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GOs BOOSTING STRATEGIC READING

Improving main and supporting ideas identification, summarizing and drawing conclusions skills through graphic organizers

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Research Report submitted

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master in English Language Teaching – Autonomous Learning Environments

Directed by María Consuelo VELASCO

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Chía, Colombia

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# GO'S IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF READING SKILLS

## Declaration

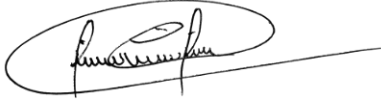
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### **Abstract**

This qualitative study aimed to identify the usefulness of Graphic Organizers (GOs) to improve reading comprehension skills of a group of fifteen fifth grade male students in a school in Neiva-Colombia. The general objective of this study was to recognize the effectiveness of GOs to identify main and supporting ideas and if there was improvement of any other reading comprehension skill as well. The data were collected through questionnaires, the use of artifacts, students logs and knowledge tests. It was found that students needed training in the use of GOs because they had not used them previously; but when they had learned to use it, most learners were able to overcome their difficulties to comprehend. In fact, after students had the appropriate training and had mastered to use the GOs, they not only showed improvement in the main and supporting ideas identification skill; but in the summarizing and drawing conclusions skills as well.

*Keywords:* Graphic organizers; reading comprehension; main and supporting ideas identification; summarizing; drawing conclusion; reading skills.

### **Resumen**

Este estudio cualitativo se enfocó en la identificación de la utilidad de los organizadores gráficos para el mejoramiento de las habilidades de comprensión lectora de un grupo de 15 estudiantes en un colegio en la ciudad de Neiva – Colombia. El objetivo general de este estudio fue reconocer la efectividad de los organizadores gráficos para identificar las ideas principales y secundarias y si había alguna mejora en otra habilidad de comprensión lectora. La información fue recolectada a través de cuestionarios, el uso de organizadores gráficos, anotaciones de los estudiantes y tests de conocimiento. Se encontró que los estudiantes necesitaban entrenamiento en el uso de los organizadores gráficos ya que ellos no los habían usado previamente; pero cuando ellos habían aprendido a usarlos, muchos estudiantes fueron capaces de superar sus dificultades en la comprensión de textos cuando leen textos diseñados para el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. De hecho, muchos estudiantes fueron capaces de identificar las ideas principales y secundarias, realizar resúmenes y obtener conclusiones de los textos proveídos.

*Palabras clave:* Organizadores gráficos; comprensión lectora; identificación de ideas principales y secundarias; resumir; concluir; habilidades de lectura.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the study**

For years, researchers have been studying the importance of identifying strategies to facilitate the acquisition of the different skills of a foreign language. For example, Buelh (2013) in his study focuses on developing proficient reading abilities which help students succeed in the reading comprehension processes; Oduke (2014) evidences the importance of role plays to improve oral skills since students learn genuine language that is used to communicate their wishes; Hammerman (2009) establishes the benefits of formative assessment to foster learning in Science since it provides the corresponding feedback not only for teachers but for students to guide them through the best way to achieve their goals. Thus, teachers need to find diverse ways to help pupils overcome their deficiencies since training students in learning strategies enhance their foreign language learning process.

This study focused its attention on the improvement of reading comprehension skills. The participants of this study were involved in the use of visual aids to organize and identify specific information when reading in English as a foreign language. In this regard, it was necessary to guide students in the use of GOs to help them foster their reading comprehension skill. Bogoya (2011) concludes that “Students’ training in new strategies such as organizing information, understanding a paragraph, or summarizing key information is required if their reading is to be successful.” (p. 48). For that reason, learners in this study were guided to master the GOs use which may determine the success in reading skills acquisition.

### **1.2 Rationale of the study**

Considering the vital role that reading comprehension skills has in the foreign language learning process, this study focuses on assessing and evaluating, not only the effectiveness of

the use of GOs to help 5<sup>th</sup> grade students identify main and supporting ideas, but also to observe any change or improvement in the students reading comprehension when reading in English.

Likewise, when students realize there is a type of progress in their target language learning process, they feel satisfied and motivated and make major efforts to achieve their learning outcomes. It is evident that they like working with visual material like videos, worksheets and realia; consequently, the use of GOs and effective reading instruction may help them improve their identification of main and supporting ideas when reading. Hence, this study focuses its attention on the impact of GOs to improve students' reading comprehension skills.

In addition, this study helped me grow professionally. Through it, I learned how to use GOs as a strategy to foster the students' identification of main and supporting ideas, and other reading skills when reading in English as a foreign language.

### **1.2.1 Needs analysis and problem statement**

Considering the importance of reading comprehension skills as the basis in the foreign language acquisition process, it was noticed that fifth grade students found it difficult to identify the main and supporting ideas when reading. At this stage, considering the school foreign language curriculum and the Common European Framework (CEFR), students must have developed those basic reading comprehension skills.

It has been observed that the main concern about the identification of main and supporting ideas is the lack of effective reading instruction and strategies to overcome students' difficulties. This issue has been notorious since learners need to be given necessary support to reduce the gap in understanding what and how to carry out the activities. In fact,

learners were applied a diagnostic test to determine their needs about reading comprehension skills.

In addition, teachers have not established appropriate learning strategies to help learners overcome their hurdles in terms of reading comprehension. It is, therefore, necessary to apply a strategy that they may find enjoyable and useful, not only to identify main and supporting ideas, but also to improve other reading skills. For those reasons, it was found that the use of GOs would hopefully help students foster the abilities previously mentioned.

On the other hand, in previous years, students at this school have shown low results in terms of reading comprehension when they take Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) Checkpoint Test. This test is taken at the end of 5<sup>th</sup> and it assesses students' proficiency in foreign language usage, especially reading in English abilities. In fact, learners do not implement any reading comprehension strategy which may help them succeed when taking this kind of tests. Thus, it is important that students find a useful reading tool not only to help them increase their results in this test, but to acquire it as permanent tool in their learning career.

### **1.2.2 Justification of problem's significance**

The teachers and this school officials have been interested in research as a means of improvement of students' and teachers' weaknesses in any area of knowledge. For this institution, well-prepared teachers are the starting point to provide students with better learning opportunities. The school officials know that learning about the latest advances in education is important for the educational environment. Furthermore, this kind of study has not been done before in this area of knowledge and the results might not only be useful to fifth graders but for other graders as well. For that reason, this study might be significant since it

focuses on students' reading comprehension skills improvement and the teacher professional development in the implementation of learning strategies which might lead the school to be more effective in terms of foreign language learning and teaching.

Moreover, we, as teachers, need to be curious aiming to find useful strategies that facilitate students' foreign language learning process. For that reason, the role of a teacher is not only to teach something, but also research about the most suitable ways to guide students to get through their difficulties and to achieve goals in their academic life.

### **1.2.3 Strategy proposed to address problem**

In this school, students find it interesting to work with visual aids like realia, charts, graphs and pictures. Learners look motivated when they are asked to work with those visual tools. This important aspect focuses the attention on the use of the GOs as a means to respond the students' needs when reading in English. GOs foster learners' organization of ideas since they recognize the rhetorical structure of the text, make connections with previous language and categorize information regarding its importance in the text ( Akhondi, Malayeri, & Samad, 2011; Fieldler & Salas, 2004; Reyes, 2011; Robinson, Katayama, Beth, Odom, Ya-ping, & Vanderveen, 2006). For that reason, the use of GOs in the classroom was the most suitable strategy to address the problem stated since students have used this visual aid in several opportunities in Spanish subjects and they have shown interest and pleasure when working on it.

### **1.3 Research question and objective**

Taking into consideration all that is mentioned above, the research questions were:  
How effective is the use of GOs to help 5<sup>th</sup> grade students identify main and supporting ideas



when reading in English as a foreign language? And what can the use of GOs tell us about students' improvement in summarizing and drawing conclusion skills?

Their corresponding objectives were to assess the use of GOs to help identify main and supporting ideas when reading in English as a foreign language and to determine the changes (if any) in students' reading skills through the use of graphic organizers.

#### **1.4 Conclusion**

The importance of learning a foreign language in this competitive world guides the researchers to find strategies which match all the students' needs. This necessity to overcome students' difficulties motivates teachers to come up with relevant activities that inspire and foster language learning process. For that reason, the use of visual aids in this study may increase students' willingness to learn a language and satisfy their needs in the reading comprehension process.

## **Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter will explore the usefulness of GOs as a strategy to improve reading comprehension skills. Additionally, it will focus on the usefulness of intensive reading activities to enhance the identification of main and supporting ideas through the use of GOs.

### **2.2 Definitions**

#### **2.2.1 Reading**

The reading process involves the importance of meaning since it is necessary to figure out the code (meaning) and know vocabulary, which are only a part of what the reading process is (Adams, 1990). In fact, reading is a basic component to prepare a human being for the world and the recognition of new, fundamental cultural aspects. Additionally, reading helps increase students' critical thinking through the use of several strategies to comprehend and analyze the content of what is read. In this sense, the use of GOs is a useful strategy to boost comprehension when reading. Hibbard & Wagner (2003) state that the purpose of GOs is to give the student support in processing information according to their foreign language knowledge. It means, it is necessary to know about the learners' needs to guide them accordingly.

Considering the purpose of this research, it is necessary to define some important facts about reading. Reading is not just a set of mechanical skills that can be learned; it is also a process of making meaning from the text for a variety of purposes and regarding the contexts in which the learner is. In simpler words, readers need to focus on the overall meaning of the text rather than on every single word.

### **2.2.2 Reading Comprehension**

Researchers would give several answers to the question of what reading comprehension is. They present numerous definitions such as the ability to remember some fragments of a text, to answer questions about the character's motives, to critique the structure of the text, or a combination of them. Others would say that students comprehend when they can predict what comes next, ask questions about what has been read, remember experiences related to the text, make mental representations of the text, or link the text to what is already known (Van den Broek & Kremer, 2000). In fact, learners show comprehension when they are not only able to recognize the hidden messages of a text, but they can relate them with future reading activities as well.

Reading a text goes beyond identifying every single word. Nevertheless, identification of words is a starting point in comprehending a text. In fact, when the eyes start moving along the text, words are first identified and then they are organized to make larger structures such as phrases, sentences and paragraphs (Pressley, 1997). In this sense, the reader is able to understand or comprehend the text they are reading. After this, if the reader understands this process, they are able to comprehend entirely the main message of a text.

Reading is not the basis of instruction of all aspects of language learning, but it is important in the foreign language learning process. Mikulecky (2008) states that reading may be a conscious and unconscious thinking process, during which the reader applies their own strategies to figure out the meaning that the author intends, as well as to comprehend the main issues of the text. Additionally, researchers have found that when the reader faces a text, they activate prior knowledge and experiences to connect these with the new ones to construct meaning (Barton, 2006; Rudell & Unrau, 1995; Mikulecky, 2008).

When the reader focuses on what they already know, they are in a concept-driven or “top-down” mode. This model establishes that reading is a psychological process that integrates physical stimuli and general knowledge. The reader needs to overcome various hurdles in the processing system by using general world knowledge and contextual information (Rayner & Pollastek, 1989; Goodman, 1994). On the other hand, when the reader relies primarily on textual features and information to comprehend, this is called a data-driven or “bottom-up” mode (Kintsch & Van Dijk, 1978). In this model, the meaning comes from deciphering the letter, then the word, the sentence and the text. The basic idea is that visual information is initially sampled from the printed page and the information is transformed according to the reader’s general world knowledge, contextual information, or higher order processing strategies (Rayner & Pollastek, 1989). Regarding these two theories, Mikulecky (2008) establishes that the reader constantly compares the information they read with what they already know. (See figure 1).

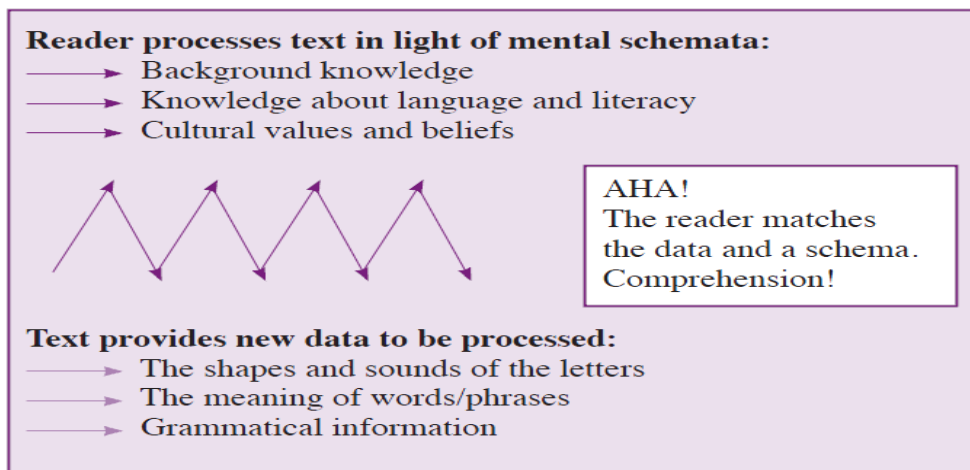


Figure 1. Graphic representation of the reading process. Taken from “Teaching reading in second language” B. S. Mikulecky, 2008, *ESL Magazine* , 68, p. 3. Copyright 2008 by ESL Magazine.

Second language readers' mental schemata (different background knowledge) are based on their first language and cultural background. What non-native readers code in the text and how they interpret it vary through the language structure and cultural knowledge from literacy. Regarding to this, Mikulecky (2008) states that "Literacy is a set of attitudes and beliefs about the ways of using spoken and written language that is acquired in the course of a person's socialization into a specific cultural context" (p.2). In fact, students need to have the opportunity to read texts that demand their cultural background to activate their motivation and attitude to face reading.

It is necessary to specify that language and culture cannot be separated. People construct their own understanding of the world considering their culture. In other words, each culture fosters the development of different schemata of the world. For that reason, Mikulecky (2008) emphasizes that learners from two different cultural backgrounds can read the same text and construct very different models of what the text means; in fact, they have different schemata. She states that teachers cannot assume that students who are good readers in their native language can apply the same skills successfully when reading in English; thus, it is necessary to enrich learners' foreign cultural background to foster their ability when reading in a foreign language.

On the other hand, it is known that students learn new strategies or thinking processes most effectively when they are consciously aware of what they are doing (Brown, Armbruster, & Baker, 1986). Students often demand to know what the purpose and the utility of a particular lesson or subject is. They realize how to face situations with the knowledge they have, making the language they use authentic and significant. While students are facing real

situations in the target language, they encounter situations for which English is necessary and use what they have learnt or acquired; this way, students will build up their language and the communication in the context will be carried out or completed effectively.

### **2.2.3 Intensive reading**

Intensive reading is a type of reading in which the reader not only needs to understand the semantic details but to go deeper on the text because the main objective is to get specific information. Intensive reading aims to foster the comprehension and retention of concepts; in other words, this type of reading helps readers retain information for a longer period of time. Nutall (1996) conceives that its aim is to discover the students' comprehension level of the text meaning and how the meaning is produced.

Intensive reading practice can focus on the identification of vocabulary, patterns of text organization and types of text. Additionally, this strategy may be used to help learners to be aware of text organization, to improve the use of reading strategies, and to develop literacy skills that encourage the production of expressions in the target language (Paran, 2003). However, Paran emphasizes on the use of the three familiar phrases when practicing intensive reading programs, i.e., pre, during and post reading, with good preparation to foster students' reading comprehension process.

Effective reading instruction is essential to succeed in learning a foreign language. For that reason, Bogoya (2011) concludes "Students' training in new strategies such as organizing information, understanding a paragraph, or summarizing key information is required if their reading is to be successful" (p, 48). Thus, teaching students how to recognize meaningful information increases interest in foreign language learning. Also, she also argues that "Deciphering information implies approaching a text from different perspectives so that

meaning is constructed. Asking students to read a text two or three times, each with a different focus, was proven to be effective if students have a specific purpose, key vocabulary is previously known, and questions guide the students' reading process." (p, 48). Therefore, when students receive effective reading instruction they foster their ability of understanding that helps them catch important facts about what they read. In fact, it is necessary to provide learners with literacy and teaching methods to provide effective instruction in reading (Mikulecky, 2008).

Migyanka, Policastro and Lui (2005) highlight the relevance of allowing learners the necessary time to reflect, connect and validate their thoughts. These mental processes are linked to making connections to other stories, ideas, characters, and experiences which might be more effective when they are modeled by the teacher. In this sense, GOs and intensive reading activities will hopefully lead the reader to build background knowledge, make predictions and comparisons, create images as they read, and self-assess their level of comprehension. All of these factors and effective reading instructions contribute to successful comprehension.

#### **2.2.4 Factors that influence the reading comprehension process in EFL in elementary students**

EFL students need to be constantly monitored in the acquisition of reading comprehension skills. Reading comprehension involves the ability to remember main ideas and certain details that relate the text to the reader's prior knowledge, in order to be able to organize the textual information (Grabe & Stoller, 2002). Moreover, there is a link between the reader's cultural background and the usefulness of the text for his/her life.

Foreign language reading researchers view reading as an interactive process. This means that while the reader, at different levels, starts their mental process, they commit themselves to decoding the meaning of what is read (Carrell, Devine, & Eskey, 1988). This meaning decoding involves the reader's variables when reading, the interest in the topic, the purpose for reading and prior knowledge about the topic, as well as the text variables, such as the text structure and vocabulary that establish the reader's comprehension level of the text. However, these variables are not the only ones; motivation is another variable in the learners' reading comprehension. Collins (1996) states that the lack of learner's experience or prior knowledge in relation to what is read, cannot only lead to misunderstanding, but to lose motivation and interest in reading.

On the other hand, students feel uncomfortable facing reading when they are unable to use the language for meaningful and communicative purposes. Communicative-based activities will smooth the progress of the learning acquisition process and boost students' motivation to read (Carr, 1995). In other words, lack of prior knowledge interferes with students' capabilities to make connections and comprehend what the text says. For that reason, the teacher needs to consider what strategies to use to overcome this difficulty. Brown (2007) establishes that relating and anchoring new material to relevant information helps the reader make connections in cognitive structures. This way of relating prior with new knowledge can encourage students to learn sufficient vocabulary to face and comprehend a text, making the activity meaningful and enjoyable for the learners.

According to "schema theory", the reader may not understand the new information, but they adjust their schemata to confirm whether the new information fits into their existing representations (Rumelhart, 1980). In this sense, background knowledge about the topic



allows the reader to understand and recognize what information they already have about this subject.

### **2.2.5 Reading comprehension strategies in EFL in elementary students**

The literature on reading provides several definitions about reading strategies, and strategies can be applied during the reading process to achieve the desired goals of comprehension. In other words, the use of these strategies helps the students to overcome difficulties while they are learning to read and in the reading comprehension process (Alsamadani, 2009).

It is widely assumed that each reader can develop individual reading strategies or the ones they find useful. Nevertheless, a good reader is one who is able to achieve a balance between comprehension (end) and the reading process (means) by using the adopted strategies. Consequently, a poor reader will need to change his/her reading comprehension strategies to overcome deficiencies. For that reason, the role of the teacher is to come up with the necessary set of strategies to increase students' awareness and love for reading, as well as the improvement of their reading skills to overcome reading difficulties. The English teachers should be familiar and capable of selecting those most appropriate strategies to meet their students' needs, due to the fact that EFL learners need to identify and simultaneously understand the importance of the language (Lee L. , 2002).

Likewise, being a strategic and skillful reader are two of the characteristics of the good reader. A good reader is one who is skilled at adjusting his or her reading strategies in consideration of his or her purposes of reading and the structures of the text. They reflect on the purposes for reading, assess the text structure and then select the appropriate reading

strategies or a combination of strategies, since reading strategies and metacognitive skills are learned and generalized to a wide range of contexts.

In addition to this, providing effective reading instruction to all children is the best way to address the difficulties that the learners may have. Effective instruction is most successful when children are interested in literacy and when they have acquired the necessary literacy skills (Mikulecky, 2008). For those reasons, effective instruction asks teachers to be well prepared, updated and to see their works as an ongoing process. Moreover, in this singular process, the learner needs to develop several abilities in order to read well in English. In fact, Mikulecky (2008) summarizes what the learner needs to do to read well:

- “1. Develop a schema of the reading process that includes the idea that reading is more than translating—reading is thinking.
2. Talk about their reading, and explain how they make sense of a text.
3. Read extensively for pleasure in English, and discuss their reading with someone who can model the literate behaviors expected in an English-language context.
4. Break the habit of reading every word by reading faster.
5. Learn to vary their reading rate to suit their purpose in reading.
6. Employ top-down processes effectively by learning to make connections between what they already know and what they are reading.
7. Learn reading and thinking skills that fluent readers of English employ unconsciously to strengthen both top-down and bottom-up processing abilities.
8. Enhance bottom-up processing by acquiring the most useful vocabulary and by learning strategies for guessing meaning in context.

9. Master the basic 2,000 words that constitute approximately 80 percent of texts in English.
10. Acquire specific reading comprehension skills they can apply strategically.” (p. 3).

As the main aim for reading is comprehension, a common difficulty that teachers find when they ask learners to read is that learners are not able to understand what they read. It has been found that learners read words but do not read for meaning. Armbruster, Lehr and Osborn (2001) affirm that “...readers cannot understand what they are reading without knowing what most of the words mean. As children learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary.” (p. 38). In this regard, the teacher must use texts that the students find enjoyable and which are related to their previous knowledge and interest to enhance the students’ reading comprehension process. For that reason, the implementation of intensive reading lessons, as well as the use of GOs in the activities, may foster the students’ willingness to read and their comprehension skills while reading in English as a foreign language.

Finally, which is the main aim of this research, GOs are simply graphical representations of the information that a text contains. In this sense, the spatial display of GOs allows the students to identify the missing information. According to Ellis (2004) it is an instructional tool that fosters students’ ability to organize, to structure data and ideas with others.

### **2.2.6 Graphic Organizers**

Studies have shown that learners’ comprehension when reading may be enhanced through the inclusion of a graphic way to organize ideas, facts, and concepts. This assumption

arises since many students are visual learners, thus, GOs may be a useful tool for teaching and learning. GOs not only help students generate mental images but build graphic representations of the information they have read as well. There are many kinds of GOs, such as knowledge maps, cognitive organizers, maps, story maps, concept maps, mind maps, advance organizers, or concept diagrams. (Graphic Organizers, n.d)

Ausubel (1963) states that the way in which knowledge is delivered may help in the learning process. Also, learning is evident when learners use their previous knowledge to make relationships with the new one. Therefore, the appropriate organizer may increase the students' connection between previous knowledge and new input. Ellis (2001) established that learners may easily understand and learn by using GOs since they acquire the basic foundation of a concept to create a well-built picture of what they study.

Likewise, research has shown that one of the best ways in which students can identify, compare and categorize information in a text is through GOs. Meyen, Vergason and Whelan (1996) which are “visual displays that teachers use to organize information to make the information easier to understand and learn” (p. 132). This means that “visual displays” help students understand easily and feel motivated since they are able to see a graphical representation of what they are doing.

Moreover, Hibbard and Wagner (2003) consider that graphic organizers are just a compilation of several verbs, aiming to help students process the information they have read. In fact, they establish that:

The purpose of a graphic organizer is to give the student support in processing information...When the student sees that the task calls for sequencing, describing, inferring, predicting, comparing, or rating, the student should eventually be able to

process information on his own without the help of a graphic. But while the students are gaining experience in processing information, the graphic organizer is a guide. (p. 103)

Revising these statements, GOs are helpful for processing information, which is one of the main concerns of the students when reading in English as a foreign language. Students, unconsciously figure out that there is a sequence when reading and, automatically identify the main and supporting ideas. Additionally, Reyes (2011) deduces that:

Teachers and researchers should not ignore the opportunity to work with visual representations that help students organize, connect, and relate information. Students comprehend texts better because they understand main and supporting ideas, focus on the more relevant aspects, and omit details and examples. While using GOs to organize information, establish hierarchies among concepts, or identify the text semantic structure, students do not pay special attention to vocabulary or grammar structures; instead, students concentrate on comprehension and look for general ideas, theses, arguments, and main and supporting ideas. Students do not focus on the form, but instead on the content. (p.18)

Considering the use of GOs in the English reading comprehension process, specifically in developing the skill of identifying main and supporting ideas, it is necessary that learners recognize the different strategies they can use when reading in order to use them for their own benefit. However, readers need to have certain knowledge of the target language as well as a clear purpose for reading.

### **2.3 State of the art**

The use of GOs to improve reading comprehension has been studied for decades. Firstly, Tang (1992) found that the students' training in the use of GOs enhances reading comprehension and fosters immediate recall. It was found that at the beginning of the implementation of the GOs in the classroom, students were not able to comprehend a text, but after having direct instruction and an effective teacher guidance, they demonstrated positive results. In fact, the use of this learning strategy helps learners retain information for a longer period of time.

Similarly, Fiedler and Salas (2004) focused their study on the importance of concept mapping for recalling and comprehending information. They found that this strategy was appropriate for students of all ages and it increased their academic performance. Certainly, it empowers students' abilities to retain, recall, comprehend and solve problems regarding the matter of study.

In addition, Echeverry and Mac Nutly (2010) determined that the introduction of GOs in the classroom helped "students write, organize and compare their prior knowledge, ideas, and predictions to the reading, increase their knowledge, remember information, develop language, and understand the reading better" (p. 121). However, it is necessary to model how to use the GOs to help students succeed in the use of them and the achievement of the learning outcome proposed.

Goss (2009) identified the usefulness of GOs when summarizing and comprehending science content. She established that GOs were used as a learning tool to understand and evaluate the students' performance in the content area. Indeed, it was observed that GOs promoted understanding and fostered students' abilities to retain information.

Jiang and Grabe (2007) provided an analysis of the use of GOs and their impact on reading comprehension. They discussed the effectiveness of GOs in reading instruction regarding the text structure. They advocated that text structure promoted reading comprehension and retention. In fact, they argued that both the use of GOs and text structure not only facilitated the identification of main ideas, but the organization of the supporting ideas as well.

In the same manner, Novak and Cañas (2006) described the usefulness of concept mapping to create hierarchical organization when reading. This organization of specific information encouraged and enhanced meaningful learning. They exposed the importance of concept mapping since it integrated new knowledge with the learners' previous concept to reach the understanding of a text.

Moreover, Bernhardt (2010) in his work carried out in a fourth-grade classroom focused on the meaningfulness of GOs to help learners organize and recall information from selected stories, and therefore improve their reading comprehension. In fact, he not only found that learners improved their reading comprehension skills of noting details, making inferences, and comparing and contrasting, but students demonstrated mastery in the use of GOs regarding to what the reading text demanded. Besides, Fealy's (2010) findings demonstrated that students found GOs useful due to the fact that learners would be able to determine important information about a text. Students perceived that they were able to organize and categorize information when using GOs because this tool helped them focus on the most important aspects of a reading text. It was also found that learners became purposeful readers since they were able to independently use GOs.

Bogoya (2011) studied the usefulness of introducing the intensive reading strategy to foster student's reading comprehension when studying Physical Science. The study was carried out in a fifth-grade class at a private bilingual institution of Bogotá. The study demonstrated that structured reading practices lead to the development of students' cognitive processes, so that, the use of a range of strategies that enhance students' reading comprehension skills develop conceptual understanding.

Likewise, Reyes (2011) analyzed how students with a basic English knowledge level comprehend short descriptive texts and rewrite their texts through the use of GOs. This study showed that students made connections with previous knowledge and daily experiences, and they organized them by using GOs and categorizing the information into main and supporting ideas, in order to comprehend and rewrite their texts.

In addition, Suarez (2011) focused her study on the use of GOs to comprehend non-fiction texts in which it was found that the use of GOs might be helpful to comprehend the content material. Also, she discussed the significance of her study since students became more active in their own learning process; thus, they became more successful in the school and they might get better scores when taking tests. These findings showed that learners increased their confidence and awareness of achieving their learning outcomes.

In the same manner, Jiang (2012), in a study which was carried out with a homogeneous group of learners with relatively similar levels of English proficiency, "confirmed the positive effects of GOs training on reading comprehension" (p; 96). He stated that reading comprehension is significantly improved when learners receive the most appropriate training. Through the use of GOs, learners are able to retain meaningful information for a lengthy period of time.



Similarly, according to Shaw, Nihalani, Mayrath and Robinson (2012) GOs facilitate the relationship between cognitive and perceptual processing to comprehend concepts when facing computer-based texts. In fact, they found that the use of GOs in the classroom promotes learners' understanding and application of concepts when reading a text since it facilitates the comprehension of text meaning.

Likewise, Solomon (2012) recognized the usefulness of GOs to foster fourth grade students' summarizing skill. She found that GOs were a helpful tool to guide students in the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading nonfiction texts; thus, they were able to compose a summary. However, she stated that the way the GOs are presented might affect the students' results when writing cohesive summaries.

Kashani, Nikoo, and Bonyadi (2013) focused their study on the significance of using GOs since learners were able to recognize texts structures and transfer linear texts to a visual format. They strongly agreed that reading comprehension occurs when the GOs training period is appropriate and the activation of prior knowledge is accurate regarding the expected results. In general, they found that the activation of prior knowledge by using GOs fosters the reading comprehension process.

Additionally, Pang (2013) stated that GOs helped young English language learners (ELLs) to become lifelong learners since they might use this visual aid to predict the events in the story, and analyze the cause and effect that can lead to a better understanding of the given text. However, she emphasized on the importance of gaining understanding of vocabulary, its context, its function, and how to use it to compose sentences to fill the GOs with accurate information.

Similarly, Borjalizadeh, Shabani and Sorahi (2015) recognized the impact of GOs in facilitating comprehension of macrostructures and recall of main ideas. When students have the opportunity to read a text, they are able to develop, organize, and communicate ideas in a better way. This useful tool helps learners recognize text structures and transferring linear text to a visual format which allows them to write more explicit information.

In her study Muniz (2015) found that GOs were useful tools to improve reading comprehension skills. She stated that it would be better if the learners create their own GO since it developed their thinking skills. While learners created their GOs they might identify, classify or arrange the information in the way they preferred to understand the reading text.

Considering the different studies in this field, it was found that it would be beneficial for students and teachers to identify how GOs would affect students' reading comprehension process. Thus, the implementation of this tool would not only foster the ability to identify main and supporting ideas, but also to improve summarizing and making conclusions skills.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The topics presented through this chapter showed relevant aspects of the reading comprehension process, the different strategies to be used when reading in EFL, the main implications of using GOs and effective reading instruction to help students go through a text without many difficulties. This theoretical framework allowed to identify meaningful aspects to conduct this project for the students and teacher' benefit.

In the following chapter, the research design of the study is presented.

## Chapter 3: Research Design

### 3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will explain the type of study that was applied to conduct this project as well as the reasons why he considered this approach suitable. Additionally, the researcher will characterize the subjects of study as well as their learning context to facilitate the understanding of how this study was conducted. Moreover, the researcher will not only present a description and the application of the instruments which were used to collect the data, but he will also undertake the ethical issues that were part of this project as well. Finally, the action plan that the researcher carried out to gather the data required will be presented.

### 3.2 Type of study

The researcher found that the most appropriate type of study to be used in this research was qualitative action research since it investigates everyday problems experienced by teachers in their teaching context (Elliot, 1991). In fact, Mack et al (2005) define qualitative research as a “type of scientific research” (p. 1), and they establish several qualitative research characteristics. They consider that using action research is suitable since it:

- “• seeks answers to a question
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question
- collects evidence
- produces findings that were not determined in advance
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study”

(p. 1)

Considering the importance of qualitative research, it is necessary to mention that one purpose of this study was to assess and then to examine the usefulness of the GOs to identify

main and supporting ideas when reading as well as to see if there was any change in students' comprehension in EFL. Thus, the use of qualitative research helped obtain information about other intervening factors that students perceived to be the ones that affect their reading comprehension process and additional effects of the GOs on their EFL reading comprehension. Other findings were determined also.

### **3.3 Context**

This is a school which focuses its institutional mission on the development of the individual person. This is a school with a population of 430 students who are grouped from transition to eleventh grade. In this regard, it is necessary to clarify that this study was focused only on fifth graders.

The school holds a premise which considers excellence as a way of life. In fact, they focus on the excellence of the spirit and excellence in action since they are the result of the harmonious development of personality and personal need to improve all components of the human being: physical, cognitive, psychological, social, aesthetic and ethical. Additionally, the high academic standards, which this school aims to achieve, promote staff quality and a challenging and rigorous academic program which promotes the use of a project based learning method called "Novus" whose aim is to help learners acquire research skills which may be implemented in their personal, academic and professional lives.

The school encourages students to get excellent grades and have good scores in national (Pruebas saber) and international standardized tests (CIE checkpoints) in which students have to answer comprehension questions from a non-literary text of approximately 400 words. For that reason, the use of GOs may help learners to get better results when taking this part of the test. In addition, students are trained in different learning strategies to achieve

outstanding results. As it is known, one of the main components of most of the standardized tests is the reading part. In this regard, the aim of this study is related to the pedagogical purposes of the school.

On the other hand, the school has been implementing Math, Science and Social studies – in English- in the curriculum since they want to become in a bilingual school and study English as a second language. In this regard, the school applies the Cambridge Primary Checkpoint tests to fifth graders. This test checks the students' performance in mathematics and science, and provides feedback regarding learners' strengths and weaknesses. This feedback helps teachers and students to know what their English level is according to this content areas.

### **3.3.1 Participants**

The target population of this study is 15 fifth grade students who study English as a foreign language and have 10 language arts lessons per week. Most of the students perform at A2 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Learners consider that learning English is useful for their future personal and professional lives since they like to study abroad or have businesses in other countries where the English language is spoken. For these reasons, they are eager to learn the target language and culture.

Likewise, it is pertinent to mention that the participants have been involved in the English language learning process for six years and they have been using English as a medium of instruction to strengthen not only their personal and academic values, but to teach Social studies, Science and Math. In addition, they have had the possibility to reinforce grammar, speaking and their listening skills. However, it is found that the students have had difficulties

in identifying main and supporting ideas when reading in English. For that reason, it was necessary to find out how to help students with their difficulties. In fact, the researcher found the opportunity to apply GOs with this population as a way to assist students to overcome this weakness and to find if any other language skills might be developed as well. Students have been using GOs in Spanish lessons and they have developed great interest when using them since they have been able to foster their native language reading comprehension abilities as well as their writing skills. However, it is necessary to mention that students have not used this tool when reading in English.

### **3.3.2 Researcher's role**

Considering the implications of this type of study, the main roles to be assumed by the researcher were those of teacher and researcher. The first one was significant when planning, designing, and implementing meaningful activities for the participants taking into consideration the students' needs, the theory revised and the aim of the research; and the second role was crucial when planning the project, gathering and analyzing the data collected from the implementation of the instruments. These teacher-researcher' responsibilities did not only help him find learning strategies to enhance his teaching practice, but to help students' foreign language learning process as well; the teacher-researcher role had a great impact on his instruction and confidence (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007); in fact, teachers who are involved in research increase their understanding of the school community needs and the deficiencies in the learning environment (Gray & Campbell-Evans, 2002). This understanding allows teachers to implement functional strategies to help learners succeed in their foreign language learning process.

### **3.3.3 Ethical considerations**

Researchers need to be careful when conducting research. Research ethics is linked to the interaction between the people subject of a study and the researcher. Drever and Munn (1990) affirm that “professional ethics deals with additional issues such as collaborative relationships among researchers, mentoring relationships, intellectual property, fabrication of data, and plagiarism, among others” (p, 9). Therefore, when carrying out the collection of the data and the references, it was necessary to investigate deeply in order not to take other people’s ideas and thoughts as his own. This meant that, when doing this research, the researcher paid careful attention to other studies in order not to plagiarize any information, and respected the intellectual property of other researchers by citing their works completely and correctly.

In addition, the researcher contacted chairperson in the school to obtain permission to include students as subjects of this study (See Appendix A: Chairperson’s Authorization Request Letter). It has been widely known that researchers need to consider the students’ and their parents’ permission make them part of the study as well as to publish the results.

Furthermore, researchers need to take into account the fact that the participants are the central part of the research, so the researcher asked for their authorization (See Appendix B: Students’ Authorization Request Letter), as well as their parents’ (See Appendix C: Parents’ Authorization Request Letter) authorization to carry out the research project.

Also, it was necessary to keep the names of the subjects of the study confidential, so the students’ names were replaced by letters when collecting and analyzing data.

### **3.4 Data collection instruments**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001) “research is a viable approach to a problem only when there are data to support it” (p. 94). In this research study, five instruments were employed for data collection: diagnostic test, questionnaires, students’ logs , artifacts and one final test.

Firstly, the diagnostic test was carried out to evidence the students’ proficiency to identify main and supporting ideas. Secondly, the questionnaires were not only designed for the researcher to identify the students’ reading difficulties when using GOs, but also to consider the students’ insights about the improvement of any other reading skill when using GOs. In addition, the student logs were focused on the detection of the positive and negative aspects of the GOs used in the lessons, and their effectiveness to identify main and supporting ideas when reading in EFL. Also, the artifacts –GOs and the final reading test- were used to identify the students’ progress in the identification of main and supporting ideas and the changes (if any) in their reading comprehension process.

#### **3.4.1 Description**

##### **3.4.1.1 *Diagnostic test***

Using diagnostic tests permitted to obtain valuable information about students’ conditions in terms of foreign language acquisition. Hughes (2003) manifests that “it is used to identify the learners’ strengths and weaknesses” (p.4) which allowed the researcher to identify the students’ comprehension skill proficiency when facing a reading text. In addition, Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) address the importance of this type of test not only to measure learner’s performance in the use of the target language, but to select the content that the course must have to help students overcome their difficulties. In fact, it helped not only to evidence



the difficulties the students had with the identification of main and supporting ideas, but with other reading comprehension skills as well. This diagnostic test (See Appendix D) was taken from the Comprehension Plus Book (2002) which had suitable reading activities regarding the objective of this study. This book has classified the reading tests according the CEFR which facilitated the selection and its application to the participants of this study.

#### **3.4.1.2 Questionnaires**

The use of questionnaires in research allows the researcher to maintain the anonymity of subjects in the study, to reduce the amount of time to analyze data and to have a high return rate (Drever & Munn, 1990).

Additionally, through the implementation of the questionnaire the necessary data was collected to recognize the effectiveness of GOs to identify main and supporting ideas when reading EFL. Therefore, one questionnaire (Appendix E) was applied in the middle of the process to find the effectiveness of the GOs and another questionnaire at the end of the application to discover if any other reading skills had improved as well. In this questionnaire, Question 1 focused on describing the students' comfort with the GOs. Question 2 intended to identify the reading comprehension ability through the use of them. Questions 3 and 4 might demonstrate how useful this tool is in the identification of main and supporting ideas and showing what difficulties, the learners might have when using it. Finally, Question 5 might provide the opportunity to show what other improvements students had in their reading comprehension ability when using GOs.

#### **3.4.1.3 Students' logs**

According to Tarleton State University (n.d), research logs help “researchers formulate searches, modify searches, choose the best search tools, plan and organize research time,

document resources, and retrace steps when needed". The researcher will, therefore, collect the data for the first and second research question using research logs.

Research logs are essential for the daily data collection, so the researcher used students' logs (Appendix F) every session to find out the progress of the students in identifying the main and supporting ideas when using GOs and to find what improvements the students had in their reading comprehension skills. Additionally, this data collection instrument helped identify the students' difficulties and the weaknesses that they might evidence while working on the reading activities during a lesson.

#### ***3.4.1.4 Artifacts***

The use of GOs in this study was essential for the achievement of the objectives proposed. In this sense, Reyes (2011) states that teachers and researchers should not ignore the opportunity to work with visual representations that help students organize, connect, and relate information. When students take the main and supporting ideas, details and examples given in a text and organize them in a GO, they may comprehend texts better because they make connections and focus on the more relevant aspects of a text. The GOs (Appendices G and H) were applied in sessions one and two. These GOs were chosen due that the students had not faced them in English previously. These kinds of GOs were easy to use and the students might be able to understand how to use them. After that, students created their own GOs. Then, the researcher analyzed the products to find out their effectiveness not only in identifying main and supporting ideas, but also if there is any improvement in another reading skill as well

#### ***3.4.1.5 Final knowledge test***

Together with the GOs, the researcher also implemented a final knowledge test to analyze the learners' reading comprehension improvement and the effectiveness of GOs at the

end of the implementation process (see Appendix I). This type of test aimed to identify how successful a person, group or course is to reach certain goals (Hughes, 2003). Indeed, its aim was to determine how much the students improved their reading comprehension skill.

### **3.4.2 Validation and piloting**

Considering the importance of instruments when conducting research, it was necessary that they show valid and reliable results. Winter (2000) states that an instrument is valid when it measures what it is intended to measure and accurately achieves the purpose for which it was designed. Thus, the researcher needs to ensure that the instruments used produced accurate results and that the data collected was focused on the research objective.

The piloting process was carried out with ten students who were part of the research. These students were chosen due to the foreign language learning difficulties that they had presented. In this process, the researcher asked students to use their knowledge to comprehend the text and used their own reading comprehension strategies to figure out the main and supporting ideas. After the students completed the exercise, the teacher provided a graphic organizer. Then, the teacher asked the students to focus their attention on the layout of the GO and he explained what the GO was used for. Next, students completed it with the information they obtained from the reading.

Likewise, the planned instruments needed to be reliable. Researchers recognized the reliability of the measurement instruments he used when the gathered data showed consistently similar results according to the main and supporting ideas identification and the improvement of any reading comprehension skill.

In the piloting process, it was found that the instruments were appropriate regarding the kind of the study and the questions to be answered; however, the researcher evidenced that he

needed to be more specific when giving the instructions to complete the GOs. For that reason, it was necessary to implement an extra session in which learners were provided with a GO which would help learners master how to complete GOs.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter the type of study, the data collection instruments, the reasons for selecting them, the description of each of them, how they were implemented, were fully discussed. This research design was presented according to the needs and characteristics of all the participants and aimed that the strategy used for the intervention helps the researcher to find meaningful data that support the main objective of the research. In the following chapter, the pedagogical implementation will be clarified.

## **Chapter 4: Chapter Four: Pedagogical Intervention and Implementation**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, it will be presented relevant aspects about how the pedagogical intervention and the detailed steps that the researcher followed to collect the necessary data. In fact, it will not only be applied, but assessed the implementation of graphic organizers as a means to improve reading skills , so that this strategy will be implemented to know whether or not GOs would help improve learners' reading comprehension processes. In other words, the students would hopefully develop other reading abilities such as summarizing, making conclusions and identify author's purpose when using this tool while they read. For that reason, an appropriate application of this artifact would provide useful information for improvement of reading skills.

### **4.2 Visions of language, learning, and curriculum**

#### **4.2.1 Vision of language**

This study aimed to improve an ability which is, probably the one people most commonly use: reading for general comprehension of main ideas and supporting information ( Kaplan, 2002; Grabe & Stroller, 2001). Therefore, the researcher implemented GOs as means to help learners overcome their comprehension difficulties when reading in EFL. It is expected that learners apply this visual tool in the different standardized test such as Pruebas Saber and CIE Checkpoints.

In addition, it is projected that low level learners improve their summarizing skills and find a suitable way which might help them understand better when reading in EFL. For that reason, it was important that learners acquired the necessary strategies to go through a reading

text and overcome the difficult passages of it (Alderson, 2005). Therefore, this study focused on the improvement of the reading comprehension skills through the use of GOs as a strategy.

#### **4.2.2 Vision of learning**

Considering the importance of the reading skill in the foreign language learning process, it is necessary to focus our attention on the main concern in the teaching context which is motivation. Motivation leads our students to succeed in their foreign language learning process, and in the same way in the reading comprehension ability. For that reason, it is necessary to find strategies that foster students' motivation. In this regard, the use of GOs as the main strategy in this study hopefully would increase students' motivation towards reading.

In this regard, Hibbard and Wagner (2003) establish that it is necessary that students use learning strategies to overcome their difficulties when reading. One of these strategies is the use of GOs which could prove to be helpful to guide learners when reading since they allow them to gain experience in processing information. Additionally, when facing reading texts, cultural background is important since they activate prior knowledge and help learners make connections with the reading. Van Patten (2002) focuses on the importance of learners' general knowledge for daily communication, interaction with people from another country and the identification of relevant ideas when reading. Thus, this study intends to establish the importance of acquiring learning strategies to foster reading comprehension skills.

#### **4.2.3 Vision of curriculum**

At La Fragua School, the curriculum was based on the interdisciplinary integration of different areas. Drake and Burns (2004) explain that the Integrated Curriculum aims to teach same content and abilities in order to facilitate learning. As it was mentioned in the previous

chapter, the school has adopted a project based learning method which aims to help learners acquire knowledge with multidisciplinary tasks and content.

This method demands learners to improve their learning strategies and apply them when it is necessary. Thus, the use of GOs may help learners carry out the reading activities in a more effective way and adopt this strategy for their learning process.

### **4.3 Instructional design**

#### **4.3.1 Lesson planning**

To begin with the pedagogical intervention, the researcher, during the 6 sessions, provided the students with one of the texts students selected. It is necessary to clarify that students were provided with a list of titles which were previously studied to identify if they were suitable for students' age, interest and English level. For each reading activity the researcher planned a workshop in which the students identified useful vocabulary about the readings to help them understand what the text is about. Then, learners read the texts and the teacher provided the GOs. Finally, students were assessed about their product. It is necessary to clarify that the lessons were planned to follow the ICELT (In-service Certificate in English Language Teaching) lesson plan form (Appendix J).

#### **4.3.2 Implementation**

In the first session, the students were provided with a GO. The teacher asked the students to focus their attention on the layout of the GO. Then, he explained what the GO was used for. After that, the teacher modeled how to fill a GO and showed different kind of GOs to the students. After he realized students were able to use it properly, he asked students to complete the GO with the information they obtained from the "Mystery in stone" reading.

After the learners had completed the GO, they had to answer questions about the text. These questions were related to the identification of main and supporting ideas. This strategy is used with intensive reading. This activity took two hours. After completing the exercise, the students answered a questionnaire to give their opinions about the usefulness of GOs in the identification of main and supporting ideas.

In the second session, the teacher selected the graphic organizer (Appendix E) to be used in the activity. During the activity, the teacher provided the students with the second text that they had selected (see Action Plan). While the students were reading the text, the teacher asked the students to complete the GO with the information they obtained from the text. This activity took two hours. After the learners completed the GO, the students gathered information (in the student log) about their performance while using the GO.

In the third, fourth, fifth and sixth sessions, the students created their own the graphic organizer to be used. At this stage, learners were shown a series of GOs created by other students around the world. They were said that the GOs' layout could be created according to the reading. During each session, the teacher provided the students with the text they selected. While the students were reading the text, the teacher asked the students to complete the GO they had created using the information they obtained from the reading text. During this activity, the teacher gathered data about the students' comprehension skills through the GOs and by using the student log. It is necessary to mention that in the sixth session learners had mastered the GOs usage; thus, a significant number of students were capable of completing GOs accurately.

During the seventh session, the researcher found that the activities were appropriate for students. The students' reading selection motivated learners to complete each stage. Moreover,



the researcher evidenced that he had to increase students' awareness of the GOs' benefits to reach a better understanding when reading in EFL.

Finally, to carry out this implementation it was necessary to follow a well-structured action plan which allowed to set dates and reading activities during each implementation session. The importance of planning different actions in advance was a key aspect of this project. The action plan ( see Chart 1) below was designed according to Hibbard and Wagner (2003) who worked on how to apply GOs when assessing reading to identify the GOs effectiveness.

Chart 1. Action plan

Action	Date	Readings
<b>Diagnostic test</b>	April 12 <sup>th</sup>	Reading test The Pie-of-the-Month Club
<b>Students facing a graphic organizer. Piloting</b>	April 14 <sup>th</sup> & 15 <sup>th</sup>	Story 1: <i>Mystery in Stone</i>
<b>Graphic organizer 1 Provided by the teacher</b>	April 18 <sup>th</sup> & April 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Story # 2: <i>Life Beyond Earth</i>
<b>Graphic organizer 2 Selected by the teacher</b>	April 25 <sup>th</sup> & April 29 <sup>th</sup>	Story# 3: <i>The White Shark: The Hungry Hunter</i>
<b>Graphic organizer 3 Created by the students</b>	May 2 <sup>nd</sup> & May 6 <sup>th</sup>	Story # 4: <i>Surviving the Desert</i>
<b>Graphic organizer 4 Created by the students</b>	May 9 <sup>th</sup> & May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Story # 5: <i>Code Talkers: America's Secret Weapon</i>
<b>Graphic organizer 5 Created by the students</b>	May 16 <sup>th</sup> & May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Story # 6: <i>Climbing to Meet Every Challenge</i>
<b>Assessing graphic organizer – Final test</b>	May 23 <sup>rd</sup> & May 27 <sup>th</sup>	Final Reading test Say, "Aah," Panda
<b>Reflect and plan how to improve the work.</b>	May 30 <sup>th</sup> & June 3 <sup>rd</sup>	

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, it was discussed the language, learning and curriculum visions of this study. Moreover, it was presented the implementation process that was held taking into consideration the timetable presented. This implementation process would allow checking the results which would show the effectiveness of GOs not only to identify main and supporting ideas, but to identify if any improvement could be achieved in the students' reading ability as well. After gathering the necessary information, the data analysis would be carried out.

## Chapter 5: Results and Data Analysis

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the piloting process and the findings after the implementation process. To carry out this process, the grounded theory was considered to avoid influence from the researcher's perceptions. Grounded theory pushes the researcher to look through the literature to deliver clear conclusions and new findings (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In fact, it allowed clarifying the path to summarize the benefits of using graphic organizers to foster the reading skills explained below.

### 5.2 Data management procedures

Corbin and Strauss (1990) present three stages to conduct the data management procedure. The first one, *labeling phenomena* which refers to observation and reflection upon the common situations presented in the data gathered. Hereof, the use of a matrix was useful at this stage since it allowed to relate common patterns emerged during the analysis. After that, the researcher made general representations and compared them with similar phenomena presented. The second one is *discovering categories* in which the researcher grouped concepts and established clear relationships. In fact, common patterns emerged and they were organized considering their focus and the data collection instrument used. The last one is *naming categories* process in which the researcher named the groups of concepts identified.

#### 5.2.1 Validation

By analyzing the data, it was found that most of the information could be validated through the triangulation process. Vacha-Haase, Henson and Caruso (2002) explain that the reliability of an instrument can contribute to the knowledge base for test administrators, and applied researchers who are concerned with the use of a test as an aid in making decisions

within groups, in individual cases, and when conducting research. Correspondingly, the use of the questionnaires showed, not only how effective the students found GOs for identifying main and supporting ideas, but also for improving other reading skills. Moreover, the researcher used the students' logs to explain how the GOs' effectiveness on the topic of the study, as well as in other reading skills improvement. It was also noted that the knowledge tests helped the researcher identify the students' reading comprehension strengths, weaknesses and improvement.

### **5.2.2 Data analysis methodology**

To carry out this data analysis the use of an inductive analysis and the Grounded Theory techniques were found useful to examine the data gathered. This blended method was chosen intentionally since an isolated approach would not be sufficient to analyze the data collected. A specific explanation of what each method is about is given below.

Firstly, Thomas (2006) indicates that the inductive approach helps the researcher summarize themes or categories from the raw data. This type of approach manifests in many qualitative data analyses. Therefore, data analysis is determined by the research objectives, theory and interpretations of the raw data to get valid findings.

Additionally, the application of Grounded Theory intended to guide this research project to bring reliable findings. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), it focuses on the constant analysis of the data gathered aiming to identify variables, called categories, to then establish a relationship among them. However, to create the categories, it is necessary to go through an exhaustive coding selection. In this regard, Corbin and Strauss state that the coding process involves operations in which the data is broken down, conceptualized and organized to clarify what the researcher expects.

### **5.3 Categories**

#### **5.3.1 Introduction**

To define the categories and subcategories, open, axial and selective coding were the techniques used in this study. Corbin and Strauss (1990) define open coding as the process in which the researcher breaks down, examines, compares, conceptualizes and categorizes the data to make it easier to analyze. For that reason, after carrying out the implementation procedure and taking into consideration the three stages noted in the data management procedure paragraph, two main patterns arose when analyzing the data: *GOs' usefulness for the identification of main and supporting ideas and reading comprehension skills improvement*. These patterns appeared during the detailed analysis of the data gathered through the two questionnaires, the two students' log, the students' GOs and the final reading comprehension skill test.

##### **5.3.1.1 Category mapping**

Having collected the data, the open-coding process was carried out. The use of colors was relevant to identify the patterns that emerged in the instruments applied and they were classified as codes and categories. After that, the data collected was contrasted with the objectives and the research question not only to verify that the results had not deviated, but also for assessing the reliability of the information.

In the axial coding stage, the researcher compared the patterns emerged and organized them into different groups which allowed for comprehension and analysis of the data. The emerging codes and categories are evidenced in the figure below.

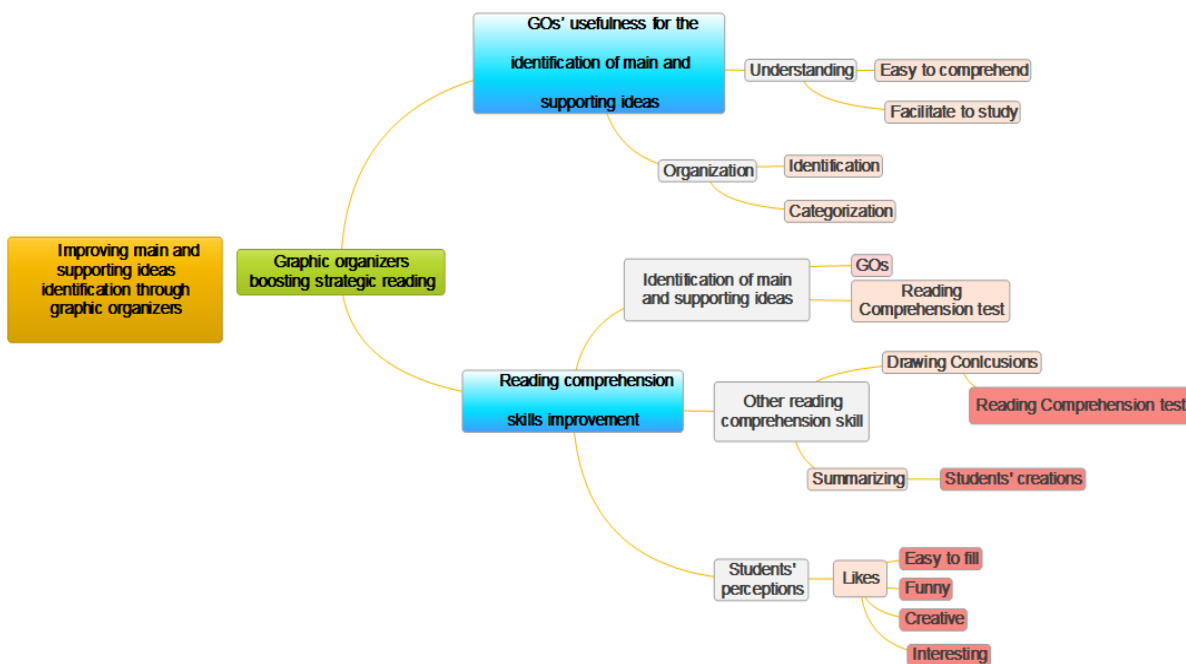


Figure 2. Categories map

### 5.3.1.2 Identification of core category

After having analyzed the codes that emerged during the data analysis, a core category was identified: *Graphic organizers enhancing strategic reading*. This core category arose in the selective coding stage and evidences the relationship between the data and the objective of this study.

## 5.3.2 Analysis of categories

### 5.3.2.1 Description of categories

A description of each category and its corresponding subcategories are presented below.

#### 5.3.2.1.1 Category 1: GOs' usefulness for identifying main and supporting ideas

This category emerged from the target proposed at the beginning of this study which is the effectiveness of GOs. Nevertheless, it was also evidenced during and after the

implementation process. Lewis and Ritchie (2003) state that in order to make the data reliable for the researcher, he needs to “have a clear understanding of what features of qualitative data might be expected to be consistent, dependable or replicable” (p. 271). The initial questionnaire and student log (See appendices E & F) showed that most of the students felt that the use of the GOs promoted the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading in EFL.

Chart 2. Questionnaire and student log comparison

Questionnaire	Student Log
<p><b>Did you find it effective to use graphic organizers to identify the main idea?</b></p> <p><i>Ss A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, M, N (11 students): yes, because you organize the supporting ideas and then you can find or know the main idea.</i></p>	<p><i>Ss A, B, D, E, F, G, H, I, K, M, N (11 students) When using graphic organizers I was able to:</i></p> <p><i>Identify Main Ideas: Yes <u>☆</u> No _____</i></p>
<p><b>Did you find it effective to use graphic organizer to identify supporting ideas?</b></p> <p>• <i>Ss A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, O (14 students)</i>  <i>Yes, because I organize the ideas to understand the text and delete unimportant ideas.</i></p>	<p>• <i>Ss A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, J, K, L, M, N, O (14 students)</i></p> <p><i>When using graphic organizers I was able to:</i></p> <p><i>Identify supporting Ideas: Yes <u>☆</u> No _____</i></p>

This comparison allowed the identification of similarities to validate the findings of this study. Olsen (2004) establishes that “the mixing of the data types, known as data triangulation, help in validating the claims that might arise from an initial pilot study” (p. 3). Additionally to this, Patton (2002) affirms that “it is in data analysis that the strategy of triangulation really pays off, not only in providing diverse ways of looking at the same

phenomenon but in adding to credibility by strengthening confidence in whatever conclusions are drawn” (p. 556). As it was mentioned previously, the triangulation of these two types of instruments evidenced that GOs, in the initial stage of the project, increased students’ main and supporting ideas identification skill; although some of them did not.

Chart 3. Question 3 initial questionnaire

**Question 3. Did you find it effective to use the graphic organizer to identify the main idea?**

*Ss A, B, D, E, F, G, H,I, K, M, N: (11 students)*

*Yes, because you organize the supporting ideas and then you can find or know the main idea.*

By comparing the data collected in the first session of the implementation of the instruments, several changes emerged in the students’ reading comprehension skills. Learners manifested that they found GOs useful to improve their identification skill. Despite the difficulties they had with the vocabulary and the structure of the language, students were able to identify concepts and organize ideas through the use of the GOs. Certainly, when difficult concepts are expressed through the use of graphics, the students can develop structures for understanding and comprehension of specific concepts (McElroy & Coughlin, 2009). The GOs usage allowed learners to develop the ability to recognize useful information to come up with a better categorization of ideas.

In addition to this, the following graphic allows observing significant changes in students’ identification skill while analyzing the artifacts.



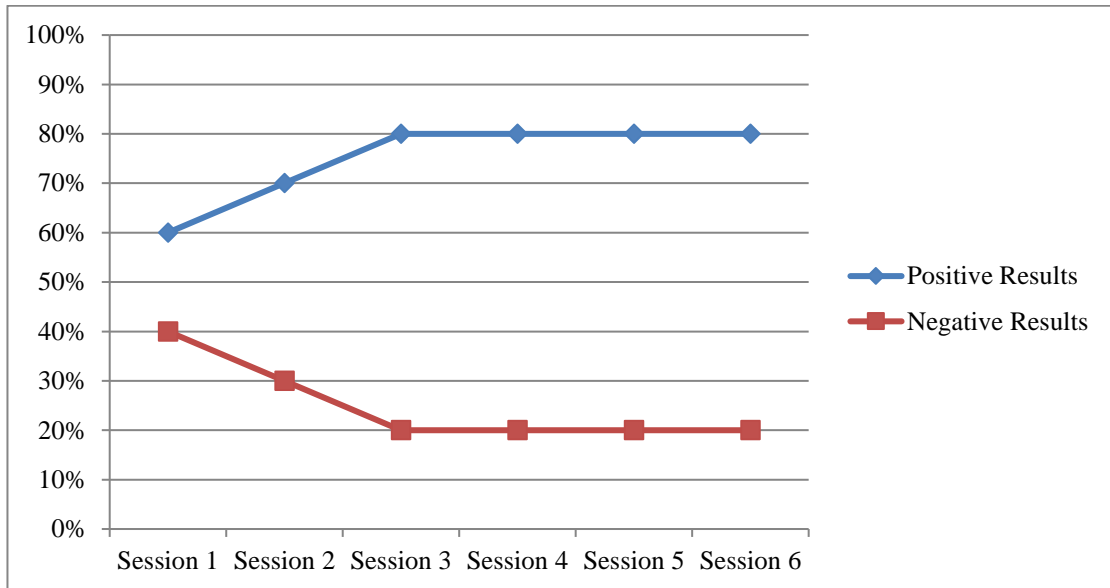


Figure 3 Improvement of the main and supporting ideas identification skill

At the initial stage, a few number of students demonstrated that they were not able to use the GOs effectively, but familiarization and understanding of their use permitted not only the organization of the ideas with the purpose of identification of main and supporting ideas, but also the understanding of the whole message of the text selected. The students mastered how to complete GOs which allowed learners not only to identify GOs' usefulness, but the categorization of the information of the texts given. The following figures (see Figures 4 & 5) show learners' evolution in the creation of their own GO and the way they organized their ideas on it.

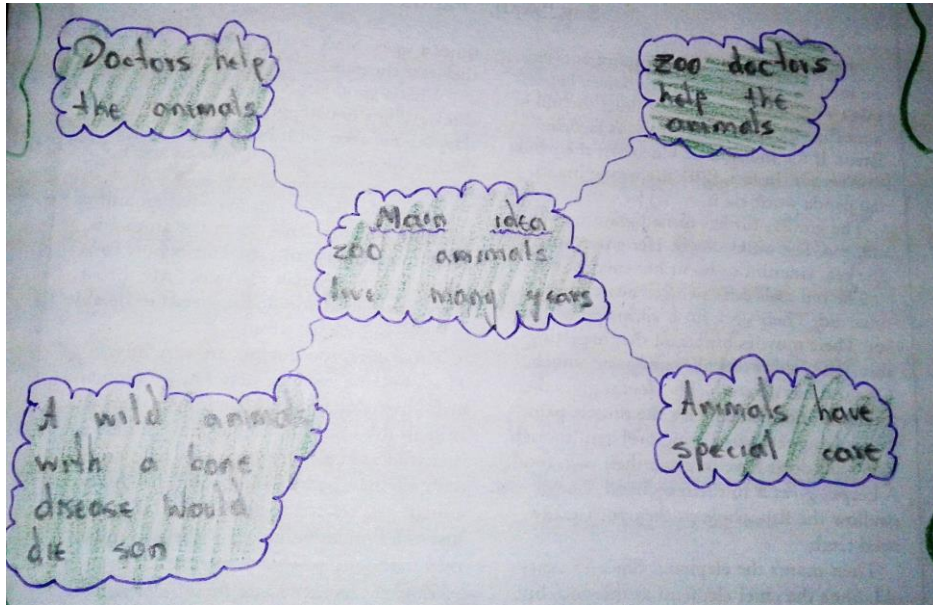


Figure 4. GO created by a student at the beginning of the implementation

It was observed that learners identified two or three ideas at the beginning of the implementation but after being familiarized with the use of GOs, they were able to come across more complex ideas. In other words, the constant use of GOs in the classroom allowed learners to acquire a strategy to organize ideas to comprehend a reading text. According to Novak and Cañas (2006) “Instructional strategies that emphasize relating new knowledge to the learners existing knowledge foster meaningful learning” (p. 3). In fact, the GOs’ use constant instruction allowed learners to make connections with their prior knowledge to make representations of linear texts.

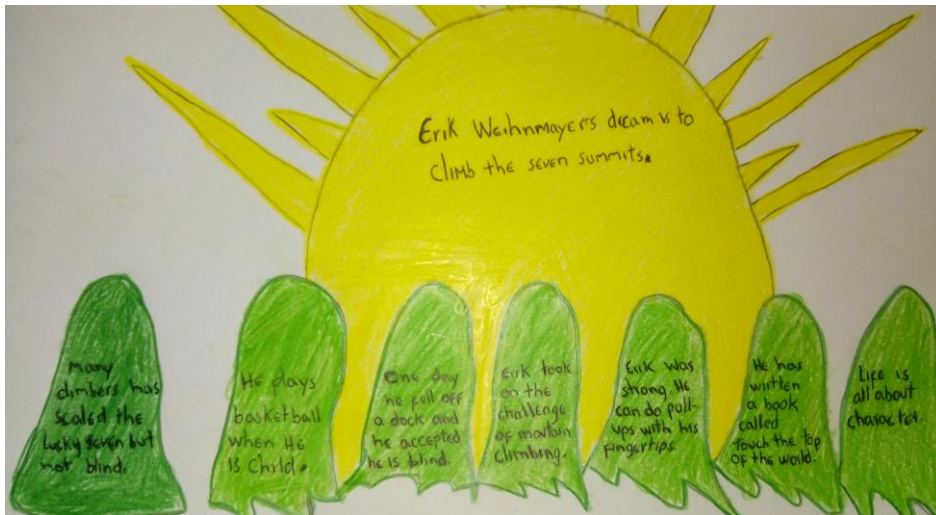


Figure 5. GO created by a student at the end of the implementation

The analysis of this category illustrated one subcategory: *organization and understanding*. During the implementation process, students showed that they could organize their ideas to understand the text.

- Subcategory 1.: *Organization and understanding*

This subcategory emerged after the detailed analysis of category one. Students expressed that the GOs helped them organize their ideas to understand the text better. According to Lee, Baylor, and Nelson (2005), the use of graphic representations fosters students' comprehension skills. At the beginning of the implementation, the diagnostic test revealed that most of the students were not able to identify main and supporting ideas and had difficulties with other reading comprehension skills such as summarizing, making conclusions and identifying author's purpose. After the constant use of the GOs, they were able to reach for a better organization of specific details which led them to an improved understanding of the text.

*5.3.2.1.2 Category 2: Reading comprehension skills improvement*

This category arose when the students expressed and evidenced their improvement of the main and supporting ideas identification skill and other reading comprehension skills. When using the GOs, students encountered that they could organize ideas and then identify the main idea and supporting details. Then, after having the ideas organized, they were able to organize their ideas to summarize the text and give their opinions about it. In fact, in the initial questionnaire, most of the students emphasized that they were able to improve other reading skills: summarizing and drawing conclusions.

Despite of the fact that a few number of students did not identify main and supporting ideas, they were able to use their graphic representations to summarize and draw conclusions (See figure 6 & student K summary transcription). It was evident that while the students created graphic representations, they were able to manipulate the information to generate mental pictures to reach at the products mentioned above. Indeed, DiCecco and Gleason (2002) state that GOs help students gain and apply their knowledge in the reading comprehension process. The following students' final product allowed the researcher to identify the GOs' effectiveness to help learners organize their ideas and how they improved when writing summaries.

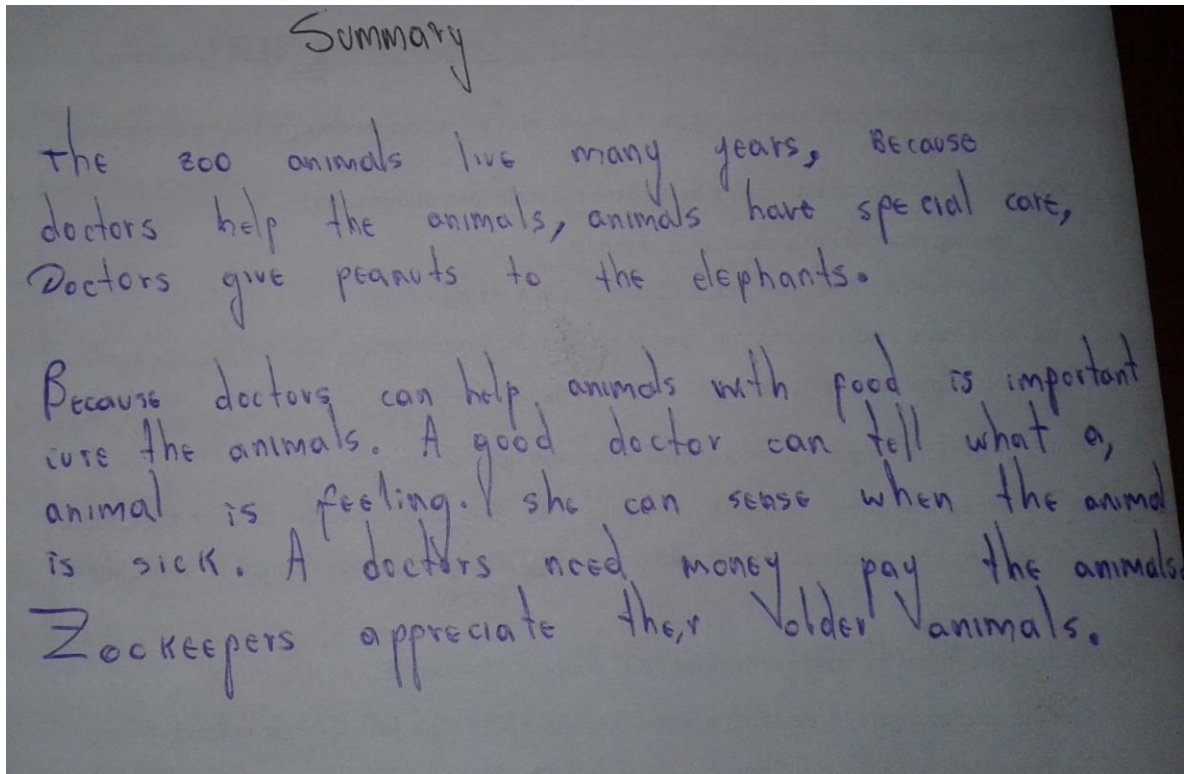


Figure 6. Student's first summary attempt

#### Summary

*K. Erik Weihenmayer's dream is to climb the seven summits, the highest mountain on each of the world's continents.*

*Many climbers had scaled the lucky seven but no blind. He plays basketball when he is child. His father devised a system of planning shots by spotting marks on the court.*

*By age 13, Erik was totally blind. He wasn't good to read braille. One day he fell of a dock and he accepted he is blind. In the school he was the captain of his wrestling team and began hiking with the family. As his confidence grew, Erik took on the challenge of mountain climbing. In time, he climbed south America's highest peak, Aconcagua. He used the mountaineer's standard system of safety ropes.*

*Erik was strong he can do pull-ups wit his fingertips. He rides a bycycle and jogs. He is married Ellen.*

*After Erik began a teacher career, but later left teaching to spend more time climbing. He has written a book called touch the top of the world.*

*His words encourage others not to give up. Erik life is all about character.*

Transcription: Student's final summary

In fact, most of the students considered summarizing as the skill they improved the most. They considered that the use of the GOs helped them organize ideas to write a summary clearly; however, most of the learners concerned about the lack of vocabulary to write a better summary.

Additionally, most students recognized that they had changes in the drawing conclusions skill since they were able to come up with specific thoughts after reading the texts. The National Reading Panel (2000) indicates that the use of external organization schemes fosters students' understanding, memory and reading comprehension process. Thus, the use of GOs allowed learners to understand and categorize specific details which help them comprehend the whole message when reading which lead them to draw conclusion of the texts.

These changes on the students' reading comprehension process led to two subcategories: *Perceptions and insights* and *improvement of other reading skills*. These two subcategories are explained below.

- Subcategory 2.1: *Perceptions and insights*

Students recognized GOs as useful tools to enhance their learning process. At the initial stage, they noticed that they could improve their skills for identifying of main and

supporting ideas, summarizing and drawing conclusions when using GOs. Even though 20 % of students did not find GOs useful, 90% conveyed that the use of GOs helped them organize the ideas adequately. This way to organize ideas helped learners understand main ideas of the texts, which stimulated them to use GOs as an important strategy to improve their learning. Ellis (2004) asserts that students can learn and understand easily when they make visual representations of the information studied.

The final questionnaire determined that GOs were essential to help students recognize main and supporting ideas. This perception could be observed when they created their artifacts since their ideas were communicated appropriately. In fact, the triangulation of the initial artifacts, the students' logs and the knowledge tests was crucial to reach this conclusion due to the evident changes in the students' reading comprehension skills.

The students' artifacts evidenced how the students improved their main and supporting ideas identification skill. The following chart describes student's perception about it.

Chart 4. General students' perception about the use of GOs

Final Questionnaire <i>Ss A, B, D, E, F, G, H,I, K, M, N: (11 Students)</i>	
<b>Did you like to use the graphic organizer?</b>	<b>Did the graphic organizer help you understand the reading message?</b>
Yes. It is funny to work on that and it helps to improve my reading comprehensions skills.	Yes, I can organize the ideas to understand the reading message.

The answers to the questions above allowed for the identification of the students' perception about the use of GOs. Students considered GOs as a useful strategy not only to guide

them towards the text understanding, but to help them overcome their comprehension difficulties and to foster their main and supporting ideas identification skills.

Students' perception of their improvement was revealed during the application of the two questionnaires, two student logs, the GOs created and the final knowledge test. Since improvement is defined as "the state of being better than before, or the process of making something better than it was before" (In MacMillan Dictionary Online, 2016) students felt comfortable when using the GOs as a means to understand the reading texts. Students' ability to use the GOs to improve the target skill was developed during the implementation sessions. Although 10 students did not show any improvement at the initial stage, most of them were able to come up with positive results at the end of the process.

- **Subcategory 2.2:** *Improvement of other reading skills*

During the implementation process, it was found that students were not only able to improve their main and supporting ideas identification skill, but to improve summarizing and drawing conclusions skills as well. This data facilitated the establishment of this subcategory and allowed the discovery how GOs were useful to foster other reading comprehension abilities.

When the data were analyzed, it was observed that students were able to summarize and draw conclusions. Indeed, most students affirmed that they had changes in their summarizing and drawing conclusions skills. They addressed the importance of GOs to foster the skills mentioned above. In fact, the students' products determined how they had mastered the use of GOs to summarize and draw conclusions. In addition to this, the final knowledge test showed positive results in students' ability to draw conclusions. They were able to come up with ideas that allowed them to reach clear conclusions.



In fact, the improvement of the skills mentioned above helped to figure out the significant contribution of GOs for the improvement of students' reading comprehension skills.

#### **5.3.2.2**     *Core category: Graphic organizers boosting strategic reading*

After a detailed analysis of the categories, it was found that GOs were effective for improving the students' reading comprehension skills. Although, at the beginning of the implementation process, it was found that most of the learners were not able to identify main and supporting ideas, draw conclusions nor summarize; soon enough, they were able to show improvement after they received the correct direct instruction to master the use of GOs. In fact, it was found that after the students had enough direct instruction about using GOs, they were able to use them as a reading comprehension strategy. This assumption emerged after analyzing the GOs, the results of the tests and the final products, the summaries.

By analyzing the GOs created by the students, it was found that the learners used the visual aid as a tool to shape the ideas, they considered, were most suitable to comprehend the text. They identified and categorized details to come up with a general concept of the text which enhanced the main and supporting ideas' identification.

GOs helped learners summarize a text. It was found that students came up with better results after they had used GOs several times. According to the synopses created by students, it was observed that learners were improving, little by little, their ability to summarize. It was determined that the use of GOs encouraged the selection of main ideas, make connections and organize information which allowed learners to summarize a text. Indeed, the use of GOs permitted the learners to create a map of the different sections of the texts helping them write summaries according to the information selected.

Additionally, it was observed that after students organized their ideas, they could contrast them to draw conclusions about the text given. Most of the students were capable of using GOs as a means to understand what the texts' ideas are.

Regarding the changes observed and analyzed by the researcher and experienced by the target population in terms of the improvement of reading comprehension process, it was found that GOs were an effective learning tool. GOs helped learners to become better readers since they monitored, organized the most important ideas, evaluated and summarized the information to comprehend a text.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

The analysis revealed that students need direct instruction to comprehend GOs' usefulness and how they work to foster reading comprehension. It was identified that GOs eased students' text comprehension due to the fact that they organized the ideas in the way they considered suitable to reach for a better understanding. Additionally, students took GOs as a guideline to create their summaries and to draw conclusions of a given text. In fact, GOs helped learners foster reading comprehension abilities since they could represent their understanding through the use of diagrams.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusions and pedagogical implications**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will describe the findings after the implementation of the instruments and the analysis of the data collected. Firstly, the findings will be compared with previous studies to find out similarities or differences. Secondly, it will be presented the significance of the results and how they could be applied to help learners improve their reading comprehension skills. Finally, it will be established the different limitations that this study had and relevant aspect to do further research.

### **6.2 Comparison of results with previous studies' results**

The amount of data collected allowed to recognize the usefulness of GOs in the main and supporting ideas identification skill. This study revealed similar results as Alvermann and Boothby (1984) study. They found that on fourth-grade students GOs were effective to help them organize the ideas when working on social studies texts. They encountered that GOs could foster students' reading comprehension since they could organize ideas to come up with conclusions. Despite the age difference, the results in this study were similar since students were able to use GOs as a means to organize texts ideas to come up with better understanding.

Clark (2007) established that GOs help students make connections between ideas, categorize information and generate ideas of what they read. In his study, it was evident that learners strategically used the GOs to comprehend better. Similarly, this study exposed how students were able to come up with the categorization of information to identify main and supporting ideas. This categorization helped learners make connections to comprehend when reading.

Similarly, Roa (2011) evidenced that students used GOs as a strategic tool to group useful information to establish association and mental links to create new information. She found that GOs enhanced her students' retention of information and encouraged the creation of mental images which facilitated the students' comprehension of the reading text. By contrasting her and this study, it was evidenced parallel results since learners were able to make mental representations when using GOs which allowed them to retain information to make clear conclusions of the texts they read.

Moreover, Pang (2013) also established that GOs improved not only students' English proficiency, but their reading comprehension ability since learners were able to organize information with a comprehension purpose. In addition, he also found that teachers need to accommodate their teaching methods to help learners to activate their learning potential. Likewise, actual findings evidenced that it was necessary to apply changes in teaching strategies to foster students' reading comprehension skills. If the teacher changes their traditional teaching methods, students would become critical, logical thinkers, and independent lifelong learners.

Jiang (2012) found that students need significant training to face GOs. When they received appropriate instruction, students were able to use them properly which helped them retain meaningful information for a long period of time. He evidenced that learners who received training in GOs improved their reading comprehension significantly due to the mental representations created while using the GOs. In fact, this recent study revealed that the learners needed to be modeled when filling a GO. As it is known, students are more likely to learn by doing. Thus, when the teacher modeled and gave learners completed two GOs before they produced theirs, enhanced the accurate completion of future GOs.

Furthermore, in her study Muniz (2015) revealed that it would be better if learners create their own GO since it develops their thinking skills. As this current study, it was found that it is better that learners create their own GOs since they used their creativity to organize their ideas and categorize the information for their better understanding. In addition, it showed how learners evolved from their initial GO to the last one created. They were not only able to come up with more structured GOs, but to identify the most relevant information from the texts. In fact, this study revealed similar results since students were able to create mental representation according to what they read which facilitated their understanding of the text.

### **6.3 Significance of the results**

Nowadays, most of the schools have understood the importance of learning a foreign language; for that reason, they have implemented or created new curriculums that demand the use of a foreign language. Thus, the implementation of content areas, which demand the use of the foreign language, such as Science, Social Studies, and Literature among others has required the use of learning strategies to help learners succeed when they face reading activities according to each topic.

The present study focuses on assessing the use of GOs as a fostering strategy to identify main and supporting ideas or any other reading skill when reading in EFL. This study has shown the GO impact in the improvement of reading comprehension difficulties since they used this tool as a means to comprehend and analyze a text. This visual aid is suitable to help learners organize the ideas to come up with the main ideas of the reading. In fact, regarding the importance of the reading skills as the basis in the foreign language learning process, the participants of this study have recognized the usefulness of the implementation of GOs to foster their reading comprehension skills.

Also, this study reveals the influence of GOs in the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading EFL material. In fact, students are able to use GOs to organize ideas which leads to the improvement of the main and supporting ideas identification skill (Ellis, 2004). Certainly, students are able to organize the supporting ideas of the texts to come up with the main idea. This strategy not only helps them in the identification process, but in other reading comprehension skills as well.

In addition, while students are using GOs they may have changes in other reading comprehension skills. Students find GOs useful to improve their summarizing skill since the organization of ideas in a diagram help them identify specific details which are later expanded by using their own words. It does not only foster their summarizing skill, but also their ability to draw conclusions. Ellis (2004) reaffirms this finding since GOs give students the opportunity to recognize important information, draw conclusions, making connections to prior knowledge and expand students' understanding.

Moreover, taking into consideration that reading comprehension is a cognitive process, teachers need to find ways to help learners to decode reading texts by using reading strategies that foster reading comprehension; however, it is necessary that teachers provide effective instruction in the use of GOs. To do this, the teacher not only needs to model how to use GOs before starting any implementation, but to train learners in the GOs' completion as well. In fact, if students receive appropriate instruction, they will not only be able to identify the GOs' usefulness, but they will apply them as the basis to reach learning objective when reading in EFL. According to Willis (2008) direct instruction in the use of GOs facilitates the text comprehension since the students "can increase comprehension, organization, summarizing, prioritizing, memorization, and analysis by helping construct and visualize

relationships” (p.140). Hence, learners might use GOs as a tool to facilitate their understanding when reading a text.

The use of GOs allows learners to foster their ability to recall and retain information for future activities. In other words, this graphic tool enhances students' lifelong learning since students use their mental images (created while using GOs) when they are facing further activities such as quizzes, final term tests or new topics. Thus, students are able to comprehend the usefulness of GOs for their learning process. In addition, Fountas and Pinnell (2001) affirm that content illustrated with diagrams increases information comprehension and retention for a long period of time. When learners use this diagrams, they are able to make mental representations of the input which is used in future situations or when it is required.

Moreover, it is necessary to take into consideration the kind of texts when implementing reading comprehension activities. It is widely known that pupils learn better if they work on activities which they feel comfortable with. Hereof, when students select their reading according to their interests and the teacher adapts them to the learners' English knowledge level, students will not only feel motivated to read, but to identify the main ideas of the readings.

On the other hand, it is evidenced that learners are motivated to work with GOs when they are asked to create their own. Students categorize and organize the information regarding their understanding which help them not only succeed on the identification of main and supporting ideas, but to foster their creativity and willingness to be engaged in the reading comprehension activity.

Finally, when students notice that they are learning they feel that the strategies they have been using are appropriate to achieve their learning objectives. In this regard, GOs

encourage students to learn since they construct knowledge through graphic representations. Robinson and Kiewra (1995) suggest that students perceive GOs as a friendly strategy to apply in their active life of learning since they can freely create their understanding of a text. In fact, students feel comfortable when creating their own GOs and their outcomes are more meaningful and accurate than when they are given one.

#### **6.4 Limitations of the present study**

When implementing GOs as a strategy for reading comprehension, a teacher may find certain limitations. First of all, it was seen that students had not used this learning strategy previously in any English subject; thus, it was necessary to train learners to use GOs properly. For that reason, at some stages of the implementation, it was evidenced that learners found it boring to be using the same strategy over and over again.

Also, this study was carried out with 15 participants; thus, because it was a small sample and since it was a qualitative study, results cannot be extrapolated to a larger population. It would be beneficial to implement this strategy to a larger population to obtain more precise results and to identify the GOs usefulness in the improvement of the reading comprehension skills.

On the other hand, this qualitative study aimed to give valuable information about the improvement of reading comprehension, but the participants had specific characteristics and needs regarding English knowledge. Indeed, it was found that the vocabulary in the texts was beyond the level of several students. Despite of that students belonged to a bilingual school and they should have had certain English knowledge at this stage, according to the English curriculum in the school, some of them had difficulties when facing the texts implemented. They not only had difficulties when organizing the information, but also writing the



summaries. In fact, these learners felt frustrated because they did not understand the text, as a result, they were not able to produce their own GO.

### **6.5 Further research**

This study results suggest the need for doing further research on the effectiveness of GOs in other reading comprehension skills such predicting, identifying author's purpose, identifying and generalizing, among others. Regarding the usefulness of GOs as the main strategy in this study, it would be appropriate to observe not only its implications on other reading comprehension skills, but to find improvement in writing skills as well.

Similarly, it is assumed that young learners are living in a digital era; thus, the implementation of online GOs and its impact on the reading comprehension process may be significant. Learners enjoy using new technologies to do their homework and to search information about the topics they like to. Hereof, it would be appropriate to recognize these visual representations' effectiveness and to measure the students' motivation when using them.

In addition, considering that the GOs can be used with different language skills, it would be appropriate to see how this strategy would help learners foster their listening and writing skills. This strategy would be useful due to the fact that when students make graphic representations they can understand easier and can develop ideas in a better way.

### **6.6 Conclusion**

To conclude, this study demonstrated the effectiveness of GOs to foster reading comprehension skills. It was found that most of students felt comfortable when working on GOs since it helped them organize and categorize ideas which allowed them to understand reading EFL materials. According to Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek and Wei (2004) GOs can enhance

reading comprehension skills since the students create them and recognize their usefulness.

When students are aware of the meaningfulness of a learning strategy in their learning process, they use it to achieve the learning goals.

In addition, it is necessary to reflect on the teachers' performance. It was evident that the use of a common teaching tool motivated students to work with pleasure. To give an adequate instruction of learning strategy eases foreign language acquisition and the students' mastery of a learning strategy use. In fact, the use of GOs in the classroom helped the teacher guide students to overcome their reading comprehension difficulties.

Finally, this study revealed the influence of GOs not only in the identification of main and supporting ideas, but to foster learners summarizing and drawing conclusion skills when reading in EFL as well. Students were able to use GOs to organize ideas which allowed the improvement of the main and supporting ideas identification skill.

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**Appendix A. Chairperson's authorization request letter**

Neiva, febrero 14 de 2016

**Señor**

ELBER ALVAREZ PINTO  
Director Académico  
ASPAEN Gimnasio La Fragua  
Ciudad

Respetado Director.

Como es de su conocimiento, desde el segundo semestre de 2010, he venido realizando estudios de maestría en didáctica en inglés con énfasis en aprendizaje autónomo en la Universidad (de La Sabana en Bogotá, con el fin de mejorar mi rendimiento profesional, personal y espiritual, para contribuir en el desarrollo del aprendizaje de idioma inglés como lengua extranjera en nuestro amado Gimnasio La Fragua.

Para alcanzar las metas previamente mencionadas, anhelo contribuir al desarrollo de la comprensión lectora en el área de Inglés, a través de un proyecto educativo con el grado 5°A de nuestra institución, llamado, “El uso de organizadores gráficos para mejorar la identificación de ideas principales y secundarias cuando se lee en inglés como lengua extranjera” (The use of graphic organizers to improve the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading in English as a foreign language), cuyo objetivo principal es mejorar la comprensión lectora en inglés como lengua extranjera.

Para alcanzar este propósito, se llevarían a cabo talleres de lectura en las horas de clase, donde los estudiantes participarían activa y voluntariamente, guiados por el docente del área. De la misma manera, se haría seguimiento a través de encuestas y observaciones, las cuales servirán de soporte para analizar la interiorización y desarrollo de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes.

Por otro lado, es necesario apreciar que a los participantes en el proyecto se les garantizaría estricta confidencialidad con respecto a los resultados que se obtuvieren. Asimismo, es válido mencionar que la participación de ellos en el proyecto no tendría incidencia alguna en las notas correspondientes al curso.

Finalmente, para que quede constancia que usted como Director Académico conoce esta información, solicito muy comedidamente dar el visto bueno para empezar la aplicación del proyecto.

**XXX**

**Language Arts Teacher**

**Appendix A. Students' authorization request letter**

Neiva, 14 de febrero de 2016.

**Proyecto de Educación:** El uso de organizadores gráficos para mejorar la identificación de ideas principales y secundarias cuando se lee en inglés como lengua extranjera (The use of graphic organizers to improve the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading in English as a foreign language.)

Estudiantes

**Quinto Grado**

Ciudad

Apreciados Estudiantes:

Como es de su conocimiento, en el área de Inglés se pretende desarrollar un proyecto educativo llamado “El uso de organizadores gráficos para mejorar la identificación de ideas principales y secundarias cuando se lee en inglés como lengua extranjera” (The use of graphic organizers to improve the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading in English as a foreign language) con el objetivo de diseñar actividades de lectura para ser realizadas a través del trabajo individual y así contribuir al mejoramiento de esta habilidad.

Para alcanzar este propósito se llevará a cabo talleres de escritura en las horas de clase donde ustedes participarán activa y voluntariamente y guiados por el docente del área. De la misma manera, para monitorear del desarrollo de este proyecto se realizarán algunas encuestas y observaciones, las cuales servirán de soporte para analizar la participación y el mejoramiento de su competencia lectora.

Finalmente, a ustedes se les garantiza estricta confidencialidad con la información que se obtenga y los resultados de este proyecto no tendrán incidencia alguna en las notas correspondientes al curso.

Como constancia que conocen esta información y la aprueban, por favor firmar el presente consentimiento.

Nombre: \_\_\_\_\_

Apruebo: SI \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix B. Parents' authorization request letter

Neiva, febrero 27 de 2016

**Apreciada Familia**

ASPAEN Gimnasio La Fragua  
Ciudad

Respetada familia.

Como es de su conocimiento, desde el segundo semestre de 2010, he venido realizando estudios de maestría en didáctica en inglés con énfasis en aprendizaje autónomo en la Universidad de La Sabana en Bogotá, con el fin de mejorar mi rendimiento profesional, personal y espiritual, para contribuir en el desarrollo del aprendizaje de idioma inglés como lengua extranjera en nuestro amado Gimnasio La Fragua.

Para alcanzar las metas previamente mencionadas, anhelo contribuir al desarrollo de la comprensión lectora de su hijo en el área de Inglés, a través de un proyecto educativo con el grado 5°A de nuestra institución, llamado, “El uso de organizadores gráficos para mejorar la identificación de ideas principales y secundarias cuando se lee en inglés como lengua extranjera” (The use of graphic organizers to improve the identification of main and supporting ideas when reading in English as a foreign language), cuyo objetivo principal es mejorar la comprensión lectora en inglés como lengua extranjera.

Para alcanzar este propósito, se llevarían a cabo talleres de lectura en las horas de clase, donde los estudiantes participarían activa y voluntariamente, guiados por el docente del área. De la misma manera, se haría seguimiento a través de encuestas y observaciones, las cuales servirán de soporte para analizar la interiorización y desarrollo de la competencia lectora en los estudiantes.

Por otro lado, es necesario apreciar que a los participantes en el proyecto se les garantizaría estricta confidencialidad con respecto a los resultados que se obtuvieren. Asimismo, es válido mencionar que la participación de ellos en el proyecto no tendría incidencia alguna en las notas correspondientes al curso.

Finalmente, Para que quede constancia que conocen esta información y aprueban la participación de su hijo, por favor firmar el presente consentimiento.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Estudiante :**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Firma padre**

**SI**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Firma madre**

**NO**

Appendix C. Diagnostic test

**The Pie-of-the-Month Club**

Elliott Tsu is in business. Elliott accidentally became president of the Pie-of-the-Month Club. His responsibilities began with a box of peaches and a family emergency. Elliott's mom had ordered a crate of peaches, and she was getting everything organized to make jam. Suddenly she got an urgent call from Elliott's aunt, who had just become the mother of twins.

Elliott's mom dropped everything. As the taxi pulled out of the driveway, she yelled, "Tell your dad I've left for the airport, and then please do something with all these peaches."

"I sure hope no one expects me to try to make jam," thought Elliott.

Elliott telephoned his dad's office and spoke to Rebecca, the secretary. "Hi, Bec," said Elliott. "Is my dad available?"

"He's in a conference, so you'll have to leave a message," said Rebecca.

"Please tell him that my mom is flying to Seattle to visit my aunt and her new twins."

"Certainly, Elliott," said Rebecca. "Anything else?"

"As a matter of fact, yes. I have a ques-

tion," said Elliott. "What would you do with a million peaches?"

"Well, that's an easy one. I would make pies," said Rebecca.

Elliott consulted several cookbooks until he found a recipe that didn't sound complicated. Mixing the dough was tricky, but Elliott had enough peaches for eleven pies, so he soon got the hang of it. Each pie was a little easier to put together and came out a little nicer around the edges. Elliott baked the pies three at a time, and by late afternoon, he was done.

"I have enough pies for the entire neighborhood," thought Elliott.

Elliott loaded the wheelbarrow and began making deliveries. Everyone he encountered seemed delighted to get a fresh, warm pie.

"What are you charging?" said Mr. Cragmore, taking the last pie.

"Nothing," said Elliott, "this is a neighborly way of getting rid of peaches."

"Take my advice," said Mr. Cragmore. "Next time, find a neighborly way of getting rid of boysenberries, but charge your customers a fair price."

Elliott was in business.

**Comprehension Plus • Level D**

1. Which of the following statements best states the main idea of this story?

- Elliott loves peaches.
- Elliott's mother is a cook.
- Elliott accidentally started a pie-making business.
- Elliott is a baker.

2. Which of the following statements supports the main idea of this story?

- Elliott has his own business.
- Elliott's dad was on a conference call.
- Elliott's business began with a family emergency.
- Elliott's mom likes to bake.

3. Which of the following statements does NOT support the main idea of this story?

- Elliott's aunt lived in Seattle.
- Elliott delivered pies to his neighbors.
- Mr. Cragmore suggested that Elliott charge money for his pies.
- Elliott used the peaches to make pies.

4. Why did Elliott's mom leave in such a hurry?

- She didn't want to cook.
- She loved going to Seattle.
- She wanted Elliott to make pies.
- She knew her sister needed her help.

5. What conclusions can you draw about Elliott after reading this story?

- He is easily bored.
- He doesn't like to make decisions.
- He loves to cook and read.
- He is creative, hard-working, and friendly.

6. What does Mr. Cragmore want Elliott to do next time?

- He wants Elliott to be a cook.
- He wants Elliott to have fun.
- He wants Elliott to make soup.
- He wants Elliott to make boysenberry pies.

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Fill in the circle next to the sentence that answers the question.



**Appendix D. Questionnaire**

The following questionnaire is part of an action research study of Reading comprehension and attempts to foster reading skills. Please answer all questions below. All questions will require you to write down your perceptions and select one option. Do not leave blanks.

Date:

Student A (B-C-D-E...):

After using the graphic organizers in the activity please answer the following questions

1. Did you like to use graphic organizers? YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_

Why?

---



---



---

2. Did the graphic organizers help you understand the reading?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_

Why?

---



---

3. Did you find it effective to use graphic organizers to identify the main ideas?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_

Why?

---



---

4. Did you find it effective to use graphic organizers to identify supporting ideas?

YES\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_

Why?

---



---

If not, please choose the problem you encountered from the following categories.

Vocabulary\_\_\_ Structure of the language\_\_\_ Length\_\_\_ Other\_\_\_\_\_

Explain\_\_\_\_\_

---

**Appendix E. Student log**

**DATE:**

**PLACE:**

**MATERIALS:**

**STUDENT: A-B-C-D-...**

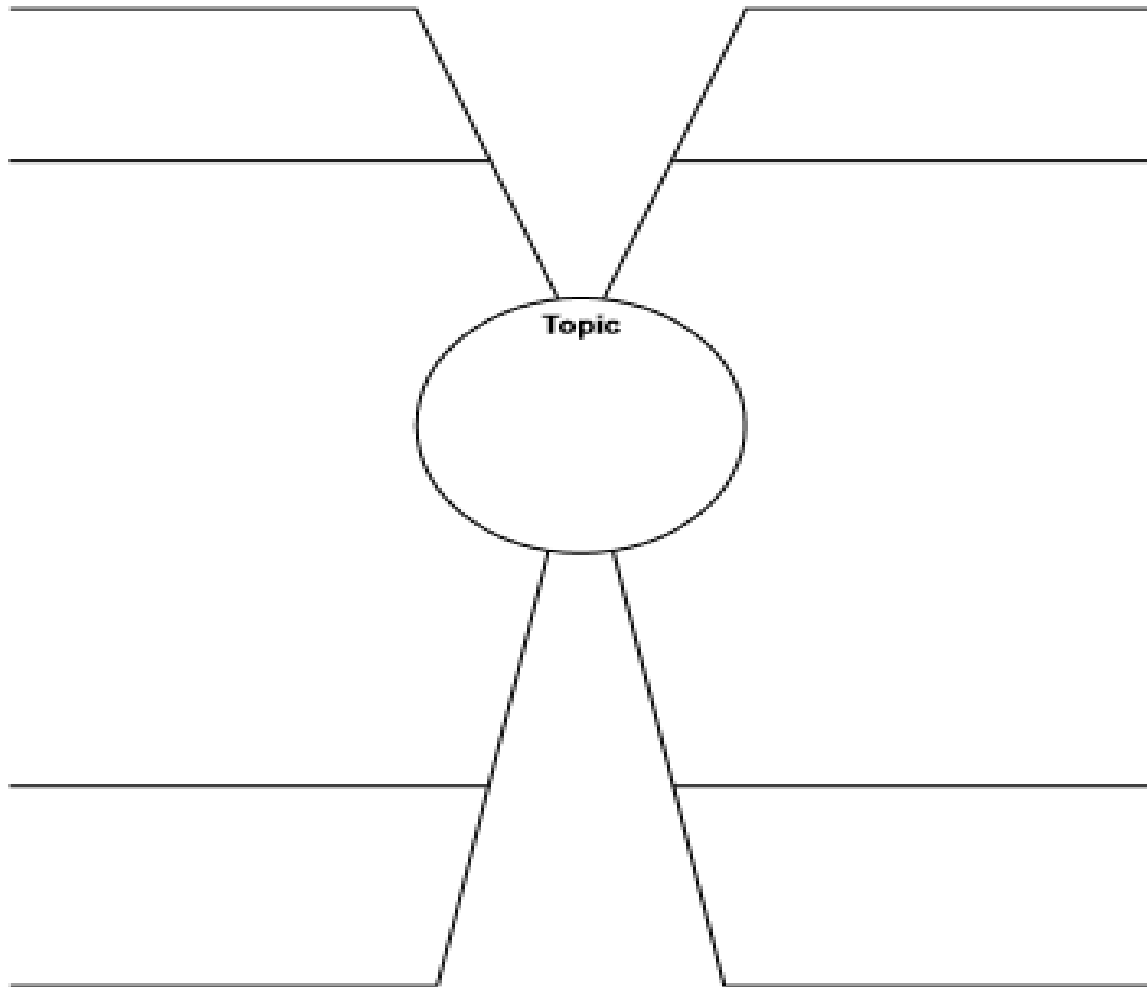
<p><b>The purpose of using this Student log is to detect the effectiveness of graphic organizers to identify main and supporting ideas and to discover other students' reading skills improvement.</b></p>	
<p><b>GENERAL ASPECTS</b></p>	<p><b>READING SKILLS IMPROVEMENT</b></p>
<p>Through the use of graphic organizers the student was able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<p>The student was able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Appendix F. First graphic organizer**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Spider Map**

Write main ideas on the slanted lines that connect to the circle. Write details on the branching lines.



Appendix G. Second graphic organizer

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
-------------	-------------

**GRAPHIC ORGANIZER**

## Main Idea and Supporting Details

```
graph TD; MI((Main Idea:)); D1((Detail:)); D2((Detail:)); D3((Detail:)); D4((Detail:)); MI --- D1; MI --- D2; MI --- D3; MI --- D4;
```

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Appendix H. Final knowledge test

Read the story below. Then answer the questions on the next page.

**Say, "Aah," Panda**

The panda is old. He can't move as fast as he used to. There's pain in his bones. He takes a pill for it. The doctor hides the pill in a muffin. Blueberry is the panda's favorite flavor. If the muffin isn't blueberry, the panda won't eat it. In fact, if it's the wrong brand, the panda won't eat it.

The gorilla's fur has turned gray. She's very old, too. She walks slowly. Her gums hurt. She gets vitamins to boost her energy.

The old seals can't swim as fast as they once did. Their sleek fur is sprinkled with silver. Their muscles hurt, and they're getting thin. They don't feel like eating very much. One seal has no teeth. The doctor gives them vitamins and medicine for the muscle pain. Not having teeth isn't a big problem, though. Zoo seals don't have to catch their own food. A keeper gives it to them by hand. They swallow the fish whole so they don't really need teeth.

Then there's the elephant. She's 45 years old. She's the chief elephant at this zoo, but she has an infected toe. How do you treat an elephant with a bad toe? Well, you'd better treat her very carefully.

The doctor gives the elephant a shot in the toe. She also gives the elephant a lot of peanuts. The elephant gets these shots three times a week. She's used to them. She knows they ease the pain.

"What a good elephant," the doctor thinks. "She's not stepping on me. She's not slapping me away with her trunk. I hope she teaches the other elephants how to act. I wish the tiger was this easy."

A good zoo doctor can tell what an animal is feeling. She can sense when the animal is going to get angry, and she knows how to calm it down. Animals can't say, "My throat hurts," so a good zoo doctor needs to be able to figure out what's wrong.

These days, zoo doctors are very busy. That's because zoos are better at keeping animals alive. Zoo animals live longer than wild animals do. Old zoo animals have illnesses that wild animals rarely have. A wild animal with a bone disease would soon die. A zoo animal gets treated for it. She can stay alive, just as a human would. But the zoo must find money to pay for her treatment.

Zookeepers appreciate their older animals, but older animals present some new challenges.

Fill in the circle next to the words that answer the question or complete the sentence.

- Which of the following statements best states the main idea of this story?
  - Treating older animals costs a lot of money.
  - When a wild animal gets sick, it usually dies in a matter of days.
  - To become a zoo doctor, you must study hard for many years.
  - Zoo animals are living longer, so they need special medical care.
- Which of the following statements supports the main idea of this story?
  - The elephant doesn't slap with her trunk.
  - Zoo seals don't have to catch their food.
  - Blueberry is the panda's favorite flavor.
  - The gorilla needs vitamins to boost her energy.
- Which of the following statements does NOT support the main idea of this story?
  - The elephant gets three shots a week.
  - Old seals lose interest in food.
  - The panda has pain in his bones.
  - Zookeepers appreciate their older animals.
- Why would you need to treat an elephant with an infected toe very carefully?
  - Elephants use all of their toes for walking.
  - Elephants can hurt their handlers.
  - Elephants are important animals.
  - Elephants have big feet.
- The old elephant seems to know that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - the doctor is helping her
  - the doctor trained for many years
  - the doctor is bothered by the tiger
  - the doctor is afraid of her
- A conclusion you can draw from this passage is that \_\_\_\_\_.
  - old animals can't be saved
  - old animals are very popular animals
  - old zoo animals have different lives than wild animals
  - old zoo animals don't always get the best of care

Comprehension Plus • Level E

**Appendix I. Lesson plan format**

MASTER IN

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

AUTONOMOUS LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

**ICELT LESSON PLAN FORM**

<b>Name of teacher: XXX</b>	
<b>Institution: ASPAEN GIMNASIO LA FRAGUA</b>	<b>Level of students: Primary</b>
<b>Date of implementation: DAY MONTH YEAR</b>	<b>Week number: 3</b>
<b>Number of students: 21</b>	<b>Average age of Students: 9-11</b>

<p><b>Main Aim(s):</b> Students will be able to identify main and supporting ideas through the use of graphic organizers when reading in EFL.</p> <p><b>Subsidiary Aims:</b> Students will be able to write a summary of the text. Students will be able to make conclusions</p>
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Stage	Aim	Procedure and Teacher and student activity	Time and interaction
Input	To recognize useful vocabulary for the topic of the class and how to use the types of GOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher will give the Ss a worksheet and they will label 8 pictures with their meaning. After that, the teacher will explain the use of the graphic organizers and how they could work effectively.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 min</li> <li>T-ss</li> <li>s-s -- s-ss/T</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re-reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will be able to make predictions about a text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher will ask one of the students to read the title of the text and the students will guess what the reading is about. After that, they will read each paragraph and they will guess what comes next. While doing these activities the students will write their predictions. Later, students will work in pairs to check if they are right.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 min</li> <li>T-ss</li> <li>ss-T</li> <li>S-Ss</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>highlighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will be able to find specific information in the text.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The students will answer 4 questions related to the reading. Then, they will share their answer with their partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5-20</li> <li>T-ss</li> <li>S-S</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ost-reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students will be able to identify main a supporting ideas through using GOs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher asks students to create a graphic organizer in which the students will represent the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 min</li> <li>S-T</li> <li>T-S</li> <li>S-SS</li> </ul>

in g		identification of the main and supporting ideas. After that, the students will share their findings.	
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