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Developing reading skills through the use of educational comics in ninth-grade students at Javier Loyola high school

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Resumen

Los cómics educativos son materiales poderosos y fuentes que pueden beneficiar a los estudiantes en las aulas de inglés; sin embargo, estos materiales no son utilizados por los educadores de inglés porque existe la idea errónea de que el contenido de los cómics no es apropiado para los estudiantes de inglés, especialmente para los adolescentes. El objetivo de esta investigación experimental era determinar el efecto que tienen los cómics educativos en la capacidad de comprensión lectora de los alumnos de noveno curso. Toda el aula se dividió en dos grupos (control y experimental) de forma aleatoria, y el tratamiento se llevó a cabo sólo con el grupo experimental, que consistió en realizar actividades de comprensión lectora mediante el uso de cómics educativos. Además, para recoger los datos, los investigadores administraron una pre-prueba y un post- prueba a ambos grupos. Tras computar todos los datos recogidos en un programa informático, se refutó la hipótesis nula y se aceptó la hipótesis alternativa. Como resultado, los investigadores determinaron que los cómics educativos tenían una influencia sustancial en las habilidades de comprensión lectora de los alumnos.

Palabras claves: Comics educativos, capacidad de comprensión lectora, investigación experimental

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Abstract

Educational comics are powerful materials and sources that can beneficial to learners in English classrooms; nevertheless, these materials are not used by English educators because there is a misconception that the content of comics is not appropriate for English learners, especially for teenagers. The objective of this experimental research was to determine the effect that educational comics has on ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills. The entire classroom was divided into two groups (control and experimental) randomly, and the treatment was carried out only with the experimental group which consisted of doing reading comprehension activities by using educational comics. Also, to collect data, researchers administered a pre-test and post-test to the both groups. After computing all the gathered data into a software, the null hypothesis was refuted and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. As a result, researchers determined that educational comics had a substantial influence on student reading comprehension skills.

Keywords: educational comics, reading comprehension skills, experimental research

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Introduction

As the world becomes more globalized, English plays a critical role in relationship building and communication; English serves as a common language and a global language in order to preserve worldwide relationships in research, technology, commerce, education, travel, and tourism, among other things (Rao, 2019). It is estimated that English is spoken by 1.3 billion of people around the world and became a second language in many countries in America with just as great an impact or perhaps even greater. Subsequently, it is possible for individuals to develop professionally and personally when they learn English.

It is widely known that English plays a significant role in the educational field in all levels (primary schools, high schools, and universities). Rao (2019) also mentions that:

> English has been widely used by the students as well as the teachers and researchers around the world as English is the main medium used in the various fields of education and it is the only language where the information is stored in the form of books and journals in both printed and electronic form. (p.73)

That is to say that the prominence of English in the educational setting not only as a major but also as a global language and being the medium of communication between researchers and students from different parts of the world. In addition, English is the default language in which most experts publish their work, so most scientific articles must be written or translated into English (Rao, 2019).

In the Ecuadorian context, English is taught as an independent subject, and it became mandatory from elementary level to high school since 2016. The Ministry of Education and other

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experts designed an updated Ecuadorian national curriculum (English as a Foreign Language curriculum); this curriculum has five curricular threads (communication and cultural awareness, oral communication, reading, writing, and language through the arts).

In the reading thread, one of the sub-threads is reading comprehension. In the EFL national curriculum (2016) it is also mentioned that "through reading, learners will improve their critical thinking skills, learn to communicate more effectively, improve study skills, and use reading texts as sources of information. Reading for pleasure is promoted essentially through the Language through the Arts thread" (p. 21). It emphasizes that reading must be promoted on all the levels and try to connect this curricular thread with other threads already stated. Also, it underlines the importance of reading for pleasure since learners are children or teenagers, teachers must use materials considering their students' needs, interests, and age to help learners to go beyond their expectations; the outcomes of reading for pleasure should result in stimulating students' curiosity and satisfaction.

Despite of these adaptations and modifications on the national curriculum, in the classrooms, learners are not able achieve what has been stated in the curriculum, and teachers are not able to deal with a variety of challenges. According to the English Proficiency Index (2022) showed that the English level of Ecuador is below than expected. Ecuador is in the eighteenth place over twenty countries; reading was one of the skills where Ecuadorian students had the most problems and obtained the lowest grades.

Reading skill is one and only, since it plays a vital part on the communication setting. This skill is perceived as an essential competence to develop the other skills such as speaking,

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writing, and listening. Academics believe that reading is the most essential of the four language skills, and many educators acknowledged that reading is the most important skill to be mastered by children and teenagers in school and high school (Koch, 1974).

Within reading skill, there is a sub-skill that is vital for learners to succeed in going beyond understanding the explicit information. Experts assumed that reading comprehension is a known and popular skill in many academic disciplines, and issues can have significant consequences for pupils' learning achievement, and it might also affect in their future careers (Okkinga et al., 2016).

Research problem or context

During seventh semesters of doing practicum, the researchers have dealt with diverse challenges, issues, and concerns in the educational field; on the other hand, there was a particular situation that caught their attention. The researchers were able to notice that students failed in their lessons especially in the reading skill; consequently, they investigated deeper the situation and came to the conclusion that learners were struggling with the comprehension of written texts because of a limited time for reading activities in class. It is important to highlight that learners were used to reading the text in their first or mother language (Spanish); nevertheless, they did not consider that reading in English was an essential skill, which is essential to progress in acquiring vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency while practicing this skill.

In addition, the practice of reading skills in English lessons was limited by its complexity to apply in foreign language learners; factors such as the selection of materials related to the mentioned skill and the skipping of pre, while, and post-reading activities during the application

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of reading tasks have been seen in monotonous situation. The English teacher was aware that the majority of learners did not have a good level in reading since they did not have English classes at school. He decided to level students starting with the teaching of vocabulary and grammar tenses, but he did not concentrate on reading skills.

As a final point, the English teacher could not use other resources since the Ministry of Education only provides textbooks to teach, so the lack of innovative resources that might catch students' attention was another matter that contributed to the main problem.

Contextualization

The students were from Javier Loyola high school, which is located in Azogues-Cañar. They were between fourteen and fifteen years old and will be the data source to develop data collection methods and provide essential information to answer the research problem. In the classroom there were about thirty-eight students, so the classroom was crowded because the space was not big enough to change the layout of the classroom and apply other kind of activities.

The English teacher had been working on the school for a year and a half and on his observations, he noticed that students who came from the school did not have an English teacher; consequently, they could not understand the English lessons. The activities applied in classes were carried out in Spanish because of the previously mentioned issue.

The group of the participants belonged to a rural public school where they learnt basic subjects such as mathematics, literature, science and social studies, and English as a foreign

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language; this last one had a limited time during the week. English subject was the only one which had been reduced the amount of time to be taught.

The English lessons observed presented common characteristics like promoting autonomous work among students by doing tasks, putting the contents learned into practice, and the use of visual scaffolding tools like pictures, images, or videos to recall students' prior knowledge.

Reading is not practiced frequently at Javier Loyola high school since the subject had been not taught in the primary school. Consequently, the professional tutor decided to focus on vocabulary, grammar tenses and the most common phrases used in daily situations; as a result, students of ninth grade were not used to performing any reading activity.

Based on the abovementioned problem, the researchers formulate the following research question and objectives.

Research question

What is the effect of educational comics to ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills at Javier Loyola high school?

Sub-question

To what extent do learners comprehend a reading text through educational comics?

Overall aim

To determine the effect that educational comics has on ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills.

Specific aim

To establish the significance difference of educational comics between experimental and control group

Hypotheses

Null hypothesis

There is no a significant effect on students reading comprehension skills through educational comics.

Alternative hypothesis

There is a significant effect on students reading comprehension skills through educational comics.

Significance of the study

Reading is one of the most significant skills that people should master, and it also mentioned that reading is a life skill that is essential for effective participation in both society and the workplace(Jerrim & Moss, 2018) . Reading is a long-term skill that should be developed from children to adolescents; therefore, teachers must pay attention on how to help learners to develop and chief this skill since learners might increase a variety of abilities such as cognitive, comprehension, and critical thinking skills.

Moreover, reading comprehension is a reading sub-skill that should be taken into account; learners are exposed to diverse texts during their school and professional lives, they must be able to read and process the information that those texts have in order to have a clear understanding of what they are reading. Reading comprehension is a complex cognitive activity

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that is difficult to teach, quantify, and study. Despite this knowledge, international and national reading scores have not been increasing for adolescents for many years (Elleman & Oslund, 2019).

Worldwide, there are thousands of studies that are focused on improving reading skills; however, in Ecuador, there are not enough studies that provide any solution to help learners improve their reading comprehension skills. Researchers, teachers, and policy makers need to work together to improve young people's reading skills, rather than find quick solutions in favor of long-term strategies that take years to develop (Elleman & Oslund, 2019).

There are diverse resources that teachers might find suitable for improving learner's comprehension skills. Nevertheless, the majority of English teachers continue to use the same materials and resources without taking into account the needs and interests of the students. In the Ecuadorian context, English teachers prefer to use the materials that the government provides; the textbook is the only material that the Ministry of Education gives to the students. Nevertheless, in some schools these materials have not been delivered to this day. As a result, teachers only teach grammar tenses and vocabulary without using innovative resources or materials, so learners are not able to grasp new knowledge and information in order to improve their skills.

One of the resources that teachers can use is comics which have not been seen as an educational resource or material because many experts believed that the content of comics is inappropriate for children or teenagers. Experts believed that many people are reluctant to associate comic books with education. Furthermore, some educators and parents regard comic

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books as childish (Vs, 2019). Nevertheless, nowadays, this point of view has changed, educators point out that cartoons and comics make learning more fun. Comics can be black and white or color, and Images, trends and visuals can be used to convey ideas (Vs, 2019). Educational comics have some catchy features which can rapidly get learners' attention. Similarly, there are other characteristics that make educational comics unique such as the time that learner can spend on reading those types text (usually less time than other reading texts).

Since educational comics have recently been introduced to the classroom, there is a lack of studies to show the efficacy of using educational comics for improving learner's comprehension skills. Consequently, this study will be essential to allow teachers, students, and future researchers to have a clear idea of how can educational comics can be applied in the classroom and its benefits while applying these materials.

English teachers will benefit from this study since they will know how to apply educational comics in the EFL classroom and its positive outcomes. Also, they will be informed about what strategies, methodologies, and techniques can be used in order to help learners to improve their reading skills, specially comprehension. Lastly, this study will help teachers to figure out how to select materials (educational comics) by considering learners' interests and needs.

Additionally, learners or students will also take an advantage of this study, since they will be informed about what resources they can use in order to enhance their comprehension skills. Many teens are interested into reading comics, but they do not know what comics they should read, so this study can help them to decide what comics are good for them. As a final point, they

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will be aware of how they should read comics properly, and what activities they can do after reading educational comics.

Finally, future researchers might also benefit from this study because the findings obtained in this study might be used as reference data in conducting similar researches; additionally, this study might be useful to serve as a background study for future studies, especially the results.

Literature review

Background studies

For many years, comics have been seen as a resource for entertaining people and without significance in education. However, in recent years, many studies demonstrate that comics are able to improve the reading comprehension skill of students and other linguistic abilities. English skills such as, speaking, writing, listening, reading are examples that comics have a powerful benefit in developing students' language skills. Albaladejo (2021) supports that idea by stating, "not only do comic contribute to the improvement of reading comprehension, but they also enhance significantly the rest of the linguistic skills and they are a valuable resource to deal with topic of other areas" (p. 45). In addition, using comic books to present educational material to students visually is an effective way to enhance their learning, so they are interested in the text and in its illustrations (Joshi et al., 2019).

Despite the variety of comics according to their genre and content, educational comics are the most suitable type of comic for applying in EFL classrooms because they focus on educational content, the type of vocabulary needed for different levels (from beginners to

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advanced learners), and illustrations. As a consequence, teachers can use comics for multiple purposes and areas, yet comics can be used and applied in other subject like social sciences, biology, mathematics, and others.

Many studies relate to the application of educational comics in EFL lessons. For example, Merc and Kampusu (2013) conducted a study aimed at investigating the effect of comic strips on reading comprehension in Turkish EFL students. Those researchers applied comics' strips with 167 students with different levels (high-proficiency level and low-proficiency level) and concluded that using comic strips greatly facilitates students' reading comprehension on two levels (Merc and Kampusu, 2013). The use of educational comics can show a significant improvement in students who have low and high proficiency. Thus, the experimental group in this study can be benefited by the application of educational comics because as it was mentioned previously, the English level of our participants is lower than the CEFR suggests due to they did not have English lessons in primary school.

Another study conducted by Cabrera et al. (2018) found that Pixton's comics are engaging and entertaining tools that motivate students in the learning process (Cabrera et al., 2018). The author emphasizes that the use of comics works as a source to engage learners and promote knowledge in a good classroom environment. In addition, the participants of the study cited previously shared similarities to the participants of this study, because in both research studies, the participants were high school Ecuadorian (aged from 12-14 years old), so the similarity can help researchers to have the possible results in this study. However, the aim of the

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abovementioned study was to use *Pixton* to teach grammar and vocabulary. As a consequence, the different focus cannot be related with the aim of the present study.

Another study by Méndez and Castañeda showed that the use of comics can significantly improve reading comprehension skills. In this study, 34 students in 10th grade were tested by a pre-test and post-test, and also the researchers made 8 sections of interventions where they applied the comics in the participants; who started the study with a 53% of participant obtaining low results and in the post-test only 3% of learners had low results. As a result, they concluded that comics, along with the control of researchers, have had a tremendous positive impact on student understanding (Méndez & Castañeda, 2018). It means that the comics and the procedure of the research can influence positively on the reading comprehension of learners. Referring to this study, the reading strategies (researcher's management) and the application of educational comics can improve the understanding of texts effectively.

Additionally, a similar experimental research done by Aldahash and Altalhab (2020) the authors used graphic novels instead of comics and their participants were separated in two groups (experimental and control group). However, the difference between graphic novel and educational comics is that graphic novels tend to present longer stories than educational comics do. Additionally, they can be divided by series and comics usually are divided by short stories divided in chapters. After applying the graphic novel, the participants were applied a test and the researchers concluded that the experimental group performed better than the control group and also improved on reading comprehension tests. This suggests that reading relevant graphic novels can have a significant positive effect on high school students' reading skills. The findings

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of this study assisted the researchers in gaining an initial understanding of which groups performed better following the use of educational comics (Aldahash &Altalhab, 2020). In addition, the authors made emphasis to the positive influence that graphic novels or comics can have on intermediate school students', which are similar to the present study.

Finally, educational comics have been proved as an important tool, which help learners to improve their reading comprehension skills rather than traditional text. This idea is supported by Rengur and Sugirin (2019) who concluded that "comic strip was proved effective in teaching students' reading comprehension. On the other hand, the use of comic strips is the most effective media, due to it consists of pictures and story line that make students more interested in reading" (p. 241). The author points out that the effectiveness of comics in reading facilitates the understanding of the students because they provide illustrations and stories, so the students get interested in reading educational comics in comparison with other type of texts.

Constructivism

The use of the constructivism approach will help researchers to have an overview of the cognitive process of the students while they are using educational comics. Constructivism has been a theory that helped educators through many years because of their applications in social science. Despite that, there are many definitions for constructivism from different authors. Scholars, for instance, define constructivism as a learning theory where knowledge is best acquired through action, reflection and creation (Brau, 2018). The author points out that that learners through their interaction, self-reflection and building actively construct knowledge. Additionally, constructivism emphasizes the active role of the learner in creating meaning and

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understanding, as opposed to simply acquiring knowledge through passive absorption (Brau, 2018). This theory is helpful because researchers can use the background of the students to promote knowledge. Regarding the problem, educational comics can have a relationship to the experiences of the students in order to support and improve their understanding in reading comprehension. It is supported by Piaget (1972) cognitive development theory who mentioned that learners actively construct their understanding of the world through their experiences and interactions with the environment.

Constructivist is not just an isolated theory; it can be divided in social constructivism, which emphasizes the social nature of learning, recognizing that individuals can construct knowledge and meaning through collaboration and communication with others. Key principles of the constructivist framework include active learning, prior knowledge, problem solving, and reflective thinking. In this theory, social interaction plays an essential role in the learning through the interaction with knowledgeable people who can help learners to achieve their learning goals (Vygotsky, 1968).

By using educational comics and the constructivist principles, teachers can take advantage of the following aspects:

Encourage self-interpretation: By using educational comics learners are guided to interpret them in their own way connecting individual perspectives with the content of comics.

Reflective thinking: Students can reflect on what they learned and how they constructed their understanding in order to be more aware about their learning. In this aspect, it is important

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that teachers provide opportunities to all students for having a meaningful learning and assess learners with questions that can improve their reflective skills.

Motivator: Educational comics can also help teachers to engage students in the lesson. Thus, educational comics can work as a material to work with specific topics and as hook activities to catch the learners' attention.

Social constructivism can also be used for applying educational comics in classroom in the following ways:

Improving collaborative work: Group activities like group discussion or collaborative activities can help learners to share their interpretations of educational comics constructing knowledge socially.

Linking real-world issues with educational comics: Educational comics can show problems that students are familiar with. These problems can be experiences, environmental issues, social problems, and daily situations. As a consequence, learning is meaningful and significant for learners.

Improving problem-solving skills: This aspect can be connected with the previous one because learners can look for solutions for real-life situations. In this way, problem-solving skills and critical thinking are improved using context and experiences such as current issues (Covid-19) or anecdotes (personal experiences).

Limitations of constructivism

Despite the abovementioned advantages that constructivism can provide English teachers in EFL classroom; its limitations should be taken into account, as well.

Complexity: Constructivist learning can be complex and time-consuming, as it requires students to actively engage in the construction of their own knowledge.

Reliance on prior knowledge: Constructivist approaches to learning can be limited by the quality and availability of students' prior knowledge. Students without a strong foundation of prior knowledge may struggle to construct new understanding.

Extrinsic student' motivation: Constructivist learning depends on students being motivated and engaged in the learning process. Students who are not interested in the topic or do not have a strong motivation to learn may struggle with constructivist approaches.

Teacher role: The teacher's role in constructivist learning can be challenging, as they must facilitate the learning process while allowing students to take an active role in constructing their own understanding.

Assessment: Assessment can be difficult in a constructivist learning environment, as traditional methods of evaluation may not accurately reflect the complex and dynamic process of knowledge construction.

Multimodal theory

This theory is useful in the present study because it will assist the researchers at understanding the way of how meaning is constructed since the use of visuals, multimedia, audios, and others in learning has a positive influence in learner's understanding. This statement is supported by Gilakjani et al. (2011) who stated that "this strategy leads learners to perceive that it is easier to learn, improve attention rates, and improve learning performance" (p. 1321).

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This can be particularly relevant in educational contexts, where the use of multiple modes, such as visuals and text, can enhance students' understanding and engagement with the material.

Regarding the use of educational comics, using pictures and words can help learners to understand the text easily. This idea is supported by Sweller (2005) who states that "learners learn better from words and pictures than from words alone, if the words and pictures are semantically related to each other and if they are presented closely together in space or in time" (p. 60). Educational comics can be used to take advantage of this by using a combination of text, images, and stories to convey reading comprehension and engage students.

Cultural- historical theory

Cultural-historical theory, also known as Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), is a conceptual model for investigating the interaction of cultural, historical, and personality factors in shaping human development and learning (Foot, 2014). This theory views learning as a social process that occurs within specific cultural and historical contexts and is influenced by individual and collective actions and activities (Foot, 2014). In educational application, it recognizes the importance of cultural and historical processes, individual experiences, and the use of material to promote active, meaningful, and culturally relevant learning. In this way, educational comics can be designed to reflect and respond to the cultural and historical context of the students, making the material more relevant and meaningful.

The importance of reading in teenager's second language development

Reading is one of the most important skills that students must learn and master while studying; as a result, understanding the definition of reading is critical in order to conceptualize

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this competence in this study. Academics define reading as the capacity to absorb words and phrases included in a text and use this information to one's own development which means that students need to understand deeply what they read, so it helps them develop their cognitive skills (Dadzie, 2008).

According to Sulaiman and Harpiansi (2018), "reading refers to the automatic process as the readers read the textual material and deriving meaning unconsciously" (p. 82). This implies that English teachers must create spaces or provide opportunities for students to cultivate their reading habits, so they will be able to master their higher-order thinking skills. In addition, reading skills in language learners is straightly associated with the reading accuracy the students have in their mother tongue. In this way, the importance of develop reading skills in L1 will be essential to understand texts in a foreign language (Sulaiman & Harpiansi, 2018).

Successful reading requires building a representation that is both abstract and more complex that help learners to master this skill for a lifetime (Greene, 2001). This indicates that educators can apply a variety of reading activities when learners are teenagers; furthermore, they will be able to foster their reading techniques and routines since they have the age to comprehend what they are reading.

Learners are able to enrich their reading skills when they practice reading daily because the best results can be achieved by reading books at the right time when they have the time to chew and digest each masterpiece thoroughly (Gallo, 2007). The author points out that educators must know their learners level, so the material that they will work on will not be neither too accessible nor too advanced (Gallo, 2007).

Reading fluency as a way to understand a text quicker

While everyone is fostering or developing their reading skills, it might also cultivate other sub-skills that are not well known by them unconsciously. Reading fluency is one of those sub-skills that people who are mastering reading skill will eventually acquire it. It implies that any learner is able to succeed in maturing or progressing this skill; however, this development might require daily practice to grasp the entire reading skills and sub-skills.

Since reading fluency is not an isolated skill, it will require others to succeed in the understanding of text of the learner. Thus, reading ability is viewed as a link between sequencing and fully understanding words (Rasinski, 2004).

Being exposed to a variety of texts day-to-day might be effective and productive for learners, for they will be able to gain a huge amount of knowledge that the teacher might help them retain through post-reading activities or short tests.

Fluent readers are able to improve their reading comprehension because fluency improves reading ability (Baker et al., 2008). Those above-mentioned authors emphasize on the importance of fluency while doing reading activities, which implies that students will be able to become fluent readers if they create or cultivate a reading routine. Being able to develop a routine might be stressful and extremely hard for students who are not used to reading any kind of text; consequently, it is the role of teacher to keep or maintain the students' motivation alive.

Comics as an entertaining material for teenagers

Nowadays, comics have become more and more popular because teenagers prefer to read a variety of comics such as science fiction, non-fiction, and others. In addition, comics have

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many features (illustrations, plot, characters, scenarios, etc.) that engage readers especially teenagers to continue exploring the content. This type of reading texts can be bought online or at any bookstore, so they are widely available. In addition, a definition of comics is given by Gordon (2020) who stated that "comics belong to the larger continuum of art: single-panel cartoons to broadsheets and comics magazines and paper to albums and graphic novels to webcomics and more" (p. 13). It is said that comics are considered a type of art that help readers not only entertain, but also learn new concepts or themes. The use of illustrations can be a crucial factor in reflection, for they can catch students' attention since teenagers love to see pictures while they are reading a text.

Educational comics

Educational comics have not been known as an innovative resource for some educators since they have the misconception that those types of texts are the same as other usual comics (manga, super heroes, or romance stories). It is crucial to comprehend what educational comics are and where they came from. Educational comics, according to some historians, are a relatively new form that first appeared in the 1930s. The comics are employed in both primary and secondary schools lately (Onkovych & Onkovych, 2016).

Educational comics had been seen as a useless tool to be implemented in the classroom because it was believed that humour would distract students to continue reading. However, nowadays educators have started to value and notice the importance of these materials in order to help learners improve or master their reading skills. According to Karagöz (2018) "comic books were started to be used in education field by adding educational and informative elements. This

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new genre, which is main in nature, is called "educational comicbook" (p. 660). The author

highlights that comics have been changing in order to be applied in educational settings by

adding educational elements such as critical thinking, creativity and expression, reading

comprehension, etc. Additionally, informative elements in educational comics provide to the

reader factual information about the text.

Positive consequences of using educational comics

      Comics can have numerous positive effects on learners, since they synthesize

information, which allow students to comprehend what they are reading efficiently. Based on a

study conducted by Robbani & Khoirotunnisa (2021), it is mentioned that various types of

graphic material are delivered in a comic book, including images, colors, and words, which may

prompt the reader to become more creative and interested in reading them.

      However, in the educational field, those kinds of reading texts are not frequently used;

Jerrim et al. (2020) found them more informal or inappropriate resources for schools than

academic books because learners do not require a depth understanding while reading comics. As

a consequence, it is critical to focus on the content of comics, so they can be used in educational

activities. Then, teachers may not obtain positive outcomes while applying these materials

(Şentürk & Şimşek, 2022).

      It would be an innovative idea to implement those kinds of readings since teens will have

a variety of reading texts to choose from. They will not follow the monotony of simple reading

texts without illustrations, pictures, and onomatopoeic sounds. These factors should be

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considered by English teachers because they can allow learners to develop their cognitive skills as imagination, to increase learners' inferences abilities, and to boost their confidence.

Learners feel more motivated by using educational comics because they are exposed to short readings supported by visual aids. This idea is supported by Robbani & Khoirotunnisa (2021) who found out that learners agreed on reading online English comics were an interesting activity which motivate them for further reading since they felt engaged and wanted to understand the complete story.

Additionally, the use of comics in teenagers offer notable advantages during the learning process of the students, especially in those skills which need high order thinking skills and can be produced in everyday situations by making connections between the comics' content and the self–experience of the student**.** In this way, teachers of English are not only expected to expose their students to the reading materials that are found in the textbooks, yet they should be more creative in order to find an appropriate reading material, especially comics (Apriani et al., 2014). The author points out that by using comics within the classroom, the engagement of the students will be benefited. As a consequence, the reading material provided in the classroom will be widely accepted and used properly by learners (Apriani et al., 2014).

Another important aspect to consider is that comic books serve as a powerful motivator in the classroom. It is recommended to combine comic books with specific teaching methods (Wahyudin et al., 2020). Thus, comics can be used as a more effective learning medium because its features catches students' attention.

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Finally, educational comics can help learners who have problems following the story by presenting the character and plot more easily. Making the reading lesson less stressful since learners will have to read fewer words (Şentürk & Şimşek, 2022).

Reading Comprehension as an essential factor to understand a text deepen

Reading comprehension is a principal element that must be considered, so learners will be able to enhance their English competencies. Erya and Pustika (2021) mentions that "reading comprehension is a procedure where the reader needs to select an etymological picture and reproduce it to the point where the whole is planned by the writer" (p. 54).

It is known that while reading a text, readers are going to improve their comprehension skills since they must grasp the message or information that they acquiring. As shown in a study done by Apriani et al. (2014) where they state that, "English Comic Book series was effective to improve reading comprehension of the seventh grade students. This was supported by the mean scores of the post-test in the experimental group and control group which was significantly different" (p. 104).

In the case of this study, educational comics might also assist students in improving their reading comprehension skills, which is the primary goal of reading. This viewpoint was also largely held in a research conducted by Erya and Pustika, in which the majority of the participants felt that Webtoons increase their reading comprehension abilities, while just a few disagreed (Erya & Pustika, 2021). In this study, the researchers emphasized the importance of reading comprehension through innovative type of texts such as Webtoons, which is digital platform where learners can reader thousands of comics. Currently, it is evident that most of

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teenagers will prefer to learn by using new strategies or methods where they feel comfortable and relaxed or are used to. Consequently, educational comics could be a suitable educational resource in order to help learners to have better results while doing reading activities.

Reading strategies

As learners read educational comics, teachers might use a variety of literary strategies and practices to help them to have a deeper understanding of educational comics. Through the use of educational comics, educators may teach students various concepts, including summing up, synthesizing, dramatizing events in the story, connecting the different modes of communication within the text, etc (Leblanc, 2021).

In addition, teaching educational comics and appropriate reading strategies can encourage students' imaginations and help them think creatively. This idea is supported by Akcanca (2020) who states that "the integration of comics with teaching activities will open a new window to students' imagination and thus contribute to their creative thinking processes" (p. 1563).

Main idea

One of the main purposes for students is to understand the general message from the reading text *(*composed by either illustrations or written words). For Lord (2015) states that:

> Determining the main idea requires analysis of how each sentence contributes to the central point of each paragraph, section, or passage. Deliberately and systematically teaching students to independently determine the main idea by skillfully examining the author's intended message will ease comprehension demands as students encounter complex text. (p. 142)

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In addition, it is important for students to develop this skill so they avoid using useless information and just focus on the most relevant ideas from the reading passage.

Skimming

Skimming in reading is an essential technique where the text is analyzed to identify the main ideas avoiding reading word by word. When seeking for general information or when pupils are reading for comprehension, this strategy might be useful (Liao, 2011). Additionally, while using or applying educational comics, skimming might help learners to focus on key aspects from the text; so they may be able to understand the main idea of a text. All these aspects are crucial for learners in order to become readers that are more effective. Skimming can be combined with other reading strategies that we mentioned such as identifying the main idea, summarizing, or predicting.

Scanning

In contrast to skimming, the primary goal of scanning is to seek for details in text; according to specialists, scanning is a strategy of obtaining information regarding particular questions answered at the conclusion of a work (Asmawati, 2015). The author points out that this technique is useful for learners when they read a text because they can identify specific information such as numbers, names, places, etc. that can be asked in the task. Thus, learners will use this technique when they are reading comics to identify name of the characters, actions, places, or even onomatopoeic sounds that can contribute feelings to the story.

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Inferring

Another important strategy used by teachers in reading activities is inferring, which is an essential skill to improve reading comprehension, for learners are able to connect what they know and what they read to draw a conclusion (Hall et al., 2019). The learner's ability to identify specific details and general understanding of the texts is essential to find out the implicit information in texts; where most of them need to be deduced. In addition, the process of inferring involves drawing conclusions based on prior knowledge and information contained in a text. In addition, inferring lets learners the opportunity to add extra information in order to understand the text by using personal notions.

Context Clues

While doing reading activities, learners have difficulties to solve these exercises because they cannot understand key vocabulary of the reading texts.

A specific strategy that assist learners when they are struggling with those issues is context clues. The ability of inferring unfamiliar vocabulary from context is commonly used by teachers to help learners to understand these new words.

Reading texts and understanding information is highly dependent on understanding the meaning of the words used in the texts. It also suggests that language plays an important role in interpreting the information presented when reading texts (Mauliza et al.,2019). Additionally, students can use the strategy of context clues to determine the meaning of words by considering the context as the main source of information. In that way, teachers can facilitate the reading

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comprehension skill by applying context clues in English lessons. Context clues strategy assists or facilitate learners in deducing word from the reading context (Mauliza et al., 2019).

In turn, Baumann et al. (2005) classified the context clues in five categories; they are described in the following table.

Table 1

Classification of context clues strategies

Context clue types	Example
Definition: the author explains the meaning of the word right in the sentence or selection	When Sara was hiking, she accidentally walked through a patch of **brambles**, prickly vines and shrubs, which resulted in many scratches to her legs.
Synonym: the author uses a word similar in meaning.	Josh walked into the living room and accidentally tripped over the **ottoman**. He then mumbled "I wish people would not leave the footstool right in the middle of the room. That's dangerous!"
Antonym: the author uses a word nearly opposite in meaning.	The supermarket manager complained, "Why do we have such a

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	plethora of boxes of cereal on the shelves? In contrast, we have a real shortage of pancake and waffle mix. We've got to do a better job ordering."
Example: the author provides one or more example words or ideas.	There are many members of the **canine** family. For example, wolves, foxes, coyotes, and pets such as collies, beagles, and golden retrievers are all canines.
General: the author provides several words or statements that give clues to the word's meaning.	It was a **sultry** day. The day was very hot and humid. If you moved at all, you would break out in a sweat. It was one of those days to drink water and stay in the shade.

Note: This table explains the types of context clues in reading and examples. From "Teaching and Learning Vocabulary: Bringing Research to Practice" by Baumann, et al, (2005), p. 97. ©Copyright by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

Predicting

Another strategy that is important for learners to use while reading any written texts is predicting. It is one key reading strategy where students use text information, such as titles,

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headings, pictures, and diagrams, to determine what will happen next (Bailey, 2015). It has a strong relationship with inferring since learners can predict events or future endings and verify their assumptions at the end of the reading.

Summarizing

Nurhayati & Fitriana (2018) pointed out that "summarizing teaches students how to take a large selection of text and reduce it to the main points for more concise understanding. It helps students learn to determine essential ideas and consolidate important details that support them" (p. 35). Therefore, learners will be able to use their creativity to summarize a whole text by using their own lexicon and feel engaged or motivated to read the final product. Additionally, new vocabulary such as phrases, words, and expressions will be learned and remembered easily by learners, and it would help them increase their vocabulary range.

Methodology

Quantitative research

The current study will have a quantitative approach since it targets to measure the effects of educational comics on learners' reading comprehension skills; experts points out that the confirmatory scientific technique is the one that is generally used in quantitative research since it focuses on theory and hypothesis testing (Johnson & Christensen, 2014). This approach will help the researchers to test their previous mentioned null hypothesis by analyzing the numerical data obtained during their intervention sessions and finally be able to reject it or fail to reject it. In addition, Creswell (2015) mentions that:

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Some quantitative research problems require that you explain how one variable affects another. Variables are an attribute (e.g., attitude toward the school bond issue) or characteristic of individuals (e.g., gender) that researchers study. By explaining a relation among variables, you are interested in determining whether one or more variables might influence another variable. (p. 13)

The establishment of clear variables (independent and dependent) will help the researcher to focus on these variables and be able to describe and explain how the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

Experimental design

This research study will focus on experimental research; Fah and Hoon (2021) mention that "experimental research is commonly used to investigate the effectiveness of an intervention programmer or treatment on a particular group of students. In an experimental research design, a researcher will observe changes of a phenomenon as a result of some interventions" (p. 25). In this study, the researchers will investigate the effect that educational comics has on ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills; as a result; some interventions will be required to test the changes. In order to be able to measure these changes, the researchers will administrate a post-test to the experimental and control group.

Experimental studies can be used to find arrangements and means, make predictions, test causality, and generalize findings to larger groups of study (Bhandari, 2020). Since this study will be experimental research, researchers will be able to test cause-effect relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Moreover, it is notorious that quantitative data will be

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essential to find patterns during the treatment. Additionally, Creswell (2015) states that in experimental design:

> You use an experiment when you want to establish possible cause and effect between your independent and dependent variables. This means that you attempt to control all variables that influence the outcome except for the independent variable. Then, when the independent variable influences the dependent variable, we can say the independent variable "caused" or "probably caused" the dependent variable. (p. 295)

It is noticeable that researchers are seeking to examine the influence that the independent variable will have on the dependent variable. In addition, the researchers will test if there is a significance difference of educational comics to the comprehension reading skills in the experimental and control group.

Variables

The variables are crucial elements in experimental research since in this type of investigations, researchers describe the phenomenon by using variables. A variable can be measurable (condition or characteristic) with a certain degree of precision. Also, variables help in determining if there is a causal link between the treatment and the outcome (Rogers & Révész, 2019). In the experimental research, there are two variables that the researchers focused on the independent variable and the depend variable.

Independent variable

Researchers pointed out that the independent variable is the variable of influence or which causes a change in another variable (Rogers & Révész, 2019). In this study, the dependent

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variable is educational comics since researchers aim to test the effect that this variable causes on the dependent variable.

Dependent Variable

Having a clear dependent variable will be beneficial to researchers to proceed with this study. A dependent variable is one that is influenced by the independent variable or the variable that is tested (Rogers & Révész, 2019). Having the previous stated variable (independent variable), researchers identified the dependent variable of this study. The dependent variable is learner's reading comprehension skills.

Participants

The students were from Javier Loyola high school, which is located in Azogues, Cañar. They were between fourteen and fifteen years old and was the data source to develop data collection methods and provide essential information to answer the research problem. In the classroom there were about thirty-eight students, they were divided in experimental and control group.

Random Sampling

As the study is an experimental research design; researchers must provide every participant the opportunity to be part of the treatment; thus, random sampling is needed in order to maintain the rigorous procedure of this study (Fah & Hoon, 2021). Fah and Hoon (2021) state "that random assignment means that each sampling unit has an equal chance of being selected to be involved in the experimental. Random assignment is the best method to ensure that the experimental and control group are equivalent" (p. 29).

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In order to proceed with the random assignment, the researchers decided to use a commonly well-known technique called fishbowl technique. This technique consists of using a bowl or a deep object and put some pieces of papers, so the participants choose or pick up one of these pieces of papers and base on what is written on it, they will belong to the experimental or control group.

In the case of this study, the researchers used a pencil case rather than a bowl and inside this object, they put some papers written on it (control or experimental). Since, they were thirty-seven students, the researchers tried to divide the class in halves. Finally, each student passed to the board and picked up one and verified to what group they belonged to, so the control group had nineteen participants and the experimental group eighteen participants.

Experimental Group. After applying the random sampling, the participants will be divided into two groups; one of them is experimental group. This group receives the interventions or the treatment. The experimental group consisted of eighteen participants (male and female students), so these learners received the treatment or intervention.

Control Group. The other group that after having the random sampling is the control group; in this research design, this group does not receive the treatment or intervention. The control group consisted of nineteen participants (male and female students), so these learners did not receive the treatment or intervention. However, they were taught by using textbooks, notebooks and followed the lesson as usual.

Table 2

Representation of control and experimental group

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Group	Pre-test	Treatment	Post-test
Experimental	Administer the pre-test	Receives the treatment	Administer the post-test
Control	Administer the pre-test	No treatment	Administer the post-test

Note: Control and experimental group before and after intervention

In the table 2, researchers summarize the whole process that they plan to conduct while doing experimental research; the only difference between the experimental and control group is the intervention or treatment application; therefore, in the experimental group, educational comics are applied, but in the control group, participants do not receive any treatment, and researcher teach using typical materials like textbooks and notebooks.

Statistical treatment

The use of software to process and present the data after the interventions from the teachers helped the researchers to illustrate the results in graphs, tables, or other visual presentations. Larson-Hall and Mizumoto (2019) mention the importance of using a software:

> While computing statistics without software is possible, computer programs have made laborious calculations easier, and are therefore a preferred option for most researchers. Starting out by visualizing the data is a way of examining statistical questions: whether relationships between variables, differences between groups, divisions into different

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areas, and other questions about the data have strong enough results for the numbers crunched to turn out to be statistical. (p. 385)

Using a trustworthy computer program can make the data analysis easier and accurate since the researchers only need to enter the data in the program and select the type of analysis required by the study. In order to analyze the data, the researchers used a virtual software and tables to present whether there is a significant difference after using educational comics in reading comprehension skills. Social Science Statistics was one of the computer programs used to compare and analyze the data obtained during the whole research process, including the pre-test, application of comics, and the post-test.

Descriptive statistics

According to Baffoe-Djan & Smith (2019) "the primary role of descriptive statistics in data analysis is therefore to enable researchers to meaningfully describe and summarize quantitative data sets" (p. 398). Going beyond descriptive statistics, researchers can calculate the measures of tendency which are ways of conveying the core point of a set of data. There is a diversity of measures of central tendency, and the use of them will depend on the nature of data (Baffoe-Djan & Smith, 2019).

Researchers agreed on using the most common central tendency measure called mean (M or $\bar{X}$), and it is obtained by dividing the total number of values in a data collection by the total number of values (Bevans, 2020). Also, there is a standard mathematical formula that can be implemented in order to obtain this value. The mean is the average value of a set of data (quantitative or numerical data), and it represents the central value.

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$$m = \frac{sum\ of\ values}{number\ of\ values}$$

M or X̄= mean

The calculations done to obtain the means of the pre-test and post-test in the control and experimental group are presented in the table (see table 2).

Inferential statistics

In the data analysis section, researchers aimed to go beyond descriptive analysis, they opted to use inferential statistics as well. Johnson and Christensen (2014) state that:

In inferential statistics, researchers attempt to go beyond their data. In particular, they use the laws of probability to make inferences about populations based on sample data. In the branch of inferential statistics known as estimation, researchers want to estimate the characteristics of populations based on their sample data. To make valid statistical estimations about populations, they use random samples (i.e., "probability" samples). (ch. 20)

By using inferential statistics, the analysis will be focused on the sample rather than the population since it allows researchers to use probability and draw conclusion which are probably to be accurate.

Hypothesis testing. Having in mind that this study is an experimental research, researchers must test the null hypothesis that they stated at the beginning of this study. Professionals mention that the area of inferential statistics known as hypothesis testing examines

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the strength of the sample data's support for a null hypothesis and determines when it may be rejected (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).

While doing hypothesis testing, researchers will always begin with the premise that the null hypothesis is true (Johnson & Christensen, 2014).Using this procedure, researchers will be able to assess the probability of obtaining this results under this assumption. Lastly, researchers have the option to reject the null hypothesis or not, and if the null hypothesis is rejected, the alternative hypothesis is accepted (Bevans, 2020).

In this study, there are two hypotheses which are the null and alternative hypothesis mentioned before; furthermore, a statistical test of significance is carried out in order to draw a conclusion based on the value of the test statistic, the critical value and the confidence intervals.

T-test. Bevans (2020) mentions that "test-test is used to compare the means of two groups and in hypothesis testing to determine whether a process or treatment actually has an effect on the population of interest, or whether two groups are different from one another".

Before using any software, the researchers must be clear of what statistical treatment they want to use in order to analyze their data and make inferences. After, knowing what statistical treat, researchers only compute the data and the software automatically present all the core elements to do the inferential analysis.

Paired-samples t-test. There is a variety of t-tests such as paired-samples t-test, independent-samples t-test, and one-sample t-test (Bevans, 2020). The researchers found it useful to use paired-samples t-tests between pre-tests and post-tests for analyzing the scores of the control and experimental group. Bevans (2020) states that "if the groups come from a single

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population (e.g., measuring before and after an experimental treatment), perform a paired t test". The researchers agreed to separately apply a paired-samples t-test in the experimental and control groups, so as to compare pre-test scores and post-test scores in the experimental and control groups.

   Significance level. After computing the gathered data on any software, the software will show some tables that needs to be analyzed in order to present the findings and results section. However, investigators must know how to interpret the data. These results will help researchers to reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis (Bevans, 2020). Statistical tests give two main outputs which are test statistic (t-value) and probability value (p-value). The test statistics indicate to researchers the degree of deviation between the data and the null hypothesis of the test. Meanwhile, the probability value provides information about the chances of obtaining the same results if the null hypothesis is true for the population (Bevans, 2020).

   Additionally, Bhandari (2020) mentions "in hypothesis testing, statistical significance is the main criterion for forming conclusions. You compare your p value to a set significance level (usually 0.05) to decide whether your results are statistically significant or non-significant". It means that if the p-value is lower that the significance level, the null hypothesis can be rejected or refuted; however, if the p-value is higher than the significance level, the null hypothesis fails to be rejected (Bhandari, 2020).

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Data collection methods and techniques

The data collection methods and techniques which were used by the researchers, were also based on the research paradigm. As the present study is an experimental research, the tool was developed by the different procedures and was used in relationship to the main hypotheses.

Instruments

Standardized tests. In experimental research, it is crucial to have a valid and reliable instrument that can be administered to gather trustworthy or rigorous data. In order to avoid instruments' validation issues, researchers use a standardized test taking into account learner's English level, specially reading comprehension skills. Faitaki and Murphy (2020) state that

> A standardized test typically also has been norm-referenced against a large population of respondents, enabling us to understand a given individual's score in reference to that larger population and often researchers opt for this route because the standardized test offers information about how reliable and valid the test is at measuring the construct under investigation. (p. 361)

Pre-test. To gather background data for the research from the participants, the researchers administered tests based on the reading of comics to know the students' ability to comprehend texts according to their level. The researchers looked for a standardized test that was suitable for the participants. Since the students were beginners, the researchers chose a Cambridge sample test (A1 movers, volume 1) focusing on the reading comprehension section (section 5) which had seven questions (see annex 1). The questionnaire items in this part are related to activating background knowledge and understanding details from the text.

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Post-test. To know the if there is a significance difference between the control and experimental group and to measure the efficacy of applying educational comics, the researchers tested the students' knowledge through a post-test. The researchers looked for a similar test and decided to administrate a Cambridge sample test (A1 movers, volume 2) using the same section of reading comprehension (see annex 2).

Stages

Pre-intervention

In this phase, the researchers observed that the most of the students were lacking in reading skills since they did not do a lot of reading activities in the classroom. Also, they could see that the participants were not engaged into reading any text in English; however, they read some comics in their spare time.

Materials selection. The researchers looked for appropriate materials since there were educational comics, so it was convenient to design or adapt a checklist in order to find suitable materials for the participants, so researchers found a checklist at TESOL website (see annex 3). The checklist can be summarized in the following table:

Table 3

Checklist for materials selection

Students profile	Language Focus	Focus of intervention
Age of the students	Reading comprehension	Reading

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Level of the students	Vocabulary	Content
Number in class	Grammar	Activities

Note: Main criteria that were considered in order to select material for the treatment.

After having a checklist, the researchers started looking for educational comics that they could apply; however, there were not enough free materials or resources, so they had to work with the material that they found available. Researchers had a meeting with the professional tutor and mentor to agree on what comics would be appropriate for the participants, and they agreed on two educational comics. The first one was about the Covid-19 issues, a story about the problems caused by the Covid-19, and the second one was about the Mexican culture, especially Aztec Empire. The researchers did not find any problems regarding to the content and the free use of these educational comics, but some adaptations were needed.

After collecting the educational comics for the study, the researchers had a meeting with their professional tutor (schoolteacher) in order to verify whether the materials were appropriate or not for the learners. Finally, the professional tutor agreed that the comics were suitable to be applied in the experimental group.

Having the educational comics organized and complete to be used, the researchers administered a pre-test in order to gather background data for the research from the participants, the researchers administered tests based on the reading of comics to know the students' ability to comprehend texts according to their level. The researchers agreed on using a standardized test

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which was developed by Cambridge (Pre A1 Starters, A1 Movers and A2 Flyers 2018 Sample papers – Vol 1).

Intervention

The intervention phase was focused on the application of educational comics and the implementation of reading strategies such as identifying the main idea, inferring, using context clues, predicting, and summarizing within the classroom (see annex 5). All these activities were conducted three days a week, twenty hours in total with the experimental group; each lesson lasted two periods of class time which was equal to eighty minutes. In the other hand, with the control group, the researchers taught the lesson as usual by using the materials that the professional tutor asked them to have and the Ministry of education provided to them (textbooks), but the treatment was not applied with this group.

Researchers had to design a lesson plan to each intervention session, so in total, they have designed ten lesson plans. As representing in the following tables, the researchers presented two lesson plan samples that were designed in order to apply the educational comics with experimental group.

Post-intervention

After having finished the treatment sessions, the researchers continued with the last phase of the intervention sessions. In this phase, the researchers administered a post-test to gather their data and to continue with the research. As mentioned before, this instrument was similar to the pre-test which was Cambridge as well (A1 Movers 2018 Sample papers – Vol 2). The number of items was the same (seven questions) and the section too (reading skill-section seven).

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Research Procedure

The following steps in the true experimental research guided the flow of the current research:

Firstly, students and teachers were informed about the use of teaching materials and the functioning of the small group discussion technique and they were enabled to participate in a pilot study for this process. The researchers observed the context in which the research problem took place, focusing on the reading skill and use of comics.

Then, the researchers were required to ask for a consent letter from the parents of participants and a letter of authorization to the principal of the school. After collecting all the documentation, the researchers were asked to socialize about their research project.

Application of the pre-test, in this phase, the researchers tested the students' current knowledge in reading skills, using the participants to gather data from a specific perspective. After that, researchers analyzed the learners' answers obtained in the pre-test application, in order to comprehend the reading comprehension skills in the classroom and application of comics selected by researchers into the classroom activities (reading skills) over a period.

The intervention phase was done by applying the reading strategies planned previously, and using educational comics together (see annex 4). The educational comics were selected by using the checklist in order to determine whether they were suitable for the participants' age and level. To have an external opinion, researchers asked their professional tutor (the high school teacher) to verify if the materials were appropriate for learners or not; he suggested that some adaptations and changes were needed.

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Administration of post-test conducted by researchers tested if there was an improvement of learners' reading comprehension skills after using educational comics in classroom activities.

Next, the researchers analyzed and presented data about the influence of educational comics on enhancing reading comprehension skills. The use of an online software was necessary to obtain reliable data and avoid bias; this software helped the researchers to obtain the mean scores of the pre-test and the post-test in the experimental and control group respectively.

Validating or rejecting the hypothesis: After finding results, researchers determined whether the hypothesis planted at the initial stage of the research was valid or refuted by implementing the descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Finally, informing whether there were gaps to be considered in future studies by announcing breaches found in the whole research process.

Findings and results

After the pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention stages, the researchers started processing all the data collected. Since the pre-test was given formerly before the intervention sessions, so these data were the first to be entered into the spreadsheet (control and experimental group). After the treatment, the researchers administered a post-test, so these data were the second to be entered into the spreadsheet (both of the control and experimental groups).

After having finished the data collection phases, the researchers computed all the tests results over ten because each test had only seven items, they needed to do a direct rule of three. As these results were computed on the spreadsheets, it made easy to calculate them accurately just by using some formulas.

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Table 5

Direct rule of three

Student	Pre-test	Rule of three	Over 10
Student 19 (Control Group)	2/7	If 7 10 2 x=	2.86 (rounded value)

Note: Example of how researchers obtained the grades in a 10 scale.

The data obtained with the experimental and control group through the pre-tests and post-tests were analyzed using two types of statistical treatment, so they were descriptive statistics and inferential statistics.

Descriptive statistical analysis

Table 6

Means of the experimental and control group

	PRE- TEST	POST- TEST
Control group	2.18	1.88
Experimental group	1.67	4.76

Note: The average of the pre and post-test in the experimental and control group

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In the first statistical treatment as illustrated in the table 2, there is a difference between the pre-test and post-test in the control and experimental group. In the experimental group, the difference between the pre-test and post-test means is 3.09, so there is an increment in the post-test. However, in the control group the difference between the pre-test and post-test is -0.30, so there is not an increment in the post-test.

Pre-test and post-test results

Figure 1

Pre-test and post-test result of the participants

Note: The average of pre- and post-test results for the experimental and control groups.

Figure 1 demonstrates that there is an observable improvement in the experimental group's post-test results. However, there is no difference between the control group's performance in the post-test and the pre-test.

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Inferential Statistical Analysis

The second statistical treatment was paired samples T-test with the experimental and control group data (pre-test and post-test scores). This treatment was used to compare the results obtained from the pre and post-tests in both groups (control and experimental) after the intervention stage.

Paired sample T-tests

Table 7

Paired sample T-test for experimental group

Treatment 1	Treatment 2	t- value	df	p- value
Pre-test	Post-test	6.453	17	$< .001$

Note: Results of the pre-test and post-test of the experimental group.

The table above displays the results obtained through the Social Science Statistics software, which automatically calculated the three most important outcomes: the test statistic (t-value), probability value (p-value), and degrees of freedom. In order to determine whether there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test in the experimental group, the p-value must be less than the standard significance level of 0.05. The general formula for rejecting the null hypothesis and accepting the alternative hypothesis is as follows: if the t-value is greater than the t-table, then the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted; however, if the t-value is less than the t-table, the null hypothesis is accepted and the alternative

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hypothesis is rejected (Bevans, 2020). Based on the degrees of freedom being 17 and the significance level being α= .05, the t-table for this result is 2.110. The results indicate that the t-value of 6.453 is greater than the t-table of 2.110.

Moreover, the p-value (,001) is lesser than the significance level (α= .05) which means that the results obtained in the experimental group can be replicable. Consequently, it confirms that, in the experimental group, the reading comprehension skills of participants present a noticeable improvement by using educational comics.

Table 8

Paired sample T-test for control group

Treatment 1	Treatment 2	t-value	df	p- value
Pre-test	Post-test	-0.63	18	0.531

Note: Results of the pre-test and post-test of the control group.

As illustrated in the table 8, by using the Social Science Statistics software, the results were obtained automatically and considered three most important outcomes which are the t the t-value, degrees of freedom (df), and p-value. In the control group, the degree of freedom is 18, so the t-table is 2.101; however, the t-value (-0.63) is lesser than t-table (2.101). Also, the probability value (p-value 0.531) is greater than significance level (α= .05).

The results of the effectiveness of educational comics to improve learner's comprehension skills

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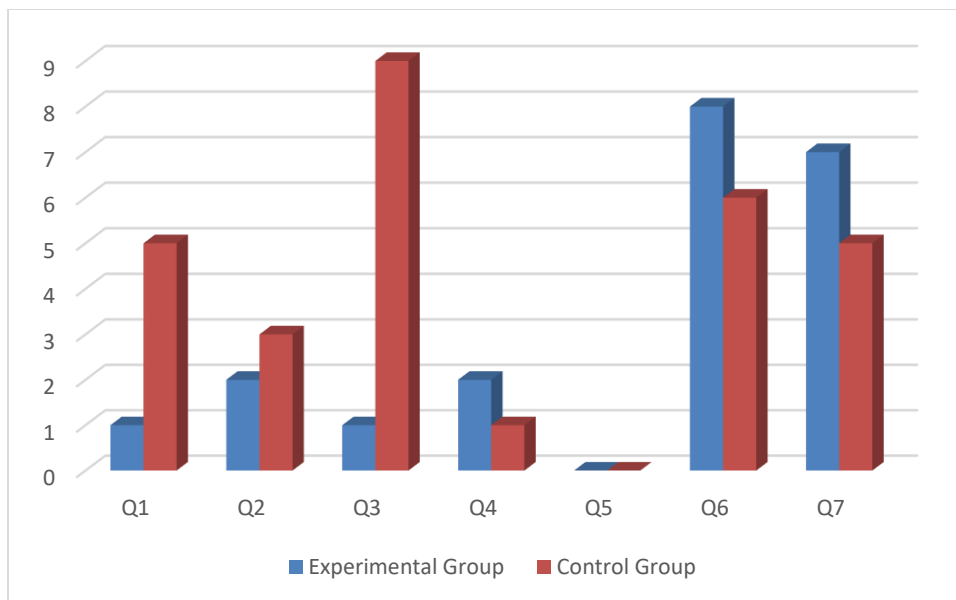Luis Alberto Deleg Juela

The participants of the experimental group who worked with educational comics showed a significantly increase in their comprehension skills. On the other hand, in the control group, participants did not show a significant improvement in reading comprehension because they did not receive the treatment. As a result, those interpretations of results above strongly asserted the Alternative Hypothesis, which concluded that the use of educational comics significantly improve learner's reading comprehension skills at Javier Loyola high school.

Results of the pre-test and post-test of experimental and control group

The following graph illustrates the number of correct answers in both scenarios, which is useful for a more in-depth analysis of the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 2

Experimental and control group pre-test results

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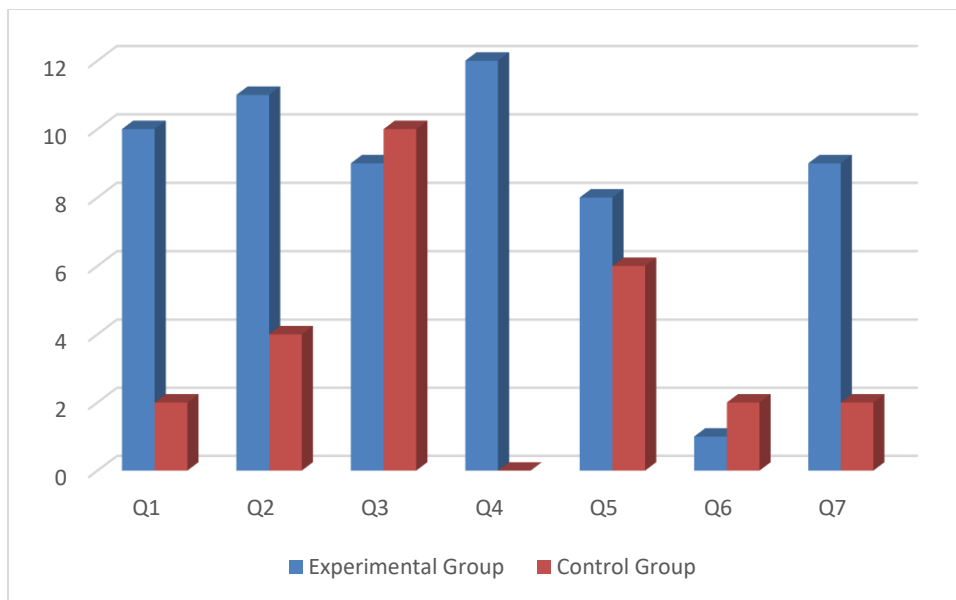Luis Alberto Deleg Juela

Note: Number of correct answers of both groups (experimental and control) in the pre-test.

As it shown in the graph 2, the difference between the results in the pre-test is varied; depending on the questions, the control and experimental group had different marks. For questions 1, 2, and 3 (Q1, Q2, and Q3), the control group had more correct answers than the experimental group. On the other hand, in the questions 4, 6, and 7, the experimental group presented more correct answers than the control group. For question 5, it is evident that both groups answered it incorrectly, having zero answers in common. As a result, there was a slightly difference between the experimental and control groups during the pre-test.

Figure 3

Experimental and control group post-test results

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Note: Number of correct answers of both groups (experimental and control) in the post-test.
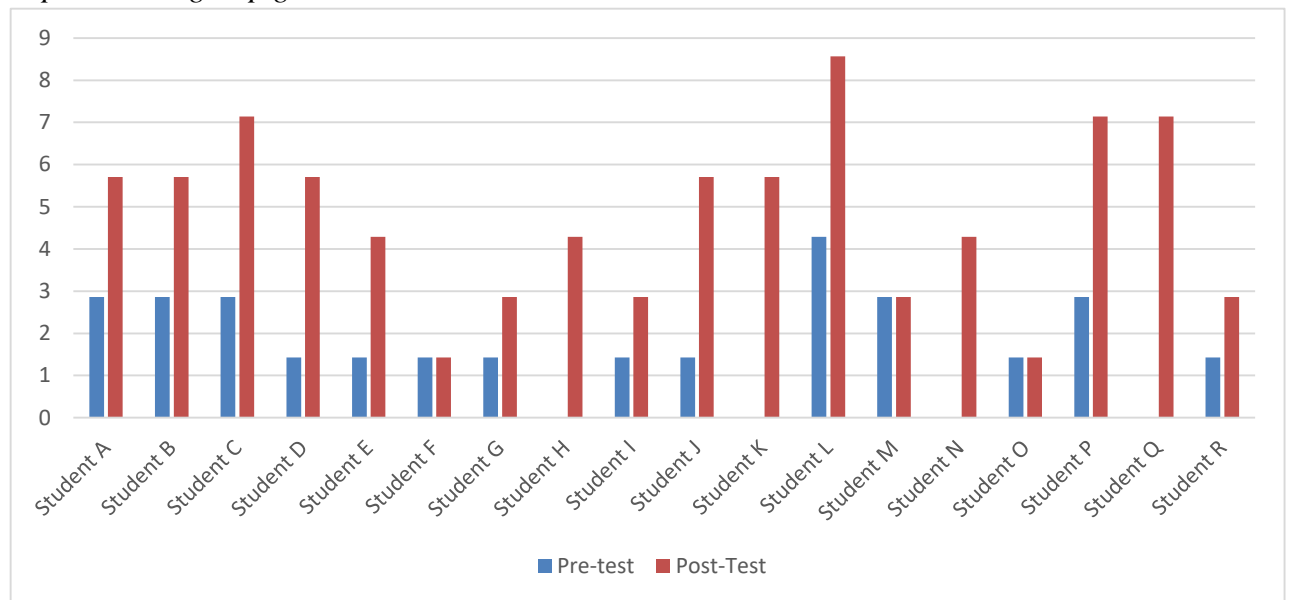
In this graph, the difference in posttest results shows an increase in the number of correct answers associated with the pretest, especially in experimental group; depending on the questions, the control and experimental group had different marks. For questions one (Q1), two (Q2), four (Q4), five (Q5), and seven (Q7), the experimental group had more correct answers than the control group. On the other hand, in the questions three (Q3), and six (Q6), the control group presented more correct answers than the experimental group. Hence, a significant variation existed between the pre-test scores of the experimental and control group.

Participants' grades in the experimental and control group

The grades of the participants are another factor to consider while analyzing data, because those numerical data can help researchers to have a detailed comprehension whether the participants improved after the intervention or not. The following graph shows the scores obtained by participants in the experimental and control group.

Figure 4

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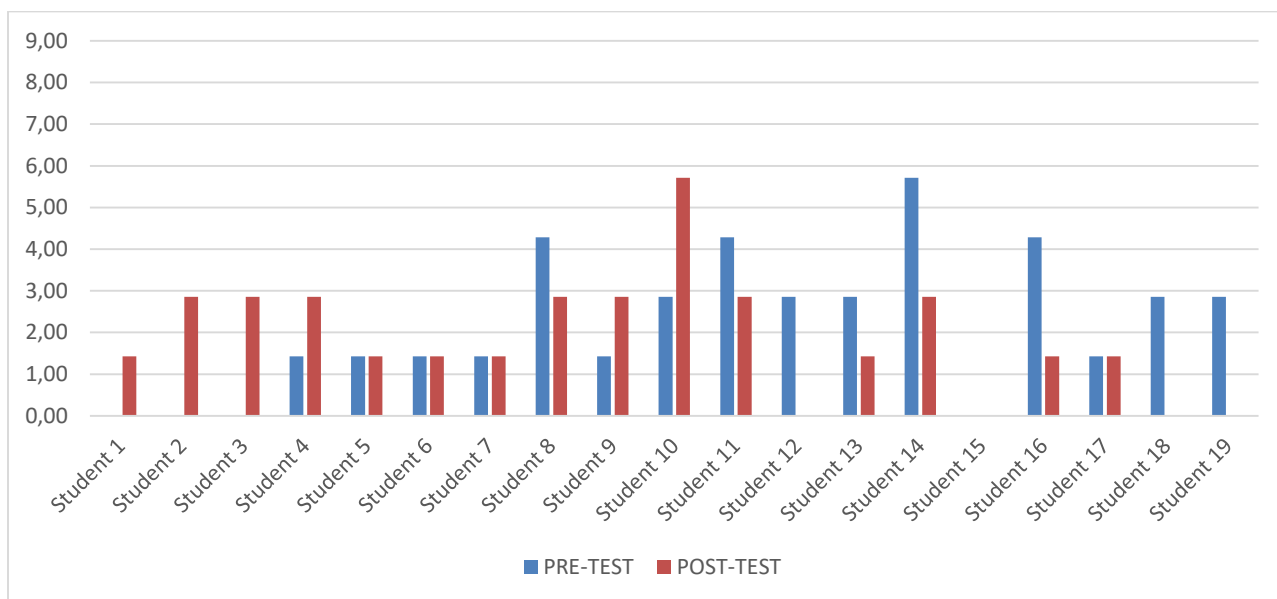
Experimental group grades

Note: Experimental group's grades in the pre and post-test.

According to the graph, the majority of participants in the experimental group demonstrated progress during the post-test, as evidenced by higher grades compared to their pre-test scores. On the other hand, three particular students (Student F, Student M, and Student O) maintain the same grade in the pre-test and post-test.

Figure 5

Control group grades

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Note: Control group's grades in the pre and post-test.

The graph illustrates the pre-test and post-test results of the participants in the control group. The grades of the control group exhibit diversity, with some participants showing higher scores in the pre-test and others in the post-test. Consequently, it is apparent that there is no significant difference between the two tests.

Discussion

In order to know how educational comics can influence positively on the reading comprehension of the students, researchers applied different reading strategies and carried out several interventions. Thus, by considering the outcomes of the pre-test and post-test following the use of educational comics, it can be suggested that the research question, "What is the effect of educational comics to ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills at Javier Loyola high school? can be addressed through the aforementioned stages. In addition, the overall aim of

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this study is to determine the effectiveness of educational comics on ninth grade students'

reading comprehension skills, which leads to understand the main function of using comics with

the different reading strategies. The results showed that the use of educational comics increased

significantly the reading comprehension skills of the students. In this way, this part will describe

main points of the research such as interpretation of results, comparison with related studies, and

the limitations of current study.

It is known that learners must develop their reading habits when they are children or

teenagers (Greene, 2001), so the participants of this study are at age to improve their reading

comprehension skills. Since participants are more interested in reading comics than traditional

books, the research of Robbani and Khoirotunnisa provides evidence that supports this notion.

Their study revealed that the participants found reading English comics online to be an engaging

activity, which could stimulate their desire for further reading (Robbani & Khoirotunnisa, 2021).

In this way, the learners could use educational comics as source of learning and as a source for

motivating themselves to continue reading.

The use of educational comics is important to help participants to improve their reading

comprehension skills as they have unique features such as pictures, short dialogues,

onomatopoeic sounds, and others. They were described in Robbani & Khoirotunnisa's study

(2021) that various types of graphic material are delivered in a comic book, including images,

colors, and words, which may prompt the reader to become more creative and interested in

reading them. Also, Wahyudin et al. (2020) support the idea that comic worked as a powerful

motivator, which is related to the results of the study, because researchers observed that learners

were into reading the educational comics rather than simple text. In addition, the conclusions of Rengur and Sugirin (2019) are similar to this study because they found out that "comic strip was proved effective in teaching students' reading comprehension. On the other hand, the use of comic strips is the most effective media, due to it consists of pictures and story line that make students more interested in reading" (p. 241). A possible cause of this observation may be the combination of words and picture as it was mentioned in the multimodal theory (Sweller, 2005) that learners convey the meaning better when words and pictures are combined closely with similar semantic meaning.

Additionally, the educational comics used in this study were selected taking into account the students' level of English in order to connect their experience and prior knowledge with the content. In this way, learning is conceived in a meaningful way. However, as a limitation of the constructivist theory, the lack of experiences in some students can affect their process of creating new knowledge. Thus, researchers looked for educational comics where the students had common experiences and had background knowledge.

The application of a variety of reading strategies and techniques such as main idea, inferring, context clues, predicting, skimming, scanning and summarizing were useful to help learners understand what they read). Moreover, the most relevant skill that was noticeable after applying the educational comics was main idea because the learners were asked to get the general message from the comics. This statement is supported by Lord (2015) who states that "the main idea requires analysis of how each sentence contributes to the central point of each

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paragraph, section, or passage" (p. 142). This strategy allowed learners to ask themselves *what is the comic about?*

However, the researchers cannot prove the efficacy of each reading strategy since they tested the reading comprehension skill of participants as Shaikah determined that it is not certain that participants will perform well on a reading comprehension test even if they use a range of reading techniques (Madkhali, 2005).

The combination of applying reading strategies and the use of educational comics worked to engaged learners in their reading lessons. This finding is similar with the results of Wahyudin et al. (2020) who found out that comics serve as a powerful motivator in the classroom when it is combined with diverse reading strategies. In addition, Cabrera et al. (2018) demonstrated in their study that comics engage leaners because they are enjoyable sources, so the comics not only worked as motivators, also they had educational purpose in improving the students' reading comprehension skills by using different reading strategies in each lesson. Additionally, the context of Cabrera's study shares common characteristics with the present study such as the nationality of the participants, age, and educative level (high school students). Those characteristics helped the researcher to preview the results in their participants.

After the intervention stage, the findings of this experiment showed that in the experimental group and control group, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the post-test. These findings are similar to the study conducted by Apriani and Viantyc (2014), they found out that English comic books were effective to improve their comprehension skills of their participants since the mean scores of the pre-test and post-test in the experimental and control

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group which were significantly different. By comparing the different results from the pre-test in the experimental and control group, researchers found a relationship between the findings and results from this study and the study done by Méndez and Castañeda (2018) where thirty-four students were tested at the begging and 54% of them obtained low results. In the present study, the average score of the experimental group was 1.67, derived from the entire group of participants. However, following the intervention, the post-test results indicated that only 3% of the population received low grades (Méndez & Castañeda, 2018). This result is similar to the post-test data of the present paper because the mean score increased to 4.76; obtained from all participants, where most of them had better grades. Consequently, there was a significant improvement in the students reading comprehension by using educational comics.

As the results obtained after applying the educational comics, the experimental groups performed better than the control group. It is noticeable that there is a significant difference in the mean scores from both groups in the post-test; concluding the study with a mean score of 1.88 in the control group, meanwhile the experimental group obtained a mean score of 2.76. The outcomes of the current research validate the conclusions made by Aldahash and Altalhab (2020), who established that the experimental group surpassed the control group, achieving higher scores in reading tests (Aldahash & Altalhab, 2020).

Another important aspect to highlight is the adaptation of the comics in order to promote an easier understanding of the content and connect them with the learners' context. According to this theory, education is perceived as a social occurrence shaped by individual and collective actions and activities within particular cultural and historical settings (Foot, 2014).

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Finally, the application of educational comics to improve reading comprehension skills was carried out in the experimental group; which showed a better performance than the experimental. Despite this, the use of comics could enhance the reading comprehension skills of both groups. This is substantiated by Merc and Kampusu's (2013) study, which observed that utilizing comic strips significantly improved the reading comprehension skills of students at both levels (Merc & Kampusu, 2013). It is important to highlight that most of the participants of this study had a low-proficiency level in English, so the Merc and Kampusu's research shares same characteristics in the participants (high and low proficiency level).

Conclusion

The use of educational comics has been recognized as a powerful tool for promoting knowledge and enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using educational comics in improving reading skills among students, and the results showed that the use of educational comics had a significant positive impact on the reading skills of the students in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that there is a significant effect of educational comics to ninth grade students' reading comprehension skills at Javier Loyola high school. Moreover, the use of educational comics in EFL classroom can improve the students' reading comprehension skills; this is supported by the mean scores, t-value, and p-value in the sample of high school students at Javier Loyola high school in the pre-test and post-test. The

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post-test results of the experimental group suggest a tendency towards higher mean scores than those of the control group.

The results of this study are consistent with previous research that supports the use of multimedia in teaching and learning. The use of educational comics can provide a unique and engaging way for students to learn, as it combines visual and textual elements in a way that can capture students' attention and motivate them to read. Moreover, the use of educational comics can also help to build students' background knowledge, and critical thinking skills, which are all essential for improving reading comprehension.

It is worth mentioning that educational comics are not isolated materials when it refers to work with reading comprehension. The use of reading strategies are also essential to improve the reading skills of learners since learners are able to comprehend a text easily by using any of the abovementioned reading strategies. Educational comics are short text that learners can read easily, and include illustrations that engage the participants to continue reading. By combining educational comics and the application of reading strategies, the participants showed a positive influence in their reading comprehension skills.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide strong evidence for the effectiveness of using educational comics in improving reading skills among students. The use of educational comics can be a fun and engaging way, and it has the potential to make a positive impact on students' reading comprehension skills. Educators should consider the use of educational comics as a valuable tool in their planning to promote reading comprehension and enhance students' learning outcomes.

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Limitations

Since educational comics can work as an engagement material or an innovative source in English classes, some limitations should be taken into account, and those limitations are the following:

The first limitation is time, the time of application of educational comics in the lesson were limited to 40 minutes or in the best cases 80 minutes per lesson, so the activities and reading strategies had to be planned for two hours of English classes (eighty minutes). In addition, the reading of educational comics was limited to one chapter per class. Consequently, the reading strategies had to encourage the students to keep reading in short periods. In this way, reading comprehension skills may depend exclusively for reading comics, which will avoid improving other reading competences like speed rate, vocabulary, or critical thinking. In addition, the students can present problems in their transition to read more complex and longer texts like articles because they get used to reading short writings with visual support.

The second limitation is the difficulty to find appropiate educational comics. Despite that, many sites on Internet or libraries provide educative content illustrated in educational comics, some of them are not related to the context of the students. The inclusion of unfamiliar contexts for the students in their reading materials cannot be as engaging as it is expected, as consequence, their comprehension skills are limited because they struggle retaining information, especially students who have learning differences. Thus, the teachers should modify the educational comics to connect the learner's prior knowledge, cultural backgrounds and personal experiences in a meaningful way according to their age and learning outcomes. In addition, the

adaptation should be done in the reading activities and in the components of the comics like vocabulary, sequence of events, or adaptations to the pictures. All these aspects are time consuming and can change the aim of the lesson.

Another important limitation found by researchers was the free access to use the educational comics. Since most of comics were copyrighted, the total or partial use of the content, pictures, and comic were prohibited. Thus, finding free-use comics with the abovementioned characteristics was difficult. Therefore, as the researchers used the educational comics in their reading activities, they needed to print them and gave them to the students. In few cases, the printed comics looked of bad quality because the dialogues were not clear or the pictures were blurred. This may affect the reading process of the students since each chapter was printed for different lessons.

Since the present study is a quantitative research, the use of a software to calculate the statistical treatment was another challenging aspect while doing the results analysis. The reason why using the software was difficult is the variety to statistical procedure depending on the type of quantitative research. Firstly, unfamiliar software may require additional time and resources to learn which can delay the research process and affect the time for the project. This may also result in additional costs associated with training and technical support. Secondly, using unfamiliar software or statistical treatment may increase the probability to make errors or inaccuracies in the data analysis, which can compromise the validity and reliability of the research findings. Thirdly, unfamiliar software may not be compatible with other tools or software used in the research process, leading to data incompatibility issues and difficulty

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integrating data from different sources. Finally, unfamiliar software may limit the ability of researchers to communicate their findings effectively in the present study, because the results can be affected by using unknown software including their interpretation and discussion as well.

Finding an appropriate test was another limitation that researchers found when they were preparing the materials to be applied in the intervention phase. Since the participants had a low level of English, the researchers created a draft of the pre-test. However, the draft should be approved and it will take too much time for receiving the acceptation. In that case, researchers should look for the appropriate test, which had to test the reading comprehension, and it should be valid for educational purposes. Fortunately, Cambridge Corporation provides resources where teachers can use. However, the use of test should be requested by e-mail. This request can take at least two weeks to be approved because a Cambridge assessor had to check how researchers would use the resources of Cambridge. Additionally, the way to incorporate Cambridge tests in research is by adding a citation.

Recommendations

Regarding to the results obtained in this study, researchers recommend the following aspects since the methodology of the study is quantitative and the use of educational comics can be modified or adapted according to each teacher, discipline, or field.

Include educational comics in classroom activities as an alternative and innovative source to promote reading comprehension skills in a unique and motivational way to learn.

Researchers must select in advance a statistical treatment of how they will analyze the data that they will gather depending on the paradigm and methodology of the study. It will

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facilitate the data analysis and findings process and avoid bias by having a rigorous data analysis process. The use of a software might be essential to interpret the data collection quickly and efficiently. Even though there are plenty of quantitative software, the majority of software are paid, so researchers must look for external help.

English educators must use a variety of innovative resources by considering learners' needs and interests. It is recommendable to find educational resources if it is possible; however, there are some materials that are not suitable for the age and level of students, so some changes and adaptations might be needed. Finally, those materials have to be used at the same time with different strategies, methodologies, and techniques to achieve learning goals.

English teachers must look for the suitable material (educational comics) in order to connect the learner's prior knowledge and experiences to the content and activities to convey the meaning and reading comprehension in a meaningful way. Additionally, pay special attention if the content allows learners to recall their own information and stablish connections with their personal experiences.

Take into account the assessment when learners are using educational comics in order to determine the effect of educational comics in reading comprehension skills by adapting them to students' needs.

Provide opportunities to incorporate the students' preferences in selecting the materials, so the content will be varied, and the learning process will be personalized to the type of content the students prefer to read.

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Pre-test (annex 1)

Part 5
– 7 questions –

Look at the pictures and read the story. Write some words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2 or 3 words.

Daisy at the farm

Daisy's family lived in a flat in the city, but every weekend they drove to the countryside to see Daisy's grandparents. They lived on a farm.

In the car, last Saturday, the family talked about the farm.
'It's so quiet there!' Daisy's mum said.
'I like working outside!' her father said.
'I love helping Grandpa with all the animals,' Daisy said. 'Look! Here we are!'

Examples

Daisy's home was in ....the city............ .

Daisy's family went to the ....countryside............ by car every weekend.

Questions

1   Daisy's mother liked the farm because it was a ....
    place.

2   Daisy enjoyed working with .... on the farm.

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They were surprised when they saw six noisy trucks on the farm. And when they got out of the car, it started to rain. It was cold, too.

'Oh dear!' Daisy's mum said. 'It's very noisy here today.'

'And I can't work outside in this rain,' Daisy's father said.

'Well, you two can sit and have tea with Grandma,' said Daisy. 'But I have to help Grandpa with the cows and sheep!'

3   There were some .... outside the house when they drove into the farm.

4   Daisy's dad didn't want to .... in the wet weather.

5   Daisy told .... to go and have tea with her grandmother.

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Daisy worked all afternoon in the cold, wet weather. She gave the cows their dry grass, washed some sheep and carried vegetables.

After dinner, Daisy was tired but happy. 'The best farmer in your family isn't your dad or your mum. It's you, Daisy!' her grandfather said.

'That's good because I want to be a farmer like you one day, Grandpa,' Daisy answered!

6   Daisy was .... after all her work outside.

7   Grandfather said Daisy was the .... in her family!

This research uses Cambridge Assessment English A1 movers (YLE Movers) sample tests, which is available online:

https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/young-learners-sample-papers-2018-vol1.pdf

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Post-test (annex 2)

Part 5

— 7 questions —

Look at the pictures and read the story. Write some words to complete the sentences about the story. You can use 1, 2 or 3 words.

The rain in the jungle

Last weekend, Vicky and Tom said to their friend Daisy, 'Would you like to go for a walk in the jungle?' Daisy said, 'I need to take some photos for homework. I can do that there.' Vicky's mum said, 'Take coats with you.' The children laughed and said, 'It's hot and sunny. We don't need coats!' When the children got to the jungle, they saw lots of monkeys in the trees.

Examples

Vicky and Tom wanted to walk in the jungle last .... weekend .... with their friend Daisy.

For her homework, Daisy had to ..... take some photos ..... .

Questions

1   Mum wanted Tom, Vicky and Daisy to ....
    with them.

2   The weather was .... before the walk in
    the jungle.

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Tom took pictures of some beautiful plants which had red flowers on them. Then Daisy pointed and said, 'Look at those black clouds!' Then it started raining. 'The camera! Put it in your bag!' said Vicky to Tom. 'OK,' said Tom. Tom got some very big leaves and they held them above their heads. The monkeys came and sat with them. It rained and rained, but the leaves were really big and the children and monkeys didn't get wet. Daisy took more photos.

3   Daisy pointed at some .... in the sky.

4   Tom put .... in his bag because it started raining.

5   When it rained the children and the monkeys sat under some .... and they didn't get wet.

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The children waited for the rain to stop and they ate their sandwiches. When it was sunny again, the children ran back home. Mum looked at their clothes and was surprised. 'Didn't it rain in the jungle?' she asked. 'Yes,' they said. 'But we found some leaves and we didn't need coats.' And they showed Mum their photos.

6   The children had their lunch and then went
    .... when it stopped raining.

7   Vicky and Tom's mother was .... because
    their clothes weren't wet.

This research uses Cambridge Assessment English A1 movers (YLE Movers) sample tests, which is available online:

https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/Images/423014-cambridge-english-young-learners-sample-papers-2018-volume-2.pdf

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Checklist (annex 3)

Checklist for selecting materials

Educational Comics

General Information	
Students' background information	
Age	14+
Level	Beginners
Number in class	37
Time	20 hours
Lessons time	2 class periods, three times a week
Purpose of the lessons	To determine the influence that educational comics has on ninth grade students' reading
Factors directly related to the students	
Students' level	Yes (taken into account)
Students' interests	Yes (taken into account)

_____

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Students' needs	Yes (taken into account)
Students' background knowledge	Yes (taken into account)
Aspects related to the text	
Relevance	Very important- yes
Content	Very important-yes
Authenticity	Important – partly

Table 2. Summary of main criteria considered to select the material

Students profile	Language Focus	Focus of intervention
Age of the students	Reading comprehension	Reading
Level of the students	Vocabulary	Content
Number in class	Grammar	Activities

Adapted from "Selecting Materials Wisely" by I. Jiménez Arias, 2007,LETRAS, 41, 131-151.

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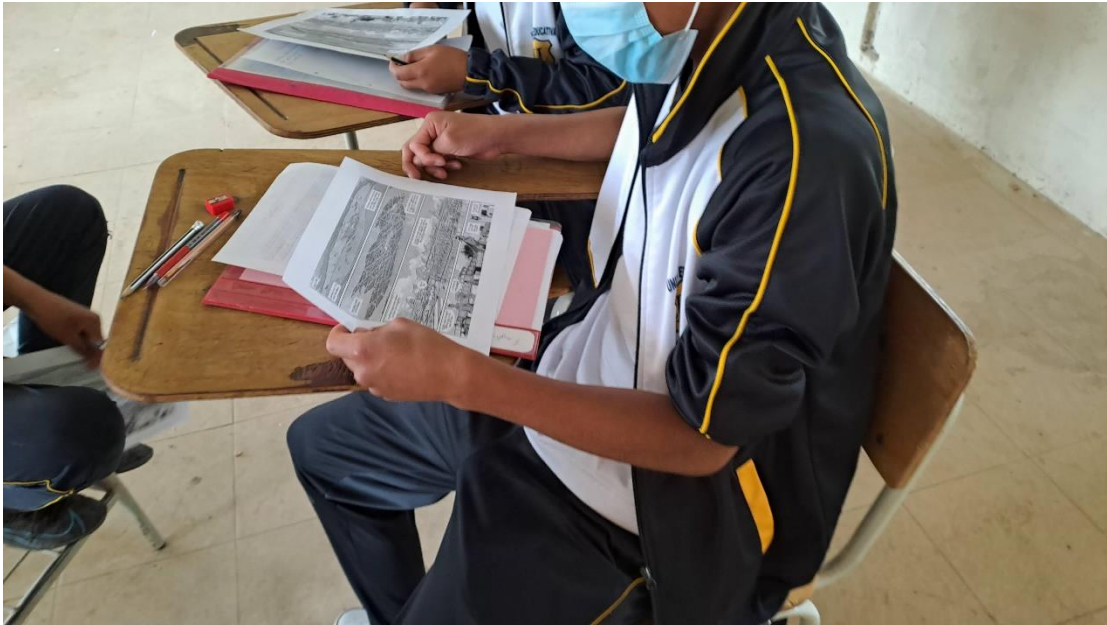
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Evidences (annex 4)

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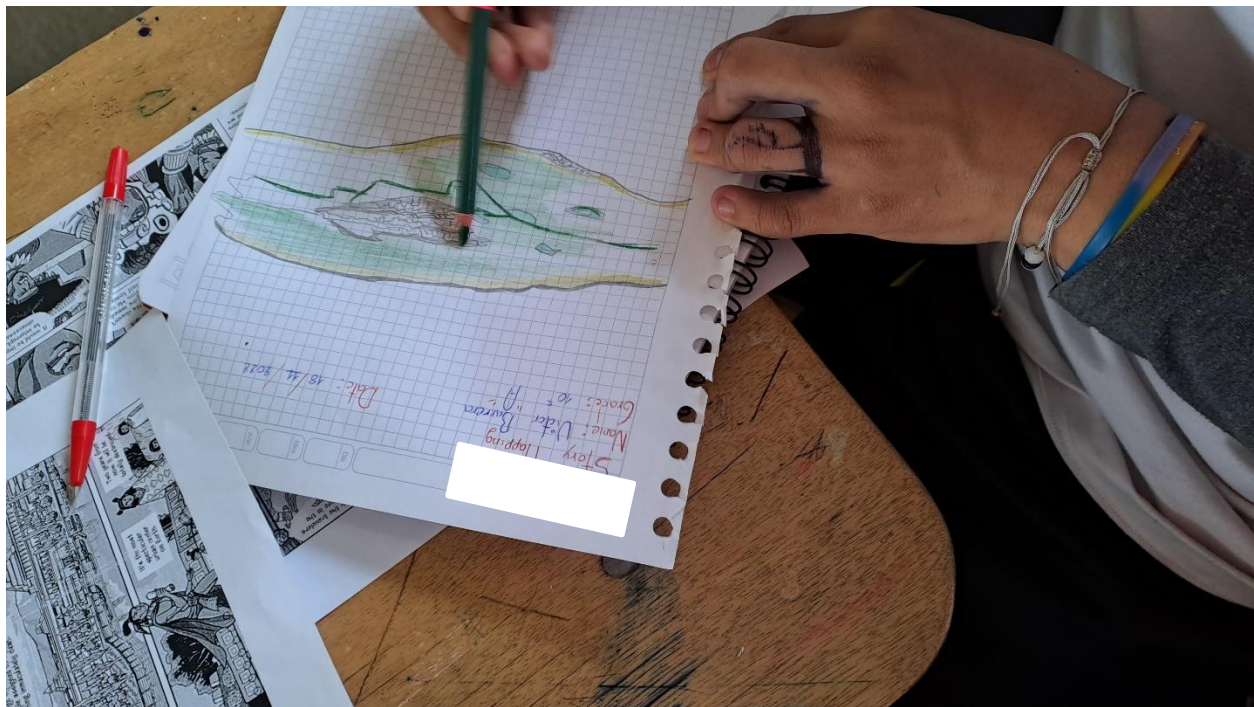Luis Alberto Deleg Juela

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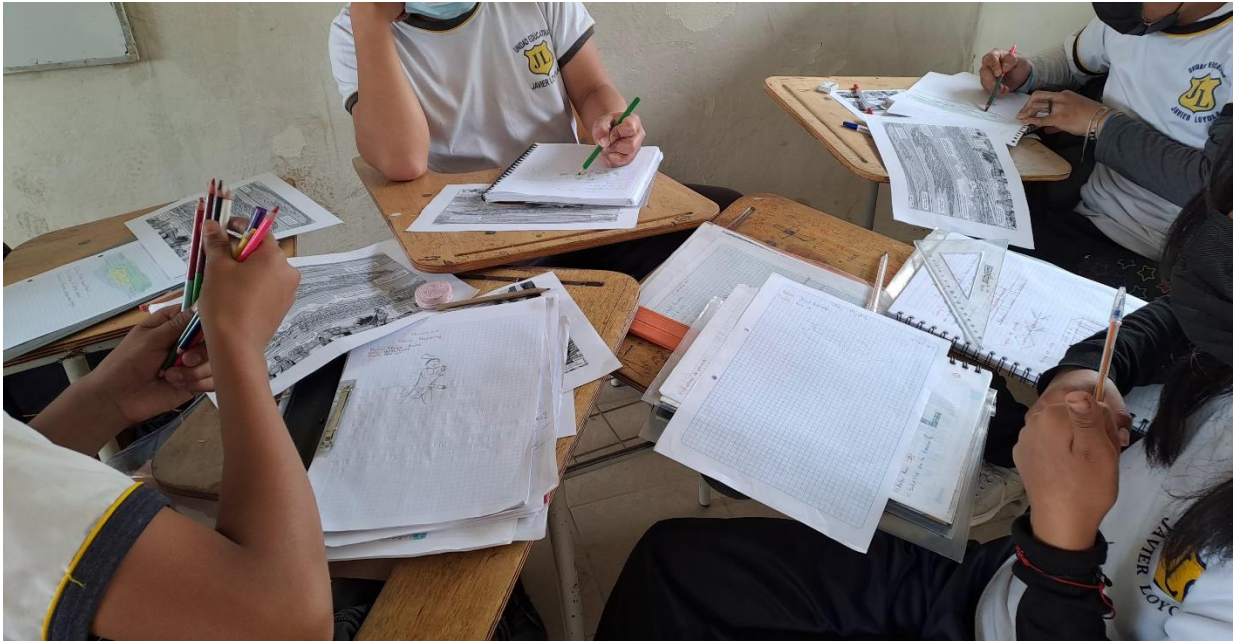Luis Alberto Deleg Juela

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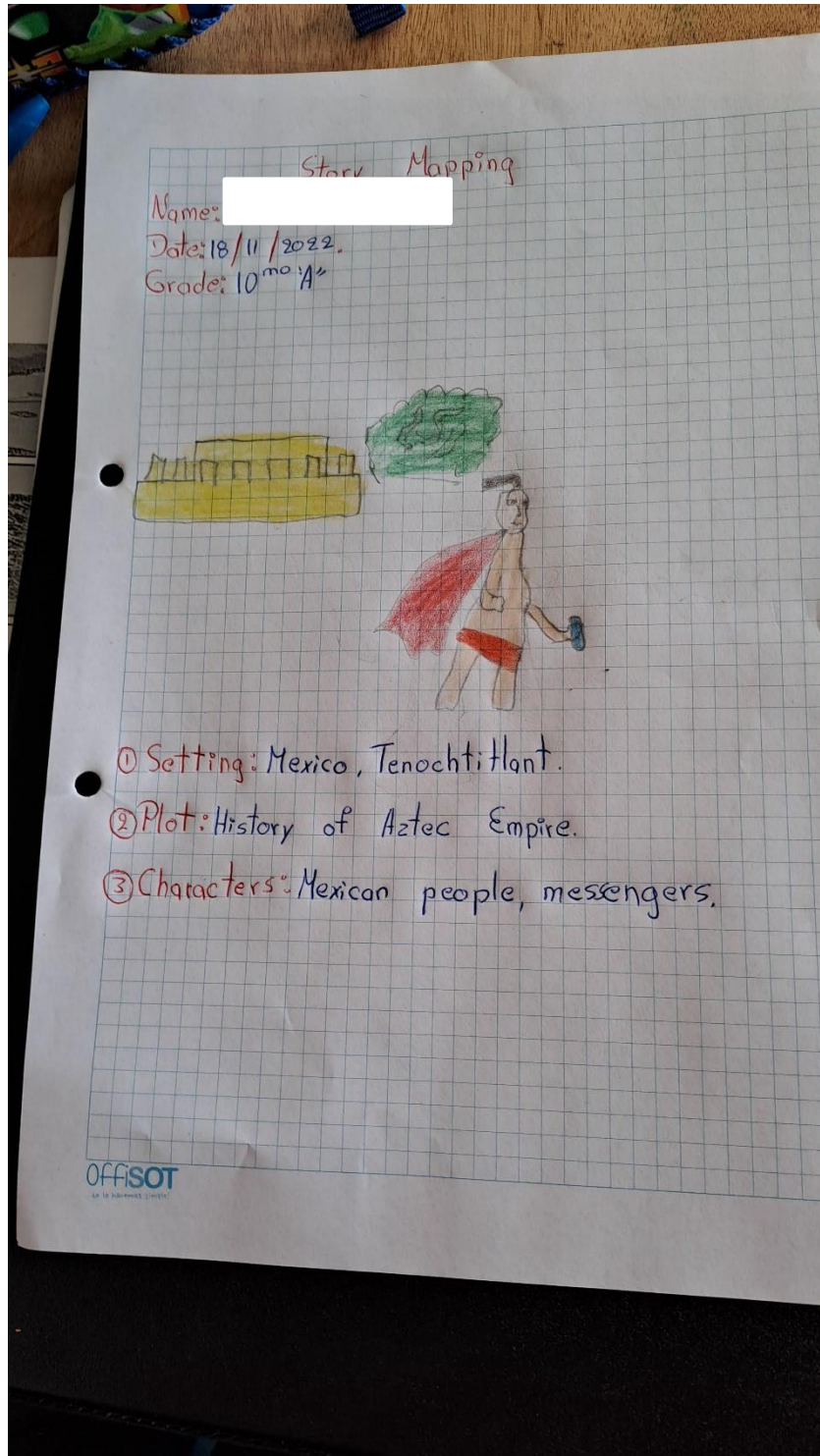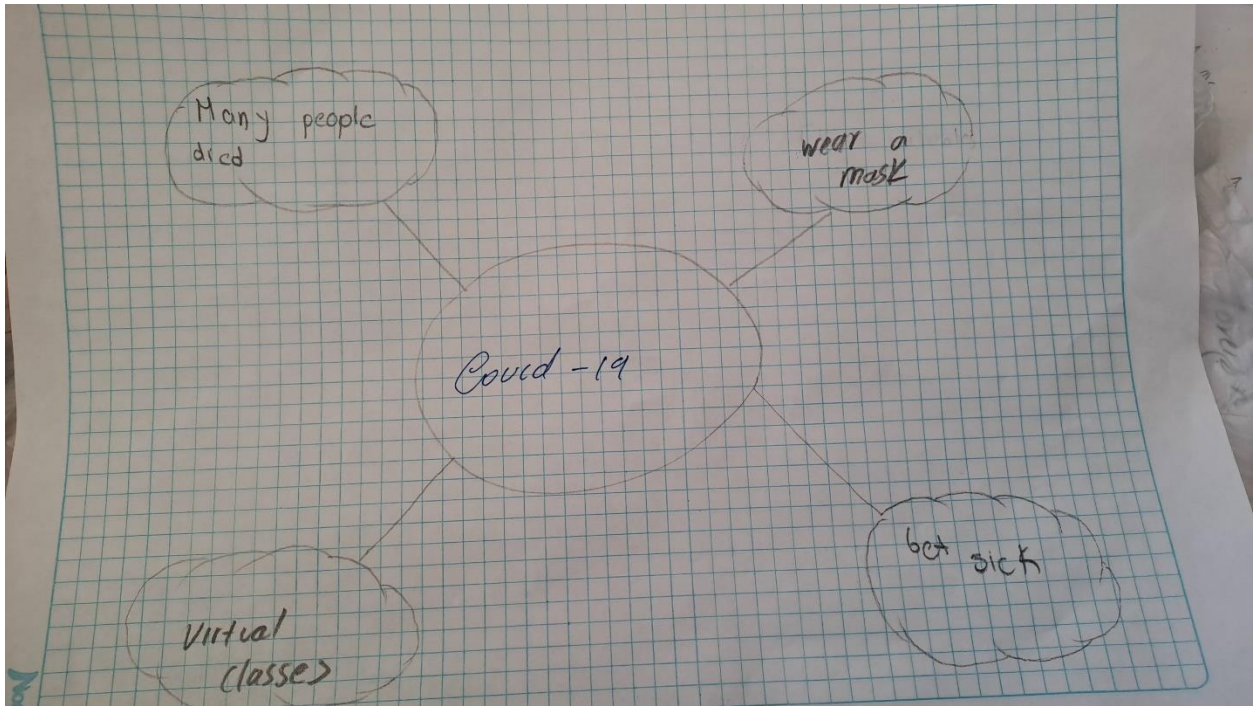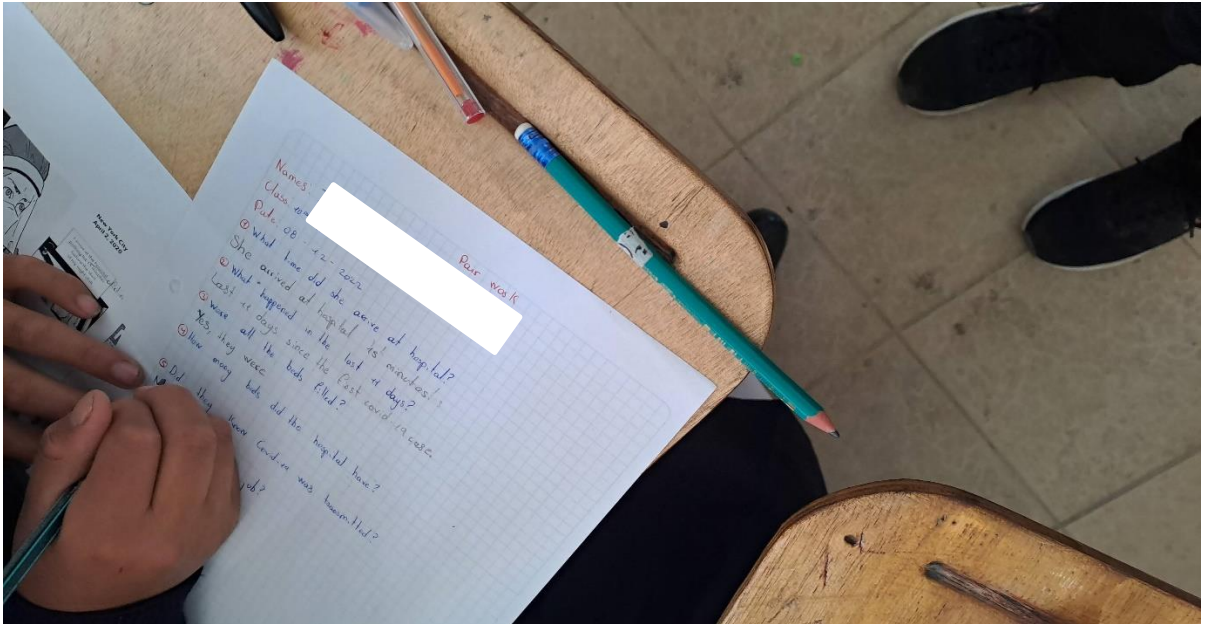
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Lesson plans (annex 5)

Aztec Empire lesson plan 1

Group	10th grade students	Time	80 min
Topic:	Aztec Empire chapter 1		
Aims:	Use Aztec history to engage students in reading.		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: Identify the main event in the comic Relate the history with their own cultural background		
Materials:	Comics: Aztec empire Markets Whiteboard Notebooks		
Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:** 1. The comics are difficult to see 2. **Solutions:** 1. The comic books will have been printed 2. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
5 min	● Apply a warm-up activity: The teacher will show some words with a phrase. Control the activity and provide equal participations	The students will play in their own columns and try to re-structure the sentence show by the teacher. They will be helping each other to create the phrase.	Students help each other to identify the phrase.	Teacher-students
	Pre-reading Ask students what is the main idea in a text.	Share thoughts about the concept of main idea and how it is used.	Students provide their own	Teacher-students

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20 min	Write the answers in the whiteboard and discuss them. Show some pictures about the context of the story (background information of Aztec empire)	Analyze the pictures and guess the topic to be read using the comics Make connections between the topic and the culture of Ecuador (Inca empire).	definition of main idea. Students identify similarities between the two cultures	
20 min 5 min	**While-reading** Explain the students to look at the illustrations, headlines, and key words for guessing what the comic will be about. Ask the students to read the comic silently, writing the words that they do not understand. Teacher will walk around the class helping students with the unknown words in the context The teacher will read the text aloud using movements to represent actions	Students will look at the illustrations and share their thoughts with their classmates by writing on sticky notes their general view of the comics. Check their classmates' answers. Read carefully, and write the main idea of the chapter in a piece of paper, highlighting their unknown words.	The students wrote similar answers with specific details of the comic The students write the main idea of the text and connect the events in the comic with their writing.	Students-students
15 min	**Post-reading** The teacher will write on the board some questions about the first chapter of the comic.	The students will have to answer the questions and check with their classmates.	The students identify the answers by scanning	Teacher-student

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| 15 min | The teacher can use challenging questions to check understanding.

Provide enough spaces for exchanging information in students. | Discuss in pair why they wrote their answers, in case of they have different responses | Students were able to identify common and different answers from the reading | Students-students |

Lesson plan template adapted from Jeremy Harmer Lesson plan format in the book: How to teach English? Page 161

Aztec Empire lesson plan 2

Group	10th grade students	**Time**	80 min
Topic:	Aztec Empire chapter 2		
Aims:	Connect events chronologically		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: Connect the previous chapter with the new chapter Identify main characters and the story problem		
Materials:	Comics: Aztec empire Markets Whiteboard Notebooks		
Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:** 1. The students may not remember the previous chapter **Solutions:** 1. Recap the students' prior knowledge		
Timing	**Teacher activity**	**Student activity**	**Success indicators**	**Focus (teacher-students interaction)**

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5 min	● Apply a warm-up activity: The teacher will show a group of emoji which will summarize a movie, book, song or any kind of multimedia source that students are familiarized.	The students will see the emoji and will try to name the song, movie, or book just by looking and making connections.	Students identify and name the type of source.	Teacher-students
25min	**Pre-reading** KWL chart: The teacher will explain to the students how to fulfill the first part of the chart (*What I know?*) Summarizing the first chapter. The teacher will present a sequence of pictures about the new chapter. The teacher will ask some questions about the new scenes and how can be related to the previous one After looking at the pictures the teacher will help the students complete the second part of the KWL chart (*what I want to learn?*) in order to establish questions and doubts of the students	The students will complete the task with the help of the teacher by remembering a brief summary of the first chapter. The students will imagine what can happen in the chapter and how these scenes are related to the previous chapter. They will be answering the questions while they look at the pictures The students will write their questions and doubts about the relationship between the 2 chapters and their connection.	Students wrote what they remember from chapter 1. Students give their opinion on how the events are connected. Students share their own connections in the story Students wrote questions related to the sequence of	Teacher-students Students-students Student-teacher

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			events of the story. They find	
25 min	**While-reading** The teacher will ask the students to read the new chapter 3 times; One for general understanding, another for identifying unknown words and the last one for specific details (scanning). The teacher will pair the students in order to compare and share their predictions about the connection between the two chapters.	Students will read the new chapter three times, they will highlight and write down the possible connections between the previous chapter and the new one. Students will share their predictions with each other and establish similarities and differences between their KWL chart.	gaps in the story. The students highlight essential information from the comic that helps them to connect both chapters Students get specific details by scanning the comic	Teacher-student Students-students
25 min	**Post-reading** The teacher will give the students a worksheet with true/false statements about the two chapters. The teacher will ask the students to complete the last part of the *KWL* chart (*What I learned?).* This work is individual, so students need to complete with their own observation,	The students will discuss and complete the worksheet based on their similarities. The students complete the chart using the information they wrote in the previous sections in order to reflect and understand the	The students discuss if the statements are true or false The students	Students-students students-teacher

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	reflecting on the whole chapter.	connection between the chapters.	connect their knowledge with the previous episode and the new one, discussing findings and affirming statements of the reading.	
	Finally, the teacher will ask the students to create their own end of the comic.	Students will use their creativity to design their own final for the two chapters.	Students use the context of the chapters to develop their endings with significant reflection.	Students-teacher

Lesson plan template adapted from Jeremy Harmer Lesson plan format in the book: How to teach English? Page 161

Aztec Empire lesson plan 3

Group	10th grade students	Time	80 min
Topic:	Aztec Empire chapter 3		
Aims:	Improve reading comprehension		
Objectives (expected	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: Connect the previous chapter with the new chapter		

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learning outcomes):	Identify main characters and the story problem
Materials:	Comics: Aztec empire chapter 3 Markets Whiteboard Notebooks

Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:**
	   1. The students may not remember the previous chapter
	Solutions:
	   1. Recap the students' prior knowledge

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
5 min	● Apply a warm-up activity: The teacher will give the students some pictures in a bag.	The students will look at the pictures and they will imitate the activity, a character, or a song.	Students guess the action that their classmates were imitating.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Pre-reading** The teacher will present the students the first dialogue of the new chapter of the comic The teacher will write some questions about the dialogue. The teacher also will be in charge of monitoring the activity to help students to remember the two first episodes.	The students will analyze the first dialogue of the comic and they will think, pair and share their thoughts about today's chapter, The students will answer the questions in pairs and then they will present them to the class	The students give many possible events that can happen in the chapter Students also discuss their answers with the whole group.	Teacher-students Students-students

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	The teacher will present a sequence of pictures about the new chapter. The teacher will ask some questions about the new scenes and how can be related to the previous one	The students will imagine what can happen in the chapter and how these scenes are related to the previous chapter. They will be answering the questions while they look at the pictures	.	
	After reading the first dialogue, the teacher will show the next scene but without dialogue, the teacher let the students connect the dialogue and the illustration	The students will write a short dialogue using the illustration and the previous conversation.	Students write their own dialogues connecting the illustration and the text they read previously.	Student-teacher
25 min	**While-reading** The teacher will read the first three scenes and he will be asking some questions about the story, making pauses to each question	Students will follow the reading of the teacher. They will listen to the questions and they will answer according to what they read so far.	Students follow the reading and answer the questions, connecting previous chapters and the new ones.	Teacher-student
	The teacher will give to the students two summaries about the chapter. The teacher should explain to the students that they have to look for the differences in the story.	Students will analyze the two summaries and they will identify the difference between the correct and the modified one.	Students compare and identify similarities and differences	Teacher-Students

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| | | between the two summaries | |

| 25 min | **Post-reading** The teacher will give the students a piece of sheet to draw their favorite character and make a description of its role in the story.

The teacher will ask the students to compare their favorite characters and their descriptions. | The students will draw their favorite character and their description and role in the story.

The students will ask each other why they chose their characters and how important they are for the story. | Students are able to describe in a few words their favorite character and their role in the chapter. | Students-teacher

Students-students |

Lesson plan template adapted from Jeremy Harmer Lesson plan format in the book: How to teach English? Page 161

Aztec Empire lesson plan 4

Group	10th grade students	**Time**	80 min
Topic:	Aztec Empire chapter 4		
Aims:	Improve reading comprehension		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: Connect the previous chapter with the new chapter Identify main characters and the story problem		
Materials:	Comics: Aztec empire chapter 4 Markets Whiteboard Notebooks		

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Anticipated problems and solutions:	Problems:

	Problems:
	  1. The students may not remember the previous chapters
	  2. The pictures are not clear
	Solutions:
	  1. Recap the students' prior knowledge
	  2. Print the comic

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
5 min	**Apply a warm-up activity:** The teacher will play with the students *SIMON SAYS* with commands and classroom objects.	The students will listen to the instructions and they will do it or show the object to the teacher.	Interaction between teacher and students in the commands or the objects.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Pre-reading** The teacher will read the students the title of the new chapter. The teacher will ask the students to write their questions and put them in a bag. The teacher will answer some of the questions from the bag. The teacher will monitor the questions and the students while doing the questions.	The students will listen to the title and they will write their questions in the bag. The question should be written in relationship with the title read by the teacher.	The students write simple questions based on previous chapters and the title of the new episode.	Teacher-students
	The teacher will present a sequence of pictures about the new chapter. The teacher will ask the students to put in sequence	The students will order the pictures in groups and they will share their own sequence with the whole class.	Students were able to put the pictures in their own	Students-students

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	all the illustrations with the prompts.		order in the illustrations.	
25 min	**While-reading** The teacher will create 3 groups. In each group, there is a part of the new chapter. The teacher should give the students the part they will read after sharing what they read with the original groups	Students will read their part of the chapter and they will take notes about key aspects of their part of the story. Share their parts in the original groups.	Students share what they found out and use their notes to improve their understanding of the text.	Student-student
25 min	**Post-reading** The teacher will ask the students to create a story map to re-tell the story to their classmates focusing on the last 2 chapters. The teacher can monitor the students and help them by answering questions about the vocabulary, the sequence of the story or the type of map they would like to create.	The students will create their own map to retell the story to their classmates. The students can choose their way to present it.	The students create an understandable map and easy to follow. They highlight the most important aspects of the two last chapters.	Teacher-student Students-students

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Aztec Empire lesson plan 5

Group	10th grade students	**Time**	80 min
Topic:	Aztec Empire chapter 5		

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Aims:	Improve reading comprehension			
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: Connect the previous chapter with the new chapter Identify main characters and the story problem Identify the plot, characters and place in the story			
Materials:	Comics: Aztec empire chapter 5 Markets Whiteboard Notebooks			
Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:** 1. The students may not remember the previous chapters 2. The pictures are not clear **Solutions:** 1. Recap the students' prior knowledge 2. Print the comic			
Timing	**Teacher activity**	**Student activity**	**Success indicators**	**Focus (teacher-students interaction)**
10 min	**Apply a warm-up activity:** The teacher will organize the students in a row, and he will be asking for quick questions like *What do you prefer dogs or cats?* or *Do you prefer fast food or healthy food?* The teacher will point out where the students will go according to their answers.	The students have to go to their right or left, depending on their answers and preferences They will not be able to speak. Reactions are allowed.	The students will go to the places where the teacher pointed out.	Teacher-students
20 min	**Pre-reading** The teacher will select a group of words from the comic and he will write them on the board. Then he will ask the students to	The students will brainstorm as many words as they can to relate them to the words written on the board.	The students identify key aspects of the chapter	Teacher-students

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	brainstorm similar words that they think can be related to the written words.		by skimming and scanning the text.	
25 min	**While reading** The teacher will give the students the comics. The teacher will let the students know that they will have to complete a table about the chapter. After reading the text the teacher will ask them to make a table where the students need to complete the information they read. The table should contain three aspects to identify in the comic. They are the characters of the comic, plot; the storyline, and the place; the scenario or scenarios where the story happens.	Students will read the chapter three times in order to get the main idea, identify unclear parts, and identify characteristics from the text. The students will complete the chart with the information they gathered from the text. They can use their notes to support their comments about the three aspects of the story.	Students identify the characters, plot, and place of the story after reading.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Post-reading** After completing the chart, the teacher will ask the students to write some questions for their favorite	The students have to write their questions and put them into a bag.	Students write their questions	Teacher-students

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character. Questions like *What would you say to …...?* *What do you want to know about …...?* The teacher has to collect all the questions and select students to answer others' questions.	The students have to pick up one paper with the questions and imagine that he/she is that character. The students have to answer the questions simulating that they are the character.	for their favorite character based on the 5 chapters	Students-students
Finally the teacher will group the students to work in their own final scene	Students have to work in groups and discuss their favorite scenes or chapters and create their how alternative final to the comic.		Student-student

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Group	10th grade students	Time	2 hours of class
Topic:	Covid-19 comic A nurse's anguish in the ICU		
Aims:	The use of educational comics to improve learners' reading skills		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Infer what the comic reading is about, by using the headlines, pictures, and scenarios • Summarize what they have read and link the story with their real-life context		
Assessment:	Outcome reading assessment		
Materials:	Comics: Covid-19 Markets White board Notebooks		
Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:** 1. The computer breaks down 2. The projector does not work **Solutions:** 1. The comic books will have been printed 2. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)

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15 min	**Warm up:** The teacher shows a short video about Covid-19 and its impact on the society.	Learners have to watch the video and take notes (ideas that they must consider crucial from the video).	They take notes to answer future questions.	Teacher-students
	Then, the teacher asks questions to the students to know if they understand what they have watched and to solve any concern.	They answer the questions individually by raising their hands.	They are able to answer the teacher questions properly.	Teacher-students
15min	**Pre-reading:** The teacher gives a worksheet to each student (puzzle activity).	In pairs, the students have to solve the puzzle by looking at the picture and writing what word will fit in the puzzle.	They are able to solve the puzzle and recognize each word that they are writing on it.	Students-students
	After that, the teacher shows a set of pictures and some headings from the comics.	They have to guess what will the reading be about, by observing and making inferences.	Leaners are able to infer what the reading will be about.	Teacher-students
25 min	**While-reading:** The teacher divides the comics into 4 parts and	Each student is assigned a number, so according to the number, they have	They are able to work in groups	Students-Students

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		to read their parts. Next, when they finish to reading and understand what they have read, they come back to their seats. Finally, everyone shares what they have read and try to comprehend the whole story.	and comprehend what individually they read.	
place them separately on the windows.				
25 min	**Post-reading:** The teacher draws a graphic organizer on the white board and the features that it should have.	The students have to create a graphic organizer summarizing the whole reading by taking into account 3 main aspects: setting, plot, and characters.	Learners are able to create a graphic organizer by including the main aspects of the comic.	Teacher-students

Adapted curriculum:		
Homework/future work:	Write a short story about a situation if someone in your family has been infected with Covid-19, and if not research for a story on the internet.	

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Group	10th grade students	Time	2 hours of class
Topic:	Covid-19 Comic A nurse's anguish in the ICU		
Aims:	The use of educational comics to improve learners' reading skills		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Use context clues strategy to understand unknown words from the comics passage.		
Materials:	Comics: Covid-19 Markets White board Notebooks Context clues log Flashcards		

Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:**
	  3. The computer breaks down
	  4. The projector does not work
	Solutions:
	    3. The comic books will have been printed
	    4. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
15 min	**Warm up:** Stop the bus: The teacher writes the categories on the board, and explains the game. Then, the teacher writes a letter on the board and starts the game.	Learners listen to the teacher and have to copy what the teacher writes on the board. Then, learners have to complete the whole categories with the initial letter, and the student who completes the chart first is the winner.	They are able to complete the chart and use the correct letter and spelling.	Teacher-students

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15 min	**Pre-reading:** The teacher writes some sentences from the comic which contains unfamiliar words. Then, he asks students to read the sentence and guess the meaning of the unknown word. After that the teacher must explains to them that there isn't enough information to guess the meaning of the unfamiliar word, so he adds more details to the sentences.	Learners should try to guess the meaning of the unknown words. They should take into account the characteristics of the words such as definition, part of speech, synonym, antonym, etc.	They are able to understand the characteristic of context clue log and how it works.	Teacher-students
20 min	**While-reading:** The teacher divides the class into groups (4 members by each group), and gives each student a comic strip.	While learners are reading the comic strip, they have to highlight the unknown words. They can use color pencils, markers, etc to do it.	Leaners are able to notice what words they are not familiarized with.	students-students
20 min	**Post-reading:** After finishing the reading activity, the teacher gives each student a context clue log and explains the activity. After that, the teacher divided the class into groups again. Finally, the teacher provides general feedback to the whole class.	Students have to write the unknown words into the log, and try to complete all the items. In groups, learners check what they have done and if they need any help. Learners pay attention to the teacher's recommendations.	They are able to understand how to use the context clues appropriately while they are reading.	Teacher-Students

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Homework/future work:	Students have to read a short piece of news, article, or paragraph and highlight at least 5 unknown words and try to deduce the meaning using the context clue log.			

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Group	10th grade students	Time	2 hours of class
Topic:	Covid-19 Comic		
Aims:	The use of educational comics to improve learners' reading skills		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Locate the general and specific information from the comic by skimming and scanning		
Materials:	Comics: Covid-19 Markets White board Notebooks Context clues log Flashcards		
Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:** 5. The computer breaks down 6. The projector does not work **Solutions:** 5. The comic books will have been printed 6. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
15 min	**Warm up:** The teacher shows a short video about the covid-19 around the world and its consequences. After that, he asks some questions from the video to known if learners pay attention to the video or not.	Learners watch the video and carefully take some important note. After that, they have to answer some question that the teacher formulates.	They are able to answer the question that the teacher formulates properly.	Teacher-students
15 min	**Pre-reading:**			

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	The teacher shows a picture about the comic passage and asks learners, "what will the comics be about",	Learners should try to guess what the comic will be about and try to make any guesses.	They are able to predict what the comic will be about just by observing a picture.	Teacher-students
25 min	**While-reading:** The teacher divides the class into groups (4 members by each group), and gives each student a comic strip. He asks the students to look carefully the whole comic for about 5 minutes, and requests learners to read it quickly. Finally, he asks a general question about the comic.	Learners have to observe the whole comic passage without reading it. Then, learner read the comic quickly and answer the question that the teacher formulates and the beginning.	Leaners are able to skim the text to get the general idea.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Post-reading:** The teacher asks the student to answers some questions about the comics that he writes on the board. After that, the teacher checks if learners answer the questions correctly and provide an general feedback.	Learners have to scan the comic passage for answer to the questions and try to use keywords in the questions to look for specific information. Finally, they share their answers with the whole classroom.	They are able to scan the text to get specific details and answer the questions.	Teacher-Students

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Homework/future work:	Learners have to choose a reading text and figure out the general idea of the text by skimming, and present in front of the class the next session.			

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Group	10th grade students	Time	2 hours of class
Topic:	Covid-19 Comic		
Aims:	The use of educational comics to improve learners' reading skills		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Retell a comic story by presenting a clear sequence of actions.		
Materials:	Comics: Covid-19 volume 2 Markets White board Notebooks Context clues log Flashcards		

Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:**
	  7. The computer breaks down
	  8. The projector does not work
	Solutions:
	    7. The comic books will have been printed
	    8. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
15 min	**Warm up:** What is my problem? The teacher writes some issues that the previous class had on post-it notes and stick one on each student's back. Finally, the teacher discusses with the whole class the problems and solutions that the previous lesson can have in order to prevent in the current lesson.	Learners must mingle and ask for help or opinions from their mates. They must provide some solutions to the problem and write on their notebooks.	They are able to reflect on the issues that the lesson had and provide solutions.	students-students

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15 min	**Pre-reading:** The teacher presents the key vocabulary from the comic passage by playing a well-known game "Hang man". He writes only some letters to guide the learners to guess the word.	Learners must speak aloud what letter they think is the most appropriate to complete the whole word. After that, if they guess the word, they should guess the meaning of it and copy on the note book.	They are able understand the key vocabulary by saying the correct spelling of the word.	Teacher-students
25 min	**While-reading:** The teacher gives students a comic reading and tells them to focus on some liking words that the text has. Then, the teachers ask learners to tell him what linking words they find.	While learners are reading the comic passage, they should try to concentrate on the linking words. They can highlight or underline the linking words that they find on the tex.	Leaners are able to identify linking words in a text.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Post-reading:** The teacher divides the class into groups and shows them a retelling chart. Then, he asks them to complete it. **E.g.** **In the beginning, …** **After that, …** **And then, …** **Finally, …** Lastly, the teacher provides a general feedback of how learners can improve in order to retell a story better.	In groups, learners have to complete the retelling chart and exchange their ideas. After having finished the retelling chart, they have to pass in front of the class and retell the story by having in mind the correct sequence of the story.	They are able to retell the comic passage by having a clear sequence.	Students-Students

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Homework/future work:	Learners have to choose any story that they have heard and prepare for the next class to retell it to the whole classroom.

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Group	10th grade students	Time	2 hours of class
Topic:	Covid-19 Comic		
Aims:	The use of educational comics to improve learners' reading skills		
Objectives (expected learning outcomes):	By the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • Summarize the whole reading passage by focusing on relevant element from the comic passage.		
Materials:	Comics: Covid-19 Markets White board Notebooks Context clues log Flashcards		

Anticipated problems and solutions:	**Problems:**
	  9. The computer breaks down
	  10. The projector does not work
	Solutions:
	    9. The comic books will have been printed
	    10. Use the whiteboard		

Timing	Teacher activity	Student activity	Success indicators	Focus (teacher-students interaction)
15 min	**Warm up:** **Charades** The teacher chooses a student to act out a sentence or word. If the learner doesn't know the word, the teacher can help them with a definition, synonym, or example. However, if the learner doesn't realize what the word is, the teacher has to change word.	Learner have to observe carefully what his or her classmate is doing and try to figure out the word or sentence. If they don't guess, they can take out their dictionaries to guess the word.	They are able to comprehend what word is presented in the charades game.	Students-students

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15 min	**Pre-reading:** The teacher tells a story to learners and then summarize it. After that, he asks learners to choose a partner and tell them to think about any story and they should tell to the classmate. When all the students have finished the activity, the teacher asked them which story was more interesting and easier to understand.	Learners listen to the story carefully and take some notes. Then, in pairs, they tell a story or anecdote that they prefer. The classmate who is listening to the story, must take notes and summarize the story.	They are able to tell a story or anecdote and summarize it.	Teacher-students
25 min	**While-reading:** The teacher asks the students to take out the whole comic passages that they have read and tells them to choose one. Then, he tells them to read the comic passage again and highlight the main aspects on the story.	Learners have to select a comic passage that they prefer and start reading again to recall what they know about the text. Also, they can highlight the relevant elements of the story.	Leaners are able to identify the main aspects of the story.	Teacher-students
25 min	**Post-reading:** The teacher asks learners to summarize the whole passage and also make a drawing to help them explain the summary better. After that, he asks learners to present the summary in front of the class. Finally, he	Learners have to summarize the comic passage on their notebooks and also draw a picture which helps them to explain the summary. After that, they present it in front of the class. Lastly, learners reflect on what they can	They are able to summarize a text by focusing on the relevant aspect of the story.	Teacher-Students

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	provides a general feedback of how students should do a summary correctly.	improve or change in order to make a good summary.		

Homework/future work:	Learners have to choose a short reading text and summarize it. Then, they present the summary in front of the class in the next session.

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DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN
DEL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
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Azogues, 07 de marzo de 2023

Luis Alberto Deleg Juela
C.I.: 0105987606

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Cristian David Chucho Muñoz
Luis Alberto Deleg Juela

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DECLARATORIA DE PROPIEDAD INTELECTUAL Y CESIÓN DE DERECHOS DE PUBLICACIÓN DEL TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
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Azogues, 01 de enero de 2023

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**CERTIFICACIÓN DEL TUTOR PARA
TRABAJO DE INTEGRACIÓN CURRICULAR
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Carrera de: Pedagogía de los Idiomas Nacionales y Extranjeros

Yo, Luis Andrés Peralta Sari, tutor del Trabajo de Integración Curricular de Carreras de Grado de Modalidad Presencial denominado "Developing reading skills through the use of educational comics in ninth-grade students at Javier Loyola high school" perteneciente a los estudiantes: Cristian David Chucho Muñoz con C.I. 0350003687 y Luis Alberto Deleg Juela con C.I. 0105987606. Doy fe de haber guiado y aprobado el Trabajo de Integración Curricular. También informo que el trabajo fue revisado con la herramienta de prevención de plagio donde reportó el 9 % de coincidencia en fuentes de internet, apegándose a la normativa académica vigente de la Universidad.

Azogues, 07 de marzo 2023

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