

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION
SKILLS

Implementing Interacting Leveled E-Books To Improve Reading Comprehension Skills

Paula A. Arias

Santo Tomás University

Foreign Language Degree

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Implementing an Online Reading Tool to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills

Contextualization

The present paper reports research study that was carried out in Liceo Pino Verde, a private, bilingual school in Pereira, Risaralda, Colombia. The study aimed to implement an online reading tool with e-books to improve reading comprehension skills in a third grade class at Liceo Pino Verde. This school offers high quality education that helps its students to acquire skills and attributes necessary to become autonomous.

“The institution aims to form students with values such as respect, responsibility, honesty as well as foster learning how to appreciate critically many beliefs, values, experiences and ways of knowing. Its educational practice aims to generate in its students awareness, knowledge and respect for difference. The school is recognized for its humanistic character, its interculturality, and multilingualism, and for being at the forefront in technology and its high academic level. It aims to create in students a sense of recognizing and reflecting on one's perspective, as well as the importance of accepting the perspectives of others.” (Pino Verde, 2015)

Liceo Pino Verde believes that a quality education is the main actor of the transformation of a person and society. The institution enhances the qualities of the human being, promotes self-development and links the family in the process of formation. It is based on a constructivist

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approach that promotes students that work together to construct meaning and make sense of the world through the interplay of asking, doing and thinking.

Pino Verde implements the curriculum and principles of the International Baccalaureate (IB). Developing the intellectual, personal, emotional and social skills needed to live, learn and work in a rapidly globalizing world. This curriculum aims to develop internationally minded people who, recognize their common humanity and care for the planet in order to create a better and more peaceful world. IB also encourages teachers and students to have a global vision and address world's challenges in the classroom and in their daily life creating learners who are committed to service and aware of current events.

The IB program is implemented in Liceo Pino Verde as the PYP transdisciplinary framework (Primary Years Program), which focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both at school and beyond. Informed by research into how students learn, how educators teach, and the principles and practice of effective assessment, the program places a powerful emphasis on inquiry-based learning. The PYP develops students' academic, social and emotional wellbeing, focusing on international-awareness and personal values. It nurtures independent learning skills and encourages every student to take responsibility for their learning and the environment around them (IBO, 2014).

The program incorporates local and global issues into the curriculum, asking students to study six related, transdisciplinary themes and to consider the links between them. The themes include 'who we are', 'where we are in place and time', 'Sharing the planet', 'how we organize ourselves', 'how we express ourselves' and 'how the world works'.

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Schools work with the five essential elements to construct a rigorous and challenging primary curriculum for international education and the development of conceptual understanding, the formation of personal, positive attitudes and the capacity to take responsible actions. These five essential elements of the Primary Years Program are:

- Knowledge, which is both disciplinary, represented by traditional subject areas (language, math, science, social studies, arts, PSPE) and transdisciplinary
- Concepts, which students explore through structured inquiry in order to develop coherent, in-depth understanding, and which have relevance both within and beyond subject areas
- Skills, which are the broad capabilities students develop and apply during learning and in life beyond the classroom
- Attitudes, which contribute to international-mindedness and the wellbeing of individuals and learning communities, and connect directly to the IB learner profile
- Action, which is an expectation in the PYP that successful inquiry leads to responsible, thoughtful and appropriate action. (IBO, 2014)

The PYP aims to create a curriculum that is engaging, relevant, challenging and significant for learners in the 3–12 age range. By developing the attributes of the IB learner profile, students also learn how to demonstrate respect for themselves and others, developing international-mindedness by working with others for a shared purpose and taking positive action for change.

In this research the participants were a group of twenty-three third graders (nine girls and fourteen boys) between the ages of nine and ten years old. Their socioeconomic situation is

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favorable, being part of the medium-high class of the city and having access to the e-tools as electronic devices and materials needed in the process of their education.

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Research Statement

Working in a private bilingual school for the past eight years, where the students are in an English program since the age of four and where they receive all of their classes in this second language, has given me a comprehensive outlook of their difficulties in several matters. According to this experience, one of the most recurrent issues that the third grade students face is that related to reading skills. They are frequently asked to read different kinds of text; informative, argumentative or narrative; nonetheless students show serious difficulties in identifying the main idea, the sequence of events, characters or implicit information that underlies the text.

At the beginning of the process, students showed serious difficulties to identify the main idea, the sequence of events, the characters or the implicit information that underlies the text in class while reading stories or books. The teacher reviewed and assessed through inferential and interpretative questions if the students understood what they read, which put in evidence the inability of the students to argue about the theme of the story, what happened with the characters, where the characters were and why that was important to the story in general. Before implementing the educational platform the teacher worked several stories in order to make a diagnostic assessment of the status of students, revealing the aforementioned flaws that directed the objectives and parameters in which the project was to be developed, in order to enhance the abilities and skills of students in these aspects of reading comprehension.

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It is clear that the lack of vocabulary is sometimes decisive for the detailed understanding of the text. However, it is important that the students understand an overview of what they are reading and that they can extract as much from the text without staying in simple vocabulary.

As expected because of their age, the students are constantly spending their free time on their computer and tablets, which generates the question: why not take advantage of this to motivate them to read and take control of their learning? Taking into account the time the students spend connected, and considering the fact that it can be used wisely, the role of the teacher can be more significant because it will let them focus on the kids that need individual help while the others can work in an independent and autonomous way.

In the classroom, there are a variety of learning styles: some students are visual, so they enjoy having colorful images; listeners, who prefer listening to books and instructions in order to understand better; and kinesthetic learners that prefer hands on activities, games, missions and problem solving. Meeting the students' needs and different learning styles is a challenge for teachers nowadays, especially for English learner's students. It is important to give the correct resources to the students in order to help them succeed in their daily life.

Considering the aforementioned needs and circumstances, I conceived the idea of focusing this research project in multimedia and innovative tools that address the textual understanding in children between nine and ten years old, in order to apply them in class to certain informational texts, from the areas of natural sciences and social sciences as well as narrative texts. I decided to focus this research project on the use of an online multimedia resource called Raz-Kids, currently available in the institution that provides students with interactive leveled eBooks from areas of

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natural sciences and social sciences, as well as narrative texts. The platform has been implemented at the institution for several years, starting with students in preschool through fourth grades. Raz-Kids aims to ensure success in the classroom and beyond with engaging, developmentally appropriate leveled books at 29 reading levels to increase comprehension and fluency. Students can read texts at their level and in their areas of interest anytime with 24/7 Web access to the practice they need to become better, more confident readers.

Raz-Kids is an award-winning teaching product that provides comprehensive leveled reading resources for students. With hundreds of eBooks offered at 29 different levels of reading difficulty, it's easy to put the right content in every student's hands.

Kids access their leveled text through an interactive learning portal designed to keep them motivated and engaged. Every eBook is available in online and mobile formats, and allows students to listen to, read at their own pace, and record themselves reading. Students then take a corresponding eQuiz complete with an extended answer response to test comprehension and determine future instruction needs. Once a child has read ten or more of the leveled eBooks and passed each of the corresponding eQuizzes, they advance on to the next reading level where they have access to lengthier and more difficult text. (Learning A-Z, 2017)

I believe implementing these resources can help students to gain the meaningful practice they need to strengthen their literacy and learning skills, as learners have the opportunity to read books of their interest in which text is supplemented with pictures and audio. In addition, the interactive eBooks have complementary activities that focus on improving the students' reading

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comprehension and motivate them to continue reading. Besides the eBooks are organized into different levels according to their abilities.

Facing the need of using and taking advantage of a tool like the one described, this research sets the objective of observing and analyzing the way children experience interactive eBook reading, with the hope of contributing to a better understanding of the opportunities that technology offers to students and teachers.

The considerations above led to the following research question: How can I use interactive leveled eBooks in an effective way to improve reading comprehension skills in a group of third grade students at Liceo Pino Verde?

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Theoretical Framework

Language can be understood as a system of signs and a cluster of structures and rules that form a network of meanings. In this work, it is necessary to define that the language attends to a system of organization (grammar), which extends to a process of semantic and pragmatic correlation. The process of acquisition of these structures is complex and difficult to conceptualize in a single meaning or theoretical postulate. But if there is something that has been made clear up to date, is that languages shape thinking and the process of reasoning, generated from cognitive interconnections and cultural contrasts, which gives as results that the frames of meanings are different depending on the language in question.

For the purposes of this research, language is a tool for meaningful learning in all areas of knowledge and, considering that in the LPV we work from a bilingual perspective, it is necessary to contemplate that bilingual education is a process of planning and implementing two languages that serve as teaching tools in the classroom with the aim of facilitating not only the understanding of learning but also the acquisition of reading and writing skills in those two languages. For our students, having two languages of instruction for the other subjects: math, science and social studies, generates certain confusions at the time of using one or the other, which develops certain types of errors in the reading process and interpretation itself concerning to the follow-up instructions, recognition of key sentences and ideas, general understanding of vocabulary and the meaning of words

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In bilingual education the ability to manage the mother tongue and the second language must be obtained. In a broader sense, bilingual has much to do with communication skills (oral, reading and writing) in both languages, so that the speaker can master the two languages significantly. In the Liceo Pino Verde, we seek that the contact of two languages is not only a linguistic condition, but also cultural. With this, we help our students to have a better understanding of the discursive contexts in order to improve and support the process of reading comprehension in the second language.

The learning of a language is a complex process that takes time and dedication. It is also generally accepted that reading starts with identifying words, moves to integrating and interpreting these, and then to comprehension that takes place at the end of sentences, phrases and texts related to the way kids approach the understanding (Verhoeven & Perfetti, 2008).

Children already know how to decode words in their home language to get meaning from text and, if not helped to decode in English, may transfer their home language-decoding techniques and end up reading English as they do it in Spanish. Students use their mother tongue as a frame of reference to complete the gaps they encounter in the second language of instruction while they are learning it, which is closely linked to the process of reading comprehension in language classes.

Young children need to know the 26 alphabet letter names and sounds in order to be able to decode in English. There must be a special consideration given that English has 26 letters but on average 44 sounds (in Standard English) so and the remaining sounds can be introduced when children have more experience in using language and reading.

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Beginning reading in any language goes really easy if children are familiar with the language they are trying to read, this applies to English too. Many children work out how to read in English by themselves if they have shared picture books with adults, as they are likely to have memorized the language. Reading what they already know is an important step in learning to read as it gives children opportunities to work out how to decode simple words by themselves. Once children have built up a bank of words they can read, they feel confident and are then ready for a more structured approach.

Children with bilingual language-learning skills tend to demonstrate, from an early age, that they know which language to use with different adults. If they are much less expert in one language than in another, they will employ with all of them the best they know most of the time. It is well known in the academic world that in the early stages of language learning and second language acquisition processes, students or apprentices do not speak either language very well and therefore they are forced to use the best of each of the languages to be understood; this is called code switching.

All students should have the opportunity to be taught differently according to their learning styles. They should be able not only to have a single methodology, but others that can fit and meet their needs. The education of the 21st century requires new methodologies that meet the needs of each student and values their capacities and abilities, as well as their work rhythm. Our worry as an institution is to search and keep up to date with new methodologies and technological tools that help in the pedagogical process of the teachers and lets students develop autonomous and

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independent abilities; along with the necessity of the teachers to keep updated with new strategies and applications.

The activities proposed by the interactive applications represent a differentiating element that accounts for the need to work in groups in order to optimize the motivation in the classroom. While some subjects such as animals or colors are suitable for the younger ones at the initial levels, others, such as communicating through mobiles or the customs of young people in different countries, fit better with older students. It is important, therefore, that the selection of themes or the material are attractive for their age, since it can happen frequently, especially by the elderly, who do not want to do an activity because it is considered too childish. In the opposite case, if the material or subjects are complex for the younger students, this will be an added difficulty that can lead to frustration or disinterest. Raz-Kids not only provides a library of texts that students can read depending on their ages and academic levels, but also allows teachers, knowing the level of their students in each of the grades, to program special and differentiated activities that lets students to work at their own pace and develop their reading comprehension skills based on their different learning phases.

Thanks to new technologies and the education revolution of the 21ST century, it is necessary that language teachers implement new strategies and develop activities that go together with the progress of their students. The learning of a second language has always been an important object of study for researchers of language. Language teachers should establish clear and updated methodologies that take into account the current process of their students and who are always

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looking for the integration of reading and writing as mechanisms of comprehension and production of language that you want to learn.

In the past few years, there has been some studies on “multimodal literacy”, which is the understanding of the different ways of knowledge representation and meaning making. (Lim, F. V. & Tan, K.Y.S. (2017). Multimodal literacy “focuses on the design of discourse by investigating the contributions of specific semiotic resources”. Raz-kids is a platform that integrates the multimodal proposal of literacy in order to incorporate sound, image and video into literature to achieve connections with students of different ways of learning, which makes this application an outstanding tool for the development of production and reading comprehension skills.

It is a standardized fact that learning a second language could not be isolated from the culture, but also they have been serious studies in Linguistics, under which it has been proven that reading and writing play a vital role as transmitters of information at the time of learning and communication channels.

Blended learning is the use of two or more distinct methods of training. This may include combinations such as: blending classroom instruction with online instruction, blending online instruction with access to a coach or faculty member, blending simulations with structured courses, blending on-the-job training with brownbag informal sessions, blending managerial coaching with e-learning activities. (Clark, 2003). Blended Learning precise origin is still uncertain. However many institutions have implemented it in order to meet their student’s needs. Schooley (2005) points to three key aspects of the blended learning models that are consistent: Offline instruction

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(classroom instruction), online synchronous learning and online self-paced learning (asynchronous online environment), Blended Learning arose from the necessity of accomplishing an educational goal with students that have different learning styles.

The inclusion of new technologies in the classroom can contribute to generate opportunities for each of the students with their levels of learning, but what does it mean to differentiate in the classroom? How can a significant differentiation be made through the use of a tool like Raz-kids? To differentiate means to adapt the teaching to the particular needs of each student in relation to their abilities, recognizing that each student has different learning styles, previous knowledge gained, varied experiences, different abilities, interests and motivations, etc. To later succeed in attending to these individualities, and thus favor the full development of their capabilities (Behjat, 2011).

Differentiation is not intended to label students, but rather to analyze their skills and knowledge in order to make decisions about the most appropriate educational strategies. That is why the tool we have chosen to use, Raz-Kids, gives us a very valuable resource to achieve differentiation in the classrooms, since students can be working on the platform while the guide teacher focuses on the students with higher difficulties, which summarizes the role of the teacher in this type of educational methodologies.

In a differentiated classroom, the teacher perceives the differences that make each student unique, not to distinguish some as better as or worse than others but to plan educational goals that relate effectively to each student. (Bertie Kingore, 2008).

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As Hart (2008) has said, blended learning gives many possibilities by combining digital media on Internet with established classroom forms that require the physical co-presence of teacher and students. Students who were born during the 21st century students are known as digital natives because of the constant exposure they have to new technologies. They are currently accessing information quickly through their cellphones, tablets and personal computers which makes it easier for them to get engage in online instruction and implement blended learning as part of their learning process. Implementing the blended approach will not only let students take control of their learning but keep them engage and help them achieve the academic and personal goals.

As Sackestein, Spark and Jenkins (2015) say, one of the referenced tools are the Electronic books (e-books) which were introduced in the late 1970s with Project Gutenberg, the original source for eBooks on the internet (Hart, 1992). EBooks have been predominant during this 21st century due to the improvements in technology. Upon the arrival of personal computers in the 1980s, the differences between reading from paper and from computer screens became a popular area of research, and in particular, whether people were able to comprehend information effectively and read text with adequate speed from digital media (Ball & Hourcade, 2011). Students prefer to use them due to the many advantages it offers such as easy access, portability, online access, price and striking design so much that schools prefer to buy eBook instead of textbooks. With their multiple functions eBooks can enhance the learning experiences and help students with learning disabilities, improve foreign language learning and promote listening skills.

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Design

Research Design

This paper is designed from the application of didactic units, which will be included later on, in order to intervene in the educational process of 23 third grade, group a students of the Liceo Pino Verde.

This research work is based on the intention to help third graders to improve their understanding and textual interpretation, promoting the use of relevant and specialized technological applications, capable of leading students to recognize different types of text, characters, situations of time and space and messages in determined texts. For the purposes of this project, it has been decided that this project should be oriented towards the implementation of an action research, which seeks to solve the immediate problem regarding the reading comprehension of third grade students from the implementation of a multimodal application, in which a reflexive process of solving problems in relation to reading comprehension will be carried out in a progressive manner, led by the teacher group director who is in charge of the language and literature area.

As an action research, this study aims to a wide variety of evaluative, investigative, and analytical research methods designed to diagnose and analyze problems related to the reading comprehension and help educators develop practical solutions as the implementation of blended

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learning, multimodal literacy and Raz-kids to address them quickly and efficiently. This action research may also be applied to programs or educational techniques that are not necessarily experiencing any problems, but that educators simply want to learn more about including technology in their classes and improve their student's abilities and competences on reading and writing. The general goal of the study is to create a simple, practical and efficient series of units that helps students in their process of literacy learning, evaluation, and reading comprehension improvement that leads to increasingly better results for schools, teachers, or programs.

Students will have a platform called Raz-Kids, which offers a good number of books for each of the student's levels. Books are not only literary but also informative. There are books on natural sciences, social sciences, history, geography, art and culture in general. Raz-Kids is a product that provides complete and level reading resources for students from grade 1 to 12. However, for this particular work, the researcher will make use of levels exclusively related to the third grade for a period of three months. In addition to books, the platform also gives students the right content they need to meet and improve their educational needs in all subjects.

Students access their level text through an interactive learning portal which was designed to keep children motivated and engaged. Raz-kids have a very friendly interface to children, providing drawings, videos, images and sound. Each eBook is available in both online and mobile formats, allowing not only to make exercises of listening and reading at their own pace, but also record themselves reading. Each one the children enter to read, the platform keeps a detailed record of the times they do, when and how much they have read, the numbers of attempts to carry out an eQuiz or a specific activity.

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Students then will have an eQuiz with an extended answer response to test comprehension and determine future instruction needs. The reading levels are conformed by ten or more eBooks. Once a child has read them, they will be able to advance on to the next reading level where they have access to more difficult text.

As part of the motivation needed to activate students' learning processes, the platform gives each one certain points and rewards that they can store and use to create figures and access to online games. This is to ensure that the third grade students find the platform very friendly and do not feel that the only thing they will find in them are texts, quizzes and academic activities, but also a space to learn while having fun.

If the researcher requests it so, he or she can assign specific tasks to each student to improve certain elements of understanding and comprehension. In addition, they can be placed in the level that the child is depending on their results.

The researcher's role will be based on the observation of his students and on the monitoring of the results provided by the platform, in order to link the didactic units that will support the process of the children in the platform. The results will be quantified and qualified based on the eQuizzes grades and the levels the students achieve. In order to reach this research project, the teacher guide should collect information about the times students use the Raz-Kids platform after applying instructional units aimed at improving the reading comprehension process. The application provides tables with periodic reports that will serve as tools to measure the progress of its students and the effectiveness of units, didactic sequences, online quizzes and multimedia work that allows Raz-Kids. Participant observation enables researchers to learn about the activities of

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the people under study in their natural setting through observing and participating in those activities (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2002)

The pedagogical intervention will be carried out in three months, with three pedagogical units per month, considering that if the tool works, this period of time will be enough to prove it. These units seek to collect the records of each student on the platform and support the work of the students with lessons that provide tools for children to take advantage of the books and activities of the platform significantly.

Here is a chart with the timetable of intervention of the teacher guide and the results that were collected during the research process.

INT.	DESCRIPTION – OBJECTIVE	COMPREHENSIÓN TOPIC	DATE
1	Unit 1: To complete a diagnostic assessment to identify the skills students are strong on and which they are struggling on.	Identifying strengths and weakness	February 8, 2017
2	Unit 2: For students to identify their strengths and weakness according to their results.	Analyzing results of diagnostic tests.	February 15, 2017
3	Unit 3: Nature of texts, identifying text typologies and their main characteristics.	Types of texts	February 22, 2017
4	Raz-Kids Report 1	Reading comprehension	February - March, 2017

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5	Unit 4: By reading different level book in Raz-kids students will be able to identify the author's point of view and compare it to their point of view.	Craft and structure (nature of the text)	March 8, 2017
6	Unit 5: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to identify and order the sequence of events of a story.	Sequence of events	March 16, 2017
7	Unit 6: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to use context clues to find the answer.	Context clues	March 22, 2017
8	Raz-Kids Report 2	Reading comprehension and literacy.	March - April, 2017
9	Unit 7: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.	Points of view	April 10, 2017
10	Unit 8: To write questions according to the story for someone else to answer.	Writing and answering questions on reading comprehension.	April 16, 2017
11	Raz-Kids Report 3	Reading comprehension and literacy.	March - April, 2017
12	Unit 9: Analyzing final results.	Reading comprehension skills.	April 26, 2017

Implementation and Data Analysis.

This research work is based on theories about the importance of using technological tools in the classroom to differentiate work with students and achieve better results in reading

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comprehension, described in the theoretical framework. These approaches are concerned with explaining how a group of children of a third grade acquire a competence in reading comprehension in English texts, and how, from the application of didactic units and a platform, students acquire from the different levels of language the skills necessary to understand and interpret all types of text and what this entails in their process of socialization and higher thinking, in contrast to the same processes that occur in the acquisition of a second language, English, from a school immersion program.

At the same time, there is a concern to address with particular care the forms of communication used by bilingual speakers as well as the manifestations of languages and their support or difficulty in learning and attaining reading comprehension skills, understanding this event as a consequence of a complex process of comprehension and production, which involves not only the structural characteristics of a language in relation to texts, but also the limits and possibilities of meaning inherent in each language, of which the user makes conscious or unconscious use; the linguistic context in which it is immersed at the moment of its linguistic realization, the linguistic knowledge and the linguistic competence that the speaker and its interlocutors present, and if one language in relation to another provides forms of thought or molds the same, attending to a cultural framework determined by the various processes of reading.

The practical part of this project was oriented and justified by the need to establish clear parameters for the teaching and learning of English as a second language and the competence of a group of students to understand and explained the third grade texts in relation with the Raz-kids

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platform and the use of didactic and technological programs in the classroom that gave teachers valid tools to address their classes in a meaningful way.

It was through the collection of data obtained in the Raz-kids reports of the third grade of the Liceo Pino Verde School, a Colombian bilingual institution, that the teacher organized the activities within each unit to enhance the reading comprehension process of the students. At the same time, various learning techniques were applied based on theories of comprehension and textual inference, which ensured the structured organization of a didactic unit and a didactic sequence that allowed enhancing the communicative processes and comprehension and production of students' texts of modern languages.

The researcher developed as a methodological plan works with several didactic interventions during three months. These didactic units were oriented to strengthen the work of the platform and to understand the results of the children in each level, in order to support the students in their process of interpretation and comprehension. The following are the didactic units that were used to carry out the interventions by the teacher researcher during the three months, included in the course plan in language that is required to work in the third grade for the first period of the school year. From this syllabus it is sought to establish the objectives with which the didactic units will be made that will help the teacher to let the students to take advantage of the platform in a most significant way.

Here is English language syllabus that needs to be covered throughout the third grade in Liceo Pino Verde.

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TERM	STANDARD	TOPIC	OBJECTIVES
1	Comprehension and textual interpretation	Craft and structure. Main ideas and details.	I understand various types of text, using some strategies to search, organize and store information.
	Literacy	Types of texts	Develop reading hypotheses about the relationships between the constituent elements of a literary text, and between the latter and the context.
	Language and communication	Media Grammar	Characterize the mass media and select the information they emit, to use it in the comprehension of new texts.

With this syllabus, it was considered opportune to develop nine different units that supported the work of the students during the three months of research. Below are the nine units that worked together with the Raz-Kids platform to promote the development of reading comprehension skills.

The reflections arising after applying the units related below are evident in the annexes.

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Lesson planners

Unit 1

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: February 8, 2017

Topic: Identifying strengths and weakness

Time suggested: 30 minutes.

Objective: To complete a diagnostic assessment to identify the skills students are strong on and which they are struggling on.

Procedure: To get the students engaged, this unit started with a short discussion by asking students why they think reading is important in their life. Students participated and some answers were written on the board and open a debate between them. Students also were asked to brainstorm some ideas on what strategies they can use and already use to improve their reading comprehension. After the discussion the students worked on Raz-kids once a week for 30 minutes in the classroom in order to improve their reading comprehension. Students took out their tablets and tried their username and password and see if it's working properly.

Wrap-up: Students will complete a pre assigned diagnostic test on the reading platform to identify their weaknesses and strengths in the different reading skills.

Observations: It was observed that the students were motivated and excited when they were told that they were going to be working with their tablets and Raz-kids. While they were working they were fully concentrated and working quietly. I noticed that my students did not care if they got the answer right or went back to the re read the book in order to find the answer.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established in a very enthusiastic and fun way.

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Unit 2

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: February 15, 2017

Topic: Analyzing Results of diagnostic tests.

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: For students to identify their strengths and weakness according to their results.

Procedure:

As a warm up activity to get students on track, students will be asked to close their eyes for 2 minutes and think about a world without books and share their answers on their board in silence. They will stay on the board for further discussion at the end of the class.

Next, I will project the overall results of their diagnostic test on the video beam without any names. We will start going over it and identifying and proposing ideas on how they can improve the skills they are struggling with.

Wrap-up: Class discussion: sharing their answers on their reflection at the beginning of the class and asking students how their answer has changed after analyzing the results and if they didn't change, why not?

Observations: It was important for students to understand their results and know what each skill asks from them. It was needed for students to actually know the objective of this intervention and the importance of it for their improvement.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Unit 3

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: February 22, 2017

Topic: Nature of texts – types of texts.

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Procedure: Warm up activity: students will be in pairs asking each other what is their favorite genre to read, they will rotate and record their answers.

Next, the students will be given instructions and write them on the board. I will go around verifying that the students have everything ready and understood the instructions.

After, students will be asked to take out their iPads and log in into their Raz-kids accounts and choose two books; one of fantasy and the other one nonfiction in the level they were assigned. They will listen to the book 2 times and then will record themselves reading out loud. At the end of these activities they have to complete the quiz where they will be asked questions about reality and fantasy and the struggling comprehension skills each students is having difficulty with.

Observations: students were very excited of using their iPads in class to read. They have always showed excitement towards Raz-kids.

It was noticed students didn't care if they got their answer wrong, they just kept going without going back to the text and finding the answer. It is necessary to work on this.

Conclusion: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

Unit 4

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: March 8, 2017

Topic: Craft and structure (nature of the text)

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: By reading different level book in Raz-kids students will be able to identify the author's point of view and compare it to their point of view.

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.6 (Common Core English Arts Standards)

Distinguish their own point of view from that of the authors of a text.

Procedure: Students will log in into their Raz-kids account and will complete the activities for the book they choose, reading, recording and answering the 5 comprehension questions about point of view.

Wrap-up: Class debate on their different points of view, they will defend their opinion and give arguments.

Observations: Students were very excited to be using the platform and their tablets and they were very worried about getting low scores. It was noticed that by them getting stars when they got answer correct it was motivating them and if they got it wrong they went back and read the book again to find the answer and get all their stars.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

SKILLS

Unit 5

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: March 16, 2017

Topic: Sequence of events

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to identify and order the sequence of events of a story.

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.8

Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text.

(e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence). (Common Core English Arts Standards)

Procedure: Students will log in into their Raz-kids account and will complete the activities for the book they choose, reading, recording and answering the 5 comprehension questions about Sequence of events.

Wrap-up: Students will complete a worksheet “first, next, then and last” with a story they will make up.

Observations: Students were very excited to be using the platform and their tablets and they were very worrying about getting low scores. It was noticed that by them getting stars when they got answer correct it was motivating them and if they got it wrong they went back and read the book again to find the answer and get all their stars.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

SKILLS

Unit 6

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: March 22, 2017

Topic: Context clues

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to use context clues to find the answer.

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.5

Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. (Common Core English Arts Standards)

Procedure: Warm up: brainstorming ideas on how we can use clues in the text to help us answer questions.

Students will log in into their Raz-kids account and will complete the activities for the book they choose, reading, recording and answering the 5 comprehension questions focusing on context clues to help them answer the questions.

Wrap-up: A book with questions will be projected and they will all work together to answer them using context clues.

Observations: Students were very excited to be using the platform and their tablets and they were very worrying about getting low scores. It was noticed that by them getting stars when they got answer correct it was motivating them and if they got it wrong they went back and read the book again to find the answer and get all their stars.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

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SKILLS

Unit 7

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: April 10, 2017

Topic: Points of view

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: By reading different level books in Raz-kids students will be able to use context clues to find the answer.

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.6

Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters. (Common Core English Arts Standards)

Procedure: Warm up: talking to students about the importance of always having a point of view and how everyone has a different one.

Students will log in into their Raz-kids account and will complete the activities for the book they choose, reading, recording and answering the 5 comprehension questions focusing on the characters point of view and how it might be different to theirs.

Wrap-up: We all read together as a class and we all try to come up with the point of view of the characters and author and compare it our opinion. Class discussion/debate.

Observations: Students were very excited to be using the platform and their tablets and they were very worrying about getting low scores. It was noticed that by them getting stars when they got answer correct it was motivating them and if they got it wrong they went back and read the book again to find the answer and get all their stars.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

SKILLS

Unit 8

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: April 16, 2017

Topic: Writing questions

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: To write questions according to the story for someone else to answer.

Standard:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (Common Core English Arts Standards)

Procedure: Students will log in into their Raz-kids account and will complete the activities for the book they choose, reading, recording and answering the 5 comprehension questions focusing on important information they can use to create questions for their friends to answer.

Wrap-up: The students will go around the classroom and give a friend the questions to answer.

Observations: Students were very excited to be using the platform and their tablets and they were very worrying about getting low scores. It was noticed that by them getting stars when they got answer correct it was motivating them and if they got it wrong they went back and read the book again to find the answer and get all their stars.

Conclusions: Students were able to complete the assignment in the time established.

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SKILLS

Unit 9

Teacher: Paula Arias

Date: April 24, 2017

Topic: Analyzing Results

Time suggested: 30 minutes

Objective: For students to identify their improvement and see their process.

Procedure: at the beginning of class I will project the results of their diagnostic test and ask them questions in order for them to remember their weakness and strengths.

The final report of these three months will be shown and they will start participating by telling them where they have seen progress.

Closing of the intervention: by asking students to write on a piece of paper how they felt throughout the intervention and how their results reflect their effort.

Observations: Students were very proud of them and were able to give a closing with a reflection about their progress.

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SKILLS

Results report

Below are the bar graphs with month-to-month results for third grade students. These results are obtained after applying the different pedagogical strategies mentioned in the weekly planners and with the help of the Raz-kids platform.

The first bar chart corresponds to the period between February and March:



As can be seen in the graph, students present difficulties in skills related to the recognition of the nature of texts (reality / fantasy), facts and opinions about stories, identifying the purpose and points of View of both the author and the characters themselves.

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SKILLS

In relation to this first report, it became necessary to implement certain activities aimed at developing these skills, without neglecting the performance in which they presented good results, such as classifying information and recognizing the main elements of the story.

Once the previously mentioned activities were implemented, another report was taken as a bar chart. The results of this sample, which corresponds to the months from March to April, is presented below:

Comprehension Skills ?

✦ Skill	✦ Correct	▼ Total	✦ Accuracy	
Vocabulary	438	574	76%	<div><div></div></div>
Main Idea and Details	438	546	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Sequence Events	299	375	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Cause and Effect	267	333	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Compare and Contrast	210	269	78%	<div><div></div></div>
Make Inferences and Draw Conclusions	192	254	76%	<div><div></div></div>
Story Elements	132	159	83%	<div><div></div></div>
Classify Information	100	131	76%	<div><div></div></div>
Author's Purpose	83	103	81%	<div><div></div></div>
Problem and Solution	62	74	84%	<div><div></div></div>
Analyze Character	39	47	83%	<div><div></div></div>
Reality/Fantasy	24	39	62%	<div><div></div></div>
Fact or Opinion	24	35	69%	<div><div></div></div>
Make Inferences	4	4	100%	<div><div></div></div>
Draw Conclusions	4	4	100%	<div><div></div></div>
Identify Genre	2	2	100%	<div><div></div></div>
Author's Point of View	1	1	100%	<div><div></div></div>
Total	2,319	2,950	79%	<div><div></div></div>

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SKILLS

At the end of the second month of didactic intervention, it can be seen that the difficulties in identifying the nature of the writing (Reality / Fantasy) still remain in the students. A considerable increase in skills such as 'making inferences', identification of 'genres', providing 'conclusions' in front of texts, and identifying the 'point of view' of the author can be appreciated.

Based on the information gathered in the bar graphs for the months of February and March, new strategies and methodologies are presented in the planning units to strengthen the skills that have resulted in assessments below 70%.

After using the strategies and activities in the third and last month of application of the technological tools, and in order to improve the reading comprehension and reading skills, the following chart with bar graphs corresponding to the period between the months of April to May:

Comprehension Skills ?

Skill	Correct	Total	Accuracy	
Vocabulary	549	682	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Main Idea and Details	572	680	84%	<div><div></div></div>
Sequence Events	394	529	74%	<div><div></div></div>
Make Inferences and Draw Conclusions	261	327	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Cause and Effect	235	272	86%	<div><div></div></div>
Compare and Contrast	217	258	84%	<div><div></div></div>
Story Elements	203	228	89%	<div><div></div></div>
Classify Information	162	183	89%	<div><div></div></div>
Problem and Solution	73	88	83%	<div><div></div></div>
Author's Purpose	76	85	89%	<div><div></div></div>
Analyze Character	72	77	94%	<div><div></div></div>
Reality/Fantasy	33	45	73%	<div><div></div></div>
Fact or Opinion	18	25	72%	<div><div></div></div>
Identify Genre	4	5	80%	<div><div></div></div>
Character Point of View	1	1	100%	<div><div></div></div>
Total	2,870	3,485	82%	<div><div></div></div>

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This last table shows the effectiveness of the activities and the technological tools that were applied during the quarter, resulting in an improvement in the skills that had been identified with low or below 70%. In the chart above, it is evident that all reading comprehension skills are above 70%, which ratifies the effectiveness of the platform and the relevance of the activities proposed to promote reading comprehension in the third grade. Therefore, the question of the present research is answered by the mean that the reading tool “Raz-Kids” does help improve reading skills in students in third grade students and that the effectiveness of a multimedia and online interactive tools in the reading skills of third grade students is quite high.

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Conclusions & Implications

From the beginning, this project emerged as a strategy to optimize and improve reading comprehension in third grade students and through the pedagogical interventions described above, it became evident the importance of the role of the researcher in the guide of educational platforms, especially Raz-Kids. The role of the teacher was basically focused on guiding the students within the intervention units to support the reading comprehension processes, the teacher also analyzed the periodic results given by the raz-kids platform and gave constant support in the skills and competences that showed a downward trend. An example of these competences were the components related to gender: reality / fantasy, facts / opinions and author's points of view. This skills and items showed a low score in the first results, so the teacher worked during the units to help the students with examples and questions to make them aware of these skills and the way they could be developed in following activities.

The nature of the project came from the educational perspectives oriented to the request of technological tools and platforms, especially from Raz-Kids, and from there, group pedagogical interventions were developed that addressed methodologies focused on the result of the platform, that is, strategies that serve to assist students with assessment criteria; Points of view, general and specific ideas, identification of the genre and narrator, recognition of the characters and their role in the text, etc. Thanks to this technological tool the students showed more progress in their reading comprehension and in the quantity of books they read during a specific period of time.

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During the interventions that were carried out, the objectives were always oriented according to the monthly results produced by the same platform. Therefore, the researcher found that the points of the students' learning process, in relation to the reading comprehension skills and criteria, were those that needed more support. Another important conclusion was for future teachers and researchers interested in doing similar projects with the implementation of online applications such as Raz-kids, it is important to bear in mind that platforms should not do all the work or replace the teacher's job. Researchers must be aware that it is a tool that must be supervised, fed and studied by the teacher. In future research, I think it is important to focus a little more on the skills related to the proposition, not only in interpretation and comprehension. While this project provided interesting results regarding the development of reading comprehension skills and abilities, a research related to textual production would be a perfect complement for this one or other research projects.

Thanks to these results, the reading comprehension process benefited significantly, leading students to improve in their skills and competencies as can be seen in the tables and graphs of results. The implementation of technological tools and different educational platforms to enhance language skills and competences, especially those related to understanding, are inexhaustible sources of work for teachers and must be done in a responsible and continuous way. Working with Raz-Kids, which was the platform that the teacher researcher implemented with the students in this specific project, provides us with an overview that can be applied in conjunction with the strategies and recommendations of the class.

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Consequently, teachers who continue to work with this tool will be able to verify the effectiveness of the platform, as well as identify other strategies to address each of the categories and evaluable criteria, to give way to new micro projects and continue to feed the activities of Teaching with activities that increasingly strengthen the processes of evaluation of reading comprehension.

The results that were obtained after the application of the pedagogical units and the activities and quizzes in the platform were those that were expected at the beginning of the project. As can be seen in the results tables presented month by month by the teacher, and obtained in the Raz-kids platform, the students improved considerably in the different components of reading comprehension and interpretation. The components that showed the best progress with the platform were those related to the narrative genre, the types of text and the macro structure or composition of the texts. In these components, the students showed greater progress in recognizing the abovementioned categories and connected them with the other skills they had already developed very well in the first phases of the project, resulting in students leveling their scores on all the criteria and skills.

After carrying out each stage of this project with the students, implementing the strategies and analyzing the results around the evaluation criteria of the Raz-Kids platform, the first conclusion is oriented to the effectiveness of the use of technological tools in classroom. The importance of bringing to class new strategies and methodologies that seek to involve students and help develop new pedagogical practices is not discussed.

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Annex.

1. Journal

UNIT 1

As a teacher I believe the importance of letting my students know what we are going to be working on and what I expect from them. To start this unit I decided to contextualize my students first with activities that will get them started and give them a brief idea of what we were going to be working on so I decided to start with a thinking routine that had them think deeper on answer for different questions like, “What is reading and why is it important” I asked students to take their time to think and then started to ask. I noticed that students were on the right track and were able to defend their point of view when another students argued. After the students shared I asked more questions trying to get deeper into the topic, I asked them “do you think reading is reading even if you don’t understand the story? Students immediately started yelling answers but a debate started on yes and no answers, everyone defending their point of view and at the end realizing they both could be right. A closure from me was necessary in order to get them back in track and come up with a clear statement from them which was “ if you are not understanding what you are reading there is no point of reading”. After this I realized I had my students attention and on track to introduce the online platform.

To introduce the platform I asked students to think about how they liked to read best if by having a book, listening to it or on their tablets, I had variety of questions but most of them answer that they like to listen to it and have it on their tablets. After this I told them we were going to start

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using an online platform called Raz-kids where they will have the opportunity to look, listen and record their reading, most of them were familiar to this platform from previous years and it was not necessary to teach them how it worked after I gave them their username and passwords and asked to search around the platform and see its features.

To wrap up the class I asked students to complete a book I assigned in order for me to know where they were standing in reading comprehension. Students were very excited to start working with this platform but when it was time to read they started doing I saw they were not taking it seriously so immediately I had to come up with strategies to have students take their reading process seriously.

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UNIT 2

After unit 1 I noticed that it was necessary to encourage my students more and get them involved with their reading process. I thought about the importance of letting them know how they did on their first diagnostic test, thinking this will empower them more and get them on track more. I started with a thinking routine asking them to think about their experience with the platform the day before, how they felt? How did they think they did and what can they improve on? Students were very honest and share their experience some of them saying they needed headphones to concentrate more, others they needed to sit on the floor away from their friends to concentrate, and most of them said they needed to read the questions again in order to understand them better.

After the discussion was finished, I told students I was going to be showing them the results of their first diagnostic test and will be going over them individually. First I showed them the overall results were they identify the areas they needed to work on and asked them how they think they can improve, they all came to the conclusion that they needed to read more and read the questions carefully and going back to the story to answer them.

To wrap up the activity I asked students to write their own private compromise on their notebook about how they were going to improve. At the end I noticed that students were actually caring about their compromise since they started asking if they could have a second opportunity on their diagnostic test.

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UNIT 3

As a warm-up activity to start working on the reading platform I asked students to get into pairs and asked each other what was their favorite type of book they liked to read (fiction, non-fiction). While students were sharing their opinions and defending their point of view I walked around listening to their answers. Their answers varied and there was not an specific favorite.

When it was time to start working on our platform I asked students to take out their tablets and log in into Raz-kids, students got very excited and started to get ready taking out their headphones, getting comfortable on their desk or in a different spot around the classroom. It was evident that they were excited and willing to work. To get students more involved I reminded them our objective which was to improve our reading comprehension in a fun efficient way keeping in mind our different learning styles. I also asked students to think about their compromises on improving and taking their reading process seriously.

Students worked quietly and in organized manner throught the 30 minutes. While I was walking around I noticed that for some students it was necessary to listen to the question and not read it only in order to understand it and noticed a certain relief in them. But as I kept walking I saw that when they got the wrong answer they did not go back to the story and try to find it, instead they kept going and didn't care about getting it wrong.

This factor worry me a lot as a teacher and it was necessary for me to have a discussion at the end of lesson in order to give a closing to the activity and where students could get their feedback on

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how they did. When I shared the overall impressions and asked students to considerate they were very receptive and willing to keep trying.

UNIT 4

For this fourth day students already got the routine clear. They were ready with tablets and headphones and were ready to start their activity. While I was setting the timer up I heard talking between them on how many stars they want it to gain today and how many books they had to read in order to get them. I asked students to tell me our objectives and to keep track of their time and books they read.

Today's activity was carried on by them with no interruptions and constant supervision. Students worked quietly and very concentrated on their reading, at times the only voices in the classroom was their celebrations when they got a correct answer.

As a teacher it was satisfying to see their effort and enthusiasm toward the work and see how they were actually taking control of their reading process and enjoying it at the same time.

At the end students were asking me to let them finish the book because they didn't want to leave it uncompleted. Immediately they started asking me what I thought about their behavior and if their scores improved, which led me to think that it was necessary to show them their results again in order for them to know where they stand. To give an ending to the activity I asked students on what they noticed the questions were about and they said it was about the point of view of the author and theirs, It was necessary to explain to them what this actually meant and why it was part

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of comprehending a story. Students started to give their point of view on the different books they read and I realized they were interiorizing their reading.

UNIT 5

After the fourth unit it was necessary for me to check the reports and see if they were any significant advances in my students reading process. I noticed that they were still pretty close to the initial ones and it was necessary to keep working on “fact and opinion and making inferences. As I welcomed students in the classroom, right away they started asking if we were going to be working on Raz-kids today and there was such an excitement in them, that I realized that this platform was actually touching them and was helping them get more responsibility of their reading process and by that they will improve their reading comprehension with this interactive platform that gets them excited and eager to keep reading.

Today’s class was started by a short talk from me to the students letting them they were doing a good job and that the changed they had made from the beginning until now it was evident and I was very proud of them and we still had a long way to go in order to improve their reading comprehension.

Students were ready to start their reading activity. Before starting I asked students to pay close attention to their pronunciation when recording their book and to use the tools the platform gave them to listen to the word so they could say it correctly. Also to identify the type of questions they were asking them on each quiz.

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Students finished their activity in a very organized manner and sharing their experiences that some of them didn't understand the questions because they kept getting harder. I explained to them that this was because they were leveling up and achieving more skills every time. I asked students if they thought this interactive platform was helping them and I heard some opinions that said yes because it motivated them and it was fun to use the tablet to learn and read.

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SKILLS

UNIT 6

For today's activity I want to start with a little bit of writing to have students used the vocabulary learned throughout the reading activities in the platform. I used the video beam to project a book from Raz-kids and asked students to identify the title and predict what the book was going to be about. I asked students to share what they thought it was needed to ask themselves while they were reading. Students came up with a variety of answers like, identifying the main characters, the setting, the problem of the story and the solution, with this answers I was able to tell students what we were going to be doing as a warm up activity which was to read the book out loud altogether and complete a worksheet where they had to identify "who, what, when, where, first, next then and last. Students participating in reading the book out loud and started working on their worksheet, they had 20 minutes to complete and then in a class discussion go over their answers. Reading activity started normal with students ready to work and signed on. The timer was up and they started reading and recording themselves, paying close attention the questions and how many stars they started with. As I walked around the classroom I noticed they celebrated more frequently when they got answer correctly the first time in other students I noticed that they read the book two to three time in order to get all the questions correctly and it got me thinking that this was actually working not only on creating a reading habit on them but on getting them worry about their reading process.

The activity closed successfully and students were asking for more time to work.

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UNIT 7

Today's activity I started by showing student the overall results of they have accomplished so far. Students started screaming out that a lot of results were on green and before they were in red such as "reality and fantasy, fact and opinion and a lot more. I notice that this got students very excited and by their comments I realized this platform was actually working on improving their reading comprehension and creating a reading habit in them. We spent a couple of minutes interpreting the results and creating new compromises on what they should improve on.

Immediately students got ready and started reading in an organized manner. The activity finished well and with students asking me if they were doing a good job and sharing that they liked the books they read and the images helped them understand better the story and answer the questions.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION

SKILLS

UNIT 8

For this unit I decided I want it to change it a little bit and get students to interact with each other.

I had students make up 3 questions for their friends that they think it would help them understand better a story. We brainstormed different questions on the board like “what was the main idea of the paragraph and the main characters.

Students started their reading activity with no problems throughout the time established and at the end they gave their questions to their friends and they had to answer them according to what they read and then get in pairs and share their answers. As a closure in a class discussion I asked students to tell me what they thought the objective of the questions was. I got different answers such as “to make us read carefully and to not cheat on the final quiz”. These answer helped me think on how far my students had come in order to come up with those answers. It showed that they are actually taking this seriously and is making on impact on them.

IMPLEMENTING INTERACTIVE LEVELED E-BOOKS TO IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION SKILLS

UNIT 9

Last revision of the results as a class discussion was needed since students kept asking for the improvement which was satisfying as teacher to see how much responsibility they had taken toward their reading process. As I displayed the final reports for that month students right away realized how much they had improved.

I started a class discussion by asking students what they thought this result meant. I had different answer such as “we got better in reading” “we are good in different areas but still to practice more” very significant answers that led me to ask them if they felt this platform actually helped them and how? I gave them a couple of minutes to reflect on their hard work for the past month and really think about the questions asked. Different answers were given such as “listening to the story really helped” “The stars helped me to do better” “the colors and having the book big helped”

In conclusion students said they were happy with their results and the platform and they want it to keep using it because it motivated them to do better each time and it wasn't as boring as having a physical book that sometimes didn't have images.

My conclusion as a teacher, I felt very satisfied with the results. It was evident that students improve their reading comprehension skills using this platform and most of all kept them motivated and taking control of their process, which is very important when a student's actually cared about their process and work hard to improve.