

READING COMPREHENSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS



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Abstract

The understanding of a text should be interpreted at different levels: literal, inferential and critical-evaluative. A literal level is to understand everything that the author explicitly communicates through a text; understanding a text at an inferential level means to interpret everything that the author wants to communicate, but that sometimes he does not explicitly say or write; understanding a text at a critical- evaluative level means to value, project and judge both the content of what one author states in his writing as well as the inferences or relationships that can be established from what appears in the text produced by an author.

Some researches consider that college student graduates are not necessarily good readers even though they read advanced academic material, for this reason they do not always comprehend the information. Many strategies have been proposed to be developed both in class and at home, to improve reading comprehension. Instructors can improve comprehension through non-reading related information such as background knowledge or experiences, homework and class work, and learning aides. Instructors can also teach students how to use other strategies including the SQ3R method, peer teaching, encoding, and reading flexibility.

Key words: *Literal, inferential, critical-evaluative, reading strategies, understand, reading comprehension.*

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1. Introduction

College students are not necessarily good readers. Even though college students are reading advanced academic material, it does not mean that they always comprehend the information. This fact is faced by the UPEC English Language Center whose aim is to develop the ability of oral and written communication supported by a curriculum based on international standards. To achieve this purpose, students must pass 8 levels of English till level B2 in reference to the performance and standards of the Common European Framework and UPEC educational model.

College teachers realize that comprehension in textbooks, scholarly books, and research journal articles, along with identification of important information can be problematic for college students. Unfortunately, many college instructors do not see teaching students reading skills as part of their job, and that reading college-level textbooks and scholarly books are not different from reading general materials. Furthermore, some instructors do not realize that students may often experience difficulty in reading academic subject matter and in comprehending what they have read, resulting in low rates of student success and retention, along with lowered academic standards.

Therefore, this research seeks to provide an alternative solution to this problem by offering a set of strategies for improving reading comprehension among college students as well as boosting their motivation towards critical reading.

2. Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message. Rayner (2001) claims that this understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message.

Firstly, researchers agree that reading comprehension is a process. “It is the interaction among word identification, prior knowledge, comprehension strategies, and engagement” (Cunningham et al. 2004, p. 186). According to Prado (2011, p. 35) “The most basic part of comprehension is word identification”. She claims that a student learns to decode words at the beginning and starts to apply rules about how words should look and sound. As they continue learning how to read, word identification turns into not only decoding words, but learning about the meanings of words and their positions in sentences. They also begin to gain an understanding of how all these words fit together to form a piece of information that will hopefully be of interest or use to them.

Secondly, another important component of reading comprehension is the activation of prior knowledge or making connections while reading. Readers must be able to draw from their experiences to apply what they are reading. Yang (2006) considers that if a student is not able to activate the schema necessary for a specific piece of text, his or her comprehension will be either distorted or greatly hindered. In this context, young students will, at first, activate their schema (background knowledge and experience) and then, as they grow as readers, they strengthen and build on it.

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In this context, Prado (2011) says that this is the reason why individuals may read a book several times and be able to gain different meanings and perspectives every time they read it. They are bringing new experiences to a text every time they read because their lives are constantly evolving. This “layering of experiences also increases their ability to gain meaning from a piece of text” (Zimmerman & Hutchins, 2003, p. 45).

Noticeably, (Curtis, 2002; Gersten, Fuchs, Williams, & Baker, 2001; Kamil, 2003; NICHD, 2000; RAND Reading Study Group, 2002) are cited by Hock (2005) who claims that reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of any reading activity, especially functional literacy tasks. For this author reading comprehension is a collective term that describes the result of grasping the meaning from a text with one’s intellect—a task that involves many skills.

In addition, Lewis M. & Tregenza J. (2007) talk about the importance of helping students develop reading comprehension – from the very early stages of learning to read to becoming fluent readers. They claim that understanding what they read is at the heart of the reading process, for without it reading becomes a purposeless activity. Understanding a text also impacts upon a reader’s motivation and engagement. If a student struggles to understand what they have read, they are unlikely to find reading a rewarding and enjoyable activity.

Also, to achieve reading comprehension “the reader employs skills such as identifying the main idea of a passage, summarizing the content of a text, generating questions about the information in the text and looking for clues that answer those questions”. (Hock, 2005, p. 193). This author points out that readers also draw inferences from the text and perhaps even create visual images of the ideas or processes presented in it in order to achieve comprehension. Different reading comprehension skills are required when reading expository and narrative text (e.g., deleting redundant information, deleting trivial information, locating topic sentences, detecting valid arguments in text).

Yang (2006) claims that for decades, a great amount of studies have been done to investigate the influences of reading strategies on readers’ comprehension. He thinks that since the 1970s, reading comprehension has no longer been considered as a static and passive process in decoding words and recoding meanings of individual words or phrases. Instead, reading comprehension has been deemed as an active, dynamic, and growing process of searching for interrelationships in a text.

Finally, “the emphasis of constructing meaning in reading process rather than reading products directs many researchers and educators to collect information on readers’ cognitive processes; that is, their reading strategies” (Yang, 2006, p. 314). He also cites Carrel when assuring “as research evidence indicates, use of certain reading strategies does not always lead to successful reading comprehension, while use of other strategies does not always result in unsuccessful reading comprehension”. (1992, p. 168).

To sum up, “strategies may not be inherently good or bad for a given reader. Rather, they may or may not promote successful comprehension of a text, depending on the particular reader, the particular text, the context in which the reading is going on, and the choice of other strategies in conjunction with the chosen one” (Cohen, 1986, pp. 132–133).

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2.1 Levels of Reading Comprehension

Reading comprehension is defined as the level of understanding of a text/message. This understanding comes from the interaction between the words that are written and how they trigger knowledge outside the text/message. Rayner, K. (2001).

The understanding of a text is a fact in which an author interacts with a reader. The author communicates ideas and a reader interprets the author's message. To make this interaction possible, the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education (2006) considers that readers must activate the knowledge they have about the subject, the experiences they have acquired throughout their life, the knowledge they have of their maternal language and the worldview that has been configured with their knowledge and experience. The understanding a text or oral speech is always an interactive act, not a unidirectional act in which a transmitter communicates something that should be understood by other. To have a true understanding, the text should be interpreted at different levels: literal, inferential and critical-evaluative. Understanding a text in the three levels mentioned needs a process.

a. Comprehension at Literal Level

First of all, understanding a text at the literal level is to understand everything that the author explicitly communicated through this. That is, to understand all the words in it (or at least the words that are essential to understand the meaning of the text), understanding all the sentences that are written in it and understand each paragraph to get a complete picture of what the author has written.

To understand a text at the literal level, the reader uses all the vocabulary that has acquired since he was born. He also relies on the different meanings a word can have in the colloquial or everyday use, in certain regions, or in certain contexts. Literal understanding draws on intuitive or academic knowledge to know how your native language works, how sentences and paragraphs are structured, what certain terms mean in a culture or in a language in particular and also relies on common sense to identify how are set certain relations between ideas.

b. Comprehension at Inferential level

When a reader is able to give an account of what the author wanted to communicate that is a comprehension at inferential level. This does not mean it is a linear process in which first a person understands what the author says and then interprets what he meant. The reader is always moving between different levels of understanding in a process. The reader, thanks to its competence and linguistic knowledge reads fluently and with no need to stop to think about what the author says.

In addition, only when faced with a difficulty to understand what the author says, the reader is forced to concentrate on the literal level of understanding. At that time the reader consciously uses some strategy to understand a word or a sentence. When the reader encounters a word that he does not understand, consciously works some of the strategies to extract its meaning (literal level). Once approaching the meaning of that word, he comes again to read

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and get an overall understanding of the text, making inferences and evaluating what the text says. If the reader encounters a sentence that does not understand the first time he reads it, so consciously focuses on using some strategy to understand that sentence (literal level) and when he is able to express the idea of the author in a clear way, returns to the level of interpretation of the text. “Understanding a text at an inferential level means to interpret everything that the author wants to communicate, but that sometimes he does not explicitly say or write.” (Ecuadorian Ministry of Education, 2006).

On this regard, the reader can understand why the author wants to communicate. This means that the author gives clues about certain ideas that are not explicit in the text. The author communicates these ideas indirectly. The reader takes the items that appear explicit in the text, establish relationships between them and finally infers and extracts those ideas that the author explicitly embodied, but that he wanted to communicate. To perform this kind of understanding, the reader uses a lot of knowledge he possesses as efficient user of his tongue. Such knowledge is of some elements and operating rules of his language such as how sentences are constructed, what certain expressions mean in his culture, the way of expressing in his culture, the use of particular types of text and its structure. That is, the reader must draw on his knowledge and experience to interpret what the author does not explicitly say.

As already mentioned, the understanding of a text is not a linear process, in which literal comprehension is understood first and then the inferential and finally the critical- evaluative. It is rather a process in which one level interacts with another one. What is important to note is that the levels of comprehension inferential and critical-evaluative are possible unless there is a literal understanding of the text.

c. Comprehension at Critical-evaluative Level

The MEC (2006) considers that understanding a text at critical-evaluative level means to value, project and judge both the content of what one author states in his writing as well as the inferences or relationships that can be established from what appears in the text produced by an author. These judgments, evaluations and projections should have a support, argument or rationale. To understand a text at this level, the reader must use his common sense, his ability to establish logical relationships, his knowledge of the text or on the subject of the text, his life experience as a reader, his scale of values, his personal criteria on what the text deals with. The reader uses all these elements to make a stand in front of what the author says or expresses in the text and so make projections about what might involve or happen.

2.2 Strategies for Improving Reading Comprehension among College Students

Lei S. et al. (2010) consider that college student graduates are not necessarily good readers. Even though college students are reading advanced academic material, it does not mean that they always comprehend the information.

Comprehension in textbooks, scholarly books, and research journal articles, along with identification of important information can be problematic for college students. Reading is fundamental in all academic disciplines. Many college instructors do not see that teaching students reading skills as part of their job, and that reading required college-level textbooks and scholarly books are not different from reading general

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(non-academic) materials. These instructors also assume that students have developed proper reading skills from previous academic years. However, instructors do not realize that students may often experience difficulty in reading academic subject matter and in comprehending what they have read, resulting in low rates of student success and retention, along with lowered academic standards. (p. 30).

On this regard, these authors claim that there are many strategies, to be developed both in class and at home, to improve reading comprehension. Instructors can improve comprehension through non-reading related information such as background knowledge or experiences, homework and class work, and learning aides. Instructors can also teach students how to use other strategies including the SQ3R method, peer teaching, encoding, and reading flexibility (Table 2).

Table No 1.

An overview of major strategies of improving reading comprehension among college students.

Major strategy
a. Background knowledge and Experience Lectures Class discussions Instructional videos Computer programs
b. Providing homework and Class Work Class - related topics Practice exercises
c. Providing Learning Aide by Instructors study guide from textbook Quizzes Textbook pedagogical aides Handouts Learning packet
d. The SQ3R Method Survey Question Read Recite Review
e. Using Peer-Teaching Cooperative learning Peer-assisted instruction
f. Encoding Outline Concept Mapping
g. Reading Flexibility Adjust speed and style of reading

Source: Lei, S., Rhinehart, P. et al (2010). Reading Improvement.

a. Background Knowledge or Experiences

Lei S. et al. (2010) claim that background knowledge are non-reading experiences that college teachers can use to facilitate and maximize student learning new materials. In this context, **lectures** are one of the primary teaching modes that have been in existence for a long time and are a successful method in improving reading comprehension. Because students can get overwhelmed easily with text-based material, the instructor's lectures are an over-

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view of important information taken out of the text.

Classroom discussions encourage instructors to engage students in interactions to promote analysis, reflection and critical thinking; students get involved in what they are learning, encourage thinking, reasoning, and comprehension of important ideas, they also stimulate students to listen and evaluate the material being discussed, giving them the opportunity to bring up their own thoughts and ideas. These discussions lay the foundation for what students will be reading, giving them the background knowledge and concepts to have a clear understanding of what's in the textbook chapter.

(Choi and Johnson, 2005) are cited by Lei Simon who claim that **video instruction** is thought to be important in problem-based learning. Video instruction is able to convey characters, settings, and action in a more interesting way, as well as can portray more complex and interconnected problems. This technological tool enhances interactions and activities in a constructivist approach and boosts learning and comprehension. Moreover, there is a significant difference in learners' motivation in terms of attention between the video-based instruction and traditional text-based instruction. All in all, a critical attribute of video instruction is the ability to use both auditory and visual symbol systems which get students involved by acting out real situations that students can relate to, and therefore give a clear picture of what they are trying to convey.

Kim, A., et al., (2006) consider that many instructors in the science and math fields use **computer programs** because they can aide in the process of learning by showing a detailed way of solving a problem. They also have the ability to teach students at their own pace, provide choices in learning paths, reading passages, reading level options, and encourage a variety of practice exercises to be used. For these reasons, computer-assisted programs provide students with an interactive learning environment intended to maintain their interest, while teaching them how to apply comprehension strategies as they read expository text passages. Noticeably, computer programs can help students with learning disabilities because they have not developed the ability to skillfully apply comprehension strategies. Finally, computer-assisted comprehension can be used in aiding to improve reading comprehension in college courses.

b. Providing homework and Class Work

A **homework assignment** refers to tasks given to students by their teachers to be completed outside the class. Lei S. et al. (2010) consider that college students should be provided with sufficient homework and class work in order to help improve reading comprehension in their courses. They cite (Sherfield et al., 2005) to claim that critical reading and thinking skills require active reading. Being active readers mean students have to engage with the text, both mentally and physically. On this regard, students should skim ahead, jump back, and highlight the text when they are studying.

Additionally, they should make specific observations about the text and pre-view the material prior to actually reading it.

In relation to class work, teachers should provide class-related topics that are exciting and in-

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teresting. The best instructors tell stories related to topic; when students are taking a quiz or exam, they will recall the story associated with the lecture to recall the information. “Practice exercises are also essential to improve reading comprehension in college courses. Practice exercises in class and homework help students to remember the information for quizzes and final exams.” Lei S. et al., 2010, p. 34).

c. Providing Learning Aide by Instructors

Learning aides or study guides are tools used to reinforce and increase comprehension of information. Generally speaking, they condense all of the study materials into manageable sections. Moreover, they identify, explain and demonstrate relationships between ideas and concepts and create practical examples to facilitate and maximize student understanding of the course material. Some of these study guides include quizzes, textbook pedagogical aides, handouts and learning packets. Lei S. et al. (2010) consider that study guides are instructional tools that are used to aide students in the acquisition of content information.

Study guides, however, are an independent review by students of the academic material. Khogali (2004) states that study guides serve as a powerful tool to help students manage their own learning. In order for these students to comprehend reading material effectively and efficiently, lecturers should provide guidance with the concepts presented in the assigned text readings. These learning aides can be used to introduce new content vocabulary, guide content-specific reading, review newly introduced content concepts, integrate new content with previously learned content, and practice specific unit skills. Thus, study guides assist college students with comprehension of course material.

However, Gurung (2003) has shown that there is no significant positive correlation between the use of study guides and performance on exams. The study guides contain outlines, chapter reviews, key terms, practice test questions, online quizzes, group exercises, and paper assignments. Gurung concludes that the outcome is due to assessment methods that do not test the other forms of learning that study aides provide. (p. 34).

(Gurung, 2003) has advised that instructors should provide explicit guidelines on how to use different pedagogical aides because some students may simply misuse the study guides and has cautioned students from spending too much time on some aides at the expense of studying other important material or working on understanding the material. (p. 35).

d. - The SQ3R Method.

The SQ3R method was developed by Francis Robinson in his 1946 book “Effective Study”. It is an acronym which stands for Survey (or Skim), Question, Read, Recite (or Recall) and Review.

The University of Illinois website and Fraser, L. (1996) mention that it is a way to read academic material such as textbooks, articles, research studies or manuals and increase compre-

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hension of what students are reading and improve their ability to recall it. It consists of the following five steps:

Survey or Skim

Skim the following: the title of the chapter, the introduction, the table of contents and any illustrations, charts or graphs and the summary paragraph. Note any unknown vocabulary and find a definition. Most importantly, skim the section headings and the first sentences of each paragraph to find the main points that will be developed. This orientation should not take more than a few minutes (make a conscious effort to look only at the headings, etc.) but will help you to organize the ideas as you read them later.

Question:

Turn the first heading, or the first sentence of the first paragraph, into a question. This will arouse your curiosity and so increase your active involvement and comprehension, and the question will make important points stand out while explanatory detail is recognized as such. Turning a heading into a question can be done instantly upon reading the heading, but it demands a conscious effort on your part to make this a query for which you must read to find the answer.

Read:

Reading is the most important part of the SQ3R method. Students can record notes in the book margins or use a separate notebook. Recording notes will help students to understand the authors' ideas and concepts. Read to answer questions, i.e., to the end of the first headed section. This is not a passive plodding along each line, but an active search for the answer. Underline only key words, never whole paragraphs. Use a dictionary if necessary to look up unfamiliar vocabulary. The reader should definitely have in mind what he wants to learn as he reads each section and not just passively read it line by line.

Recite:

Having read the first section, look away from the book and try briefly to recite in your own words the answer to your question (aloud, if possible). Students should reflect on what they have read, including reciting answers to questions they asked during the survey portion. If you can do this you know what is in the section;; if you can't, skim the section again and repeat the exercise of reciting. An excellent way to do this reciting from memory is to jot down cue phrases in outline form on a sheet of paper. Make these notes very brief.

Review

When the chapter or selection has thus been completely read, look over your notes to get a bird's-eye view of the points and their relationship to one another. Check your memory by reciting the major points under each heading and the sub-points under each major point. You

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can do this by covering up the notes and trying to recall the information. Review daily during the period of time before your exam. Through review, students can reflect on their reading comprehension and retention as well as reorganize the reading in a way that will make sense to them. Moreover, they reflect on their answers to the proposed questions.

To sum up, these five steps of the SQ3R Method, if applied and practiced, should result in an increase in reading comprehension, an improved ability to identify important points and better retention of the material.

e. Using Peer-Teaching

Peer teaching is the process by means of which a skilled pupil with a teacher's guidance helps one or more students at the same grade level learn a skill or concept, assuming that the knowledge and experience of the student teacher is superior to that of his/her partner.

Goldschmid B. (1976) considers that peer teaching has gained momentum in higher education because "students who tutor other students profit not only on a cognitive level (i.e., become more expert in the subject they are teaching), but also on an interpersonal, affective one: their self-esteem increases and their attitude towards teaching and learning in general becomes more positive". (p. 26). On the other hand, those who are being tutored benefit from this form of individualized instruction. Students may be more willing to attempt difficult tasks when placed in pairs than when alone and be more creative. A possible negative result of this kind of cooperation could be an increase in problem-solving time. Another important cognitive benefit from peer teaching and learning experiences may be improved retention. Conceptual development may also be enhanced by peer teaching as was demonstrated by Murray (1972).

The author mentions that on the affective side, students have expressed great satisfaction and enjoyment in the peer teaching situation. Alternating between "teacher" and "student" roles reinforces the idea that students, especially in the university, can be autonomous and assume at least some responsibility for their own instruction. Such an attitude also fosters in the students the belief that they can themselves muster resources for their own learning and thus be better prepared for life after college.

Furthermore, peer teaching must be subject to continuous evaluation. Students can evaluate their own progress and check the performance of their peers as well as provide constant feedback to their teachers with respect to the instructional materials and learning environment.

Lei S. et al. (2010) cite an example of reading practice by means of peer teaching. First, the group reads a portion of textbook chapter silently, and then the peer teacher asks a question about what they just read. The group discusses the reading and assists each other with any questions or clarification if needed. Meanwhile, the actual teacher of the class starts off the group discussion and offers much help. Through time, the teacher reduces the assistance that is given to the group until the group is guiding the entire discussion on their own. Students are also able to look at the reading and make future predictions about what comes next. Higher or average performing students are paired with a student who achieves lower results

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based upon a pretest performance. This approach allows students to ask questions about the assigned reading together in a group.

f. Encoding

Lei S. et al. (2010) consider that the two major techniques of improving encoding are the use of outlines and concept mapping because research studies have shown that the use of an outline and the implementation of concept mapping have shown positive correlations to improved reading comprehension. Structurally, the use of an outline presents the visual organization of a textbook that function to prepare readers for identification of major topics and relevant information within the text. This identification leads to meaningful storage of new material in long-term memory. The aim of an outline is to help writers organize their thinking and information they have gathered. Some writers revise their outlines while they draft, others do it after they have finished revising their papers.

Concept mapping, they say, is a schematic tool that allows college students to graphically represent their knowledge. The concept map graphically depicts an inclusive main concept to which connections to several other general concepts are shown by lines of direct and indirect relationship. The network of concepts moves downward to show differences in main to more specific concepts. This tool helps students diagram their knowledge of key concepts, and demonstrates their understanding of relationships among them. It turns out to be an effective learning tool for college students who have more complex experiences and more accumulations of knowledge than much younger- aged students who are juvenile in their academic endeavors. Moreover, concept mapping can also benefit college instructors in identifying any student misconceptions and improve in student understanding of course material.

g. Reading Flexibility

White, H. (2004) considers that college students need to be guided through the course information and must be given a purpose for reading the passage of information. Their thinking needs to be stimulated, their curiosity needs to be aroused, and they need to be assisted with major concepts and vocabulary. In this context, they must learn to adjust their speed and style of reading to their reading objectives and the type of materials to be read. College instructors can give students insight on how to identify which materials to use for different types or reading speeds and styles.

2.3 Experiences of reading comprehension conducted by Carchi State Polytechnic University.

The SNNA, National Admission and Leveling System is the agency in charge of administering a leveling and admission system to higher education public institutions in Ecuador, to ensure the relevance of the academic offer and the existence of a fair and transparent system, for all aspiring students, based on the application of appropriately validated standardized tests.

The Political Constitution of Ecuador in Article 350 says: “The higher education system is aimed at academic and professional training with scientific and humanistic vision, scientific

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and technological research, innovation, promotion, solutions to the problems of the country, in relation to the objectives of the development scheme.”

On the other hand, the Higher Education Law LOES in Article 1 states: “ The institutions of the Ecuadorian National System of Higher Education mission is the search for truth , the development of universal and ancestral Ecuadorian cultures, science and technology, through teaching, research and links with the community.” In this context, LOES Regulations, Article 17, of the programs and linking courses with society, says: “ The Academic Regulation Regime will regulate all matters related to programs and courses in connection with society as well as continuing education courses, taking into account the characteristics of the institution of higher education, their careers and programs and the needs of national, regional and local development.”

With this legal basis, the UPEC launched a linking program with society in the academic period March 2013 - August 2013, under the responsibility of Dr. José Antonio Rojas Pijal - SNNA – UPEC General Coordinator. This program aimed to first determine the levels of verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning and abstract reasoning and then plan training courses in these areas. In the field that is in our interest, it should be noted that verbal reasoning is the ability to reason with verbal contents establishing principles of classification, arrangement, relationship and meaning through the use of synonyms, antonyms, analogies, incomplete sentences and comprehensive reading.

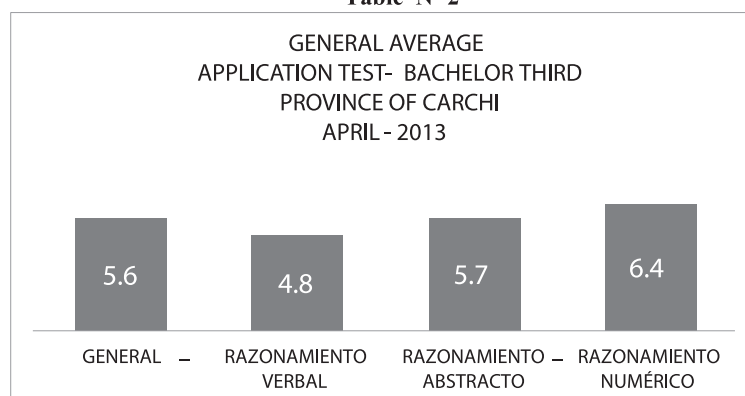
In this process approximately 1200 third year of high school students participated, before admission to higher institutes, universities or polytechnics. These are the secondary schools that were evaluated: Bolivar Technological Institute, Vicente Fierro Technological Institute, Consejo Provincial High School, National Huaca High School, Santa Marta De Cuba High School, National El Angel High School, José Julián Andrade High School, Mario Oña Perdomo High School, and Cesar Antonio Mosquera High School.

The results obtained were as follows:

TABLE OF RESULTS (OVER 10 POINTS)

GENERAL PERFORMANCE	5,6
VERBAL REASONING	4,8
ABSTRACT REASONING	5,7
NUMERICAL REASONING	6,4

Table N° 2



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Conclusion: Verbal reasoning tests, which included reading comprehension items, show a score of 4.8 out of ten points. It is determined that secondary school students who aspire to enter higher education institutions have an unsatisfactory verbal reasoning level.

A second experience was undertaken with the existing students at the Carchi State Polytechnic University distributed in the following colleges:

Table N° 3
Strata of sample

COLLEGE	MEN		WOMEN		TOTAL	
	POPULATION	SAMPLE	POPULATION	SAMPLE	POPULATION	SAMPLE
<i>Business Administration and Marketing</i>	94	40	61	26	155	66
<i>Integral Agricultural Development</i>	44	19	22	9	66	28
<i>International Trade</i>	97	41	39	16	136	57
<i>Tourism and Ecotourism</i>	32	14	20	8	52	22
<i>Nursing</i>	18	8	120	51	138	58
TOTAL	285	120	262	111	547	231

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora - estudiantes de la UPEC
Note: the sample of student population was subjected to a verbal ability test. The findings of the students who took this verbal aptitude test at the different colleges in the Carchi State Polytechnic University, demonstrate the reading level they possess, it is evaluated between “A little Satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory”, as evidenced by the following graphics:

According to Chavez (2013) the sample of student population was subjected to a verbal ability test. The findings of the students who took this verbal aptitude test at the different colleges in the Carchi State Polytechnic University, demonstrate the reading level they possess, it is evaluated between “A little Satisfactory” and “Unsatisfactory”, as evidenced by the graphics:

Table N° 4
Business Administration and Marketing College Results

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	2	3,03
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	38	57,58
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	26	39,39
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00
TOTAL		66	100,00

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

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Table N° 5
Integral Agricultural College Results

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00%
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	1	3,57%
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	13	46,43%
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	14	50,00%
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00%
TOTAL		28	100,00

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

Table N° 6
International Trade College Results

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	35	61,40
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	22	38,60
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00
TOTAL		28	57

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

Table N° 7
Tourism and Ecotourism College Results

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	16	72,73
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	6	27,27
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00
TOTAL		22	100,00

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

Table N° 8
Nursing College Results

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	1	1,72
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	30	51,72
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	27	46,55
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00
TOTAL		58	100,00

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

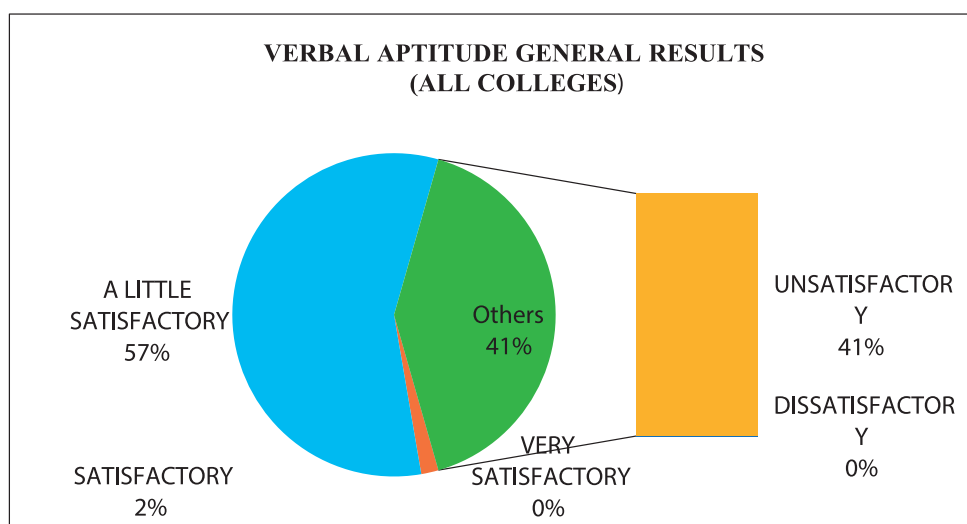
READING COMPREHENSION AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS

Table N° 9
TOTAL RESULTS - UPEC STUDENTS

LEVEL	INDICATOR	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Between 9 y 10	VERY SATISFACTORY	0	0,00
Between 7 y 8	SATISFACTORY	4	1,73
Between 5 y 6	A LITTLE SATISFACTORY	132	57,14
Between 3 y 4	UNSATISFACTORY	95	41,13
Between 0 y 2	DISSATISFACTORY	0	0,00
TOTAL		231	100,00

Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

Table N° 10



Source: Análisis y soporte didáctico de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes de la UPEC

Analysis and interpretation: The graph shows that the A Little Satisfactory level corresponds to 57% of diagnosed students and is the predominant, followed by an Unsatisfactory level 41% and barely 2% corresponds to a Satisfactory level.

These results show the urgent need of helping students develop reading comprehension from the very early stages of learning to read to becoming fluent readers. Moreover, understanding what they read is at the heart of the reading process and impacts upon a reader's motivation and engagement.

The major strategies of improving reading comprehension among college students presented in this research seek to provide an alternative solution to this problem by offering a set of strategies for improving reading comprehension among college students as well as boosting their motivation towards critical reading.

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