

Reading Comprehension Strategies to Improve School Performance in Fifth Grade Students



Estrategias de Comprensión Lectora para Mejorar el Rendimiento Escolar en Estudiantes de Quinto Grado

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is the reader's ability to have and use different strategies that help him/her understand different texts and solve multiple situations to make a certain content his/her own (Madero, 2011, p. 179). The purpose of the project is the implementation of didactic strategies to facilitate reading comprehension in fifth grade students of the Departmental Educational Institution Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, Orihueca, Zona Bananera, Magdalena. We worked with 26 boys and girls between the ages of 9-13 years old. The type of study is qualitative, under the

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action research method. A psychosocial survey was used to recognize the family environment of the students who represent the population. The didactic strategies based on stories, informative texts, comics, fables, among others, energized with favorable environments in the school environment and creative ludic and pedagogical activities, triggered reactions of attention and concentration of the children, showing satisfactory results in reading comprehension, according to the evaluation and analysis process carried out by the researchers. With the implementation of conventional, simple didactic strategies, based on different types of simple readings, accompanied by pleasant and playful environmental situations, according to the age and socio-educational conditions of the students, an adequate level of reading comprehension was achieved, even with many difficulties, but it is demonstrated that these strategies are of great help to achieve textual comprehension and interest in reading.

Keywords: Comprehension, reading, strategies, didactics.

Resumen

La comprensión lectora es la capacidad del lector de disponer y utilizar diferentes estrategias que le ayuden a comprender distintos textos y resolver múltiples situaciones para hacer propio un determinado contenido (Madero, 2011, p. 179). El objeto del proyecto es la implementación de estrategias didácticas para facilitar la comprensión lectora en estudiantes de quinto grado de la Institución Educativa Departamental Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, corregimiento Orihueca, Zona Bananera, Magdalena. Se trabajó con 26 niños y niñas en edades comprendidas entre 9-13 años. El tipo de estudio es cualitativo, bajo el método de investigación acción. Se utilizó una encuesta psicosocial para reconocer el entorno familiar de los estudiantes que representan la población. Las estrategias didácticas basadas en cuentos, textos informativos, comics, fábulas, entre otros, dinamizados con ambientes favorables en el entorno escolar y actividades lúdicas y pedagógicas creativas, desencadenaron reacciones de atención y concentración de los niños, mostrando resultados satisfactorios en la comprensión de lectura, de acuerdo al proceso evaluativo y de análisis realizado por los

investigadores. Con la implementación de estrategias didácticas convencionales, sencillas, basadas en diversos tipos de lecturas simples, acompañadas de situaciones ambientales agradables, lúdicas y acordes con la edad y condiciones socioeducativas de los estudiantes, se logró un adecuado nivel de comprensión lectora, aun con muchas dificultades, pero se demuestra que dichas estrategias son de gran ayuda para lograr la comprensión textual y el interés por la lectura.

Palabras clave: Comprensión, lectura, estrategias, didácticas.

Introduction

The study proposes reading comprehension strategies that contribute to the improvement of school performance in fifth grade students of the Departmental Educational Institution Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, in Orihueca, Zona Bananera, Magdalena.

Addressing a common situation among teachers of Spanish in the same educational institution, we intend to establish a detailed analysis of the significant aspects involved in the lack of reading comprehension observed inside the classroom, evidenced daily through observation of students, when in curricular activities they are required to extract central ideas from a text or analyze paragraphs and propose solutions to everyday problems, they do not perform the proper interpretation, do not understand the texts, do not have coherence in their answers or simply do not understand what they read. (Pinedo, 2016, p. 101).

The problem consists of reading comprehension deficiencies in fifth grade students of the institution, ratified in the diagnostic part of this research, most of the students of the fifth grade of basic education, as a result of multiple factors, for which the objective is to implement reading comprehension strategies that contribute to improve the academic performance of students (Albán and Calero, 2017). In order to achieve this objective and, with it, to answer the research question, With the didactic strategies proposed can improve the reading comprehension processes in fifth grade students of the Institución Educativa Departamental Rodrigo Vives de Andreis Centro de Educación Básica Primaria N°1, of the corregimiento of

Orihueca, Zona Bananera, it is justified to conduct research that involves the populations directly affected, in search of potential solutions that contribute to improve the reading comprehension processes, through relevant pedagogical actions.(Nieto, 2006, p. 32).

This problem is recurrent in students of all levels and areas and according to bibliographic reviews, it is a problem at international level that has been detected in the execution of classes and teachers should question themselves at a pedagogical level (Gómez, 2019), about the management that is being given to improve the low rates of reading comprehension of students.

A sample of 26 boys and girls between the ages of 9-13 years old was randomly selected from the Rodrigo Vives de Andreis Departmental Educational Institution. The type of study is qualitative, under the action research method. An initial information gathering instrument based on a psychosocial survey was used to recognize the family environment of the students who represent the research population.

Methodologically, 5 pedagogical activities were proposed, framed in different types of common readings, where children should demonstrate immediate comprehension at the moment of reading. The research team proposed the following names for the reading comprehension activities: Activity 1. Educational Comics Gallery, Activity 2. Reader Sharing, Activity 3. Nature Stories, Activity 4. Informative reading, and Activity 5. Reading round.

We tried to recreate appropriate pedagogical spaces for the students' reading process, with different types of simple texts, such as stories, informative fables, comics, news, among other stories of daily life, implementing simple didactic strategies in order to attract the students' attention and concentration and motivate reading comprehension.

In the diagnosis, it was determined that these are students with few reading habits, who have read less than five books in their lives, who do not receive adequate reading stimulation from their parents, who are limited to attending to basic household responsibilities, in most

cases, parents who do not read daily, children who, in general, have poor reading behavior associated with the lack of reading exercise in the school and family environment.

The results of the implementation of didactic strategies to improve reading comprehension in students of the Institución Educativa Departamental Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, demonstrate the acceptability and confidence regarding the educational value that didactic activities can achieve in the teaching-learning process. Thus, students showed improvement in reading comprehension in each of the tools used, allowing to generate positive changes in the acquisition of pleasant strategies to read and understand what is read (Torres, 2017).

It is considered that the reading comprehension practices implemented in this study are innovative, although simple and recognized, but implemented and evaluated in the reality of the school context in question, as strategies to motivate reading from the academic environment, showing pleasant options for children to read in various spaces, taking advantage of this phase of cognitive development in which fifth grade students are in order to sensitize them and make reading a daily and necessary activity for life Guevara G. (Verdesoto and Castro, 2020).

Materials and methods

The research is framed in the type of descriptive qualitative study, under the participatory action research method (Hernández, Fernández and Baptista, 2014), which seeks interaction among participants and with it the collection of information for the analysis of the situation and the proposal of alternatives for the solution of the problem. A simple random sample of 26 students was taken, which corresponds to 28.9% of the fifth grade students of the Institución Educativa Departamental Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, made up of boys and girls between 9 and 13 years of age.

The project was developed in four phases that consisted of: Establishment of the psychosocial characteristics of the students

through a survey of students, parents and teachers. Next, pedagogical strategies were selected through reading comprehension materials and didactic activities. Subsequently, the didactic strategies were applied creatively in pleasant environments for adequate motivation and concentration to improve the students' reading comprehension levels. Finally, the results obtained by each student were analyzed for the realization of an argumentative analysis based on the reality of the study environment.

The activities implemented with their respective readings were: Educational Comics Gallery; "Take care of your environment", "The little fox friends", "Condorito doctor", "Quique Photosynthesis" and "Quique spider web"; Compartir Lector: "The little lead soldier", "The Penguin Family", "The Cicada and the Ant" and "The Mouse and the Lion"; Tales of Nature: "El pajarito", "Buscando leña", "En la noche", "El pastor mentiroso" and "El trabajo de la ballena"; Informative Reading: Card 7 (Lanjarón), Card 8 (Solís), Card 11 (Toy Story), Card 14 (Manifestation), Card 20 (Alka-Seltzer) and "Zoo" poster; Reading Round (Didactic Game): "The Tortoise and the Hare", "The Victory Cow", "Pedro Picarón", "Hoy Faltó...", "El Abecedario".

Results

The Departmental Educational Institution Rodrigo Vives de Andreis is part of the public sector establishments of the municipality of Zona Bananera, is an institution committed to serving the student community of the municipality and the region, in an inclusive and equitable manner, in the different academic days: morning, afternoon and evening, according to the needs, in preschool, elementary and high school and vocational middle school.

The survey applied to students, teachers and parents, provides diagnostic information, which ratifies the problem in question, i.e., reading comprehension deficiencies in fifth grade students, and also makes a recognition of the psychosocial conditions of the environment where the children under study live, which will allow inferring the potential causes of the problem addressed in the research. In the sociodemographic part, the total population of

students selected for the study is 26 boys and girls of the fifth grade, with representative participation under precepts of social inclusion, without bias in the sample, randomly and with the consent of the parents and the directors of the institution. The 46.2% belonged to the female gender and 53% to the male gender. The age of the students that make up the total population of the fifth grade of the Rodrigo Vives de Andreis Departmental Educational Institution, Primary Basic Education Center No. 1 (Headquarters 3), is between 9 and 13 years old, with an average of 11 years old.

On the other hand, the students' survey reveals that they do not spend enough time reading during the day; there is even a considerable group of them who read less than an hour a day, which is equivalent to not exercising the process of reading comprehension. As for the family support they receive for academic activities at home, the responsibility falls mostly on the mothers, who are culturally immersed in household chores and some in working hours, as well as the fathers, who generally do not take care of their children's school activities and delegate this responsibility to the mothers.

In other appreciations, the great majority of the children consider that they like to read, but do not do so due to lack of reading routines motivated by teachers and family members in each corresponding space, this is ratified by the fact that children at the age of 9-13 years have only read one book during their lives. The children consider that they understand a reading more when someone else reads it to them, which is why many parents read them stories at home, and they are the population of the study that considers daily reading important to improve the learning process.

Another important information expressed by the children is that when it is their turn to do school activities, such as consultations or presentations, they first consult the topic, write it down or summarize it and then learn it by heart to express it to their classmates, which immediately after the presentation becomes null knowledge, both for the presenter and for the listeners. Students consider important the feedback of the results of the evaluations they carry out in the curricular areas, through explanations of the phenomena or circumstances contained in the situations presented in the real

results, which makes students confront doubts in any subject and assume effective conceptualization processes based on their own construction of knowledge (OECD, 2006).

On the part of the parents, the most important information collected through the survey, shows a rural population of parents with scarce resources and low levels of formal education and in many cases in total illiteracy, therefore they do not stimulate children to read because they do not read or do not have reading habits, some do it occasionally through newspapers, television or social networks. However, some routine household activities serve as stimuli for reading comprehension such as reading the bible as a family, making the market list, reading ads on the internet, listening to news and playing digital games supervised by parents.

The vast majority of parents agree in recognizing the importance of reading comprehension in children, to improve academic performance and for a better performance in daily life, however, they do not provide adequate support in school, half of the parents say that they attend school when they are summoned for some behavioral or academic circumstance.

Finally, the contributions of the teachers are taken into consideration in the recognition of the problems of the fifth grade students of the Institución Educativa Departamental Rodrigo Vives de Andreis, to which they consider that almost all of them are at a basic level of reading comprehension, with manifestations of difficulties both in reading and writing, in which cases didactic alternatives can be faced to stimulate reading and raise to higher levels of reading comprehension (Navarro, 2008). The somewhat predictable results, given the daily teaching experience of the problem situation in this educational institution, is associated with certain cultural and social circumstances faced by the inhabitants of the municipality in particular; a problem that is being the object of intervention from various work fronts at the institutional and community level to overcome the difficulties of poverty, school dropout, unmet needs, the social gap between the rural and urban sectors and apathy for study, among others (Castellanos and Guataquira, 2020).

In compliance with the objectives set, some didactic strategies of easy application were developed, based on readings of different types of informative and literary texts, among others, but set by playful activities and pleasant environments that facilitate concentration (Feo, 2015), and therefore, the comprehension of the texts.

In activity 1, Gallery of Educational Comics, it was found that 67.7% of the students were able to effectively comprehend the readings and satisfactorily answer the questions asked in each reading block. The 25.4% moderately managed to answer the reading comprehension questions. 4.6% of the students did not manage to comprehend the texts in any grade.

In Activity 2, Reader Sharing, 53% of the students achieved satisfactory reading comprehension, while 38.5% did so partially, i.e., they presented many difficulties in understanding the readings.

In activity 3, Nature Stories, 78% of fifth grade students achieved 78% reading comprehension and 20% partially achieved with some difficulties in text comprehension, generally associated with external distracters and lack of attention to the readings.

The results in Activity 4, Informational Reading, show 66% achievement in reading comprehension, i.e., they answered the questions correctly. 25% of the students in the test had moderate or partial achievement, which indicates a certain degree of difficulty in understanding the informative texts.

In activity 5, Round of readings, it was observed that a little more than 89% achieved a satisfactory level of reading comprehension, compared to 12.5% of students who presented difficulties in understanding the texts.

Some of the problems or difficulties identified and ratified in the study are as follows:

- There are reading and writing problems among the students, observed in the lack of penmanship, poor spelling associated with

the lack of knowledge of spelling rules, poor intonation of words and punctuation marks.

- They present difficulties in the interpretation of simple texts and retention of the main ideas of what is immediately read.
- Lack of knowledge of the meaning of a variety of common terms or words of everyday language and even more so of other less used terms, but without attempting a linguistic association.
- They make no effort to associate and argue the ideas of the text read with the test questions.
- Lack of attention and concentration in reading, associated with environmental distractions such as being aware of adjacent peers, cellular devices, among others.

Discussion

The didactic strategies proposed in the research, dynamize the teaching-learning processes in a world that every day is projected more to the virtual, articulates academic, recreational and cultural activities with the immediate environment, and makes reading an imperative activity as a pedagogical strategy, enhancing learning and social integration of all students with society (Salazar, 2021).

A population of students fully identified with reading comprehension difficulties at basic levels, ratified in the study and based on the researchers' teaching experience, demonstrate comprehension of different types of texts, in different environments or reading strategies, which is interpreted as a successful way of motivating fifth graders to read, given that the aversion to these pedagogical practices is recognized voluntarily, and in the school environment it is being done in a conventional and not very creative way, it is reaffirmed that with simple activities, full of environmental motivation and adequate spaces, as well as varied readings, good results are achieved (Gallego, Figueroa and Rodríguez, 2019), which serve as models to imitate and perfect to replicate in the school environment of other basic education institutions.

Something important, is to emphasize that the game has been a transcendental ludic tool in the development of aptitudes and skills in the human being that have contributed through time in the

formation of socially inclusive people and that contribute and enrich others with the knowledge and actions towards a social transformation generating positive behaviors that help to empower others in skills (Muñoz and Ocaña, 2017), as in this case, where students play while reading, and manage to capture the attention of the reading activities and respond correctly, which is inferred then, that are necessarily required, common strategies to motivate reading comprehension in children. Poor school pedagogical practices, particularly in reading and writing, produce negative effects on the achievement of routines and love for reading in minors (Coronado, & Romero, 2017).

On the other hand, the educational factors, both internal and external, that could be influencing students' lack of good reading comprehension are: didactic or teaching strategies, the absence of appropriate environments for learning and the lack of family support. It could be evidenced through observation that teachers, particularly Spanish teachers, limit themselves to using traditional reading comprehension strategies limited only to the literal level (Avendaño, 2016). In addition, their pedagogical work reflects that it deserves qualification and updating, since they fail to stimulate the habit of reading and learning the concepts necessary for the development of reading comprehension (Caracas and Hernández, 2019).

Likewise, the lack of appropriate environments for reading comprehension, such as equipped libraries, reading rooms, didactic and technological aids, also influences the development of this skill. Finally, the lack of family support is a determining factor in reading habits. In the family context, parents have a low level of schooling, and due to exhausting working hours, they provide little support to their children in their education and in the development of reading (Serrano, 2020, p. 223).

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