSES  
AT ESPE – SANGOLQUÍ – ECUADOR, SEMESTER SEPTEMBER 2010 –  
FEBRUARY 2011.**

By

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*María Teresa Llumiquinga Pullupaxi*

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a response to the desire of on-site English learners at ESPE to have new alternatives in language acquisition which help them to develop their talents and mental processes. To start and find a topic that would be worth to research, it was necessary to look for some problems in the learning and teaching process. One of the most serious difficulties concerning this field was to find ways to develop students' reading comprehension; then, many alternative techniques for reading comprehension to be applied in groups of students were analyzed and a very interesting innovative technique was chosen: the use of graphic organizers.

The next step, gathering enough information to support this research for the Theoretical Framework was an engaging activity as it allowed the researcher to discover many issues related with the two key variables of this research work. Thus, in the independent variable, '*Use of Graphic Organizers*', aspects such as definition, importance, advantages, and different kinds of graphic organizers were detailed and exemplified to be later explained to the students during the application of this technique by means of providing a piece of reading and assessment activities by using a graphic organizer.

In the dependent variable, '*Improvement in Reading comprehension*', it was necessary to include a full description of what this skill consists of: characteristics (on the basis of the schema theory), reading models, reading strategies, reading comprehension skills as well as points such as variables affecting reading comprehension, teaching reading comprehension.

The theoretical framework in its last part contains a literature review of the research that has been done in the use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension with data of evidence for effectiveness, showing to what extent research has shown that this technique is useful in education and specifically in reading in a second language.

For this study, there was the participation of two groups of students of I-II of learning English at ESPE: the Control Group and Experimental Group which both took a pre-test and a post-test; additionally, the experimental group carried out a series of systematic activities with the application of graphic organizers to show comprehension as well as a

survey concerning their level of satisfaction in the application of this technique. The methodology was experimental and ethnographic, and the strategy used for the different reading activities was by providing an outline of the two-phases reading proposed in ‘Scaffolding Reading Experiences’ by Michael Graves & Bonnie Graves.

By contrasting the results and the statistical analysis between the pre-test and the post-test it was technically shown that there was a great difference in favor of the Experimental Group with reference to the Control Group. Their performance was highly positive and all the students of this group –even those who were low- had an excellent progress during the application of graphic organizers. In the same way, the survey concerning their level of satisfaction showed high levels of satisfaction and their suggestion was to continue with the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension.

Finally, on the basis of the results obtained, conclusions and recommendations are made; the main conclusion was that the formulated hypothesis, which stated that the use of graphic organizers improved reading comprehension in learning English, was proved and the expectations for the author of this research work are that it will be interesting and useful for future readers.

(This Abstract will be translated into Spanish below in order to abide by the Ecuadorian Constitution)

## RESUMEN

(La siguiente traducción fue realizada a fin de dar cumplimiento a la Constitución Ecuatoriana)

Este trabajo es una respuesta al deseo de los estudiantes de inglés presencial de la ESPE de tener nuevas alternativas para la adquisición del idioma inglés que les puedan ayudar a desarrollar sus talentos y procesos mentales. Para empezar, se buscó un tema que valiera la pena investigar y fue necesario buscar algunos problemas en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Una de las dificultades más graves en este campo fue encontrar formas para desarrollar la habilidad de la lectura comprensiva en los estudiantes; entonces, se analizaron varias alternativas y técnicas para aplicarse en grupos de estudiantes y se escogió una alternativa muy interesante e innovadora: el uso de los organizadores gráficos.

El siguiente paso, la recopilación de suficiente información para sustentar esta investigación a través del Marco Teórico, fue una actividad maravillosa que permitió a la investigadora descubrir muchos temas relacionados con las dos variables del presente trabajo de investigación. Así, en la variable independiente, ‘El Uso de los Organizadores Gráficos’, se detallaron y ejemplificaron aspectos tales como definición, importancia, ventajas y diferentes tipos de organizadores gráficos los cuales fueron más tarde explicados a los estudiantes durante la aplicación de esta técnica a través de una lectura y actividades de evaluación utilizando un organizador gráfico.

En la variable dependiente, ‘Comprensión Lectora’, fue necesario incluir una completa descripción de lo que constituye esta habilidad, sus características (en base a la teoría ‘squeame’), modelos y estrategias de lectura, habilidades de lectura comprensiva y las variables que afectan la comprensión lectora.

El Marco Teórico en su última parte incluye una revisión de la literatura sobre la investigación que se ha realizado en el uso de los organizadores gráficos para mejorar la comprensión lectora con datos de la evidencia de su efectividad, indicando hasta qué punto la investigación ha demostrado que esta técnica es útil en la educación, y específicamente en la lectura en otro idioma.

Para este estudio, hubo la participación de dos grupos de estudiantes de I-II de aprendizaje de inglés de la ESPE: un Grupo de Control y un Grupo Experimental los cuales rindieron un 'pre-test' y un 'post-test'; adicionalmente, el grupo experimental desarrolló una serie de actividades sistemáticas con la aplicación de esta técnica. La metodología fue experimental y etnográfica, y la estrategia utilizada para las diferentes actividades de lectura fue con un esquema de lectura propuesto en el texto de Michael Graves y Bonnie Graves 'Scaffolding Reading Experiences'.

A través de la comparación de los resultados y análisis estadístico entre el pre-test y post-test quedó demostrado que hubo una gran diferencia a favor del Grupo Experimental; su desempeño fue altamente positivo, y todos los estudiantes de este grupo –aún los más bajos- tuvieron un excelente progreso durante la aplicación de los organizadores gráficos. De la misma manera, la encuesta sobre el nivel de satisfacción produjo altos niveles de satisfacción y la sugerencia que ellos dieron fue que se continuara con el uso de los organizadores gráficos.

Finalmente, en base a los resultados obtenidos, se establecieron conclusiones y recomendaciones, la conclusión principal fue que se comprobó la hipótesis planteada, es decir, el uso de los organizadores gráficos mejoró la comprensión lectora en el aprendizaje de inglés, y la autora de esta investigación aspira a que la misma sea de interés y utilidad para sus futuros lectores.

## **INTRODUCTION**

We usually wonder why reading is important and the answer is connected with learning or with the necessity to find an answer to a question. We read for specific purposes; reading comprehension is crucial for learning in general and specifically learning a new language. When an L2 learner reads, he not only learns a new language but he also gets in touch with many issues related to the culture of the speakers of that language such as: customs, religion, history, etc.

In order to get better results and carry out effective learning after reading, the use of graphics is essential to make reading more attractive and easier to comprehend especially when learners are starting the study of a foreign language. The present thesis was developed on the basis of these aspects and with the purpose to show the hypothesis that the use of graphic organizers improves reading comprehension.

There are three main chapters organized as follows:

Chapter I deals with the Theoretical Framework and provides detailed support concerning both variables: the use of graphic organizers and reading comprehension.

Chapter II describes the Methodological Design and reports the results of the data collected from: 2 pre-tests, 6 pieces of reading to apply the use of graphic organizers in reading comprehension, and 1 post-test. It provides a full description of how the methodology was applied and charts with numerical results.

In Chapter III, all the data are analyzed according to the theoretical foundation shown in Chapter I and using statistics to make the analysis reliable and scientific. In this section, the hypothesis was tested and accepted; it showed that the use of graphic organizers is effective in achieving reading comprehension.

Finally, on the basis of the results gotten in this research, recommendations are made.

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## **TOPIC**

The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skills with students of I-II intensive level course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Semester September 2010 – February 2011.

## **BACKGROUND**

**Name:** The Army Polytechnic School, “ESPE” (Escuela Politécnica del Ejército)

**Activity:** “ESPE”, The Army Polytechnic School is a public-military university, managed by the Ecuadorian Army. It has different departments with different degree courses, and one of them is the Department of Languages with headquarters in Quito at Seis de Diciembre and Tomas de Berlanga Ave. This department is made up of three programs: the Distance Linguistics Program which offers the university degree of a Bachelor in Arts, Major in Applied Linguistics; another program is the Distance Proficiency program; and there is the On-site Proficiency program as well. The Distance Programs (Proficiency and the Linguistics career) have 25 supporting centres around the country.

The On-site Proficiency program has its headquarters at Seis de Diciembre Ave. and at three branches: Heroes del Cenepa, La Recoleta, and El Valle.

With regard to the teaching staff, at the moment, the On-site program has 3,800 students, 9 qualified full-time teachers, 83 part-time teachers, 13 military instructors.

The installations of the Department of Languages in general are first class; for example, in the headquarters, it has an ample space and comfortable rooms. Every classroom has its own TV, a DVD, and CD players.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSES**

In order to get the Proficiency Certificate at the on-site program, students have to approve 8 levels of English knowledge in one of the following ways:

- Super-intensive courses: 4 hours a day, 4 days a week for 1 year (2 semesters).
- Intensive course: 2 hours a day, 4 days a week for 2 years (4 semesters).

- Saturdays or Fridays: 4 hours every Saturday or Friday, 4 years (8 semesters).
- The book series used at the moment of presenting the outline of this thesis was *American Channel* which included: a textbook with 3 CDs, a teacher's book, a workbook with a CD, a video program, and a reading book (Readers), all of this for the different levels of proficiency:
  - First and Second levels: American Channel Elementary.
  - Third and Fourth levels: American Channel Pre-Intermediate.
  - Fifth and Sixth levels: American Channel Intermediate.
  - Seventh and Eighth levels: American Channel Upper-Intermediate.

It is necessary to point out that at the moment of the research this series was shifted at the beginning of this research (Semester September 2010/January 2011) to *English Result* by Joe McKenna, Oxford University Press. This new series consists of a textbook with 3 CDs, a teacher's book, a workbook with 1 CD, a video program, a resource book with thematical exercises for practice, and a reading book (Readers), all of this for the different levels of knowledge:

- First and Second levels: English Result Elementary book.
- Third and Fourth levels: English Result Pre-Intermediate.
- Fifth and Sixth levels: English Result Intermediate.
- Seventh and Eighth levels: English Result Upper-Intermediate.

This shifting was made progressively starting with I-II levels, leaving the rest of levels to continue with American Channel.

## **JUSTIFICATION**

This research has been inspired by the permanent observation of students' disappointment with their routine activities during their learning of English. They are generally eager to learn if they find something which responds to their needs and

aspirations, but they usually feel discouraged when they are asked to carry out very simple exercises, or provide logical answers.

The use of different approaches in the development of the four main skills in learning English is part of the everyday teaching and learning process, and the need to have different alternatives becomes more urgent as the days pass because our students would rather pay attention to other entertaining activities from many sources, than listening to an English teacher who uses routinely the same old strategies.

One of the skills to be developed with our students is Reading. With beginners, this activity traditionally consists of one or two paragraphs about an interesting topic; after this reading, there are usually questions for comprehension, and sometimes questions about the message of the reading are included. This process does not guarantee that students really understood the reading or how it contributed to their vocabulary.

Students at ESPE expect teachers to teach them by using different strategies, but they the teaching sometimes does not live up to their expectations, and they have mentioned in informal conversations that they would like to learn English with new visual instruments which motivate them to learn and read more intensively.

In this context, this project tries to show that we can improve our students' knowledge of vocabulary by means of using a motivating technique: graphic organizers through which students do not feel forced to understand but catch ideas spontaneously in a visual and logical way; besides, with graphic organizers, teachers have a better way to assess reading comprehension.

For the aforesaid, it is necessary that all teachers develop action research in their classrooms, so as to look for new strategies and apply them with their students, and develop new theories in language acquisition, specifically for reading comprehension.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

When a person attempts to understand a written message in another language in which he has not become automatic yet, he will necessarily have to divide his attention between the content of that message and the language itself. He will therefore have a great difficulty in understanding. The reader is forced to use all his concentration for word recognition and therefore has no concentration left to decode the written message, and as a result he will not be able to comprehend it thoroughly.

Suzana Maria Lucas Santos de Souza in her article on the Internet, *Developing English Reading* (p.1) says “reading in English has largely become a primary tool in the various fields of human knowledge; the number of English readers is increasing each day. One could assert that the individual who is not familiar with this language will surely face difficulties in succeeding professionally, as English has represented a means of social-economical ascent. According Statistics have shown that more than 60% of the universal literature is written in English, which makes this language the most frequently read in the world.” This is why difficulties in developing this ability in English as a second or a foreign language must be searched and innovative proposals to improve reading comprehension must be submitted.

L2 learners usually encounter problems related to the five components of reading: phonological and phonemic awareness, word reading and phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. However, for some students, the problems could be not only one of these but the result of a combination of two or more of these factors. Or even for others, the difficulty could additionally be other elements such as attention, memory, or the anxiety of understanding English as a second or a foreign language.

In traditional education, the use of old memorizing strategies is part of everyday teaching and learning practice since the thought is that the more words from a list or a text a student is able to memorize the more fluent he will become. Reading comprehension is not restricted to the memorization of isolated words or isolated ideas, it is the distinction

between knowing a word and understanding it appropriately in context; it is getting a main idea, supporting ideas, general message, etc.

In Ecuador, when a traditional teacher wants to present a piece of reading in English, he usually extracts a list of words before having students read it aloud and consult meaning of the words in the dictionary. Then, the teacher reads the text and makes the students answer some questions about it so as to know how much his learners have comprehended.

At ESPE, some teachers continue with these kind of techniques for various reasons, especially because they have to fulfill a deadline of a teaching plan and a syllabus and maybe traditional practice for developing the ability of reading is easier and takes less time. Another reason is because they were taught this way and it was useful at that time, but they have not taken courses to be trained suitably to work with students in reading comprehension using modern alternatives to improve this skill.

## **RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

### **Main Question**

How will the use of graphic organizers help students of First level of ESPE improve their reading comprehension?

### **Secondary Questions**

- What can a teacher do to increase his/her knowledge and quality of teaching reading skills and how students learn to read effectively?
- What beliefs do students of First Level at ESPE hold about teaching and learning reading comprehension?
- What kinds of strategies are used in class in order to teach and learn reading comprehension?
- What is the purpose of using reading comprehension strategies in the classroom?

- How much will students be able to improve their reading comprehension by means of applying the graphic organizers technique?
- Which graphic organizers will be more helpful for their reading comprehension?

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **General Objective**

To improve reading comprehension skills by using graphic organizers with students of I-II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Semester March – August 2010.

### **Specific Objectives**

- To use graphic organizers to identify students' ability to comprehend reading according to the level they are in.
- To show that the use of graphic organizers in class helps students to improve reading comprehension.
- To identify traditional and new strategies used to develop reading comprehension.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

The use of graphic organizers will improve reading comprehension with students of I-II intensive course at ESPE-Sangolquí-Ecuador, Semester September 2010 – February 2011.

## **VARIABLES**

### **Independent Variable**

The use of graphic organizers as a tool to be applied with a group of students when they read.

### **Dependent Variable**

Improvement in reading comprehension.

## VARIABLES OPERATIONALIZATION

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Indicators
<p><b>Independent Variable</b></p> <p>The use of graphic organizers</p>	<p>A graphic organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, or ideas within a learning task. Graphic organizers are also sometimes referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers, or concept diagrams.</p>	<p>Number of hours spending using organizers</p>
<p><b>Dependent Variable</b></p> <p>Reading Comprehension</p>	<p>- Reading is one of the four main skills in language learning</p> <p>- Reading comprehension is an integrated cognitive process where many issues take place and play an important role to contribute to the appropriate communication between the writer and the reader. During this process, many mental events take place and have been considered relevant: surface and deep schemata theory, models of reading, styles of reading which will lead the learner to construct new knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement.</li> <li>• Reading comprehension scores in tests</li> </ul>

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Current trends in pedagogy show that a change of paradigm about teaching and learning from Teacher-Centered to Learner-Centered Education has occurred. Under this new theory, students develop meaningful learning by using their prior background to add new information and construct new knowledge responding to their necessities and are more actively engaged with the subject of study. In a student-centered classroom the role of the instructor is mainly to facilitate active learning by the students.

Various related studies report positive changes for teachers and students in motivation, attitude toward learning, and skills, including work habits, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving abilities. John W. Thomas, in his web article says that learners struggling in traditional instructional settings have often been found to exceed expectations when they have the opportunity to work in new trend strategies such as a problem based learning context, total physical response, use of scaffoldings, graphic organizers, which better match their learning styles or preferences for cooperative work and activity types in the classroom.

One problem for a student to solve in learning a language is comprehending written ideas appropriately, getting an accurate interpretation of a text, demonstrating for him/herself the capacity of expressing someone's ideas accurately and feel he/she has the chance to express his/her written opinion on the basis of different sources of information.

## **1.1 GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

The psychologist David Ausubel has contributed to education significantly by developing the theory of meaningful learning. Jack Hassard considers "to learn meaningfully, students must relate new knowledge (concepts and propositions) to what they already know." To strengthen logical organization, a new theory was developed based on Ausubel's meaningful learning principles that adds "concept maps" to show meaningful relationships between concepts and propositions. It is clear that they both regarded the

concept map as a tool that suggests linkages between the new information to be learned with what students already know.

Graphic organizers can be used at any age and at any stage of learning from brainstorming ideas to presenting research findings because visualization to learn is daily used by anyone who is able to see; he relates what he sees with his prior knowledge, and builds and shares this new knowledge with others. Graphic organizers are suitable for different class learning arrangements, individual, paired, or grouped, and learners love working in groups and developing cooperative activities.

To know more about graphic organizers many resources have been consulted, below some of them are mentioned.

### **1.1.1 DEFINITIONS OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**

Many authors and researchers in education and other areas such as psychology mathematics, and business administration have developed interesting works and provided definitions of graphic organizers as interesting tools for logical learning,

Tracey Hall & Nicole Strangman state that “a graphic organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, or ideas within a learning task. Graphic organizers are also sometimes referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers, advance organizers, or concept diagrams.”

Besides, they mention in the same website article some other definitions and interesting issues about this technique, and refer to graphic organizers as “visual and spatial displays designed to facilitate the teaching and learning of textual material”. Graphic organizers connect important words or statements to diagrams, show a process, or present a sequence. This helps students, who often have difficulty reading and understanding information in textbooks and other expository texts, which are sometimes poorly organized. They also serve as excellent study guides, and can be used for presenting new information or reviewing content.

### 1.1.2 WHY USE GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS?

Margaret Cleveland in her book *Content-Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies* reiterates that “a picture is worth a thousand words” (p.3) and this is true when we as teachers have to present a wide range of material to support learning with all levels of learners; it is the best way to communicate in the teaching-learning process.

Graphic organizers are devices or versatile tools of communication that show the organization or structure of concepts, relationships between concepts and different elements of a topic, identification of main ideas and details of a story, comparison and contrast for two papers, etc. The learner does not have to process as much semantic information to understand its content. Many researchers suggest that these instruments support learning in the classroom for all levels of learners, who benefit from their use.

Using graphic organizers is a visual alternative to create an environment that shows how easy it is to organize ideas and express them orally, by using logical linking of mind maps, conceptual maps, brainstorming, cause and effect charts, flowcharts, etc. According to eHow (Education, How to Information) on the Internet, these elements develop students ability to organize information as well as their creativity to show it from different points of view. In this way, to synthesize information engages them in a variety of analytical and critical thinking for solving problems to further develop cognitive skills. This way, learners can understand content more clearly and can take clear, concise notes to make it easier to retain and apply what they have learned.

Graphic organizers help students identify main ideas and details in their reading, and make it easier to see patterns of comparing and contrasting, sequence of actions, chronological order, etc. Cleveland, in her book *Content-Area Graphic Organizers for Math* (p.3) points out that these organizers contribute to better test scores as they help learners establish relationships between main ideas, and enable them to be more focused when they study.

In the article Time saving Starters – Start slow and let it flow! Teacher tap (p.1), it is stated that “visual thinking can be expressed in many ways. Graphic organizers are one

way for visual thinkers to arrange their ideas. There are unlimited ways to express these visual ideas. Graphic organizers have many names, including visual maps, mind mapping, and visual organizers. Although many students plan with paper and pencil, technology tools can also be very helpful because they allow for easy editing.”

As we can see, many authors have found the importance usefulness of using this interesting and crucial technique. Now, let us see the advantages of using it in class to improve reading comprehension.

### **1.1.3 ADVANTAGES OF USING GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION**

After obtaining results in reading comprehension surveys applied on many groups of students by different experts in this field, José María Madariaga Orbea and Estibaliz Martínez Villabeitia in their Volume 1 of *Anales de Psicología*, article *The Teaching of Reading Comprehension and Metacomprehension Strategies*, a program implemented by teaching staff website, (p. 112), reveal a low level of reading comprehension skills among L2 learners and this is especially due to “a lack of activities oriented at improving text comprehension in the classroom”; in the same sense, Dechant (p.112) points out that “too often the main purpose of reading at school is that the pupils are taught to read words, rather than to understand the texts”.

When reading any kind of text students interact with content, construct meaning and become protagonists of active learning process. A considerable amount of research has shown that graphic organizers can enhance reading comprehension for language acquisition; hence, for example in the article *Graphic Organizers: Research Based, Educational and Teaching*, Michael L. Lujan, outstands that many researchers (Ausubel, Lovitt, Fauntas and Pinnell, Gagnon & Maccini, Dye, among others) believe that graphic organizers provide a visual, organized display of information which leads learners to process patterns to organize this information, think critically, and communicate effectively. He finally states that “graphic organizers combine the printed word and the

spoken word making learning active, which makes it meaningful, and hence leads to the ultimate goal of effective learning for students.”

In creating an organizer, pertinent aspects of a concept or topic are arranged into a pattern using labels. This process is one that research suggests aids comprehension for several reasons:

On the basis of effective results by psychologists, teachers and educational researchers, many alternatives have been proposed and the most interesting technique suggested is the use of graphic organizers. For example, Susan Loshier in her article *What Are the Benefits of Graphic Organizers in Elementary Language Arts?* suggests the following as the most common advantages for applying them:

- It is easier to understand information from a graphic organizer than from a paragraph.
- They can be used at the beginning of a lesson to introduce a piece of reading so that students can infer a context and a message.
- They can show the connection between what a student already knows and the new topic; in this way, meaningful learning is easily developed.
- They can help to identify patterns in students’ reading, for example identifying the main idea in a story as well as the supporting details.
- They help students structure their learning, visualize the way information is presented and organized in texts of any kind of genre, or map out stories to improve comprehension.
- They summarize large quantities of information in a creative and interesting way.
- They develop critical thinking at different levels of deepness even if texts are at elemental stages of knowledge.

#### **1.1.4 KINDS OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND THE MOST USEFUL ONES IN READING COMPREHENSION**

Margaret Cleveland (p.4) invites us to “think of graphic organizers as a new language” and says “using this new language may be a bit awkward at first, but once you gain some fluency you will enjoy communicating in a new way”. From this point of view, in like manner as language has many different symbols, graphic organizers have different shapes matching the needs of communicating a specific kind of information. For example, the Venn Diagram is used to show similarities and differences between two aspects or two elements; a sequential map can be used to express a chain of events in a story, and so on. Moreover, according to the areas of knowledge (social sciences, natural sciences mathematics) or specifically, in the case of language learning: writing, speaking, listening and reading, there are graphic organizers which transmit ideas more eloquently than others. Let us see the most common graphic devices for developing reading comprehension.

##### **1.1.4.1 ORGANIZING, CATEGORIZING, CLASSIFYING AND OUTLINING**

The graphic organizers below are used to help students identify a main concept or superordinate structure and the ranks, or levels, of sub concepts under it. They can be used to illustrate hierarchical information, or categorization; for example, the student is given a list of animals: deer, dog, snake, cat, lizard, cow, iguana, alligator, and whale; it would be a challenge to try to recall the whole list unless this information is organized by establishing how to sort these animals into groups or categories: mammals and reptiles.

**a) Charts**

One way to show this is a chart as follows:

<b>Mammals</b>	<b>Reptiles</b>
deer	snake
dog	lizard
cat	Iguana
Cow	alligator
whale	

Figure 1: Classification of Mammals and Reptiles  
 Source: Taken from: Margaret Cleveland (p.7)

Another way to organize it would be this chart would be the following:

<b>Wild animals</b>	<b>Domestic Animals</b>
deer	dog
snake	Cat
lizard	cow
iguana	
whale	
alligator	

Figure 2: Classification of Mammals and Reptiles  
 Source: Adapted from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.7)

There could be other criteria to classify this information, e.g. meat-eating vs. plant-eating; in other words, whatever way is most useful for the individual student or the task. The most important point here is to find an organization that makes sense to show that a student understands this information.

**b) Webs**

Additionally, and using the same parameters as above, there is another alternative to show these classifications using webs.

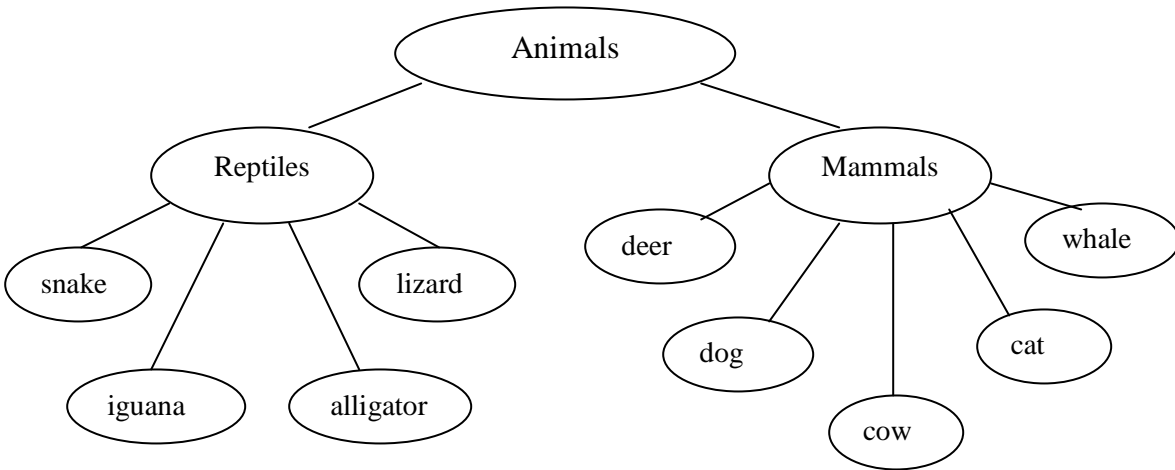


Figure 3: Classification of Mammals and Reptiles  
Source: Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.8)

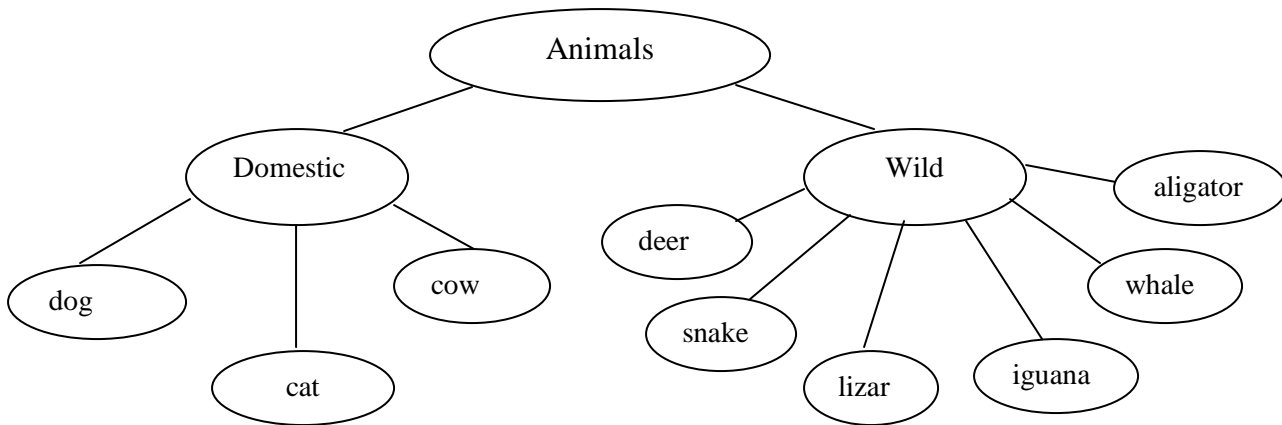


Figure 4: Classification of Mammals and Reptiles  
Source: Adapted from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.8.)

### 1.1.4.2 MAIN IDEA AND DETAILS CHART

The graphic organizers below can help to identify the main ideas of a text with their corresponding supporting ideas in order to analyze a poem, a paragraph, a story, a scientific concept, or a point of view that one holds, and reasons for this position.

For showing a main idea and the supporting ones, we can use star organizers, trees, charts, webs, etc. These kinds of graphics are especially useful for students to organize information from a specific subject in order to remember it for taking a test. The example below is a web for a main idea and details chart:

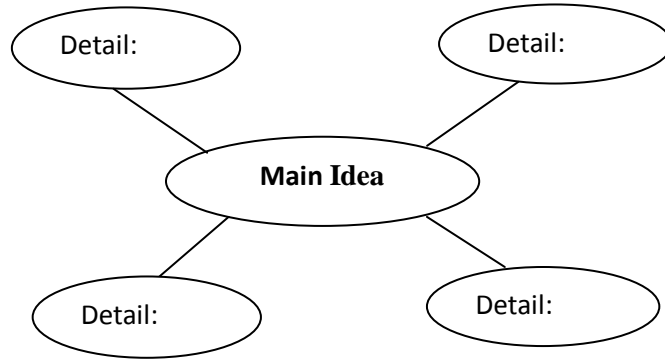


Figure 5: Main idea and supporting details  
Source: Scholastic Red, Student resource web site. (p.6)

Or, it can also be represented as follows:

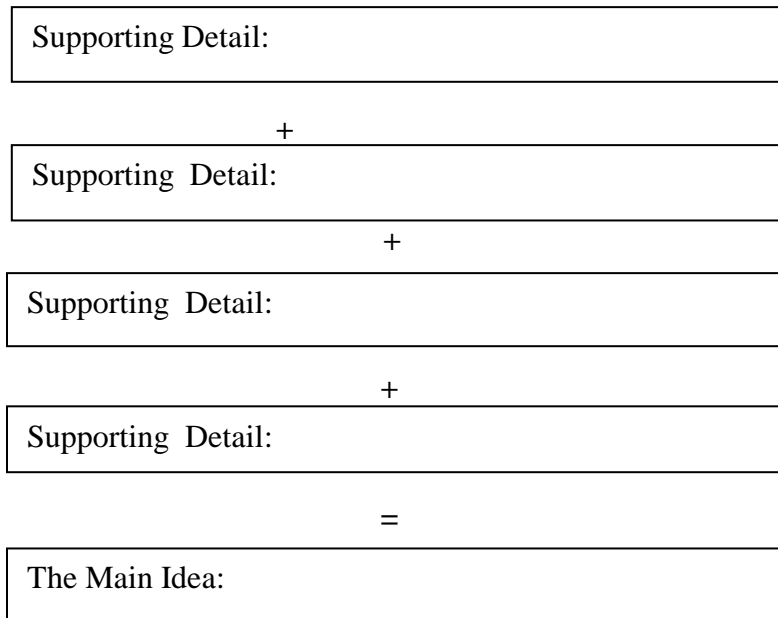


Figure 6: Main idea and details chart  
Source: Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies, Margaret Cleveland (p.16)

Or it can be designed like this:

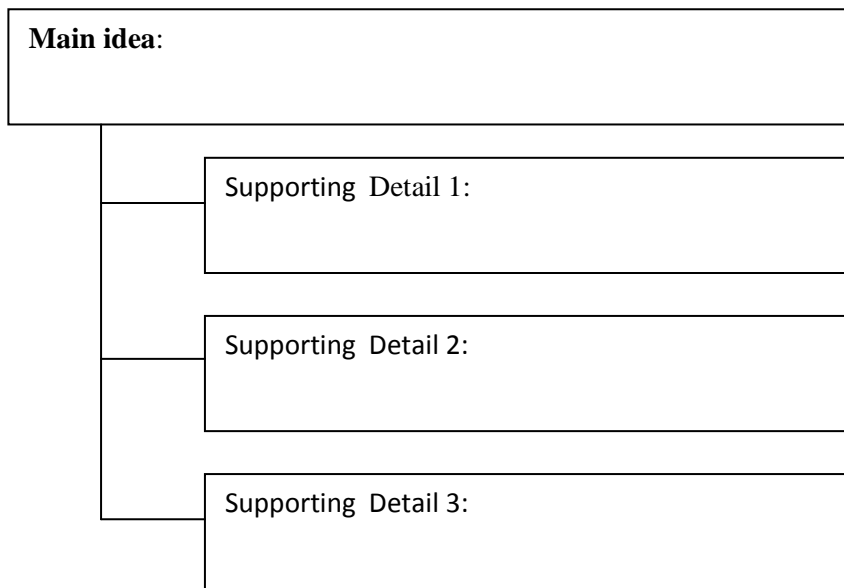


Figure 7: Main idea and supporting details  
Source: Adapted from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.18)

### 1.1.4.3 COMPARING AND CONTRASTING GRAPHICS

The graphics below are used to show differences and similarities between two or more elements: things, people, places, events, ideas, etc. by classifying individual characteristics in different sections of a graphic. In this study we will restrict their use to just comparing and contrasting two elements. Two of this kind are especially interesting here: Venn Diagrams and Comparison Matrices.

#### a) Venn Diagrams

The simplest way to represent this graphic is by drawing two intersecting circles in which one overlaps the other, and the overlapping part represents the ways that the two compared elements are alike. This graphic was named after John Venn who developed it as a way to represent math and logic problems, but nowadays it is also used to illustrate similarities and differences between characters, stories, poems, settings, plots, etc.

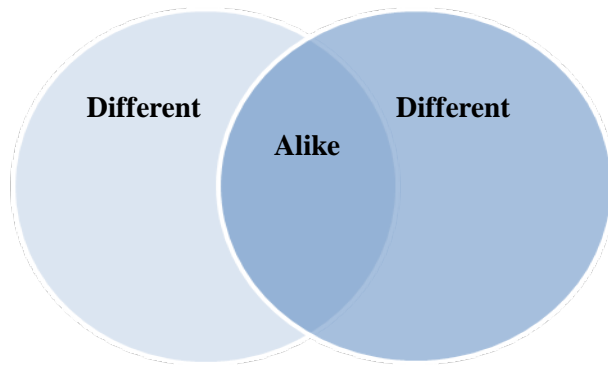


Figure 8: Venn Diagram  
Adapted from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies, Margaret Cleveland. (p39)

An example on the basis of a language art text about Poems and Stories.

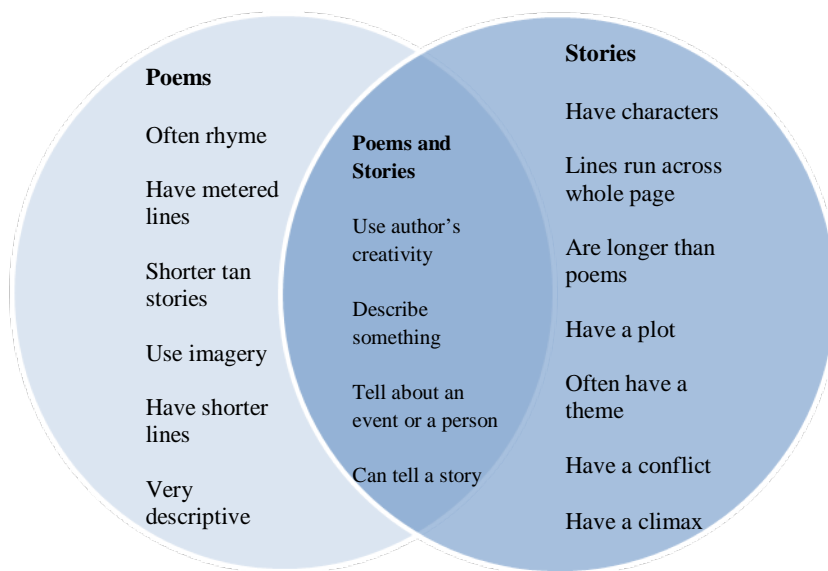


Figure 9: Venn Diagram about similarities and differences between Poems and Stories  
Source: Adapted from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.25.)

## b) Comparison Matrices

Another way to compare and contrast is by using a comparison matrix to link traits or characteristics of three or more elements. In order to create it, it is necessary to identify three important aspects:

- at least three specific things, people, ideas, events to compare.
- specific characteristics or traits to compare.

- on the basis of their characteristics, in what way they are similar or different.

In the following chart there are six students about whom a teacher is speaking:

**Activity:** to fill in information about a piece of reading; for example *My students in the Foreign Language Classroom*.

**Fill in the gaps with the corresponding information according to the texts you have received**

**People in the reading**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Sandra Lopez</b>	<b>Martha Zambernz</b>	<b>Paulette Duvois</b>	<b>Paola Vinueza</b>	<b>Michael Pavlov</b>	<b>Johanna Baker</b>
Traits to be compared	<b>Age</b>	24					
	<b>Nationality</b>		Polish				
	<b>Home city</b>			Lyons			
	<b>Job</b>				Travel agent		
	<b>Hobbies</b>					Computer games, internet	

Figure 10: Comparison matrix to link traits of more than two elements.  
Source: Adapted from Reading Extra, A resource book of multi-level skills activities, Liz Driscoll. (p.11)

**1.1.4.4 SHOWING CAUSE AND EFFECT**

When there is a relationship of cause and effect, the cause is generally mentioned first to emphasize the situation which generated a consequence that is usually placed after the

cause. Graphic organizers that focus on cause and effect relationships are discussed below.

**a) Maps**

When maps show cause and effect, the format is flexible, creating a chart that shows just one effect with different causes and vice versa. For example, talking about someone who used to live in a place where there was a huge snowfall, we can establish many effects due to this state of weather. Let us look at this chart.

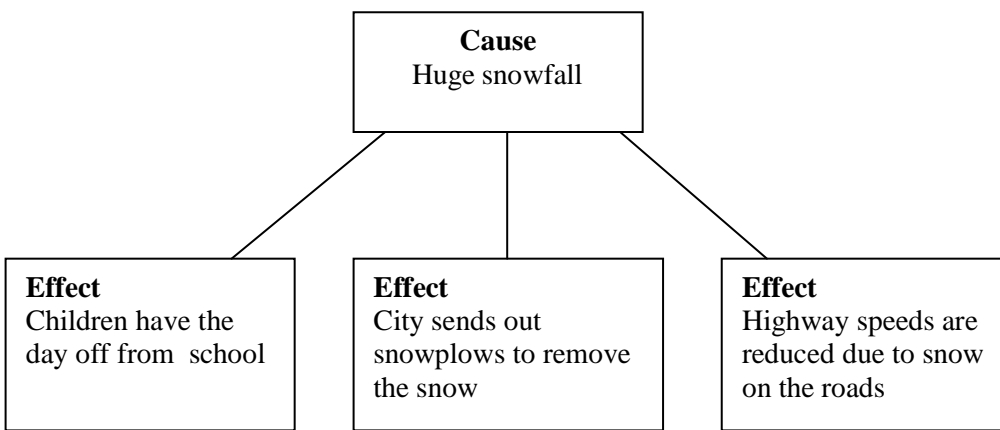


Figure 11: Results of snowfall  
Source: Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.34.)

It also happens that in a piece of reading we can find more than one cause with its corresponding effect, such a chart would look like this:

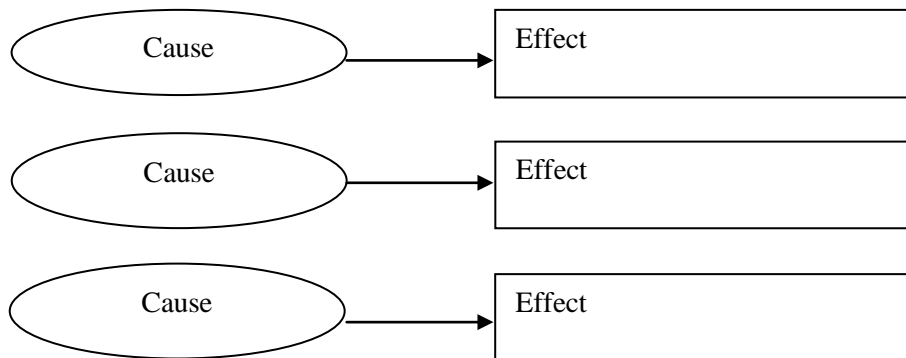


Figure 12: Example of a chart to show Cause and Effect  
Source: Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.34.)

## b) Fishbone

This kind of graphic organizers is also called "Ishikawa Diagram" because Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa of the University of Tokyo used it for the first time in 1943.

A fishbone diagram helps identify causes of a problem. Its major benefit is that it forces you to consider all possible causes of the problem (or effect). By means of a fishbone graphic organizer it is possible to generate a comprehensive list of possible causes of a problem and the identification of these issues is the first step to point to the potential remedial actions. A fishbone looks like a skeleton of a fish.

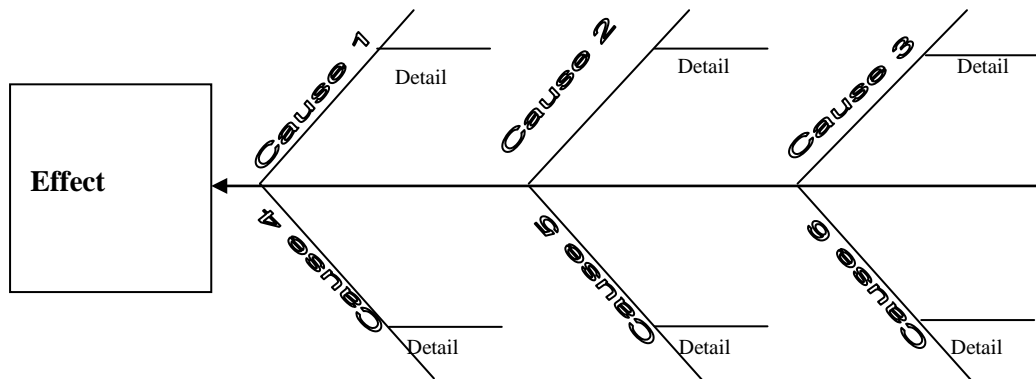


Figure 13: Example of a fishbone to show Cause and Effect  
Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.38.)

### 1.1.4.5 SHOWING STORY SEQUENCE DIAGRAMS

Through this graphic organizer, we can visualize a summary of a story, the order of actions or the identification of important story elements such as: setting, key characters, and the most significant events taking place in a story or narration.

One of the most frequently used sequence charts is given below:

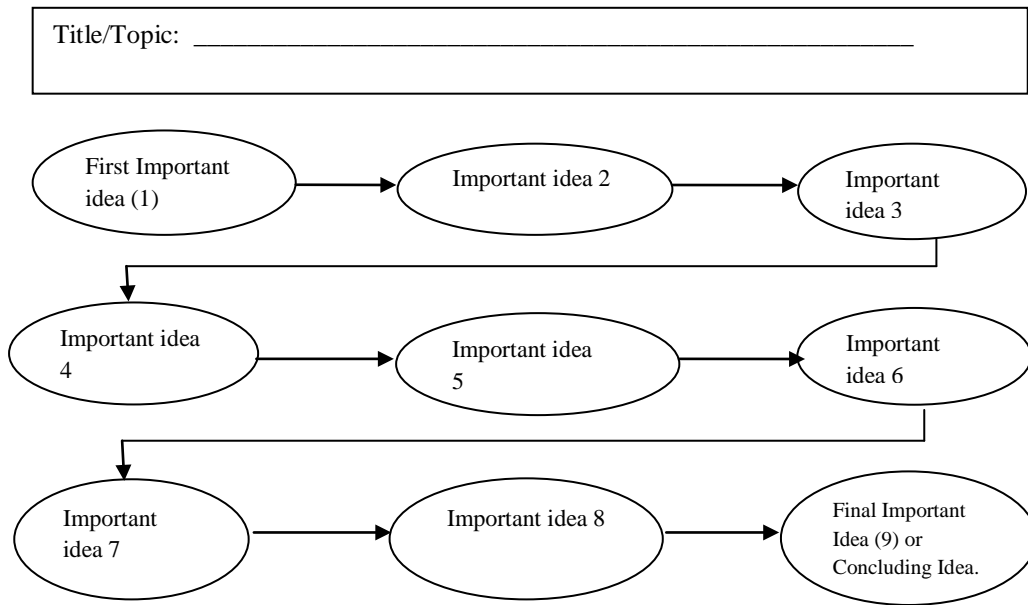


Figure 14: Example of a fishbone to show Cause and Effect  
Taken from Content Area Graphic Organizers: Language Arts, Margaret Cleveland. (p.38.)

The graphic organizers here mentioned are the most common ones used specifically for improving reading comprehension. They may reflect in some way how the brain actually organizes information in schemata. (This key idea is discussed below in 1.2.)

## 1.2 THE READING SKILL

Reading, according to Wikipedia, is regarded as a language skill and a means of language acquisition communication, and a complex interaction for sharing ideas between the text and the reader.

Constructivists view reading as a cognitive, developmental, and socially constructed activity that goes beyond embedded meaning in the text, and current research views reading as a more dynamic process in which the reader "constructs" meaning based on information he/she gets from the text. Website article *Reading Comprehension Overview* by Landmark College Institute for Research and Training defines reading comprehension as "... an holistic process of constructing meaning from written text

through the interaction of the knowledge the reader brings to the text; the reader's interpretation of the language; and the situation in which the text is read.”

Reading in the target language is like reading in ones' native language; this means that it is not always necessary to read and understand each isolated and individual word in L2 but the idea as a whole. The skill of reading requires a series of steps to enable readers to turn writing into meaning and achieve such goals of fluency, comprehension, criticism, and mentally interact with the message and the writer's thinking.

Current trends in teaching and learning a second or a foreign language usually mention many issues related with the processes a reader has to go through to achieve reading comprehension. Janette M. Hughes, for example, in her blog *Teaching Language and Literacy, Reading Process*, mentions the following:

- Activating prior knowledge
- Predicting
- Visualizing
- Questioning
- Drawing inferences
- Finding important/main ideas
- Summarizing
- Synthesizing
- Monitoring comprehension
- Evaluating

Hughes says the good reader goes through a reading process that begins before s/he starts to read the text in detail. S/he previews the text, then s/he engages in reading and uses context to get meaning by sorting ideas, with graphic organizers, as suggested here,

visualizing and making notes. After that, s/he generally reacts to the reading by drawing conclusions, making judgments, and thinking about the text.

This reading process can be carried out anywhere people feel in the need to get information from a text; it can be done silently and aloud and for different purposes.

### **1.2.1 What is reading comprehension?**

Reading comprehension is defined as an integrated cognitive process (Read Right Systems Empowering the Mind) in which many issues take place and play an important role to contribute to the appropriate communication between the writer and the reader, and the latter will be able to achieve a higher level of thinking when his/her brain has gained higher levels of inference, analysis or synthesis of information. The reader begins from the association of meaning with individual words and goes through reasoning with successive words (phrases, sentences, etc.), interpreting words in a particular context, to comprehending on qualitatively different levels of comprehension which will lead him to construct new knowledge.

### **1.2.2 Reading as interpretation of experience and graphic symbols**

A graphic symbol is defined as “a written symbol that is used to represent speech” (The Free on-line Dictionary), and for some authors it is a visual representation of speech or thinking.

About the reading skill, Emerald Dechant points out that “definitions of reading can generally be divided into two types: a) those which equate reading with interpretation of experience generally, and b) those which are concerned with the traditional interpretation of graphic symbols” (p.5). Something that is not well-known is that the second category is included by the first one.

For the present study it is important to take into account the definition given by Dechant (p.6): “In the broadest sense, reading is the process of interpreting sense stimuli...

Reading is performed whenever one experiences sensory stimulation”. This was expressed considering reading as a sensorial process to comprehend situations such as reading pictures, reading faces, or reading the weather, reading a barking dog or another’s facial expression. In the same way, Dechant makes a link to Benjamin Franklin, who in 1773 in *Poor Richard’s Almanac* referred to this point of view when he wrote “Read much, but not too many books”. These words were expressed assuming that to be good readers it is necessary to become good readers of graphic symbols, and this relates to the theory of meaningful learning, which involves the construction of knowledge on the basis of the previous background experienced by the learner plus the new knowledge obtained from graphic symbols.

On the other hand, definitions equating reading with the interpretation of graphic symbols have been provided by many writers who described reading as involving the “comprehension and interpretation of the symbols on the page” as a complex interaction of cognitive and linguistic processes with which readers construct a meaningful representation of the writer’s message, or as giving significance intended by the writer to the graphic symbols by relating them to what the reader already knows (Dechant 6).

Dechant also sees this skill as the “reconstruction of the message encoded graphically by the writer, as constructing meaning from it); as an interactive process involving both the reader’s previous fund of knowledge and the words in the text; as a process of putting the reader in contact and in communication with the writer’s ideas which are cued by the written or printed symbols; as a process of building representation or a mental model of text” (p.6).

### **1.2.3 The process of reading comprehension or decoding written text**

Reading is more than a process of identifying or naming a word on a printed page. Decoding requires the reader to reconstruct the message encoded graphically by the writer; decoding occurs when meaning is associated with the written symbols and only when the meaning that the writer wanted to share with the reader has been received.

Dechant, (pg. 9) says “Reading entails both reconstructing an author’s message and constructing one’s own meaning using the print on the page” and “reading comprehension is partly the reconstruction of an author’s intended meaning.” So, reading is not just a matter of communicating signs or symbols, letters or words, it is the communication of meaning. Therefore, reading is concerned with the interaction by which meaning encoded in visual stimuli by an author becomes meaning in the mind of the reader.

Creating meaning from symbols consists of two processes: the visual process which involves bringing the stimuli to the brain, and the mental process that consists of interpreting the stimuli after they get to the brain. However, it is necessary that the symbols must be interpreted and given meaning by the reader. Reading requires not only the interpretation of the graphic symbols but it requires a reconstruction of the events which underlie the symbols (Dechant, p.9).

An interesting source of information about comprehension mentioned by Dechant is Frank Smith, a psycholinguist regarded as an essential contributor to research on the nature of the reading process. He observes that comprehension is “the basis of reading and learning to read” (10) and reiterates that cognitive structure, which he calls “nonvisual information” determines whether the reader comprehends or not; this means comprehension is related to what the reader knows, the “possibility of relating whatever we are attending to in the world around us to the knowledge, intentions, and expectations we already have in our heads”. He concludes this with “reading is intrinsically more difficult for the novice than for the experienced reader.” (p.10).

Dechant (p.10) states that Smith differentiated between information and meaning, and said information is not what the brain is primarily concerned with, and did not believe that reading is the acquisition of information from text or that it is a matter of receiving particular facts put into a text by the writer, or that writers encode messages in text which readers in turn must decode, he suggested that the brain deals with meaning and understanding, he said “Either information becomes understanding when it gets into

brain... or it remains an isolated fact.” In this phrase, he made noticeable that we can receive a lot of information. But not everything is meaningful enough to remain in our brain as knowledge; much of it is not relevant and becomes an isolated fact.

#### **1.2.4 Levels of comprehension**

Some authors talk about levels of comprehension and start with the encoding of the meaning of a single word as the most elemental form of comprehension; a second level is a semantic encoding, the appropriate meaning of a word in a context; a third level is the comprehension of units of increasing size such as phrases, sentences, paragraphs and whole text. Dechant (12) says “readers must be able to extract meaning from units larger than a single word, phrase or sentence. They must be able to develop a representation of extended text, of paragraphs and multiple paragraphs.” Thus, a reader must not just comprehend or decode words in isolation but also larger structures of ideas encoded by a writer. Besides, comprehension depends on the reader’s background, on his/her ability to understand on different levels of organization, inference and appreciation of the text; on the purpose of his/her reading, for general knowledge, for study process, for carrying out a research work, etc.

#### **1.2.5 Characteristics of reading**

It is important to think over some relevant characteristics of reading as a skill since it is usually believed that there is a close relationship between the knowledge of the reader and the kind of text he reads. The reader should know these characteristic so as to understand some text difficulties that he needs to manage with as well as to how he interacts with the text and the writer.

##### **1.2.5.1 Surface and deep structure**

Experts say that reading has several characteristics. Let us mention the most important ones:

When we talk about symbols or the graphic cue system we talk about “surface structure”, physical aspect of communication, visual information of written language or the observable features of language, in the syntax; on the other hand, meaning is regarded as the “deep structure”, that is the association of the written or oral words with mental interpretation. As a result, L2 learning development of reading comprehension is usually affected by prior experience in L1.

An article on *Surface structure systems and Deep structure System* (1) contains the following chart that summarizes the differences between these two characteristics:

Surface Structure Systems	Deep Structure Systems
<b>Grapho-Phonic</b> -letter/sound knowledge; -phonemic awareness -decoding	<b>Semantic</b> word meanings/associations; precision in word usage
<b>Lexical</b> -visual word recognition -visual memory for words	<b>Schematic</b> constructing meaning at the whole text level; prior knowledge that governs storage and retrieval of information
<b>Syntactic</b> -language structure at the word, -sentence and text level	<b>Pragmatic</b> -social construction of meaning, -reading for specific purposes and audiences – adopting the social customs of a reader, reading habitually

Definitely, comprehension resides in both surface and deep levels of structure.

Another characteristic of reading is its description as a high-level thinking process since the reader, from the first moment s/he gets in touch with the piece of reading, s/he starts a series of associations of situations, from the most simple to the most complex levels of interpretation, analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge. S/he is able to do this within his social, language, and cultural contexts.

We create significant meaning by connecting new ideas to the ones which are already in our background, by the links or chains with which we connect new information to that we already know are their common concepts.

In the Higher order Thinking blog by Center for Developing and Learning (p.1) it is said that Higher-order thinking in reading requires that we develop many processes with the information we read; we must understand the facts, make inferences from them, connect them to other facts and concepts, make categorizations of them, manipulate them, put them together in new or novel ways, and apply them as we seek new solutions to solve new problems with them.

#### **1.2.5.2 Schema theory and reading**

Schema theory was developed by psychologist R.C. Anderson although the word “schema” was first used by Jean Piaget in 1926. According to Kevin Laurence Landry in his article *Schemata In Second Language Reading (2)*, “this learning theory views organized knowledge as an elaborate network of abstract mental structures which represent one's understanding of the world,” Dechant (111) describes schema theory as “a cognitive theory that emphasizes cognition; conceptual learning; the process of understanding; mental events; conscious experience; acquiring, processing, organizing, storing, and retrieving of information; thinking; reasoning; problem solving; and meanings.”

These concepts reflect the connection of knowledge that the reader already possesses (background knowledge, cross-cultural knowledge, the reading structural knowledge, symbols, semantic meaning of individual words, sentences, idioms, etc.) and the new information that he finds in the written text which will be useful to predict and infer facts to construct a meaningful reading.

This theory could help a second language teacher to better understand the process of reading of his/her L2 learners because they may benefit from either being more prepared for a text or the text itself could be modified for easier comprehension. If the learner does not possess the appropriate schema or he is not able to activate it, this would lead to incorrect construction of meaning.

Nowadays theorists believe that schema is a structure of data of general ideas stored in one's brain; it has variables and slots. Under this principle, meaning exists in the reader's mind and it depends on if he has activated his brain schemata.

Schemata are higher-level complex knowledge structures that function as "ideational scaffolding" (Landry 2). They are viewed as something influencing the reader's opinion even before reading a text.

In a few words, reading comprehension is a higher order thinking process which involves such elements as: concept formation, concept connection (includes inferring), getting the big picture, visualization, problem solving, questioning, analytical thinking, practical thinking, creative thinking, and metacognition, as mentioned in the Conference about Increasing Reading Comprehension with Higher Order Thinking Skills, U.S.A, Department of Education's 2010 Reading Institute.

Research on the theory of schema, then, has had a great impact on understanding reading.

### **1.2.5.3 Schema as a cognitive structure**

Schema theory is mainly focused on a schema as a cognitive structure, and the schema framework is a model of the structure of knowledge. This means that the mind uses schemata or mental organizing structures to guide perception and cognition and to categorize objects or events for a long-term memories (Dechant, p.111).

The organization of concepts or subsumers is hierarchical and categorized from the most inclusive at the top to the least inclusive at the bottom. These related subsumers are the schemata. The element that is placed at the top is called *superordinate*, which means of higher rank or status or value or quality; it includes various different words representing subordinated elements or subcategories called hyponyms, and they can be represented as tree-like diagrams (Dechant, p.111)

For example, if information deals with the concept of "trees", some kinds of them, and origin of the name and place, this information would probably be organized as below:

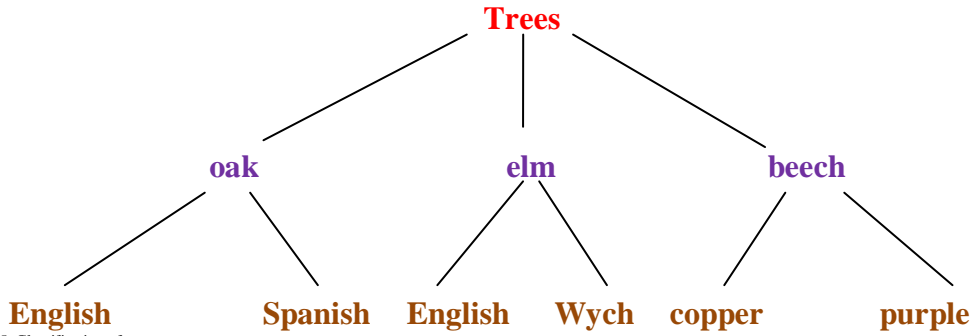


Figure 15: Classification of trees

Source: Taken from: Graphic organizers about trees (p.1)

We would take “trees” (in red) as the superordinate word, which includes some kinds of them (in blue); these kinds of trees have different origins (in brown).

However, if the information is about a “tree” and its parts, the hyponymy tree would look like the diagram below:

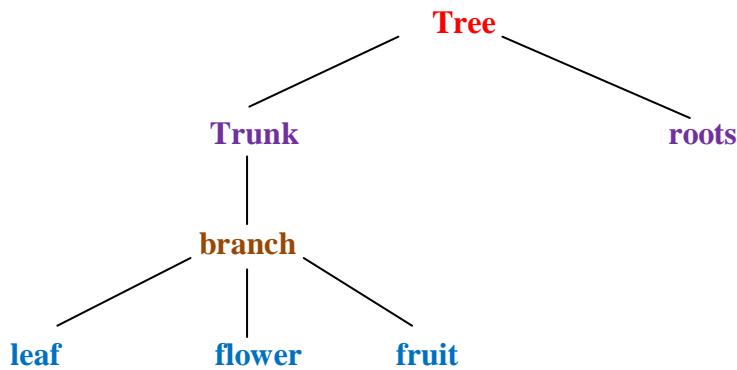


Figure 16: Classification of trees

Source: Adapted from: Graphic organizers about trees (p.1)

If information read by students deals with “animals”, there is the chance that he thinks about categorizing some words related to this word and creates a tree like the diagram below:

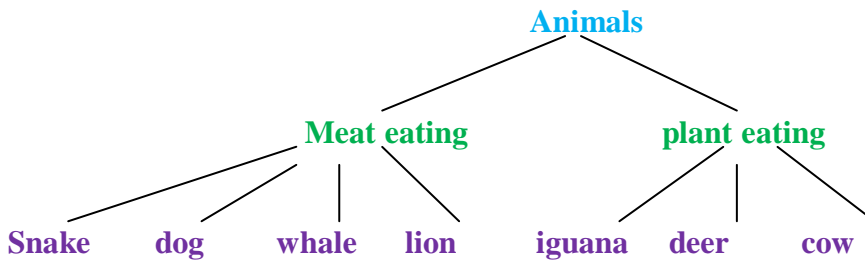


Figure 17: Classification of animals

Source: Adapted from: Graphic organizers about trees, Images(p.1)

The meaning the learner constructs from reading plays a very important role in the process of learning a new language. Dechant (112) declares that “objects, experiences, events or words take on meaning when they elicit a mental representation in the content of consciousness; that is when they are related to a concept already in one’s cognitive structure” which corroborates once again the point about meaningful learning, and meaning depends on the reader’s linguistic experience or background, his cognitive base, his topical knowledge, his purpose and expectancy, in a few words his schemata.

All this spiral process of continuous construction and reconstruction of knowledge and enrichment of prior knowledge when a reader comprehends his reading is part of his daily learning.

#### 1.2.5.4 The Reader and Text Interaction

Under the schema theory, Dechant (115) says there is a “symbiotic relationship” between the reader and the text, he believes that reading and comprehension occur when the reader interacts with the print; hence, reading comprehension depends on what is in the reader’s mind and what is in the text. When this interaction occurs, an episodic memory representation is formed in the reader’s mind. So, the meaning that the reader can attain depends on his knowledge system, the analysis of the context and the characteristics of the message.

Since meaning comes from the reader’s mind, reading and comprehension are based on his ability to extract meaning from visual information - constituted by the surface structure- and basically from the experience and knowledge in his brain stored in his memory or deep structure of the language.

#### 1.2.6 Reading models



Figure 18: Bottom-up / Top-down chart  
Source: Taken from Ray and Tree – English

Day after day, people find piles of information to deal with when checking the newspaper, reading emails, reviewing subject information to study for an exam, etc. With those volumes of reading to face, it is necessary that we have alternatives to process all that data with logical reasoning so as not be wrapped in confusing isolated ideas.

Most of us read regularly as part of our lives and jobs to develop our skills and general knowledge, even more if we are working in the intellectual field. For example, we read project documents, blogs, e-books, newspapers, trade journals, articles, etc. since we consider them useful documents which can help us to gain any useful information; we sometimes re-read them several times to get a full understanding of the content.

Learners of English as a Foreign Language are not usually so interested in reading authentic material in the target language unless they are keen on learning this language as a profession or when they are aiming a scholarship in a specific area and need to get familiar with the lexicon of that field.

Models of reading deal with word recognition and comprehension. There are three current exemplars that our pupils should develop: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive.

#### **1.2.6.1 Bottom up model**

Rakesh Ranjan (p.1) says about this model “it is also known as “part-to-whole processing of a text” and it is based on the principle that the text has already been hierarchically organized, whereas the reader processes the information starting with the smallest linguistic unit, gradually compiling higher units to finally get the complete process. It means that the reader recognizes letters, he combines them to recognize words, and then goes on to phrases, sentences, paragraphs and complete text processes.

This process begins with the fixation of one’s eyes and the decoding of the printed word. During this process, the reader associates the many issues like the length of the word and the usually rapid lexical access of that fixated word. When oral reading happens, the phonological route is probably the primary means to recognize unfamiliar words in print,

and it also involves a mental visual analysis of individual words and strings of words (Keith Rayner Keith Rayner, *Understanding Eye Movements in Reading* p.317).

In the teaching field, this bottom-up teaching approach has been tested through eye movement especially used in the Grammar-Translation Method; therefore, “reading is a process of decoding written symbols in which texts are the containers of rules and codes to be deciphered to get meaning” as mentioned by Chin-ching Lee.

From this view, comprehension is the result of the structural and lexical analysis of the text in which each word has syntactic and semantic components leading to a contextual or pragmatic interpretation.

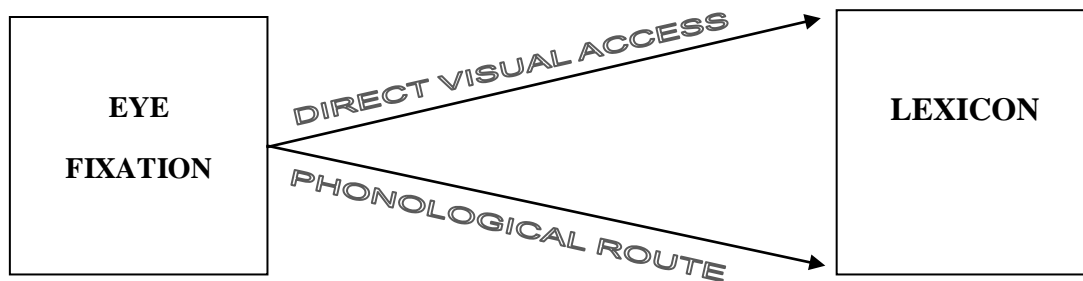


Figure -19: Chart of the process of comprehension

Source: Adapted from *Understanding and Teaching Reading*, Emerald Dechant (p. 25).

This model, however, has limitations. It is inflexible and linear because it does not demonstrate that the reader does not move his creativity from lower to higher level processing and vice versa, according to Dr. Zaida bt. Zainal in the *Jurnal Kemanusiaan* (p.104). Nevertheless, we cannot do without the bottom-up model as it can be successfully used with poor readers or beginners.

### 1.2.6.2 Top-down model

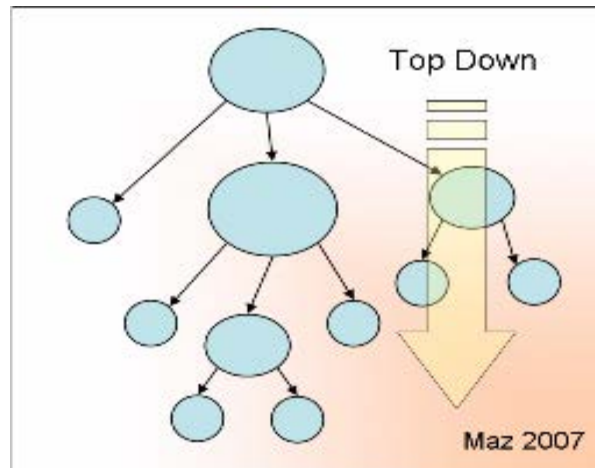


Figure 20: Top-down chart  
Source: Taken from Ray and Tree – English

The advocates of this model suggest that the bottom-up model is not enough to achieve reading comprehension; the reader must begin this process in his mind with meaning-driven processes or through making a hypothesis about a text; and then he identifies, letters and words and confirms his hypothesis. The reader's schemata (his knowledge, experience, and concepts) brought to the text are part of the process. As stated by Chin-ching Lee, in this sense, "top-down reading strategies contain predicting, inferring, and focusing on meanings. Reading is actually "a psychological guessing game". Thus, the more schemata you bring to a unit of print the more efficient your reading comprehension will be.

Under this strategy, the learner activates his content schemata as he uses his prior knowledge to make reading comprehension possible and, at the same time, he enhances his language learning.

This model goes from the whole to the parts, and here, according to Dechant (26), the reader is said to be using the deep structure of the language to interpret the surface structure. Most top-down models describe reading as an inferential, constructive process characterized by the formation and testing the hypothesis of the text in which the

contribution of the reader is an essential part. Besides, a series of steps is suggested in the process of reading:

1. Recognition- initiation
2. Prediction
3. Confirmation
4. Correction
5. Termination

(Dechant, p. 26)

Concerning the top-down model, Zainal in her *Critical Review of Reading Models and Theories in First and Second Language*, states that it represents a process of four cycles: optical, perception, syntactic, and meaning construction. Besides, she says that these cycles overlap with each other as the reader tries to predict or hypothesize the meaning of the text. Then, she mentions the above steps of the process.

According to Zainal, in the **recognition-initiation** stage, the reader recognizes the visual graphic input of the written text; then, s/he *predicts* or hypothesizes the meaning of the data input. After that, the reader tries to check his/her hypotheses by confirming or disconfirming original predictions using follow-up information, whether or not the information is as expected. When the reader cannot confirm his/her predictions s/he makes corrections. In the termination step, the reader completes the process of reading.

Dechant (p.130) also deals with this model and notes that the core of reading is prediction because it “brings potential meaning to the texts eliminating in advance irrelevant alternatives” which also means reducing the level of uncertainty.

He also highlights the syntactic and semantic context that the reader needs to construct meaning and the need of going through the above process. He additionally mentions that the reader’s nonvisual information (or schemata) is a prime determinant or source of the reader’s prediction, but they are not always correct. So, the reader must have a developing and constantly modifiable set of expectations about what he will find in the

text and about where the text as a whole must be leading. This is called “reader’s specification of text”. Writers must also have their own expectations, which are also constantly changing; there is a point at which readers and writer interact and this is the text itself. At this point it could be said that the reader’s and writer’s communication is perfect because their expectations are the same and the reader’s comprehension of the text is complete.

### **1.2.6.3 The interactive model**

This model deals with the principle that the two models mentioned above are actually inseparable. It is the interaction between bottom-up and top-down processing, and the interaction between text and reader; it is the process of combining textual information with the information the reader brings to a text. Talking about L2 readers, it is important to state the extent to which foreign language readers use lower-level processing skills of reading (bottom-up) to interact with higher level strategies (top-down).

In Al-Hassan’s article (8) about interactive reading by using computers, she asserts that we as teachers should consider that interactive reading has two implications in the classroom: (a) we have to devote time to develop the reading activity by using the bottom-up model, as students might have been able to develop higher level skills in their native language but maybe they might not been able to transfer these skills to the target language; and (b) We should also devote some time to the top-down model as reading for global meaning developing a willingness to make intelligent guesses at meaning. This way, L2 learners develop appropriate schemata for the proper interpretation of the text and they are able to achieve a high level of comprehension and interaction with the writer at the same time.

According to the blog of the University of Malaysia (*Models of Reading: Interactive-Constructive and New Literacy Approaches*) both modes of information processing, top-down and bottom-up alike, are seen as strategies that are flexibly used in the accomplishment of reading tasks. Hence, interactive approaches rely on both the graphic and contextual information. The best readers in any language are those who use the

strategy of interactive reading, which integrates elements of both bottom-up and top-down reading.

This brings us now to a discussion of the different reading strategies that readers use to maximize their comprehension. These same strategies need to be taught to foreign language readers.

### **1.2.7 Reading strategies**

Reading strategies are specific behaviors or thought processes that readers use to contribute to improve their reading; they are incorporated into the construction of new knowledge. A strategy is considered by Alderson and Bachman (p.307) as “the conscious efforts the learners make” and as “purposeful activities, techniques, tactics, potentially conscious plans, consciously employed operations, learning skills, basic skills, functional skills, cognitive abilities, language processing strategies, problem-solving procedures” in learning a second language.

There are different criteria to classify strategies as a set of steps, plans and activities used by the learner to facilitate the obtaining, storage, retrieval and use of information. The ones below suggested by Oxford (p.12) seem to be used in any skill of learning a language and the most important for the purposes of the present thesis are:

#### **1.2.7.1 Cognitive learning strategies**

They constitute the use of reasoning, analysis, note-taking, summarizing, synthesizing, outlining, reorganizing knowledge to reach stronger schemas, practicing sounds and structures; clarifying; inductive inferring, memorization among others that the reader or teacher consider appropriate for different pieces of reading. The writer of this thesis considers that graphic organizers in reading would come under cognitive learning strategies.

#### **1.2.7.2 Metacognitive learning strategies**

These are related to identifying one’s own learning style preferences and needs, gathering and organizing materials, arranging a study space and schedule, monitoring mistakes

choosing, prioritization knowledge issues, planning useful tasks, preparation in advance, selective attention and others. The writer of this thesis has mentioned metacognition in 1.2 above. The decision to use an appropriate graphic organizer in reading is a clear example of a metacognitive strategy.

The reader needs not just to have knowledge but certain abilities not only to learn new knowledge but also to process information. There are readers who have relevant knowledge; however, they are not so skillful at processing reading appropriately.

According to Alderson and Bachman (p.48) the ability that distinguishes good readers from bad readers or good understanding from bad understanding in second language learning seems to be what some researchers have called Schematic Concept Formation. This could be verbal or non-verbal and consists of finding a common set of features which make up a single graphic pattern or a set of patterns and the ability to understand text and the story structure of it. He notes that much of the reading is a general cognitive, problem solving ability which underlies all language processing, not only reading.

It is essential to establish what strategies need to be taught which are relevant to reading comprehension skills. This means what makes a good reader in contrast with a poor reader, identifying and contrasting their understanding, process and product as well as what skills are thought to be needed and constructing suitable tests to measure such skills. When a learner sees pictures or graphics in a book feels more motivated to read and discover information about them. He prefers to be evaluated with the use of interesting graphics which involves lines, arrows, bubbles, boxes or any other visual representation wherein he has to complete to show ideas by following a logically organized order.

*When mentioning the best strategies to reading comprehension, it is crucial to cite and have in mind the impact that a visual attraction bears on the reader; he finds a text easier, entertaining, and, for sure, fascinating to read for different specific purposes when he is familiar with graphic organizers.*

When we read we do not necessarily read every word in the text, it depends on our interest; we may read an advertisement website to look for prices, or we may be

interested in reading a science book or literature book in detail because we want to learn every aspect about them.

According to our reasons for reading, there are various strategies to help us to cover a vast amount of information very rapidly. Some of the key reading strategies needed to improve reading skills have been discussed in the previous lines. The decision to use one or another of these is, in fact, a metacognitive strategy (see above).

### **1.2.8 Reading comprehension skills**

#### **1.2.8.1 Skimming**

According to Professional Development Resources for Educators and Libraries, **skimming** is a technique used to quickly identify main ideas in a text by skipping over words by reading the first and last paragraph, using headings and subheadings, and examining illustrations. Skimming is reading for gist and it is done at a speed three to four times faster than normal reading. It is often used when there is lots of information to read in a limited period time, for example, it is necessary to read material for doing research, and the most relevant data should be selected from a lot of information.

The University of Hawai'i System suggests the following ways to skim:

- Read the title.
- Read the introduction or the first paragraph.
- Read the first sentence of every other paragraph.
- Read any headings and sub-headings.
- Notice any pictures, charts, or graphs.
- Notice any italicized or boldface words or phrases.
- Read the summary or last paragraph.

This skill can be used at the very beginning reading to make understanding fast and easy for learners who could get bored when they are required long sustained answers. Then, it is also interesting to use authentic material from a newspaper, a magazine, etc. and make

them identify the main ideas rapidly filled in simple charts. Finally, with more advanced students, we can get deeper analysis in skimming such as finding appropriate information for preparing a report, an article, etc. In here, students could develop more complex graphic organizers such as a fish bone to set up cause and effect or a Venn diagram to find similarities and differences.

### **1.2.8.2 Scanning**

T. Smirnova, at RTU Valodu Institututs, in her article Reading to locate specific information: Scanning, refers to this skill as “a strategy for reading to answer a question or locate a specific piece of information by ignoring unrelated information and searching for key words, phrases, figures, or ideas”; it is used to seek particular information such as dates, names, places, in a newspaper, magazine or book; it is used when we want to find a telephone number in a telephone book, the meaning of a word in a dictionary, or more specifically historical dates in a history book.

The University of Hawai’i System (2011), mentions several suggestions about scanning for reading.

How to Scan:

- State the specific information you are looking for.
- Try to anticipate how the answer will appear and what clues you might use to help you locate the answer. For example, if you were looking for a certain date, you would quickly read the paragraph looking only for numbers.
- Use headings and any other aids that will help you identify which sections might contain the information you are looking for.
- Selectively read and skip through sections of the passage.

This skill can specially be developed to fill in charts starting with beginners and simple information; then, this could turn more complex by using longer texts.

### **1.2.8.3 Reading for detail or detailed reading**

There is a kind of information that requires reading and understanding the content of a text in a very detailed way; this is a serious study wherein we need more concentration, highlighting, making notes at the margin, memory retaining, rereading to fully learn the content. For example, reading a letter, a novel, a law book require detailed reading for tackling this type of material which may be time consuming but it is the best way to absorb the information.

The use of this skill would be appropriate for higher levels, advance learners who will get a great development of high such abilities as analysis, synthesis, inference, etc., to be used with any kind of graphic organizer since the information gotten from the text is deep.

### **1.2.8.4 Intensive reading**

This takes place when it is concerned with the language rather than the text and it is usually referred to extracting specific lexical, syntactical or discoursal aspects of the target language. Teachers might ask students to focus on a particular kind of vocabulary or structure in order to make them be more aware of the language study. It might be necessary to read the text more than one time in order to find the information required.

This kind of reading has been considered relevant by many authors and experts like Doubting to shuō, who asserts that the only way people really learn how to use new grammar or vocabulary correctly is by encountering them in a *large variety* of contexts. In other words, even after you have “learned” a word, it is still *extremely* beneficial to keep reading material which includes it. And it is also surely applicable for structures from the most simple to the most complex and sophisticated.

This skill is used specially for grammar and vocabulary purposes and it could be tested by using tables or for classifying, categorizing, and outlining grammar points or vocabulary chunks . (See 1.1.4.1 above).

Finally, we can summarize the foregoing reading skills by saying they are not mutually exclusive, they can be used combined and wonderfully developed; and as Alderson and Bachman say (p.312), reading is “a constant process of guessing: hypothesizing, skimming, confirming guesses, further prediction, and so on.”

### **1.2.9 Variables affecting reading comprehension**

In the reading process, there are a series of variables that affect the reading process which need to be considered before the reader can reach a high level or poor level of comprehension (or product). These variables may be related to the reader, the writer or the text. Some of the most significant variables affecting reading comprehension are: the state of the reader’s knowledge, the reader’s motivation, reasons why the reader is reading that text, and the strategies the reader uses to process the text. Besides, there are some other physical and apparently stable characteristics of the readers and with low incidence such as sex, age, personality, speed of word recognition and meaning processing, etc. Some of these will be analyzed below.

#### **1.2.9.1 Reader’s knowledge**

Alderson and Bachman (33) note that the nature of the knowledge that the reader has will influence not only what he remembers of the text, but the understanding of the text (the product), and the way he processes it. Schema theory explains how this background affects reading comprehension. The reader’s knowledge or schemata are the mental structures that he integrates to new information from the text. His schemata influence how he recognizes information as well as how he stores it in his mind.

Alderson and Bachman note various authors who have stated different kinds of prior knowledge or schemata, for example, some of them distinguish formal or linguistic schemata from content schemata; the former are meant to be knowledge of language and linguistic conventions including knowledge of how texts are organized, and what the main features of particular genres are (grammatical, syntactic and semantic systems); content schemata are knowledge of the world as well as the subject matter of the text.

According to an article by LiKe Xinjiang Normal University three functions of the content schemata are established: (a) schemata permit a coherent interpretation of a text by providing the basis for filling the gaps with inferential elaboration as there is no text which is completely explicit; (b) schemata contain the reader's interpretation of an ambiguous message; and (c) by establishing a relationship between what is known (prior experience) and information given in the text, the reader is able to monitor his comprehension and know whether or not he has comprehended the text. In a few words, content schemata are considered to be "the foundation stone of cognition, on which all information is processed and the greater the background knowledge a reader has of a text's content area, the more likely he or she is to concentrate his mind on the content rather than the form of the language."

Due to the importance of content schemata, some possible reasons could be established for a student's failure in reading comprehension. One of them could be that the reader does not have the appropriate schemata the writer expected and the message could not be effectively communicated. Another reason would be that the reader may understand a consistent interpretation of the text but not the intention of the author. And finally, the reader could have appropriate schemata but the author was not able to provide the reader with enough clues to activate the reader's content schemata.

Alderson and Bachman (p.43) say that schemata do not simply need to be available but it need to be activated by the reader, if a text is going to be understood accurately. Researchers have shown that readers who have learned how to activate their own schemata have improved their performance on reading comprehension.

#### **1.2.9.2 Reader's knowledge of the world and cultural knowledge**

Background knowledge or knowledge of how the world works has an important effect on reading comprehension, not only the world one lives in but also other people's worlds and how they work. The way in which those people share their knowledge will be crucial to reading comprehension. There are, of course, a great deal of cultural differences that

can be learned between children and adults, Muslims and Christians, black and white, American and European, inner city vs. rural, etc.

Reading texts in familiar cultural settings could be easier to process and recall, but reading unfamiliar ones could present difficulties in processing and recall or it could produce misunderstanding as Alderson and Bachman state (p.46).

### **1.2.9.3 The medium of text presentation**

There are a variety of ways of presenting text. In academic settings it is usually presented in books; however, it is becoming much more common on TV screens, computer screens or projectors screens for large classrooms. With the use of the Internet and World Wide Web more and more information is available for students. Some readers prefer to print out texts since they consider as a limitation the fact that turning pages is less time consuming and more efficient than scrolling forward and backwards on the screen; another inconvenience they view is that the reader has just one screen at a time, (Alderson and Bachman, p.78).

Concerning the use of the computer screen, there are several aspects that could affect reading processing; among others they could be: text fonts, color and line spacing. For example: proportionally-spaced screen fonts, mixed upper-case and lower-case characters, double spacing make screen reading faster and easier than regular line-spaced text and right-justified text.

Although there are still some readers who think processing reading from print is less stressful, easier, faster and more accurate, technological advances have allowed us to have more advantages than disadvantages in the use of the screen for reading. Nowadays, screen resolution produces less eye strain and perceptible flicker so, information can be processed more effectively; that is why in testing English learning, for example, most of standardized tests are delivered by computer. In the same way, most of the information is now available in e-books which means, in general terms, that the reader must be up-dated in the use of electronics.

#### **1.2.9.4 Reader's motivation or interest**

Many researchers of L1 and L2 reading comprehension have proved that poor reading causes poor motivation. Poor readers lack motivation to read or to spend time in trying to improve their ability to read and understand.

But, how to solve the problem of improving reading motivation to become an efficient reader? We have frequently heard about the distinction between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The first one is assumed to come from external inspiration and it leads the reader to read at a surface level, emphasizing facts and details rather than main ideas, to what the text is about, to how ideas relate with other ideas in the text, and to how the text relates to other texts, or to what the reader knows about the subject or the world. Intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is generated internally in the individual who develops the reading process as an internal inspiration that moves him to produce higher quality outcomes. This reading with intrinsic motivation leads to higher-order levels of understanding and it is, for sure, educationally desirable.

However, when students know their reading is going to be assessed, they take it as an imposed task and do not read for pleasure, enjoyment or satisfaction but for passing a subject. They perceive this activity as threatening and their performance might be lower than they could be achieved in different settings.

#### **How can teachers motivate reading**

Teachers play an important role in students' motivation for reading. Many L2 students are keen on learning the target language in a deep way and find reading as an excellent alternative to improve all the other language learning skills, so they become good and fluent L2 readers. However, they know this skill is a hard task and they need effective motivational support from teachers and the curriculum itself; therefore, teachers must carry out activities in the classroom which lead students to feel eager to continue reading a novel, widening information about a short story, etc. There are important ways in the classroom for teachers to promote students' motivation for reading, William Grabe in his

article *Teachers Needs to know about L2 Reading* provides some tips to increase motivation in the following ways:

1. Talk about what interests you and why.
2. Have students share their interests.
3. Promote the development of group cohesiveness.
4. Create communities of learners who support each other with difficult tasks.
5. Increase students' expectancy of success in many particular tasks.
6. Have good lead-ins for major texts and tasks in order to build initial interest.
7. Match student skills with challenge.
8. Make the curriculum relevant to students.
9. Make learners active participants so learning is stimulating and enjoyable.
10. Build real levels of expertise in topics of readings (Content-Based Instruction).
11. Give students some degree of choices within the curricular framework.

Optimum reading opportunities are essential to reading comprehension.

### **1.2.10 Teaching reading comprehension**

Students' reading comprehension cannot improve unless the teacher guides this activity with appropriate techniques. Teachers themselves improve and help their students improve reading comprehension skills by using appropriate strategies to foster the reading activity as part of their lives. In this context, it is important to highlight the methodology proposed by Michael Graves and Bonnie Graves, who describe a very interesting process to be used with Second Language Readers. Graves and Graves emphasize a set of pre-reading, during-reading, and after reading activities designed to assist students in successful reading, understanding, learning from, and enjoying a particular selection.

The word "scaffolding" has its origin in Lev Vygotsky's theory of the Zone of Proximal Development. This zone is the area between what learners can do completely

independently and what they can do with assistance. eHow Education states that scaffolding in reading allows students to connect reading with prior knowledge, preparing them to comprehend more easily and quickly. As we have seen, activating existing schemata is a key to successful reading.

This methodology of using scaffolding reading does not just deal with a textbook but it is a flexible plan that can be tailored for a specific situation. It consists of two phases: the first phase is Planning and takes into account the particular group of students doing the reading, the text they are reading, and their purpose (s) for reading. The second part is the Implementation phase or a process of pre-reading, during reading, post-reading activities for those readers, the selection being read, and the purpose of that reading.

The following figure summarizes the two phases of Graves and Graves' Scaffolding Reading Experiences which was the basis of this research:

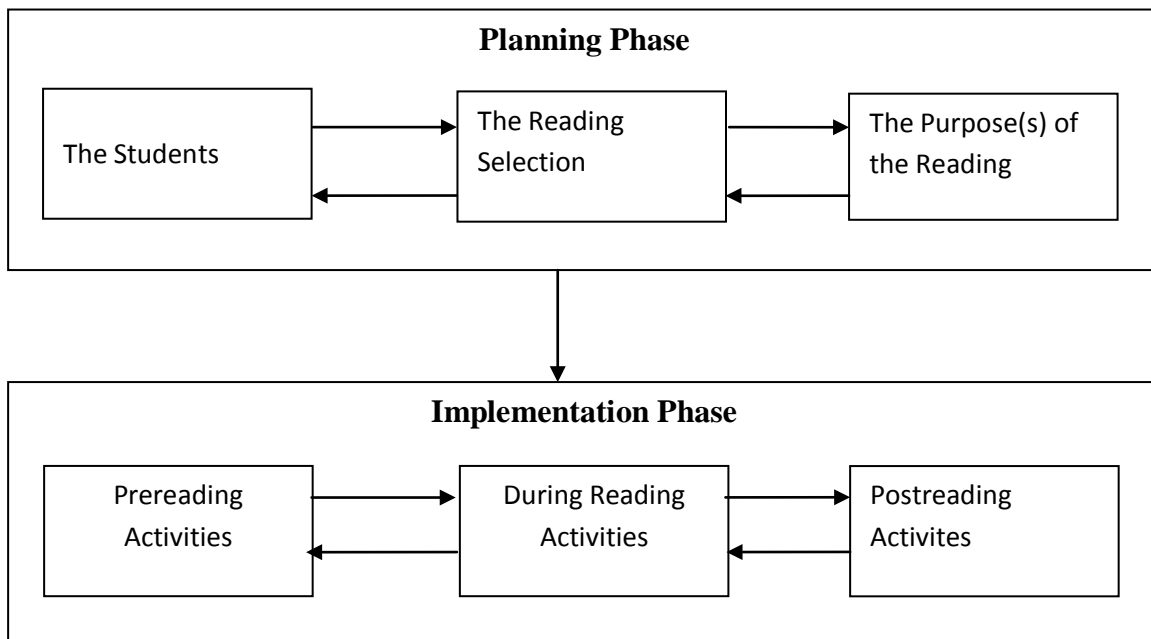


Figure 21: Planning Phase chart

Source: Taken from Scaffolding Reading Experiences by Michael Graves and Bonnie Graves (p. 10)

This technique consists of a series of activities that the reader must go through to reach a complete comprehension of a text. It deals with the three stages or phases of reading: pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading.

The components of each stage of this process are demonstrated in a specific situation for in the following table:

## THE THREE STAGES OF READING

<p><b>Prereading Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Motivating</li><li>Relating the reading to students' lives</li><li>Activating or building background knowledge</li><li>Providing text-specific knowledge</li><li>Preteaching vocabulary</li><li>Preteaching concepts</li><li>Prequestioning, predicting, and direction setting</li><li>Suggesting strategies</li></ul> <p><b>B: Five items of multiple-choice answers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relating the Reading to students lives</li><li>Activating or building background knowledge</li><li>Providing text-specific knowledge</li><li>Preteaching vocabulary</li><li>Preteaching concepts</li><li>Prequestioning, predicting, and direction setting</li><li>Suggesting strategies</li></ul> <p><b>During-Reading Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Silent reading</li><li>Reading to students</li><li>Guided reading</li><li>Oral reading by students</li><li>Modifying the text</li></ul> <p><b>Postreading Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Questioning</li><li>Discussion</li><li>Writing</li><li>Drama</li><li>Artistic, graphic, and nonverbal activities</li><li>Application and outreach activities</li><li>Building connections</li><li>Reteaching</li></ul>
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Figure 22: The Three Stages of Reading Chart

Source: Taken from Scaffolding Reading Experiences by Michael Graves and Bonnie Graves, (p.12)

The stages are discussed in detail below.

### **1.2.10.1 Before reading or pre-reading**

In this stage the reader is taught to activate his existing knowledge of the reading topic by means of asking questions of what he already knows about it, how he can match his background knowledge to the topic or how predictions will help understand the new material better. The reader is asked to analyze the text with its print features, the pictures, layout, genre, etc.

Such activities prepare students to become interested in reading the selected text, to understand further aspects that may be challenging or just to remember the things they already know. This way, students are helped to find reading an enjoyable, successful and rewarding activity.

### **1.2.10.2 During reading (or reading and rereading)**

This step includes what the students do themselves as they are reading, as well as we as teachers to assist them while they are reading. Here, there is an interaction between the reader, the text, and the writer. The reader establishes the purpose for each part of the reading, visualizes the text, summarizes, confirms or rejects his predictions, identifies and clarifies key ideas. In this way he answers questions formulated in the pre-reading stage; it is common that he looks back at the text to verify his answers or support his opinion or position or creates new questions which arise during reading. During this stage, there are a few possible activities that we can mention: silent reading, reading to students, guided reading, oral reading by students, and modifying the text.

### **1.2.10.3 After reading (post-reading)**

In this stage, the student incorporates what he has just read into his prior knowledge, he reflects to see if he met the purpose for reading. He develops other deep analyses such as paraphrasing important information, identifying main ideas, makes connections with what he already knew of the new information gotten during the reading, draws conclusions, and assembles all this to construct new knowledge.

This is also an opportunity for readers to evaluate aspects such as the writer's message, his stance in presenting the topic, the quality of the text, etc. It also provides opportunities to students and teacher to self-evaluate their understanding of the text. There is also the chance for students to develop many activities to show comprehension in an oral or written way, among the most commonly used are: questionnaires, graphic organizers, oral discussion, drama, etc.

For this three-steps approach, some authors suggest the use of a three-column page headed with three aspects (KWL): (a) what the reader already *knows* or thinks he knows about the topic; (b) he asks questions about *what* he wants to be answered by the text; and (c) he often goes back to the text to know what was *learned* from the text or what misconceptions must be corrected after reading.

#### **1.2.11 Use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension**

The use of graphic organizers has been widely researched for its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes in different areas of knowledge specially for *improving reading comprehension* and learning disabilities. All of them follow a similar pattern. They start including definitions, a variety of types of graphic organizers with descriptions and examples for application across curriculum areas, although, by far, reading is the most well studied one. Social studies, language arts, science, math are mentioned as the outstanding content areas in the research base of the use of graphic organizers.

Some research works carried out by different professionals on different groups of learners to whom the use of graphic organizers were applied are mentioned below.

### **1.2.11.1 Using graphic organizers to facilitate learning**

*A Study Prepared by Tracey Hall & Nicole Strangman,  
National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum*

Tracey Hall and Nicole Strangman carried out a very interesting study about the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension *Using Graphic Organizers to Facilitate Learning*. In this web overview they have focused on applications of graphic organizers to reading instruction, with the intention of later expanding the discussion into other subject areas.

They reviewed 12 studies investigating effects of graphic organizer use and found that 10 of them reported some positive learning outcome. They focused on two main areas: comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. Those which reported no effect of graphic organizer use on comprehension appeared to be attributable to such factors as deficiencies in experimental design or other factors different from the effectiveness of the use of these interesting tools. Thereby, Hall and Strangman have shown that students to whom this approach has been applied seem to have improved their reading comprehension.

### **1.2.11.2 Effects of graphic organizers on reading achievement**

Developed by Christina M. Keene  
Valdosta State University

Christina M. Keene developed this study by examining the effects of graphic organizers on reading comprehension of third grade Early Intervention Program (EIP) students. This study also examined the attitudes of students toward graphic organizers by means of a questionnaire. Fourteen students were taught using the regular reading program for 4 weeks and graphic organizers were added to the reading curriculum in the next 4 weeks. Student performance was assessed using three parameters: students' average reading

grades, the STAR (Standardized Test for the Assessment of Reading) reading test, and an attitude questionnaire. Results of the STAR reading test showed that although there was a difference in reading comprehension when graphic organizers were used, the difference was not significant. However, the attitude survey made evident that students had positive attitudes toward the use of graphic organizers.

### **1.2.11.3 Evidence for effectiveness: to what extent research has shown graphic organizers to be useful**

Many research works developed in the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension have come out to be very successful and useful, as previously explained. A few studies have reported no effect of graphic organizers use on comprehension due to different limitations.

Hall and Strangman say with regard to their work that there is solid evidence for the effectiveness of graphic organizers in facilitating learning as 10 of the 12 studies investigating effects of graphic organizer use on learning reviewed reported positive learning outcomes.

Research has demonstrated favorable outcomes from the use of graphic organizers and has shown students' ability to recall more information than when they do not use them. Also, it is important for effective use of graphic organizers that students are involved in the process of reading and designing their own organizers so it is their ideas being organized, rather than those of the teacher.

In general terms as HubPages Inc. mention in their website, "The use of graphic organizers has been proven to help students to gain knowledge more effectively and efficiently."

# **CHAPTER II**

## **METHODOLOGICAL DESIGN AND DATA REPORT**

In this Second Chapter, some issues such as the methodological design of this research work and the data will be reported.

## 2.1 TIMELINE

The technique of using graphic organizers for reading comprehension was applied during the second period of the semester September 2010 – February 2011. This research was carried out over a period of 8 weeks, starting on November 22<sup>nd</sup> and ending on January 20<sup>th</sup>. Figure 23 below summarizes the various activities that took place and when.

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Participants</b>
November 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2010	Small talk	Explanation about the research	I- II “A” and “B” Intensive English courses at the Sangolquí Campus, schedule: 07h00 to 09h00
November 30 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Pre-test 1	Phoning in Sick (with no use of graphic organizers)	I- II “A” and “B” Intensive English courses at the Sangolquí Campus, schedule: 07h00 to 09h00
December 1 <sup>st</sup> 2010	Pretest 2	How do I look?	I- II “A” and “B” Intensive English courses at the Sangolquí Campus, schedule: 07h00 to 09h00
December 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2010	Lesson	Teaching the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension	I – II “A”
December 3 <sup>rd</sup> 2010	Reading Activity 1	KEYPALS, Write Around the World	I – II “A”
December 7 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Reading Activity 2	The Changing Family	I – II “A”
December 8 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Reading Activity 3	Face to Face With Twins	I – II “A”
December 9 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Reading Activity 4	African Elephants at Risk	I – II “A”
December 15 <sup>th</sup> 2010	Reading Activity 5	The Story of a Town	I – II “A”
January 11 <sup>th</sup> 2011	Reading Activity 6	Jerry Decided to Buy a Gun	I – II “A”
January 17 <sup>th</sup> 2011	Post-test	Phoning in Sick (With the use of graphic organizers)	I- II “A” and “B” Intensive English courses at the Sangolquí Campus, schedule: 07h00 to 09h00
January 20 <sup>th</sup> 2011	Survey	To know the level of satisfaction the students got with the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension.	I – II “A”

Figure 23: The Three Stages of Reading Chart  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquire P.

## **2.2 SIZE AND SAMPLE**

Two groups of EFL learners at the Army Polytechnic School in the main campus, Sangolquí, were the center of this research; thirteen students of Intensive First - Second Level “A” participated as the experimental group, and nine students of First - Second level “B” performed as the control group. They were beginning the eighth-level course as a requirement to get their degree in the schedule of 07h00 to 09h00. Members of both groups were between 18 and 22 years old, some of them were students taking English to complete their curricula of their different degrees at ESPE and others were taking only this subject at this university.

Besides, the participants of both groups had been taught English as part of their secondary studies. Through their information provided in their portfolios, it is possible to learn that they received English from 4 to 6 hours a week; however, due to the Ecuadorian public school system, they did not learn much beyond some very easy structures and a few words as part of their vocabulary. It is important to point out that there were 2 students in the Control Group who studied at “Veinticuatro de Mayo” high school who had a good level of English but they decided to start from First Level because they considered they had some knowledge gaps they needed to complete.

## **2.3 FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH**

This research was aimed at finding out to what extent students of the experimental group were able to improve their reading comprehension by means of using graphic organizers, which were presented in different forms, according to the topic of the short readings provided to help students develop their ability to organize information in a logical way and hence motivate, increase recall, assist understanding, create interest, combat boredom, and organize thoughts. Two pre-tests were applied with the two groups at the beginning, six pieces of reading were applied during the process, a post-test was applied, and also a survey to discover their feelings about the use of graphic organizers for reading was applied at the end of this research.

## 2.4 METHOD USED

The methodology was mixed; experimental because two groups were used for the research and the data was processed with numbers according to the results achieved in the activities applied; it was also ethnographic because students were surveyed to know their feelings about the use of this technique, and this was also analyzed in a qualitative way. This analysis will be described in detail in Chapter III.

### 2.4.1 Defining the Strategy

To explain the methodology used in this research, it should be stated that it was based on the following aspects:

1. The two-phases reading proposed in *Scaffolding Reading Experiences* by Michael Graves & Bonnie Graves referred to in Chapter I was used with every piece of reading. The first phase dealt with planning, taking into consideration the students, the reading selection, and the purpose of reading; the second phase consisted of the implementation of three elements: pre reading, during reading and post reading activities.
2. Graphic organizers specifically used for language and reading were taken from different resources, especially from *Content-Area Graphic Organizers, Language Arts* by Margaret Cleveland.
3. One of the readings taken from the text they were using (English Result, Elementary Book) was used twice: in the pretest and the post-test.
4. The topics for pre-tests, post-test, and activities during the application of the use of graphic organizers were chosen according to the participants' knowledge of English, young and young-adults level of interest, and the needs of this research. The following aspects were considered for using certain pieces of reading:

- a) Their stage of knowledge in English; readings had to include structures and vocabulary taking into consideration that they were in I-II level of an L2 learning course, so they were brief descriptions, narrations, or short stories.
- b) The content of the short story or brief narration had to be perceived by students as worth reading, which made communication relevant.
- c) A reading had to be suitable for the analysis with an appropriate graphic organizer.

## **2.4.2 Development of the research**

### **(a) The beginning of this work**

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2010 this work started with a twenty-minute explanation about what the research consisted of, and the students were pleased to know they were going to be part of a piece of research on the use of graphic organizers to improve their reading comprehension. They asked questions about the scoring of the different activities they had to develop, since they thought they could be affected by those scores and calmed down to know that all the tasks were just to be used in the research.

### **(b) Induction into the use of graphic organizers**

On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2010, there was a one-hour induction about the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension with the students of the Experimental Group. During the introduction of the topic, the following relevant facts should be mentioned:

- At the beginning of the chat, most of them said they already had certain knowledge about the topic as they had used graphics in other subjects as part of the activities developed in their degree courses.
- They mentioned they did not know graphic organizers could be used to learn English.

- They asked some questions; for example, when to use some graphic organizers, such as a fish-bone, a Venn diagram, a web, and the researcher responded to their concerns.
- They were told about what graphic organizers consisted of and the advantages of using them.
- Finally they were given an example: disorganized information, which consisted of words and numbers; then this information was organized on a chart and they were able to establish the difference between a disorganized text and data graphically organized, which made information easy to understand.

The example below, taken from *Content –Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies* by Margaret Cleveland (p.3), was provided:

Alden E. Jones, 18 Milford St., Boston, MA 02118, (617) 555-8040. Alun Huw Jones, 91 Westland Ave., Boston, MA 02115, (617) 555-9654. Alvin Jones, 715 Tremont St., Boston, MA 02118 (617) 555-2856. Alvin D. Jones, 77 Salem St., Boston, MA 02113, (617) 555-2890. Amanda Jones, 111 W. 8<sup>th</sup> St., Boston MA 02127, (617) 555-0738. Amos K. Jones, 11 Helen St., Boston, MA 02124, (617) 555-35-60. Andre N. Jones, 523 Mass. Ave., Boston, MA 02118 (617) 555-0829. Andrew Jones, 168 Northampton St., Boston, MA 02118, (617) 555-0069.

<b>NAME</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>CITY, STATE, ZIP</b>	<b>PHONE</b>
Alden E. Jones	18 Milford St.	Boston, MA 02118	(617) 555-8040
Alun Huw Jones	91 Westland Ave.	Boston, MA 02115	(617) 555-9654
Alvin Jones	715 Tremont St.	Boston, MA 02118	(617) 555-2856
Alvin D. Jones	77 Salem St.	Boston, MA 02113	(617) 555-2890
Amanda Jones	111 W. 8 <sup>th</sup> St.	Boston, MA 02127	(617) 555-0738
Amos K. Jones	11 Helen St.	Boston, MA 02124	(617) 555-3560
Andre N. Jones	523 Mass Ave.	Boston, MA 02118	(617) 555-0829
Andrew Jones	168 Northampton St.	Boston, MA 02118	(617) 555-0069

Figure 24: Chart with organized information

Source: Taken from *Content –Area Graphic Organizers: Social Studies* by Margaret Cleveland (p.3)

### 2.4.3 Development of the six activities with the application of the methodology

All the activities used during the application of graphic organizers were diagrammed adopting Graves and Graves' scheme proposed for scaffolding reading (p.22).

#### Proposed scheme for scaffolding reading

<b>PLANNING</b>		
<u>Students</u>	<u>Selection</u>	<u>Purpose</u>
13 English students of I-II intensive course at ESPE.	Topic of the piece Reading Activity and the source.	Different purposes; for example, cause and effect, similarities and differences.
<b>IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
<u>Prereading Activities</u>	<u>During-Reading Activities</u>	<u>Post-reading Activities</u>
Some of the activities mentioned in point 1.3 of Chapter 1.	Any of the activities mentioned in point 1.3 of Chapter 1, although at the beginning <i>Reading to Students</i> was preferred considering they were beginning their knowledge in English.  Step by step, they also got involved in <i>Oral Reading</i> .	As this research was focused on improving reading comprehension, the chosen activities for this part of the process were questioning and graphics.

Figure 25: Proposed Scheme for Scaffolding Reading  
Source: Adapted from Graves and Graves (p.22)

Besides, each Reading Activity included the following elements:

- *Topic:*
- *Date:*
- *Reading focus:*
- *Time allotted:*
- *Activities:*

During the application of the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension the 6 activities mentioned in *Figure 23* were developed.

## 2.5 INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Two pre-tests and one post-test on reading comprehension were applied according to parameters established by the variables and objectives; six activities to read and show comprehension by means of using suggested graphic organizers were developed during the application of this technique. Finally, a structured survey about their confidence on the application of graphic organizers for reading was applied (See figure 35).

BEFORE THE APPLICATION OF THE METHODOLOGY		DURING THE APPLICATION						AFTER THE APPLICATION	
<b>Pretest 1</b> (Only Pre-test 1 was used for this research)	<b>Pretest 2</b>	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5	Activity 6	<b>Post-Test</b> (Pretest 1 was used as a Post-test)	<b>Survey</b> to know the level of satisfaction

Figure 26: The Three Stages of Reading Chart  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

## 2.6 RESULTS

The scores of the pre and post-tests for the two groups were processed so as to obtain an explanatory table and make up comparisons between the control group and the experimental group. Additionally, every single piece of reading was analyzed to check their progress. **The arithmetic mean and the standard deviation were the statistical calculations used to test the hypothesis.**

The results of the survey were analyzed qualitatively, and reactions toward the application of this technique were established. All this numerical report is detailed below:

**Chart of Pre-test results**

No.	CONTROL GROUP		No.	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	
	PRETEST 1	PRETEST 2		PRETEST 1	PRETEST 2
<b>1</b>	6	3,5	<b>1</b>	2	5,5
<b>2</b>	1	5,0	<b>2</b>	4	6,0
<b>3</b>	1	3,0	<b>3</b>	1	19
<b>4</b>	1	3,5	<b>4</b>	1	5,0
<b>5</b>	10	4,5	<b>5</b>	1	5,0
<b>6</b>	5	12,0	<b>6</b>	1	3,5
<b>7</b>	2	1,0	<b>7</b>	3	3,0
<b>8</b>	1	6,0	<b>8</b>	4	6,0
<b>9</b>	2	4,5	<b>9</b>	3	3,0
$\bar{X} = 3.22$ $SD=3.15$			<b>10</b>	4	9,0
			<b>11</b>	1	1,0
			<b>12</b>	1	5,0
			<b>13</b>	2	8,0
			$\bar{X}=4.72$ $SD: 2.88$		$\bar{X}=2.15$ $SD = 1.28$

Figure 27: Chart of Pre-test Results

Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

**Limitations:**

- For pre-test 1, both groups needed 40 minutes to carry out the activities for reading comprehension, 20 minutes were initially allotted for this.
- In pre-test 2, students in both groups were not so much interested in the contents of the piece of reading provided; the activities to develop and the vocabulary used were very simple.
- It is important to mention that only pre-test 1 was used as a post-test for comparison and contrasting purposes, so pretest 2 was left behind.

## Reading Activity 1

Topic: Keypals, Write Around the World			
Date: December 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2010			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	Nº	SCORE
<i>Read the texts and do the required activities in 20 minutes.</i>	<p>ACTIVITY 1: Fill in the graphs with the corresponding information according to the texts.</p> <p>ACTIVITY 2: Circle a, b, or c according to the correct information.</p>	1	16
		2	15
		3	16
		4	18
		5	16
		6	16
		7	14
		8	14
		9	15
		10	14
		11	5
		12	12
		13	16
		<b>SD =3.052</b>	

Figure 28: Chart Reading Results of Activity 1

Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### Limitations

- As it was the first activity for using a graphic organizer to evaluate reading comprehension, they needed more time than expected in the process of reading (during- reading) in order to understand and be able to fill in the chart.
- No students could answer correctly Question 1 in Part B wherein they had to circle the correct definition of “keypal”.

## Reading activity 2

<b>Topic:</b> The Changing Family <b>Date:</b> December 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2010			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	Nº	SCORE
<i>After you read the following article, use the graphic organizer provided to summarize the information.</i>	Place relevant information of each member of this family in the corresponding petal of the flower provided.	1	17
		2	19
		3	16
		4	20
		5	20
		6	17
		7	20
		8	14
		9	19
		10	18
		11	17
		12	14
		13	20

Figure 29: Chart Reading Results of Activity 2

Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### Limitations

The graphic organizer was too easy to carry out and they completed the chart in less time than expected.

### Reading activity 3

<b>Topic:</b> Face to Face with Twins <b>Date:</b> December 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2010			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	Nº	SCORE
<i>After you read the following article, use the Venn diagram provided to establish two similarities and two differences between Annie and Elizabeth.</i>	In the following Venn diagram place differences and similarities in the corresponding part of the graphic.	1	19
		2	19
		3	19
		4	20
		5	20
		6	16
		7	19
		8	19
		9	19
		10	19
		11	15
		12	16
		13	17

Figure 30: Chart Reading Results of Activity 3  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiyinga P.

#### Limitations:

Some students provided simple words or short phrases to develop the activity required.

### Reading activity 4

<b>Topic:</b> African Elephants at Risk <b>Date:</b> December 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2011			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	N°	SCORE
<i>Read the passage and complete the Cause-and-Effect diagram given in 20 minutes</i>	Use a box on the left to state the cause and link it to the corresponding effect in the box on the right.	1	20
		2	20
		3	18
		4	20
		5	18
		6	20
		7	4
		8	20
		9	1
		10	8
		11	20
		12	15
		13	20

Figure 31: Chart Reading Results of Activity 4

Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### Limitations:

- The piece of reading had many new words that required long explanations, so they had little time to develop the activities.
- There was one student who got mixed up with cause and effect and mentioned the consequence as a cause and got 1/20.

**Reading activity 5**

<b>Topic:</b> The Story of a Town <b>Date:</b> January 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2011			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	N°	SCORE
<i>Read the story and develop the activities below in 20 minutes.</i>	<b>ACTIVITY 1:</b> Fill in the Sequence Chart given.  <b>ACTIVITY 2:</b> Circle the best answer a, b, c, or d to answer the questions.	1	18
		2	17
		3	18
		4	15
		5	17
		6	16
		7	14
		8	16
		9	16
		10	16
		11	14
		12	17
		13	18

Figure 32: Chart Reading Results of Activity 5  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

**Limitations:**

- A couple of students used the sequence of the story backwards.
- There was no time to feed-back this activity.

## Reading activity 6

Topic: <i>Jerry Decided to Buy a Gun</i>			
Date: January 11th, 2011			
GENERAL DIRECTIONS	ACTIVITIES	N°	SCORE
General Directions:	ACTIVITY A. Fill in the Decision chart given.	1	18
		2	17
		3	18
		4	15
		5	17
		6	16
	ACTIVITY B. Answer the questions.	7	14
		8	16
		9	16
	ACTIVITY C. Express what you learned from this story.	10	16
		11	14
		12	17
		13	18
			<b><math>\bar{X} = 14.5</math></b>
		<b><math>SD = 2.24</math></b>	

Figure 33: Chart Reading Results of Activity 6  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### Limitations

- Some students considered pros as cons and vice versa.
- Students were more worried about the time to prepare their final evaluation works rather than about this activity which was not going to be part of their final score.

### Chart of the experimental group progress during the application of use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension

N° of Activity	Name	Date	Arithmetic Mean
1	Keypals, Write Around the World	Dec. 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2010	14.4
2	The Changing Family	Dec. 7 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	17.8
3	Face to Face with Twins	Dec. 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	18.2
4	African Elephants at Risk	Dec. 10 <sup>th</sup> , 2010	15.7
5	The Story of a Town	Jan. 5 <sup>th</sup> , 2011	16.3
6	Jerry Decided to Buy a Gun	Jan. 11 <sup>th</sup> 2011	14.5
			<b><math>\bar{X} = 16.15</math></b>
			<b>SD= 1.408</b>

Figure 34: Chart of Progress of the Experimental group during the application of the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### Chart of post-test results

CONTROL GROUP		EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	
N°	POST-TEST	N°	POST TEST
1	1.5	1	16
2	1	2	17
3	2.5	3	18
4	6.5	4	19
5	17.5	5	12.5
6	15.5	6	16.5
7	6.5	7	12.5
8	9.5	8	14.5
9	1.5	9	16.5
<b>MEAN</b>	<b><math>\bar{X} = 6.88</math></b>	10	15
		11	12
		12	18
		13	20
		<b>MEAN</b>	<b><math>\bar{X} = 15.9</math></b>
	<b>SD =5.83</b>		<b>SD =2.54</b>

Figure 35: Chart of post-test results of Control Group and Experimental Group  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

### CHART TO CONTRAST PRETEST AND POST-TEST

CONTROL GROUP			EXPERIMENTAL GROUP		
N°	Pretest	Post-Test	N°	Pretest	Post-Test
1	4.75	1.5	1	2	16
2	3	1	2	4	17
3	2	2.5	3	1	18
4	2.25	6.5	4	1	19
5	5.5	17.5	5	1	12.5
6	10.25	15.5	6	1	16.5
7	1.5	6.5	7	3	12.5
8	3.5	9.5	8	4	14.5
9	3.25	1.5	9	3	16.5
$\bar{X} = 3.97$  <b>SD =1.93</b>	$\bar{X} = 6.88$  <b>SD =5.83</b>	10	6.5	4	
		11	1	1	
		12	3	1	
		13	5	2	
		$\bar{X} = 2.15$  <b>SD =1.28</b>		$\bar{X} = 15.96$  <b>SD =2.45</b>	

Figure 36: Chart to contrast pre-test and post-test results of Control Group and Experimental Group  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

**SURVEY ADDRESSED TO STUDENTS OF I-II (ELEMENTARY) TO KNOW THEIR LEVEL OF SATISFACTION ABOUT THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION**

N°	Question	Alternatives	Answers	%
1	<i>How did you feel when you developed your first exercise of this project, it means, without using any graphic organizer:</i>	a sure of yourself	0	0
		b with some doubts	6	46
		c with no idea about the answer.	3	23
		d with a little knowledge about the answer	4	31
2	<i>When you developed your next exercises with the application of graphic organizers, you felt:</i>	a more confident than the first occasion	5	39
		b. Same as in the first occasion.	2	15
		c. motivated to work on this activity	6	46
3	<i>When you had to prepare one graphic organizer you found it:</i>	a extremely difficult	1	8
		b difficult but motivating	9	69
		c very easy	3	23
4	<i>In your opinion, the use of graphic organizers is ..... to improve your reading</i>	a. very useful	12	92
		b. a bit useful	1	8
		c. definitely not useful	0	0

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:**

Among the most interesting comments the following have been quoted:

“The graphic organizers is the tool of studies for my comprehension.”

“I recommend use graphic organizers.”

“Is very useful because organize ideas.”

“Graphic organizers is very useful to improve your comprehension.”

“More practice with graphic organizers.”

“Is more difficult, but is motivated to work”

“I think that is a good instrument to learn.”

Figure 35: Chart to show level of satisfaction in the use of graphic organizers with the Experimental Group  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

# CHAPTER III

## ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Now, in the light of the theoretical framework, the data collected by the different pre- and post-tests developed with both groups as well as the application of the use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension with the experimental group will be processed, analyzed and generalized below.

### 3.1 ANALYSIS OF PRETESTS

The calculation of the standard deviation for the analysis of the results were made by using this formula:

$$\sigma = \sqrt{\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

And the Arithmetic mean was calculated on the basis of this formula:

$$A = \frac{1}{n} * \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$$

A = average (or arithmetic mean)

n = the number of terms (e.g., the number of items or numbers being averaged)

$x_1$  = the value of each individual item in the list of numbers being averaged.

#### Control group

Arithmetic Mean  $(\bar{X}) = 3.22$

Standard Deviation (SD) = 3.15

#### Experimental group:

Arithmetic Mean  $(\bar{X}) = 2.15$

Standard Deviation (SD) = 1.28

From the statistical data gotten, we can generalize that the performance of both the Control Group and the Experimental Group in the two pre-tests was very low as it can be

seen; so, at the beginning of this research both groups had a poor level of comprehension in reading.

### 3.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PERFORMANCE OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP IN THE 6 ACTIVITIES DURING THE APPLICATION OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR READING COMPREHENSION

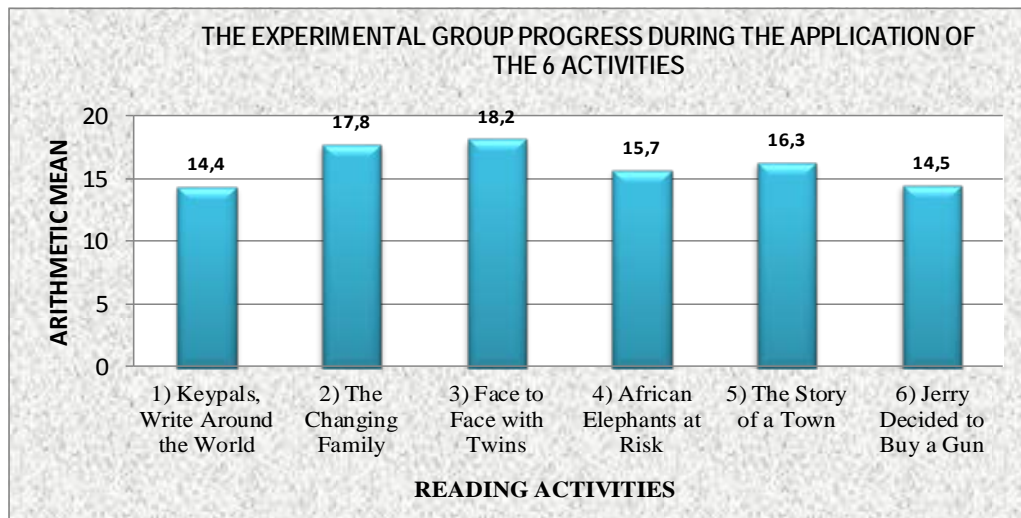


Figure 36: Graphic representation of the performance of the Experimental Group during the application of the use of graphic organizers  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

The mean of the general performance during the 6 activities was 16.15. All the activities had a mean higher than 14.4/20. Once introduced the use of graphic organizers for every piece of reading, students became interested in this technique and they got high scores. The highest arithmetic mean was in Activity 3 (18.2), even though the activity to be developed (a Venn diagram) was challenging. The other arithmetic means had slight variations.

It is important to notice that at the end they lowered their performance since at the end of the semester they were busy with preparing for the last exams, and it was more important for them to pass the English course and the other subjects than doing an activity which was not to be part for their promotion.

### 3.3. INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE OF THE STUDENTS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP IN THE APPLICATION OF THE 6 ACTIVITIES

According to the results gotten, Student 4 had the best performance during the application of this technique ( $\bar{X} = 18.5$ ); he was an excellent student. Students 1 and 2 got the second highest performance ( $\bar{X} = 18$ ); they were very interested in the use of graphic organizers and were permanently asking about the next activity. Their works had a high quality, for example they did not quote information from the text to the graphic but they reported the speech and used third singular person.

Something important to point out is that Student 5 was not brilliant at English, he was eager to carry out every activity, and even though he lost the course due to low grades in grammar, writing and speaking, he got an average of 17/20 in the 6 reading activities.

The other students had an average performance, and no student got a lower mean than 13.2/20 (See Annex).

In short, although some students were not excellent, they got high grades in reading comprehension activities with graphic organizers.

### 3.4 CONTRASTING PRE-TESTS AND POST-TESTS OF CONTROL GROUP AND EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

	<b>Control Group</b>	<b>Experimental Group</b>
<b>Pre-test</b>	$\bar{X} = 3.22 \pm SD = 3.15$	$\bar{X} = 2.15 \pm SD = 1.285$
<b>Post-test</b>	$\bar{X} = 6.88 \pm SD = 2.88$	$\bar{X} = 15.96 \pm SD = 2.55$

Figure 37: Chart of Pre-test Vs Post-test of Control Group and Experimental Group  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

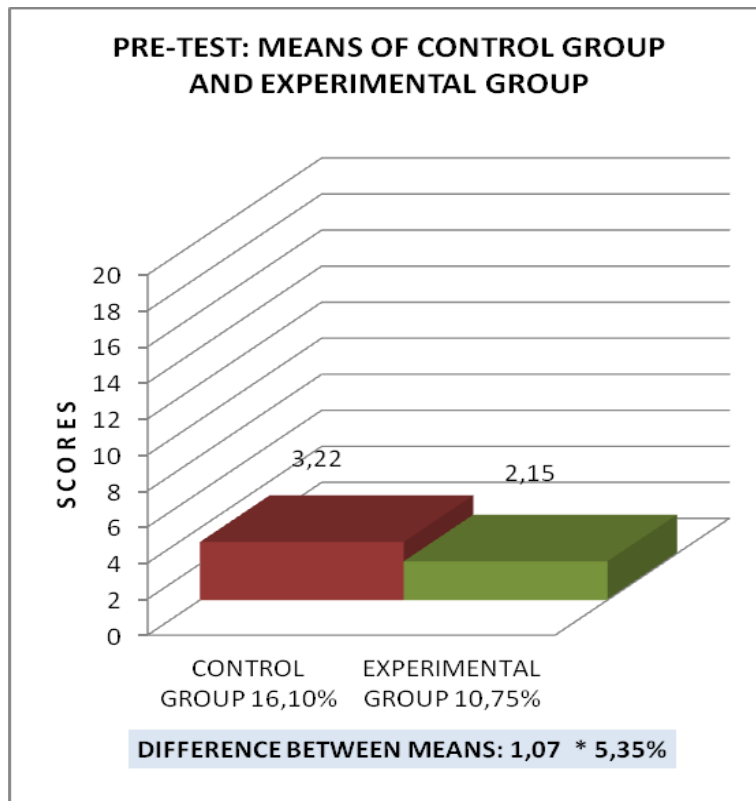


Figure 38: Graphic of Pre-test of Control Group vs. Experimental Group  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

As the graphic shows, at the beginning of the treatment, students of both groups presented similar conditions of reading comprehension. In both cases the level of comprehension was very low: Control Group=03.22 which represented the 16.10%; Experimental Group 02.15 which represented the 10.75%. The difference between means was slight: 1.07, or 5.35%. So, although there was no significant difference between the Control Group and the Experimental Group performance, this difference was in favor of the Control Group.

The performance of both groups was similarly low before the application of graphic organizers for reading comprehension.

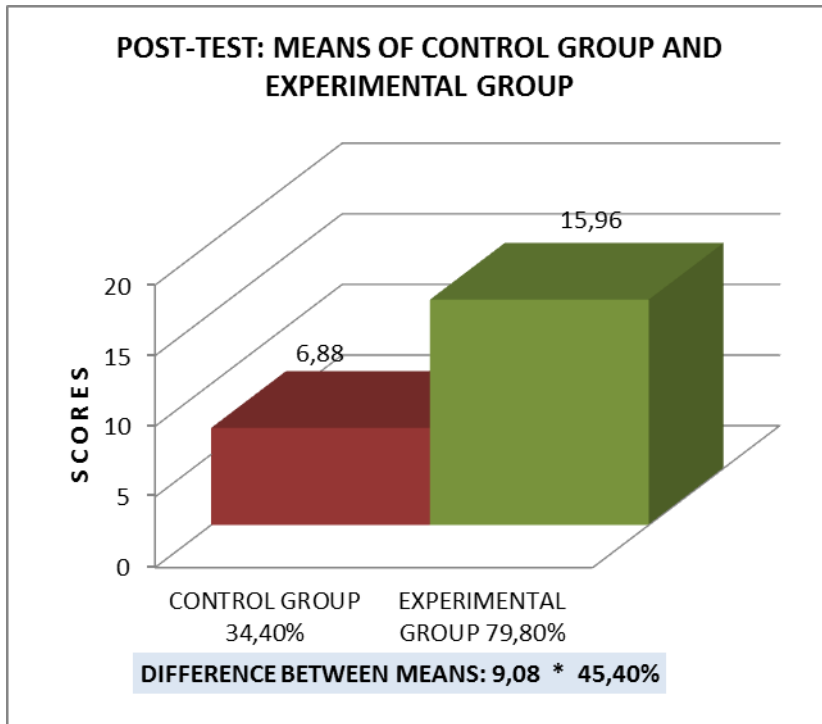


Figure 39: Chart of Pre-test Vs Post-test of both Control Group and Experimental Group  
 Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

After the application of the use of Graphic Organizers, it is noticeable the progress that the Experimental group got. The mean of the Control group was  $\bar{X} = 06.88/20$  (34.40%), and the mean of the Experimental group was  $\bar{X} = 15.96$  (79.80%).

Comparing the progress of the Control group performance from the Pre-test to the Post-test, there is a difference in the means of 3.66, they have barely made a progress of 14.55%. Whereas that the progress of the Experimental group is higher from the Pre-test to the Post-test; there is a difference in the means of  $\bar{X} = 13.81$ ; from the Pre-test to the Post-test, it progressed a 61.95%

It is important to notice that at the beginning of the treatment, there was just a slight difference in the performance of both groups (difference between means in the pre-test 1.07, or 5.35%), and after the application of the use of graphic organizers, there was a significant difference between the two groups (difference between means in the post-test 9.08 or 45% in favor of the Experimental Group).

### 3.5 TESTING THE HYPOTHESIS

The level of significance between the two groups from the Pre-test to the Post test:

Control Group,  $\bar{X} = 06.88/20$  (34.40%),

Experimental Group,  $\bar{X} = 15.96$  (79.80%),

And the difference in the progress of the two groups from the Pre-test to the Post-test: the Control Group progressed just 0.40 or 2%, but the Experimental Group progressed 9.08 or 45%.

*It demonstrates that the hypothesis is accepted and the use of graphic organizers improves reading comprehension in the students of I-II intensive course at ESPE.*

### 3.5 TESTING THE LEVEL OF SATISFACTION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP IN THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS FOR READING COMPREHENSION

#### Question 1

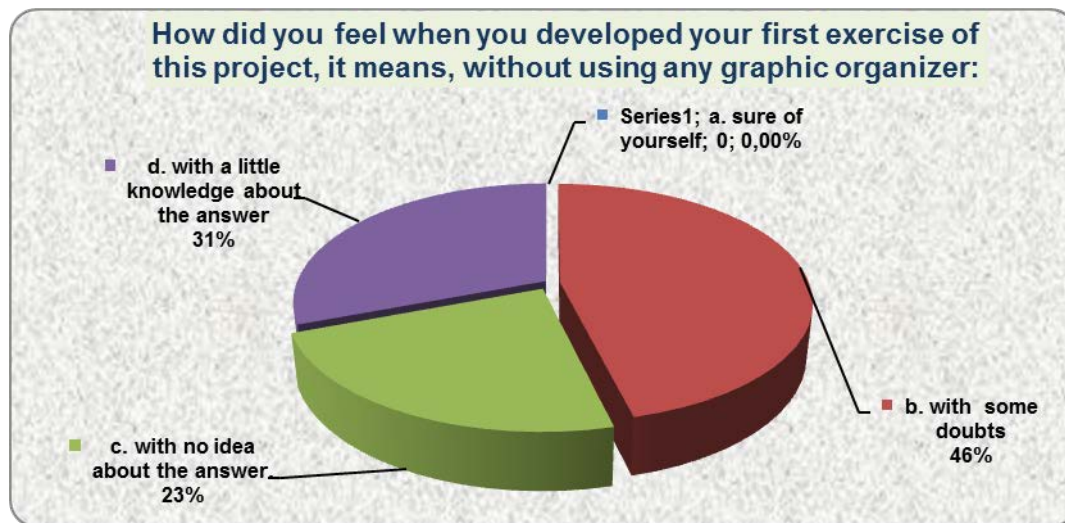


Figure 40: Graphic representation of answers to Question 1 about level of satisfaction in the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiyinga P.

From this graphic, it can be understood that most of the students (46%) felt with some doubts at the beginning of the treatment of the technique of using graphic organizers to

improve reading comprehension as they did not know how to manage with filling them in. A 31% of the students said they had a little knowledge about how to answer. And a 23% of them said they had no idea about the answer, and finally, no student felt sure of himself when using graphic organizers to show they understood a piece of reading in the first activity.

The conclusion here is that students had a little prior knowledge about the use of graphic organizers so they could not show reading comprehension by this means.

## Question 2



Figure 41: Graphic representation of answers to Question 2 about level of satisfaction in the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiñana P.

It is observable that most of the students (46%) felt motivated to work on the reading activity with graphic organizers. A 38.5 % answered they felt more confident than the first occasion; and a 15.4% still felt the same as in the first occasion.

Anyhow, the 84.7% were happy with the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension.

### Question 3

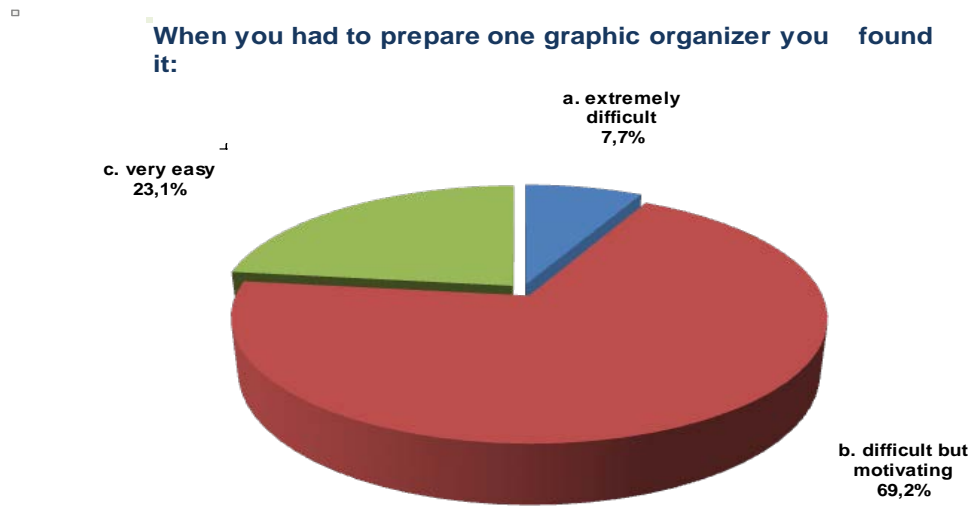


Figure 42: Graphic representation of answers to Question 3 about level of satisfaction in the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

To the question about the difficulty they found when they had to prepare a graphic organizer, the 9 of the 13 students ( 69%) said it was difficult but motivating; 3 students (23.1%) found it very easy, and 1 student (7.7%) said it was an extremely difficult activity.

In general most of the students found this activity challenging and motivating.

### Question 4

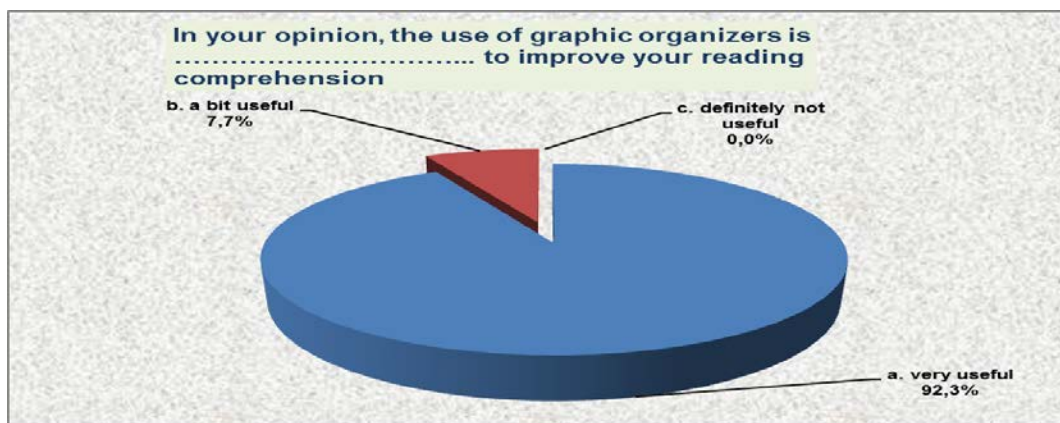


Figure 43: Graphic representation of answers to Question 4 about level of satisfaction in the use of graphic organizers for reading comprehension  
Source: Elaborated by Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P.

When they were asked for their opinion about the treatment, 12 of the 13 students (92.3%) answered it was very useful the application of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension; and only 1 student (7.7%) answered that it was just a bit useful.

Additionally, they had a space at the end of the survey to make some comments or suggestions. some of the most outstanding and interesting thoughts they provided have been quoted below:

The graphic organizers is the tool of studies for my comprehension.

I recommend use graphic organizers.

Is very useful because organize ideas.

Graphic organizers is very useful to improve your comprehension.

More practice with graphic organizers.

Is more difficult, but is motivated to work

I think that is a good instrument to learnd.

In summary, they survey showed there was a high level of satisfaction of the application of this technique and they found it challenging but interesting.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### CONCLUSIONS

- The results gotten by both groups in the pre-test were extremely low and relatively similar. The difference between means of both groups was 1.07 and the Control Group had a better mean equal to 5.35%. Considering the standard deviations of the results of each group in the pre-test, we can say that there was no significant difference between the groups before the treatment, and there was clearly considerable room for improvement in both groups.
- The Control group obtained a better performance in the post-test with reference to their pre-test results; there was an increase of 3.66 points (18.3%), although their mean remained very low at 6.88 points.
- The Experimental Group, on the other hand, improved their performance significantly from the pre-test to the post-test; there was an increase of 13.81 points in their mean (from  $\bar{X} = 2.15$  to  $\bar{X} = 15.96$  ; or from 10.75% to 79.80%) equal to an improvement of 45.4%.
- The difference between means of both groups in the post-test was 9.08 in favor of the Experimental Group. As there was an increase in the difference between means of both groups from the pre-test to the post-test (pre-test:  $\bar{X} = 1.07$ ; post-test:  $\bar{X} = 9.08$ ), and considering the difference between standard deviations of the results in the post-test of each group to be clearly significant, the hypothesis was accepted; this means that the use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension is effective because the whole Experimental Group and every student individually improved their performance significantly with respect to the Control Group after the treatment.
- At the beginning of the application of this technique none of the students in the Experimental Group was sure of themselves about what to do with graphic organizers for reading comprehension.

- The survey applied to the students of the Experimental Group showed they were highly satisfied with the treatment, found it a challenging but motivating activity and wished they could continue with the use of this technique.
- Students of the Experimental group increased their prior incipient knowledge of graphic organizers and will apply it in their future reading for the learning of English and other subjects.
- There were some limitations during the development of this thesis, but the most important was the lack of time to carry out more activities with graphic organizers, especially for students to create their own graphics. It also needs to be emphasized that four students out of 13 in the Control Group dropped out, which could have affected the validity of this research.
- This research has enriched the author's prior knowledge about reading comprehension, and now she has a new view of reading and the use of graphic organizers as an alternative to increase levels of reading comprehension. In fact, she is applying the use of graphic organizers with the groups she is working with now.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- More information should be given to students about how to prepare graphic organizers from other points of view and different from the ones provided in this thesis.
- More learning activities should be assigned during learning English to develop students' capacities of analysis, synthesis, critical thinking, and problem solving.
- More time for feedback to reinforce and clarify various issues related to the use of graphic organizers should be given.
- Further research should be carried out over a longer period of time in order to confirm the results obtained in this study and to investigate the effect of graphic organizers in the different levels of EFL learning at ESPE.

- Since in all the activities performed by these students the graphic organizers were provided by the researcher, it is strongly recommended that research be carried out on students preparing their own graphic organizers.
- EFL teachers should be trained in the use of graphic organizers to make reading comprehension more effective, enjoyable and rewarding.
- Cooperative learning should be developed with the help of graphic organizers.
- More research in the use of graphic organizers to improve EFL reading comprehension should also be carried out for other age levels, e.g. at school.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2010

I - II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### PRE-TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 30 MINUTES.**

#### PHONING IN SICK

**How often do you phone in sick when you are well? The results of a new study show:**

- The average person takes eight days a year off sick. People who work in the public sector, for example education, take more time off than other people. The highest figure is in the police force. The average worker in the police force takes 12 days sick leave a year.
- The most common excuses are flu, back pain, headache, and stomach ache. 40% of days off result from flue.
- Of all people who take time off sick, about one in five are not really ill.
- Every year, 22 million people get sick notes from their doctors. Of these people, 9 million are perfectly well.
- 50% of sick days are on Monday or Friday. The number of people off sick is also higher when there are important football matches or other events.
- There are also problems with school kids taking time off sick. There are plans to make parents pay £100 a day if their kids take time off sick, for example to go on holiday.

**Are you going to take a day off sick this month? Tell us what you think about sick days.**

**Your comments:**

‘They want us to work longer hours and they don’t pay us enough. So sometimes we take days off when we’re not really sick. What’s wrong with that?’

**Derek, Middlesborough**

‘I never take days off. These days, people feel tired after a late night nad they phone in sic. I think it’s disgusting. If you don’t want to work, leave!’

**Marge, Leeds**

I hate people coming into the office with flu. Two weeks later, we've all got it. When I get flu, I stay in bed and phone in sick. But I don't agree with people taking days off when they're not ill. I think that's like stealing from your company.'

**Robert, Northampton**

In our office, we get a bonus if we don't take sick days over Christmas and New Year. So I take my sick leave in February!'

**Beverly, Guildford**

'I get really bad headaches. But I hate phoning in sick. The boss thinks I'm lying because the others in the office are taking days off to go shopping or whatever. That's the problem.'

**Sheila, Motherwell**

'I'm always ill in the holidays or at weekends. I think it's because I work too hard, I get really tired and stressed, and then I get sick in my free time. So I take a few days off and say I'm sick. That's fair enough, isn't it?'

**Russ, Swansea.**

**ACTIVITY 1. Reading for gist or skimming:**

**Find words or phrases in the article with these meanings.**

- 1.1 time off work when you are ill .....
- 1.2 a letter from the doctor to say you are ill .....
- 1.3 take a day off work when you are ill .....
- 1.4 a pain in the head .....
- 1.5 a stomach problem .....
- 1.6 extra money .....
- 1.7 9,000,000 .....
- 1.8 taking something and not paying for it .....
- 1.9 not telling the truth .....
- 1.10 something given or paid in addition to what is usual or expected. ....

**ACTIVITY 2 Reading for detail:**

**ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS WITH ONE SENTENCE BY USING YOUR OWN WORDS**

2.1 When is the time that people prefer to ask for permission for sickness?

.....

2.2 How much would parents have to pay for their children's taking time off sick?

.....

2.3 Who from the six people giving their opinion thinks the salary is low.

.....

2.4 When does Robert take days off ?

.....

2.5 Does Russ phone sick or go to the office when she is sick?

.....

**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX 2

### PRE-TEST 2

#### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: December 1st, 2010

I - II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### PRE-TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 20 MINUTES.**

#### HOW DO I LOOK?

##### **Nell Gifford, circus performer**

1. I get up early every morning and practise on my horse. Perlo is a very good horse. He kneels, stand on his back legs, goes backwards and sideways. I learned to ride when I was a child. But I did not want to work with horses then. I wanted to be a monkey trainer. I had about 30 toy monkeys. The circus is now my life – but I don’t want to work with monkeys. I understand that they are very difficult to train. I studied at the Circus Roncalli in Germany under Yasmin Smart. She taught me a lot about training circus horse.
2. My husband Toti and I started Giffords Circus in 1999. I design the costumes for the show. I use many different things – short skirts, fancy jackets, ballet shoes, feathers in our hair. We all look very glamorous. Dressing up for the show is wonderful.
3. As a circus performer, you have to wear a lot of make-up, too. I wear a lot of on my eyes and I like it to be perfect. It’s really important to clean your skin after wearing make-up. But sometimes I’m very tired at night, and I forget to remove it.
4. Toti and I live in a 1940s wooden wagon. The wagon was in a terrible state when we bought it. We restored it, and now it’s like a little flat. It’s small, but very warm. With a TV, cooker and electric heating. It’s also got running water – much better than most circus caravans.



.....  
6. What did they do to the wagon?  
.....

7. What kind of circus performer is Nell?  
.....

8. What other things does she do in her job?  
.....

9. How does she hope to look at the beginning of a show?  
.....

10. How did Nell learn a lot about horses from?  
.....

**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX 3

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: .....

DATE: December 3rd, 2010

I - II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 1

To develop a research project about *“The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011”*.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 20 MINUTES.**

#### KEYPALS Write around the world

*Do you want to make friends around the world! Then read about keypals below and start writing!*

**Reading focus : Reading for specific information, reading for detail.**

1. Hello! My name is Belen Lopez and I'm looking for a keypal. I'm 22 years old and I'm from Madrid in Spain. I'm a nurse. I work long hours, but in my free time I do a lot of sport. And I like eating out with my friends. In Spain we eat very late in the evening. Write to me at Box 001.

2. Hi! My name is Paulo Dias and I'm Brazilian. I live in Rio de Janeiro near the sea - I love water sports! I teach music in a school. I love music too! What else? I'm 24 years of age and I'm single. My box number is 002.

3. Hello! I'm a 20-year-old Russian university student (engineering). I live with my family in Moscow. I want to write to other people around the world. My hobbies are computer games and the Internet. Please write to Box 003 to find out more. I nearly forgot – my name is Mikhael Pavlov.

4. I'm Stefan Zilliken and I work in a travel agent's in Munich in the south of Germany. I was 23 on January 1<sup>st</sup>. My hobbies are football – I play and I watch – and walking in the mountains. I also get some free holidays with my job! Perhaps I can come to your country! I'm at Box 004.

5. Hi! My name is Claudette Romand and I'm French. My home is in Lyons, but I work in Merybel – I'm a ski instructor there. I work in the winter – but in the summer I like to travel. (I went to Russia last summer). I like photography too – so I always have a camera with me! Oh yes, I'm 25 years old. Contact me at Box 005.

6. My name is Maria Szopen, twenty-one years old, and I'm from Warsaw, the capital of Poland. I'm a computer programmer. In the evenings I go to the cinema – but English films are difficult for me! I also like running – I'm a member of a big athletics club. You will find me at Box 006.

**PART A**

**Fill in the gaps with the corresponding information according to the texts above.**

<b>Name</b>						
<b>Age</b>	24					
<b>Nationality</b>		Polish				
<b>Home city</b>			Lyons			
<b>Job</b>				Travel agent		
<b>Hobbies</b>					Computer games, internet	

**PART B**

**Circle the correct information.**

1. A keypal is .....
  - a. your best friend sending you an e-mail.
  - b. your classmate sending you an e-mail.
  - c. anyone who you can know by mail.
  
2. If you want to meet the youngest person of this group, you have to write to.....
  - a. Maria Szopen
  - b. Belen Lopez
  - c. Mikhael Pavlov
  
3. You want to meet someone who works in tourism, then you can meet.....
  - a. Stefan Zilliken
  - b. Claudette Romand
  - c. Paulo Dias
  
4. Claudette Romand lives in .....
  - a. Russia
  - b. Lyons
  - c. Merybel
  
5. If you want to know someone who likes to eat in a restaurant, you can contact .....
  - a. Maria Szopen
  - b. Belen Lopez
  - c. Paulo Dias

## APENDIX 4

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: December 7th, 2010  
I – II LEVEL SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 2

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 20 MINUTES.**

After you read the following article, use the graphic organizer provided to summarize the information.

#### THE CHANGING FAMILY

***What kinds of problems do parents have in your country?***

American families are changing. One important change is that most married women now work outside the home. What happens when both parents work? Read about the Morales family.

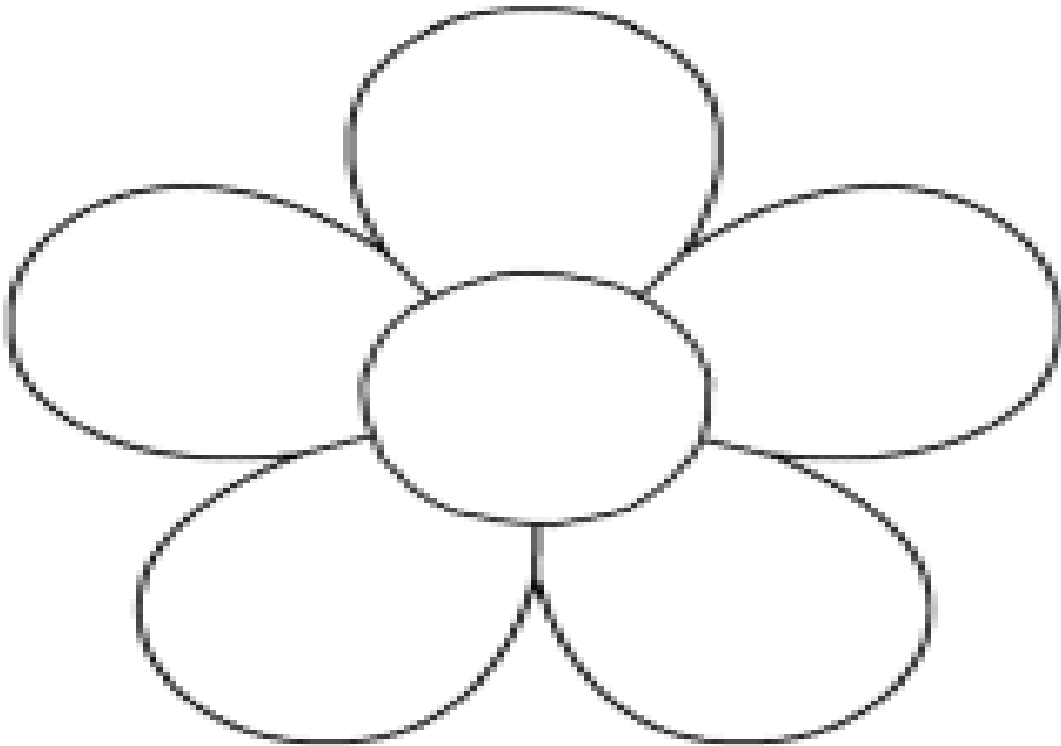
Judy and Steve Morales have three children: Josh, 12; Ben, 9; and Emily, 6. Steve is a computer programmer. This year, Judy is working again as a hospital administrator. The family needs the money, and Judy likes her job. Everything is going well, but there are also some problems.

Now that Judy is working, Steve has to help her more with the housework. He doesn't enjoy it, however.

Judy loves her work, but she feels tired and too busy. She also worries about the children. Judy has to work on Saturdays, so Steve and Judy don't have a lot of free time together.

Emily is having a great time in her after-school program. When Judy comes to pick her up, she doesn't want to leave.

Unfortunately, Ben's school doesn't have an after-school program. Right now, he's spending most afternoons by himself in front of the TV. Josh is enjoying his new freedom after school. He's playing his music louder and spending more time on the phone. He's also doing a few household chores.



## APPENDIX 5

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: December 8th, 2010

I – II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 3

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 20 MINUTES.**

**After you read the following article, use the Venn diagram provided to establish two differences and two similarities about Annie and Elizabeth.**

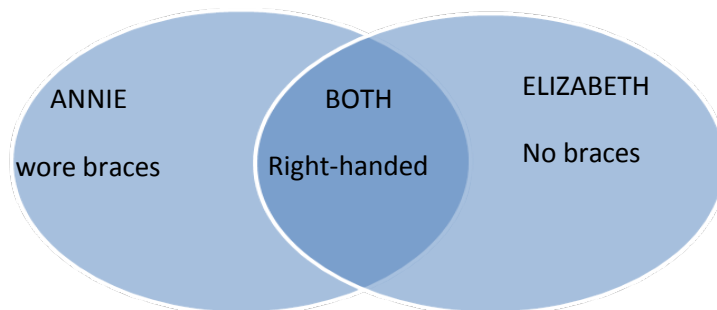
#### FACE TO FACE WITH TWINS

##### *Identical but not the same*

Annie and Elizabeth say they’re alike in many ways and different in others. That’s common among identical twins. Annie and Elizabeth are both right-handed. They both wear contact lenses. Their hair looks the same. They lost their baby teeth at about the same time. And they both got their only cavity in the same tooth when they were 9.

“But Annie wore braces and I didn’t,” says Elizabeth. “Annie has asthma and I don’t. Besides, Annie has more freckles.” Their mother often got confused when the girls were babies. She couldn’t establish the difference. One of Elizabeth’s toes was more crooked than Annie’s.

Annie and Elizabeth say they’re best friends with some differences in opinion. “We fight over everything, but we prefer the same kind of food,” says Annie. Elizabeth adds “Sometimes, it is so weird to be a twin. It is also fun and kind of cool.” Annie agrees.



## APPENDIX 6

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: .....

DATE: December 9th, 2010

I – II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 4

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

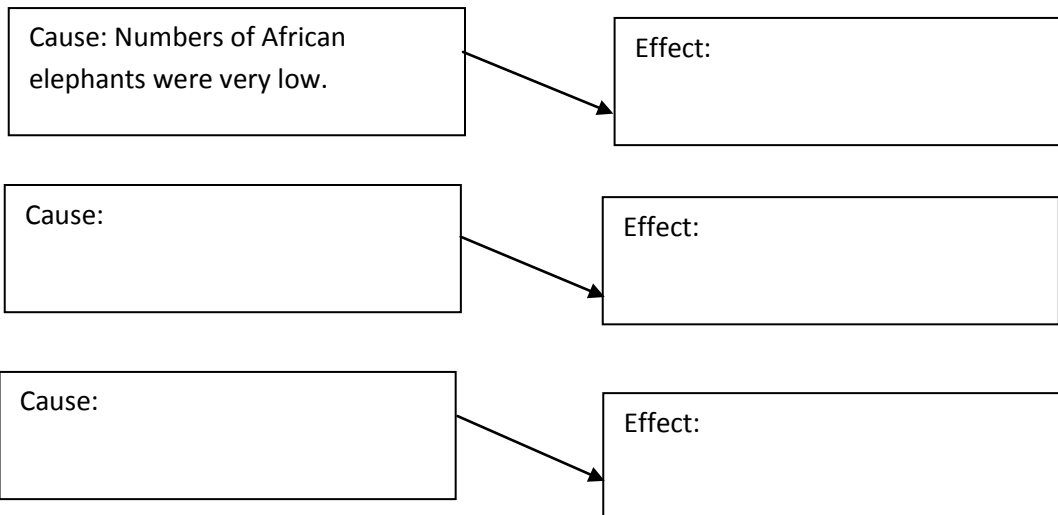
**GENERAL DIRECTIONS.** Read the cause-and-effect passage and then complete the diagram given in 20 minutes.

- Circle words in the passage that signal causes and effects.

#### AFRICAN ELEPHANTS AT RISK

For hundreds of years, African elephants have been killed for their ivory tusks. However, in 1970s, the demand for ivory greatly increased. As a result, the number of African elephants greatly decreased. In addition, since hunters wanted the biggest tusks they could find, they killed the biggest elephants. Not surprisingly, many of the largest elephants have vanished. Today, tusks are only about half the size they were a hundred years ago.

Between 1979 and 1989, the African elephant population was nearly reduced to half. Because the numbers were so low, the African elephant was placed on the endangered species list. Finally, in 1989, a law was passed that put an end to international ivory trade. Consequently, the number of Africa elephants began to increase. Some African countries, however, ,objected to the law. These countries depend on the ivory trade. Their demands contributed to regulate the law in 1997. Today, some people fear that great numbers of elephants will be killed again.



## APPENDIX 7

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: January 5th, 2011

I – II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 5

To develop a research project about *“The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011”*.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS.** Read the story and then do the following activities in 20 minutes.

**ACTIVITY A.** Fill in the Sequence chart given.

**ACTIVITY B.** Circle the best answer (a, b, c, or d)) to the questions.

Reading focus: Reading for detail

### THE STORY OF A TOWN

Brighton is the largest seaside resort in the south-east of England. At first the town was a fishing village and did not become popular until about 1800. Rich people began to visit Brighton in large numbers and when King George IV decided to build a house there, it became very fashionable. The King continued to visit it until 1827, but Queen Victoria did not like the house.

Nowadays, it is open to the public every day and there is a special exhibition there in the summer.

Brighton offers all kinds of entertainment, from concerts and plays in the theatre to local attractions like the Aquarium.

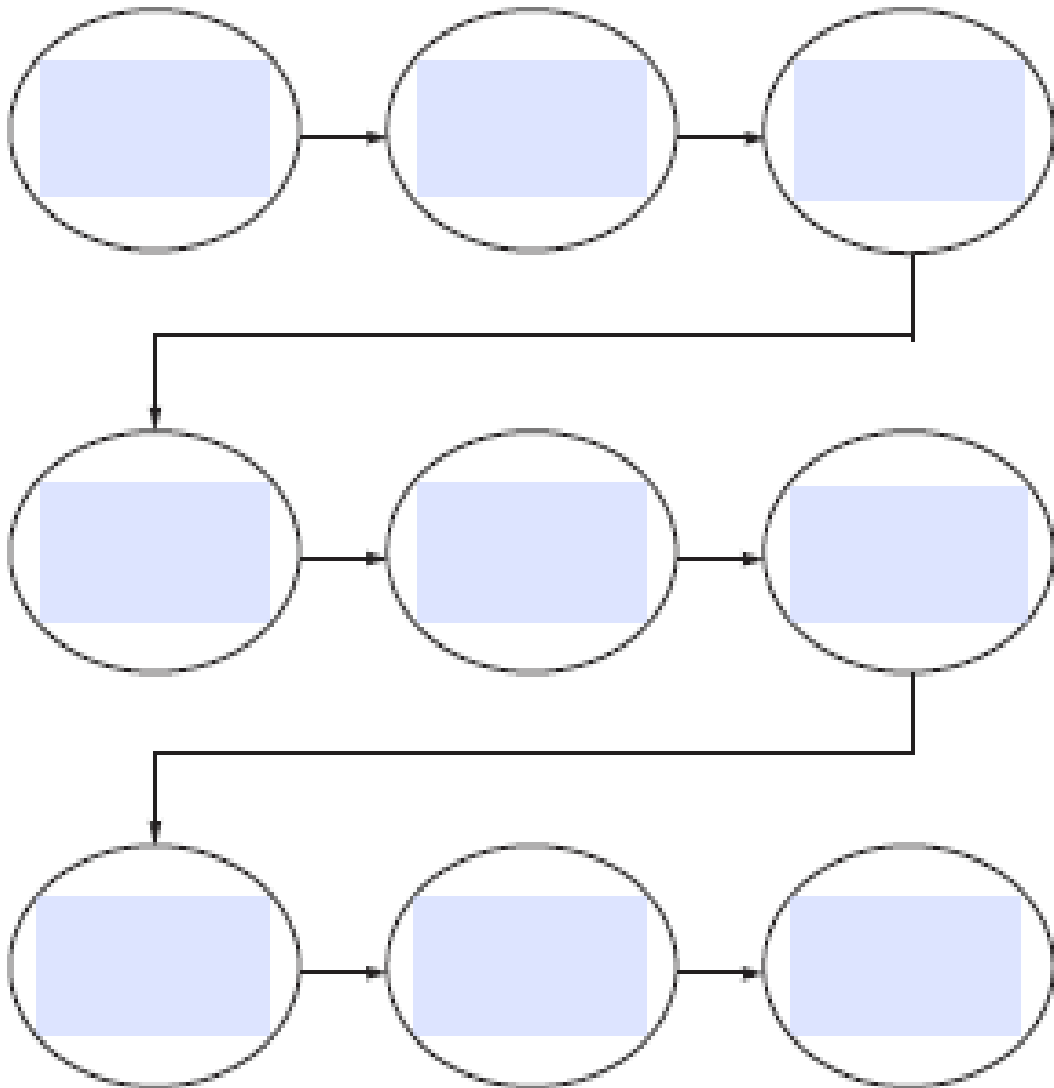
The area of old houses known as The Lanes is a very attractive shopping centre, where visitors can buy souvenirs and antiques. The houses were once lived in by fishermen but have now been converted into shops. Not far from The Lanes is a modern shopping centre with licensed restaurants and tables outdoors where you can enjoy a drink in good weather.

Brighton is within easy reach of London and has been a popular day out for Londoners for many years.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**Graphic Organizer**  
**Sequence Chart**

**Title / Topic:** \_\_\_\_\_



## ACTIVITY B

- 1 When did Brighton begin to be popular with tourists?
  - a) When King George IV arrived.
  - b) When houses were built.
  - c) After 1800.
  - d) When Queen Victoria arrived.
- 2 Why did the town become popular?
  - a) Because the King built a house there.
  - b) Because Queen Victoria liked it.
  - c) Because it was a fishing village.
  - d) Because it's on the sea.
- 3 When can you visit King George IV's house?
  - a) Only at the weekends.
  - b) Whenever you like.
  - c) You can't. It's a private house.
  - d) Only in the summer.
- 4 What things does the text say can you do in Brighton?
  - a) Visit the cinema and the theatre.
  - b) Buy antiques and souvenirs.
  - c) Visit the fisherman.
  - d) Fish, shop and swim.
- 5 What did Queen Victoria think about the King's house?
  - a) She didn't like it.
  - b) She thought it was fashionable.
  - c) She loved it.
  - d) She decided to stop going in 1827.
- 6 How have the fishermen's cottages changed?
  - a) They are shops now.
  - b) They are very fashionable now.
  - c) They are nearer to London now.
  - d) They are restaurants now.
- 7 What kind of buildings are in The Lanes?
  - a) Modern shops.
  - b) Converted houses.
  - c) New houses.
  - d) Old pubs.
- 8 What does the text say you can do near The Lanes in fine weather?
  - a) Buy souvenirs.
  - b) Buy antiques.
  - c) Go to concerts.
  - d) Sit outside for lunch.
- 9 How long do many people from London stay in Brighton?
  - a) One day.
  - b) A weekend.
  - c) A week.
  - d) A month.

10 Which of these is true?

- a) Brighton is the biggest town on the coast of England.
- b) Brighton is the same size as London.
- c) No resort in south-east England is bigger than Brighton.
- d) Brighton is the biggest town in south-east England.

## APPENDIX 8

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: .....

DATE: January 11th, 2011

I – II LEVEL

SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### READING COMPREHENSION: ACTIVITY 6

To develop a research project about *“The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011”*.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS.** Read the story and then do the following activities in 20 minutes.

**ACTIVITY A.** Fill in the Decision chart given.

**ACTIVITY B.** Answer the questions.

**ACTIVITY C.** Express what you learned from this story.

**Reading focus:** Skimming for gist, recognizing pros and con of a decision.

### Jerry Decided To Buy a Gun

Jerry Baldwin was 30 years old. He was the manager of a pizza restaurant. He lived in an apartment about one mile north of the restaurant. He walked to and from work. When it was raining, he took the bus.

Jerry loved gangster movies. When a new one came out, he would go to the theater and watch the new movie three or four times. Then, when it went to video, Jerry would buy the video at Barney’s Video Store. Jerry had a home collection of over 1,000 gangster videos. Old ones, new ones, color, black and white, English, Spanish, and Japanese—he loved them all. He could tell you the name of the movie, the director, the stars, and the plot. Did you say you liked “Pulp Fiction”? Well, Jerry would rattle off all the details of that movie. And then he would invite you to his place to watch it some time. He was a nice guy.

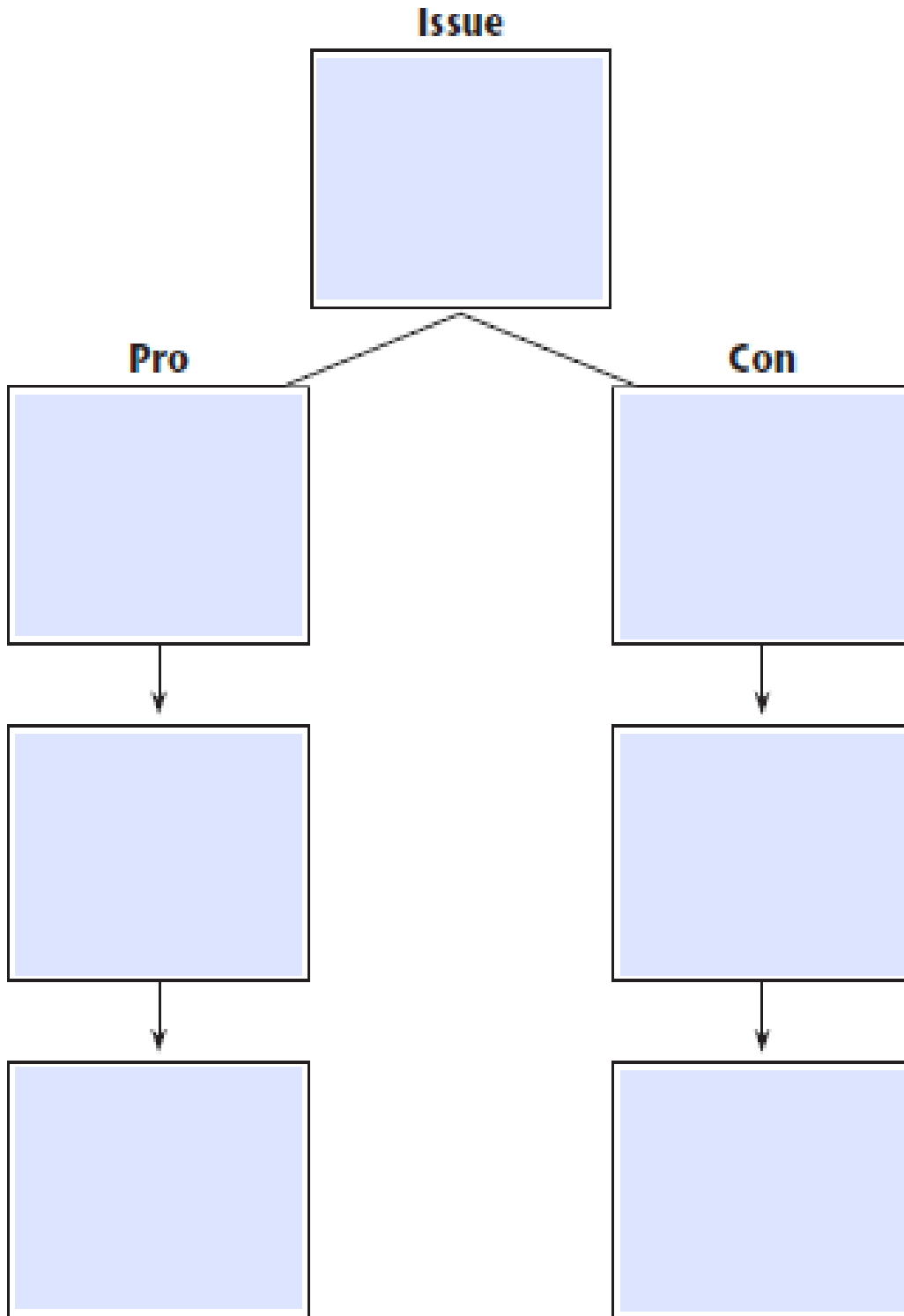
Jerry finally decided that he would like to own a gun, just like the gangsters. So he saved his money for a couple of years. Then he went to a gun store and bought a used .38 caliber revolver for \$300. While there, he also bought a couple of boxes of ammunition. The following Saturday morning, he went to the gun club to practice with his new revolver. He was in the club for only 10 minutes when he accidentally dropped his pistol. The gun went off, and the bullet went into Jerry’s right knee.

Jerry now walks with a limp and a cane, just like some gangsters.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ CLASS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Graphic Organizer

**Decision Chart**



**B. ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS, GIVE EXPLANATIONS WHEN NECESSARY**

1. Where did Jerry work?

.....

2. Did he live in an apartment or a house?

.....

3. How did Jerry get to work?

.....

4. What did Jerry do when a new movie went to video?

.....

5. Did Jerry play roles in gangster movies?

.....

6. How big is Jerry's collection of gangster videos?

.....

7. What did Jerry finally decide to own?

.....

8. How much did Jerry pay for his revolver?

.....

9. What else did he buy at the gun store?

.....

10. What happened to Jerry when he went to the gun club to practice?

.....

**C. USE THE FOLLOWING 3 LINES TO EXPRESS WHAT YOU LEARNED FROM THIS STORY.**

.....

.....

.....

## APPENDIX 9

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
I – II LEVEL SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### POST TEST OF READING COMPREHENSION

To develop a research project about “*The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011*”.

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS. READ THE TEXTS CAREFULLY AND DO THE REQUIRED ACTIVITIES IN 30 MINUTES.**

***Reading focus : Reading for specific information, reading for detail.***

#### PHONING IN SICK

**How often do you phone in sick when you are well? The results of a new study show:**

- The average person takes eight days a year off sick. People who work in the public sector, for example education, take more time off than other people. The highest figure is in the police force. The average worker in the police force takes 12 days sick leave a year.
- The most common excuses are flu, back pain, headache, and stomach ache. 40% of days off result from flue.
- Of all people who take time off sick, about one in five are not really ill.
- Every year, 22 million people get sick notes from their doctors. Of these people, 9 million are perfectly well.
- 50% of sick days are on Monday or Friday. The number of people off sick is also higher when there are important football matches or other events.
- There are also problems with school kids taking time off sick. There are plans to make parents pay £100 a day if their kids take time off sick, for example to go on holiday.

Are you going to take a day off sick this month? Tell us what you think about sick days.

#### **Your comments:**

‘They want us to work longer hours and they don’t pay us enough. So sometimes we take days off when we’re not really sick. What’s wrong with that?’

***Derek, Middlesborough***

'I never take days off. These days, people feel tired after a late night and they phone in sick. I think it's disgusting. If you don't want to work, leave!'

**Marge, Leeds**

I hate people coming into the office with flu. Two weeks later, we've all got it. When I get flu, I stay in bed and phone in sick. But I don't agree with people taking days off when they're not ill. I think that's like stealing from your company.'

**Robert, Northampton**

In our office, we get a bonus if we don't take sick days over Christmas and New Year. So I take my sick leave in February!'

**Beverly, Guildford**

'I get really bad headaches. But I hate phoning in sick. The boss thinks I'm lying because the others in the office are taking days off to go shopping or whatever. That's the problem.'

**Sheila, Motherwell**

'I'm always ill in the holidays or at weekends. I think it's because I work too hard, I get really tired and stressed, and then I get sick in my free time. So I take a few days off and say I'm sick. That's fair enough, isn't it?'

**Russ, Swansea.**

**ACTIVITY 1. Reading for details or specific information. Fill one of the below boxes with the corresponding data from the first part of the reading.**

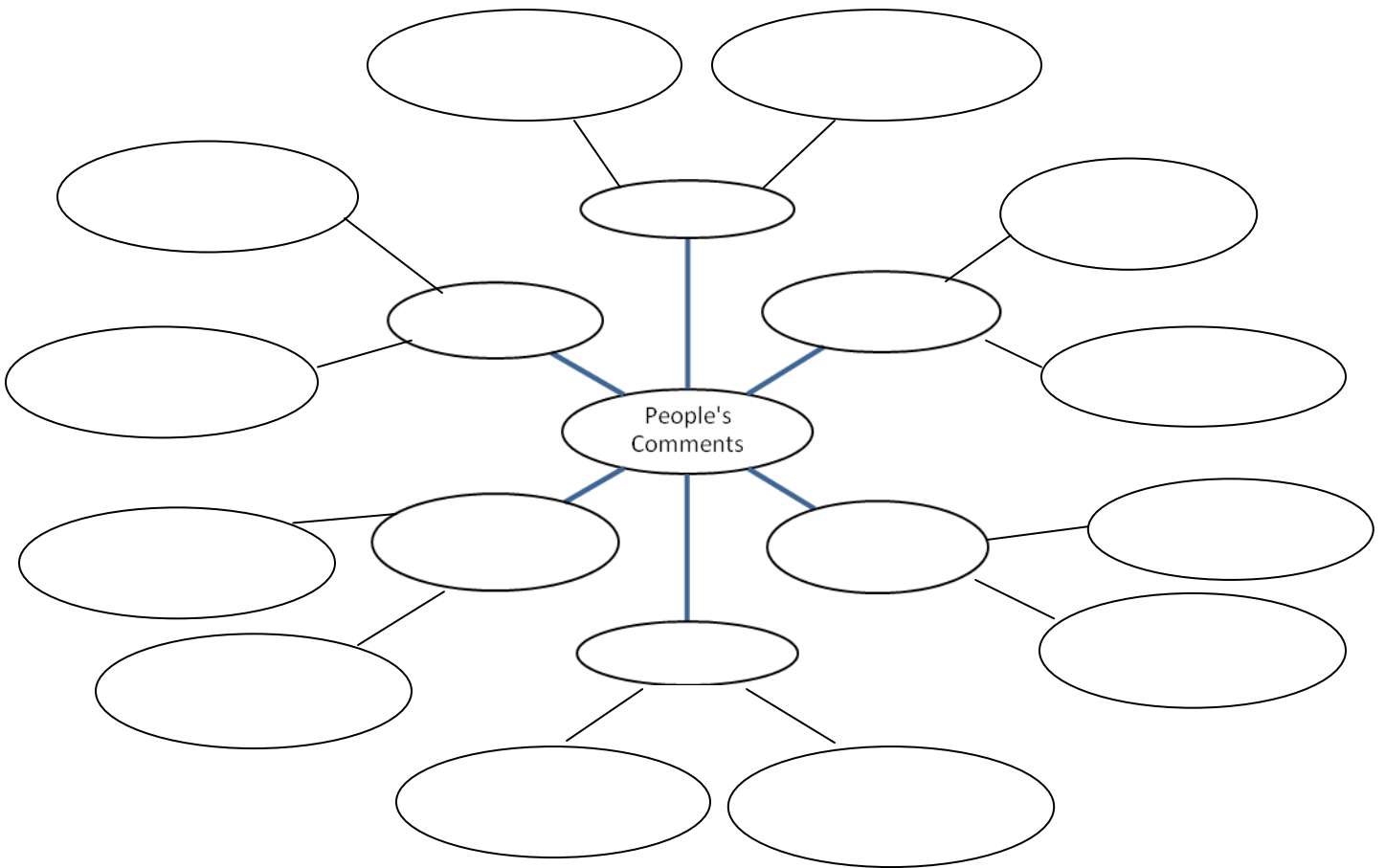
A. People who take time off sick, but they are not ill.

--	--	--	--	--

B. Common days when people phone in sick.

.....	50% of sick days are when there are important events.
-------	---

**ACTIVITY 2. Reading for details or specific information. Fill in the following cluster with information of some people's comments about sick days.**



**ACTIVITY 3. Reading for gist or skimming:**

**Find words or phrases in the article with these meanings.**

- 1.1 time off work when you are ill .....
- 1.2 a letter from the doctor to say you are ill .....
- 1.3 take a day off work when you are ill .....
- 1.4 a pain in the head .....
- 1.5 a stomach problem .....
- 1.6 extra money .....
- 1.7 9,000,000 .....

1.8 taking something and not paying for it .....

1.11 not telling the truth  
.....

1.12 something given or paid in addition to what is usual or expected.  
.....

**ACTIVITY 4** Reading for detail:

**ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS WITH ONE SENTENCE BY USING YOUR OWN WORDS**

2.1 When is the time that people prefer to ask for permission for sickness?  
.....

2.2 How much would parents have to pay for their children's taking time off sick?  
.....

2.3 Who from the six people giving their opinion thinks the salary is low.  
.....

2.4 When does Robert take days off ?  
.....

2.5 Does Russ phone sick or go to the office when she is sick?  
.....

**THANK YOU!**

## APPENDIX 10

### Army Polytechnic School

NAME: ..... DATE: January 20th, 2011  
SECOND LEVEL SCHEDULE: 07H00 – 09H00

#### SURVEY TO DISCOVER LEVELS OF SATISFACTION WITH THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

**Dear English student of Second Level at ESPE:**

I would appreciate very much for your answers to this survey which has been designed to sustain the development of the thesis *“The use of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension skill with students of I- II intensive course at ESPE – Sangolquí – Ecuador, Second part of Semester September 2010 – February 2011”*, by Dr. Maria Teresa Llumiquinga P. to obtain her Master’s Degree in Teaching English.

**DIRECTIONS:** Please read each question carefully and answer it as accurately as you can. Your answers will be very useful to achieve these project goals. **Circle the letter that suits your real situation.**

**1. How did you feel when you developed your first exercise of this project, it means, without using any graphic organizer:**

- a. sure of yourself
- b. with some doubts
- c. with no idea about the answer
- d. with a little knowledge about the answer

**2. When you developed your next exercises with the application of graphic organizers, you felt:**

- a. more confident than the first occasion
- b. same as in the first occasion
- c. motivated to work on this activity

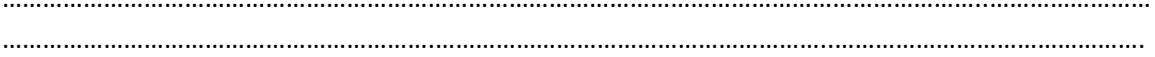
**3. When you had to prepare one graphic organizer you found it:**

- a. extremely difficult
- b. difficult but motivating
- c. very easy

**4. In your opinion, the use of graphic organizers is ..... to improve your reading comprehension**

- a. very useful
- b. a bit useful
- c. definitely not useful

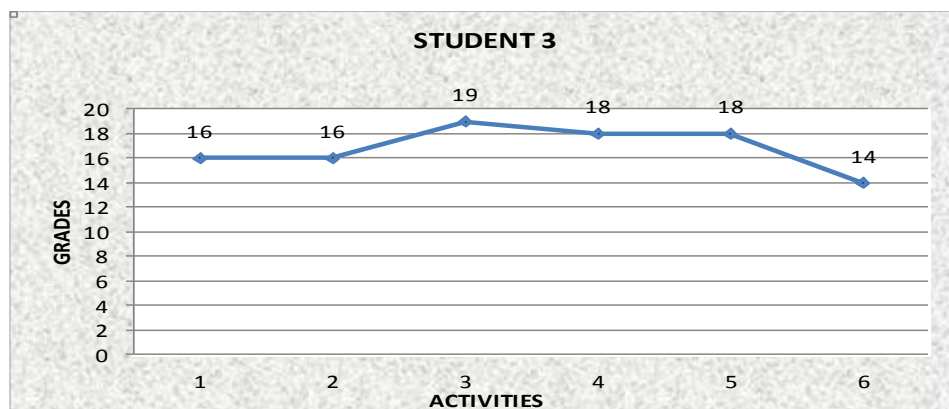
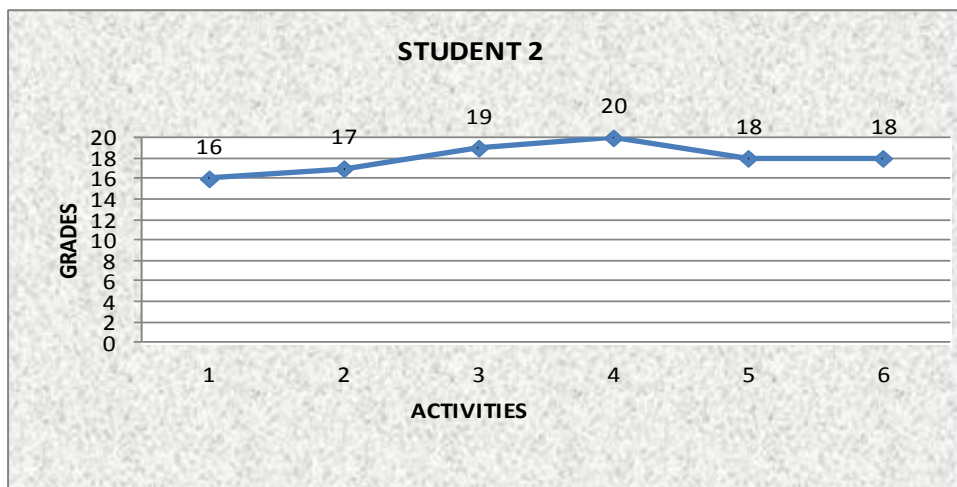
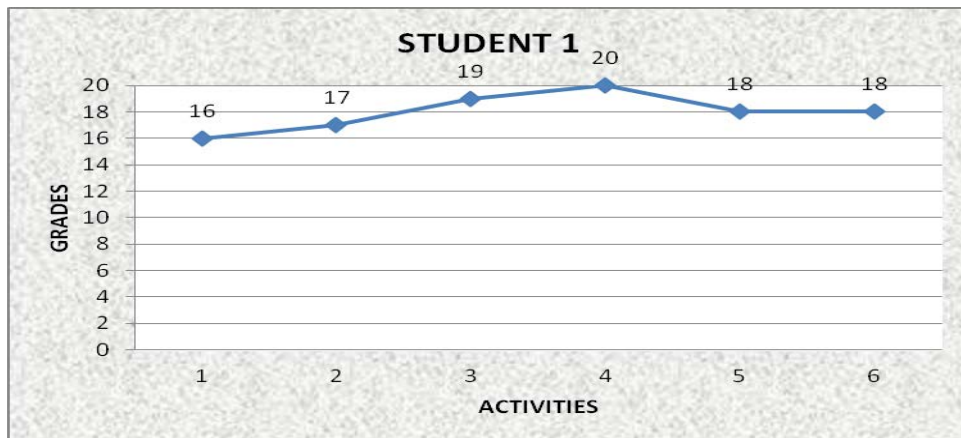
**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:**

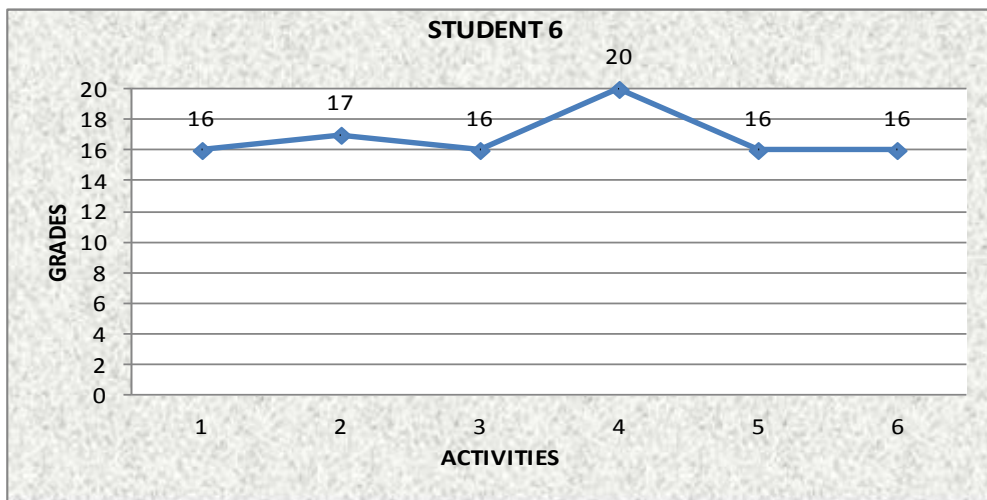
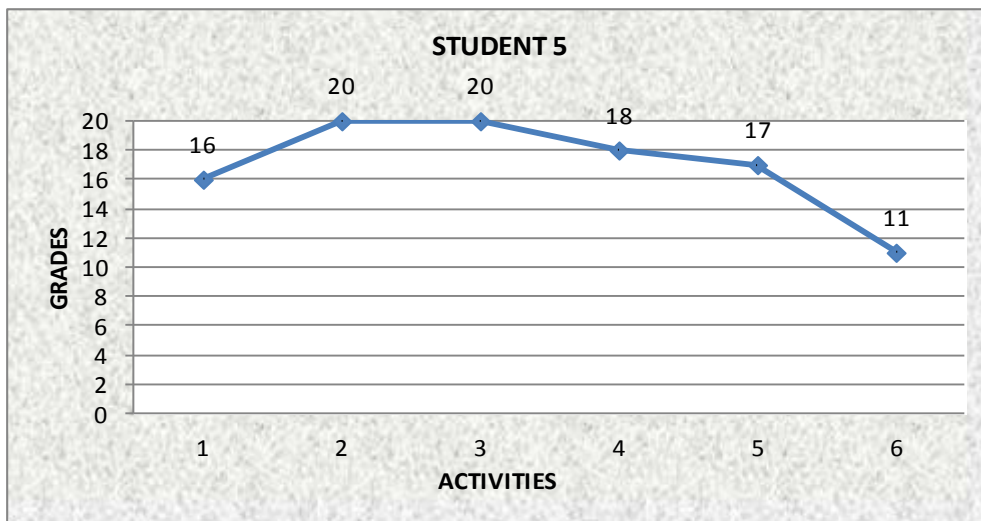
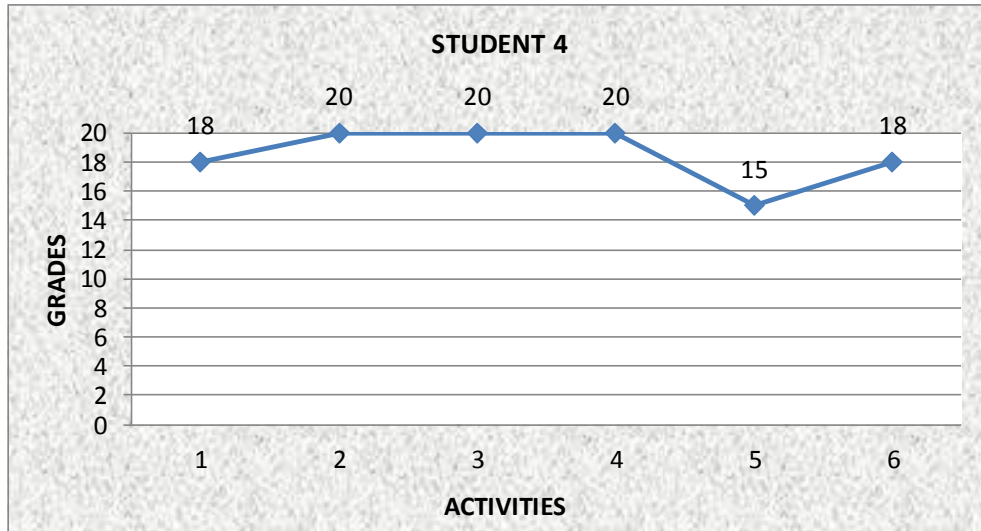


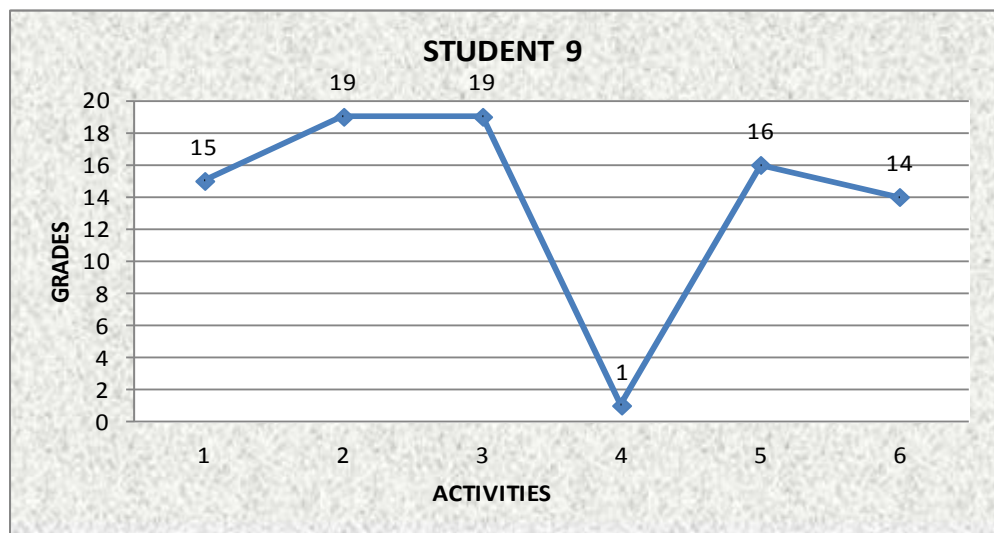
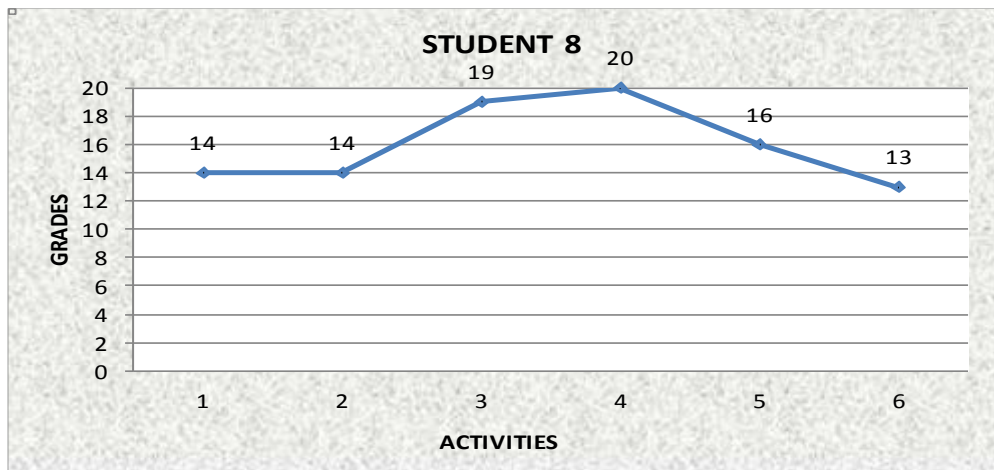
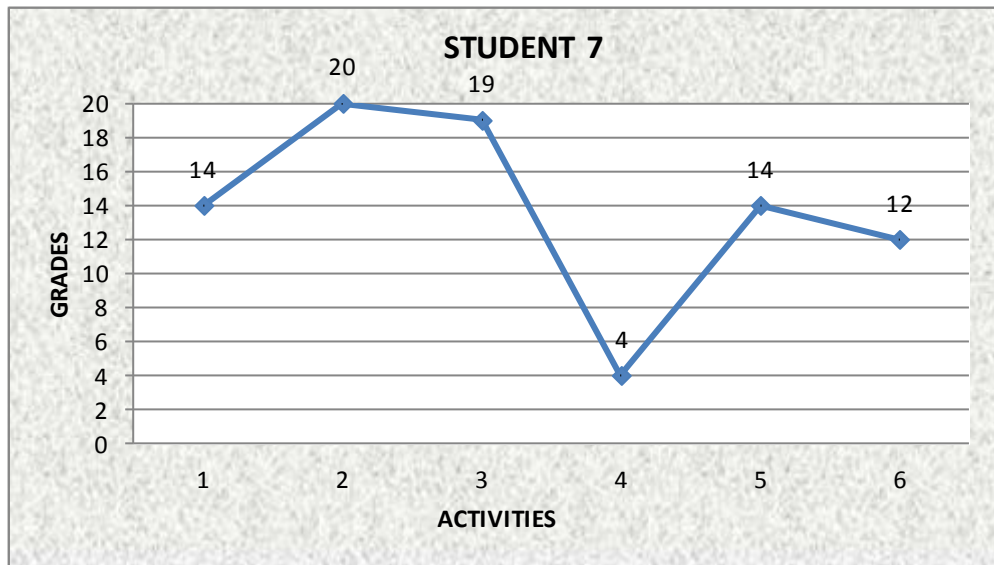
**THANK YOU**

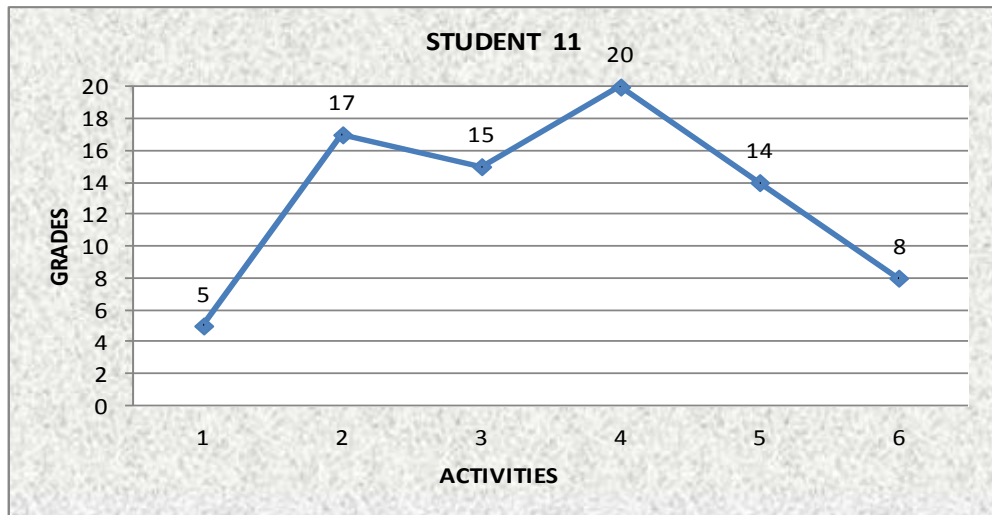
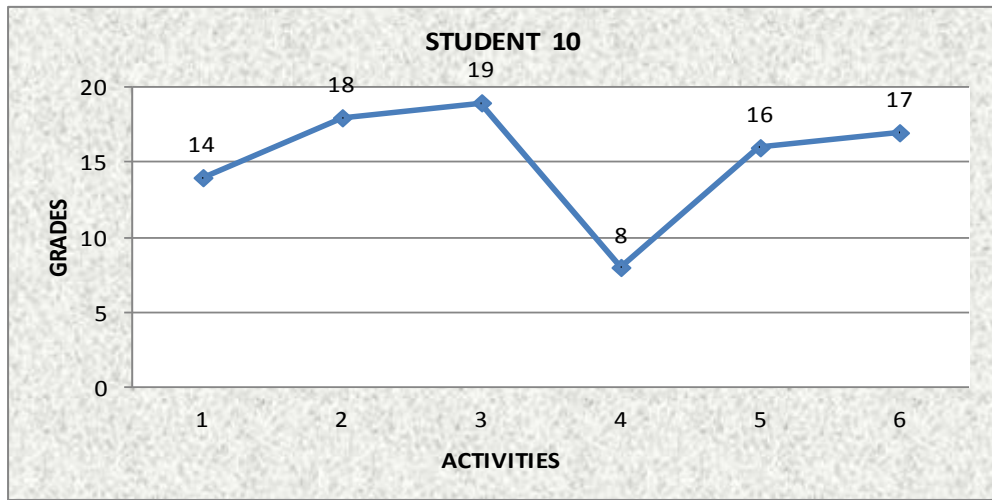
## ANNEX 1

**Individual performance in the 6 activities developed during the application of graphic organizers to improve reading comprehension.**

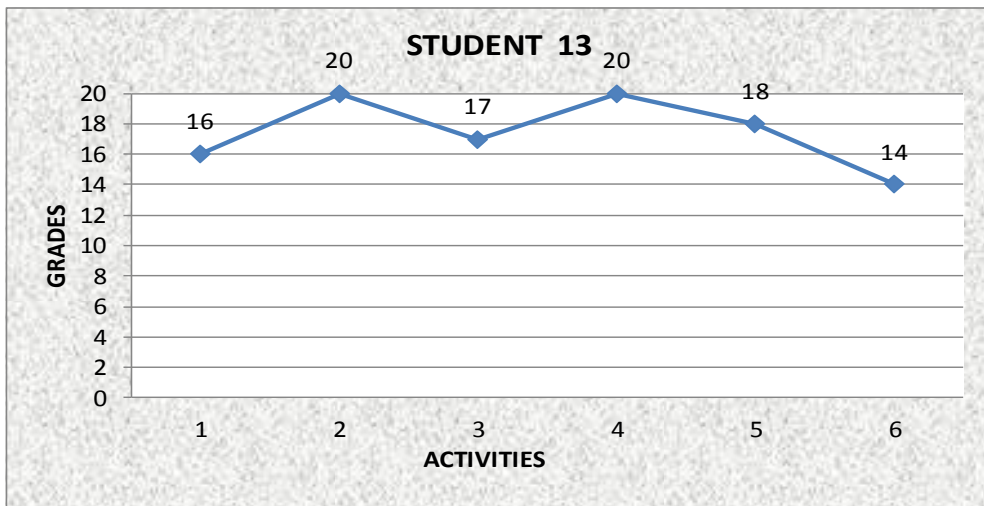
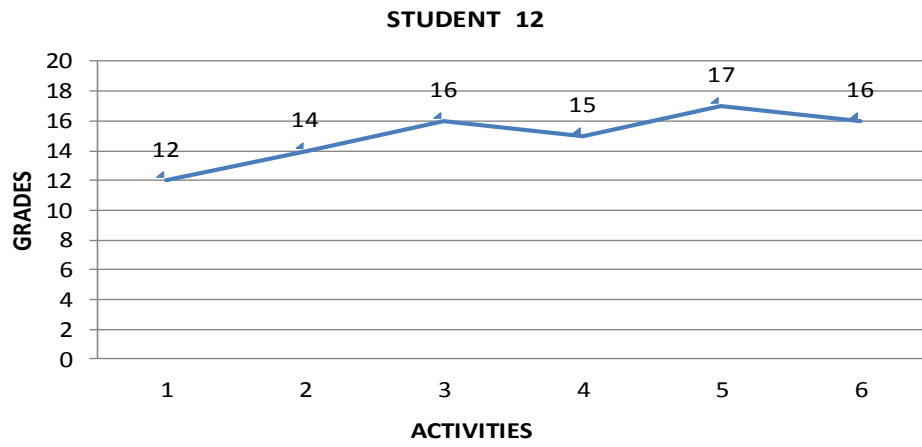








□



ANNEX 2

EXPERIMENTAL GROUP



Students of the Experimental Group taking the Post-test in the lab.



Experimental Group during the Post-test

**Students of the Experimental Group during the Post-test.**



## CONTROL GROUP



Students of the Control Group taking the Post Test



Control Group during the Post-test

**Students of the Control Group during the Post -Test**



**PARA GRADOS ACADÉMICOS DE MAESTRÍA (CUARTO NIVEL)**

**PONTIFICIA UNIVERSIDAD CATÓLICA DEL ECUADOR**

**DECLARACIÓN Y AUTORIZACIÓN**

Yo, **MARIA TERESA LLUMIQUINGA PULLUPAXI**, C.I. **1707219489**, autora del trabajo de graduación intitulado: **"THE USE OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS WITH STUDENTS OF I-II INTENSIVE COURSES AT ESPE – SANGOLQUÍ – ECUADOR, SEMESTER SEPTEMBER 2010 – FEBRUARY 2011"**, previa a la obtención del grado académico de **MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA DE INGLÉS** en la Facultad de **Comunicación, Lingüística y Literatura**.

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Quito, 2 de marzo de 2012

**María Teresa Llumiquinga Pullupaxi**

**1707219489**