

A Language-Based Approach to Improving Reading Comprehension in Sixth-Semester
University of Cauca Students Using Short Stories



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APPROVAL
UNIVERSIDAD DEL CAUCA

The Undersigned Committee of Human and Social Sciences School approves the project developed by Marian Camila Quintero Bastidas:

A Language-Based Approach to Improving Reading Comprehension in Sixth-Semester University of Cauca Students Using Short Stories

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Dedicated to

Quiero dedicar este trabajo de grado, en primer lugar, a Dios, por darme la perseverancia y la salud necesarias durante todo este trayecto. A mi hijo Aarón, por ser el motor que cada día me motiva a seguir adelante en nuestros proyectos familiares.

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Resumen

Este estudio analizó la efectividad de un modelo basado en el lenguaje utilizando cuentos para mejorar la comprensión lectora de estudiantes de sexto semestre del programa de Lenguas Modernas en la Universidad del Cauca. Utilizando notas de campo, encuestas, observaciones, intervenciones de comprensión lectora y pruebas diagnósticas y finales, se observó un aumento significativo en las puntuaciones de los participantes. La adquisición de vocabulario y el aprendizaje cooperativo fueron factores clave en la mejora. A pesar de las diferencias individuales, la intervención demostró ser efectiva en mejorar la comprensión lectora, subrayando la importancia de estrategias basadas en la evidencia y entornos de aprendizaje colaborativo.

Palabras Clave: Enfoque basado en el idioma, comprensión lectora, historias cortas, adquisición de vocabulario, Programa de Lenguas Modernas.

Abstract

This study analyzed the effectiveness of a language-based model using short stories to improve the reading comprehension of sixth-semester students in the Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca. Using field notes, surveys, observations, reading comprehension interventions, and diagnostic and final tests, a significant increase in participants' scores was observed. Vocabulary acquisition and cooperative learning were key factors in the improvement. Despite individual differences, the intervention proved effective in enhancing reading comprehension, highlighting the importance of evidence-based strategies and collaborative learning environments.

Keywords: Language-based approach, reading comprehension, short stories, vocabulary acquisition, Modern Languages Program.

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Introduction

In today's globalized world, proficiency in multiple languages has become increasingly valuable. The ability to comprehend and interpret texts in a second language is a crucial skill for students in language programs. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of a Language-Based model intervention using short stories to improve the reading comprehension of students in the sixth semester of the Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca in Santander de Quilichao.

Reading comprehension is a multifaceted skill that involves not only understanding the literal meaning of words but also interpreting and integrating information within a broader context. For language learners, this process is often complicated by unfamiliar vocabulary and complex syntactic structures. To address these challenges, educational interventions that integrate pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities have been proposed. These activities help students grasp literary elements such as plot, character motivations, and event sequences, thus enhancing their overall comprehension.

The Language-Based approach, which emphasizes the use of context and collaborative learning, offers promising strategies to tackle these issues. By engaging students in meaningful interactions and collaborative problem-solving, this approach fosters a deeper engagement with texts and the development of essential social and cognitive skills. Moreover, vocabulary acquisition, identified as a significant challenge by both teachers and students, is addressed through targeted instruction and strategies such as the use of contextual clues.

This study utilized a combination of field notes, surveys, observation formats, reading comprehension interventions, diagnostic tests, and final tests to gather qualitative and quantitative data. The results indicated that most participants showed an improvement in their reading comprehension scores, although individual differences influenced the extent of this progress. These findings highlight the potential of a Language-Based model to enhance reading comprehension skills and underscore the importance of tailored educational strategies that consider individual needs.

By exploring the impact of this intervention, the study aims to contribute valuable insights into effective teaching practices and support the development of proficient readers capable of navigating complex texts in a second language. The conclusions drawn from this research emphasize the need for evidence-based strategies and collaborative learning environments to promote reading comprehension among language learners, ultimately preparing them for academic success and lifelong learning.

Problem Description

Problem Statement

English is currently one of the most spoken languages by non-native speakers. Colombia is a country that has been characterized by integrating the bilingual culture that is being implemented in urban and rural schools. Unfortunately, in some contexts the implementation of these programmes is more complex because of economic impediments or teachers who are assigned to the English area without a license in that emphasis. However, the Ministry of Education (MEN) tried to promote bilingual programs to Colombian students and the results were low in most of the cases.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a study conducted in more than 80 countries for 15 year old students , which assesses the extent to which they have acquired the knowledge and essential skills to be competent in society. In 2018 tests, the results were too low, in reading it was found that 50% of students reached at least Level 2 reading competence (OECD average: 77%). However, about 1% of students in Colombia ranked as the best performers in reading. These studies focus on their mother language, where there are high deficits. English is a subject that goes through multiple problems to be taught.

English is one of the most widely spoken and used languages in economic, cultural and educational aspects. However, for certain tests worldwide as Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), it is known that Colombia is part of the countries where there is a deficit in reading comprehension. For many years, there have been many ways to learn English, such as English books with exercises and conversation groups where some topics of interest are taken into account. On the other hand, literature is one of the most significant tools for teaching English as a Foreign Language. Nowadays, we can find short narrations with specific props that can be useful like books, novels, poetry and short stories. In another aspect, reading comprehension is a subject that could be solved with short readings and

multiple activities based on the story for English learning. Learners of English as a foreign language have a fundamental role in developing the learning skills process. For this reason, reading comprehension is highlighted for being helpful because it understands and analyzes the world in a written form and promotes critical thinking.

In view of this, based on the results mentioned above, learning English as a foreign language is an essential component within the Bachelor's Degree Program in Modern Languages, English and French and requires complex study and learning of skills such as listening, speaking, writing and last but not least, reading. Over the years, problems have arisen in reading comprehension since primary school and students thus start at university. In the same way, all the problems related to learning English could be changed by new perspectives and ways to learn. Providing context, this project worked with the students of sixth semester because at this level of English it is important to domain aspects like understanding vocabulary to comprehend the texts, non-literal language and multi-word verbs.

These aspects could be a hard issue for English learners and even more comprehending texts at the first time. Taking into account reading comprehension skills and characteristics, it is important to highlight the importance of knowing how to read and comprehend texts around us and emphasize the teaching of language skills that are relevant to reading, such as grammar, vocabulary, and discourse structure. To understand the students' challenges with reading comprehension, interviews were conducted with both the students and their teachers. The student interviews aimed to identify their specific difficulties, while the teacher interviews sought to gather insights from educators responsible for teaching English in the respective semester. Additionally, a diagnostic reading comprehension test was administered to assess various aspects of their comprehension, including vocabulary, analytical skills, and overall understanding of the text.

In this sense, the Language based approach will help learners with exposure to different contexts, meaningful vocabularies, and a development of language skills. For this reason, it is important to ask the following question: What are the effects of a language-based approach interventions based on reading comprehension on sixth semester students of the Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca in Santander de Quilichao?

Rationale

Learning a foreign language is a complex process that involves developing different skills, such as speaking, listening, writing, and reading. However, in the case of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners in Colombia, reading comprehension skills have been identified as a weak point. According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Colombian students scored lower than the OECD average in reading comprehension. This is a concern, especially for sixth-semester students at the University of Cauca, who need to master advanced reading skills to succeed in their academic and professional pursuits.

To address this issue, a language-based approach can be a useful strategy to enhance reading comprehension skills in EFL learners. The Language-based approach is a method that focuses on developing language skills through authentic and meaningful contexts. By using this approach, students can improve their language proficiency by practicing with real-life situations, which can make their learning experience more engaging and effective. In the case of sixth-semester students at the University of Cauca, Language-based approach can be particularly beneficial because it targets specific areas of difficulty, such as understanding vocabulary to comprehend texts, recognizing non-literal language, and mastering multi-word verbs. These are crucial skills for students who are preparing to face professional life, where they will need to be able to understand and interpret complex texts.

Moreover, the Language-based approach can also promote critical thinking and foster a deeper understanding of the world. By using this approach, students can develop a more profound appreciation of language and culture, which can help them become more well rounded individuals. This approach can provide an effective and engaging way for students to develop their language skills and prepare them for future academic and professional endeavors.

For the Modern Languages program, it could be a new tool for teaching English, it could be used to different audiences and likes in order to improve understanding in a more innovative way. English teachers of the University, searching for new instruments to catch and keep the attention of the students, made multiple activities and exercises based on the short stories and the approach mentioned before. The Language-Based Approach can bring several benefits to teachers who implement it in their English language classes. One of the main benefits is that it provides teachers with a clear and structured framework for teaching English reading comprehension skills. By using this approach, teachers can focus on teaching language and literacy skills in an integrated way, helping students to develop a deeper understanding of English and improving their ability to comprehend English texts.

This approach also encourages teachers to work collaboratively with their students. It requires students to actively participate in their own learning, to set their own learning goals, and to reflect on their own progress. This means that teachers can create a more student-centered and interactive classroom environment, which can help to develop students' confidence and independence in using English. Therefore, the Language-Based Approach can bring many benefits to teachers, including a clear and structured framework for teaching reading comprehension skills, the use of authentic materials, and a more student-centered classroom environment.

Objectives

General objective

To analyze the effectiveness of a Language-Based model intervention using short stories on improving the reading comprehension of students in the sixth semester of the Modern Languages program at the University of Cauca in Santander de Quilichao.

Specific objectives

- To design a Language-Based model intervention using short stories as a means of improving the reading comprehension level of the target population.
- To implement the use of short stories as a means of improving the reading comprehension of sixth semester students focusing on the quality of their comprehension.
- To evaluate the reading comprehension level of sixth semester students

Referential framework

Previous research

In every research project, it is important to consider the ideas and overviews of other researchers to facilitate a comprehensive understanding of the topic. In the case of this research, several fundamental studies were carefully selected to give credibility and strengthen the foundation of this project. These studies were chosen based on their relevance, reliability, and contribution to the field of study, and were used to support and contextualize the findings and conclusions of the current research.

The first antecedent is the study written by Febriani et al. (2018). This article is a literary work that uses an approach called "Language based approach" which seeks to improve English proficiency through literature. The literary work that was used for this article is "A marriage proposal" written by Anton Chekhov. According to Lazar (1993), students need certain steps to stimulate literary activities. These steps were pre-reading, while reading and post-reading, which help to better understand and know the cultural enrichment that reading can provide.

The findings in the research show how the steps (pre-reading and while-reading activities) help the students to identify in an easier way the questions. In other aspects, they highlight the teachers' labor to lead the activities and help the students to make interpretations of the text, following the writing activities and understanding the narrative. At the same time, this study takes into consideration how literary activities and literature benefit EFL learners.

The second antecedent was a study written by Syafi (2018), which conducted a study on the use of online short stories to enhance reading comprehension ability. The study aimed to explore the effectiveness of online short stories as a tool for improving reading

comprehension among participants. The participants of the study were students who were studying English as a foreign language. The study focused on their reading comprehension ability and aimed to improve it through the use of online short stories. The methodology of the study involved the use of online short stories as the main tool for enhancing the participants' reading comprehension ability. The participants were given a pre-test and post-test to assess their reading comprehension skills. The study also used a survey to gather data on the participants' attitudes towards reading and the use of online short stories.

The results of the study showed that the use of online short stories had a positive effect on the participants' reading comprehension ability. The study found that the participants showed significant improvement in their reading comprehension skills after using online short stories. The survey also revealed that the participants had positive attitudes towards reading and the use of online short stories as a tool for learning. Overall, this study suggests that online short stories can be an effective tool for improving reading comprehension ability among foreign language learners. The study provides evidence that the use of online short stories can positively impact language learners' attitudes towards reading and their overall language learning experience.

The author of the third study is Yeni (2020). The study aimed to solve problems in a classroom and enhance students' reading comprehension by using short stories as teaching material and strategy. The study used classroom action research with a cycle comprising four steps. Data were collected through observation, learning test results, and documentation. The study was conducted at SMP Negeri Samarinda¹ and involved 35 eighth-grade students. The study was carried out in one cycle, and it showed an enhancement in students' learning results and improved reading comprehension.

¹ School in Kalimantan Timur, Indonesia

The use of short stories during the teaching and learning process was found to be very effective due to the enthusiasm of students to join the process and short stories that were exciting to read. Students' mean scores indicated an enhancement during the teaching and learning process using short stories. Additionally, short stories were found to be diverse, which enriched students' vocabulary, and helped them think critically through what was conveyed by the stories.

The fourth study was conducted by Gharehaghaj and Ghapanchi (2018). The context or the place where the study was conducted in Arak University in Iran. The participants involved 60 English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners at the intermediate level. The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of focalized narrative texts on the reading comprehension of EFL learners. In the methodological part, the study used a pre-test, post-test design with a control group.

The experimental group was exposed to focalized narrative texts, while the control group was exposed to non-focalized narrative texts. The reading comprehension levels of both groups were tested before and after the intervention using a reading comprehension test. The results of the study showed that the experimental group, which was exposed to focalized narrative texts, outperformed the control group in terms of reading comprehension. The study suggests that focalized narrative texts can enhance EFL learners' reading comprehension by providing them with a clear and coherent point of view.

Conceptual framework

Short stories

Short stories have become a popular and creative tool for language learning due to their length, conflict resolution, and comprehensibility. According to Pardede (2011, as cited by Yeni, 2020), "short stories should be interesting for students, allowing them to enjoy reading comprehension through short stories and leading them to become critical thinkers. They will be entertained with short stories provided by the teacher" (p. 85). The use of short stories in language learning can also provide students with the opportunity to ask questions and gain a better understanding of the text. By asking the right questions and getting a good interpretation of the stories, this tool proves to be very useful when using literature.

In addition to their length and plot, short stories have several advantages for raising critical thinking in students. Young (1996, cited by Khatib, 2012) discusses two key advantages of using short stories for critical thinking: first, because they are entertaining, students' apprehension is reduced, and they learn that critical thinking is natural, familiar, and sometimes even fun. Second, the stories put issues of critical thinking in an easily remembered context, making it easier for students to recall and apply the concepts learned in the future. Moreover, the concise format of short stories can help students to remember important details such as facts, actions, characters, and contexts.

Apart from the advantages of short stories, the use of literature in language learning can also foster creativity, imagination, and empathy in students. Literature provides a window into different cultures and perspectives, which can enhance intercultural competence and broaden students' horizons. Through literature, students can also develop their language skills and improve their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas effectively.

It is worth noting that the use of short stories and literature in language learning should be complemented with appropriate teaching strategies and activities. Teachers should design activities that not only focus on comprehension but also encourage students to analyze, interpret and reflect on the text. For instance, pre-reading activities, such as pre-teaching vocabulary and stimulating students' interest in the story, can help students to engage with the text before reading. During reading activities, such as helping students to understand the plot, can facilitate their comprehension and encourage critical thinking. Finally, post-reading activities, such as asking questions based on the text, can help students to consolidate their understanding and develop their critical thinking skills.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension is a fundamental aspect of language learning that cannot be ignored. According to Kong (2019), "it is a complex process that involves both extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with written text" (p. 9). This interaction requires the reader to engage with the text on multiple levels, from basic comprehension of the words and sentences to the more advanced understanding of the overall meaning and implications of the text. In this sense, readers play an active role in making sense of what they read by asking themselves questions such as "who?" "how?" and "when?" to gain a better understanding of the text.

Furthermore, the interaction between the reader and the text can be influenced by a range of factors, such as prior knowledge, personal experiences, and cultural background. This means that the same text can be interpreted and understood in different ways by different readers. Readers can also relate the text to their own lives, making it more meaningful and engaging. For instance, if a reader is reading a text about traveling, they might recall a similar experience they had and this can enhance their reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is a complex process that has been the subject of study for many years. One important theorist in the field is Smith, a scholar of psycholinguistics who proposed that reading comprehension is essentially a process of "getting questions answered" (Smith, 1978, as cited in Kong, 2019, p.11). Smith's perspective emphasizes the importance of formulating specific questions and finding their answers directly in the text. By asking these questions, Smith's theory suggests that it is easier for readers to make predictions and draw inferences based on the information presented in the text.

In other aspects, reading comprehension has an important role in learning another language. It helps to learn vocabulary, recognize places and meet other cultures. To Kathid (2012) "Most learners in EFL contexts have little or no opportunity to contact with native speakers, so reading literary texts will give them the opportunity to have a better interaction with foreign culture and people." (p. 242). Furthermore, students can learn expressions, idioms or traditions of other countries, this opens their perspectives and ways of thinking about other places and people who speak English.

Language-Based Approach

The language-based approach is closely related to the learning of a second language, as it seeks to improve students' knowledge and proficiency in English. This approach has some affinity with literature, as it helps the development of student interaction and independence when learning another language. Lazar (1993, as cited in Febriani et al, 2018) "believed that the main purpose of the use of literature in the classroom is to improve the students' knowledge and proficiency in English" (p.42). Likewise, literature and learning English as a foreign language, facilitate the way to answer questions because they use the knowledge acquired.

Furthermore, literature is a practice that requires concentration and a few steps to follow to stimulate the use of reading with planned activities. The language-based approach suggests three important steps with literature: pre-reading, while reading, and post-reading. As noted by Lazar (1993, taken from Frebiani et al, 2018), pre-reading activities could include pre-teaching vocabulary and stimulating students' interest in the story. While-reading activities could focus on helping students understand the plot, and post-reading activities could involve helping students make interpretations of the text, understand the narrative point of view, and ask questions based on the text.

In this way, the language-based approach seeks to promote better interpretation of texts during the learning of a second language. It also aims to help students with other skills, such as speaking, through activities like summarizing plots and remaking new endings. Such activities also help to develop language interaction through the story and among students, as they discuss the story they read and share their perspectives and ways to assimilate the plot or characters.

Moreover, literature-based language learning has a significant impact on students' motivation to learn a second language, as it enables them to use language in a meaningful context. It helps students to develop critical thinking, cultural awareness, and empathy. Through literature, students can gain insights into different cultures and societies, which enhances their understanding of the world.

Contextual framework

As a proposal to transform education in northern Cauca, regionalization was created and the Bachelor's Degree Program in Modern Languages, English and French began in 2012. These days, the program is characterized by providing quality education to the people who live in Santander de Quilichao and surrounding areas. Language learning and teaching is the basis of this program, as well as emphasizing all language skills. In the same way, it is essential to seek new resources to facilitate the learning of literature in a more entertaining way. At this program, there are many challenges in the learning process of the students because learning languages at the same time could be difficult for them. For this reason, it is necessary to reframe the ways to teach and expose the learners to the languages.

A survey conducted to assess the students' literary preferences revealed a shared passion for literature among all participants. This common interest in literature, particularly in their leisure time, was a key factor in their motivation to engage in this project. Their enthusiasm for reading and analyzing literary texts made them ideal candidates for the interventions aimed at improving reading comprehension through Language Based approach strategy. .

The demographic distribution of the participants was as follows: four women and two men within the age range of 20 to 28 years. The survey results indicated that all participants had a strong inclination towards reading literature in their free time. This shared passion not only provided a solid foundation for the study but also ensured a high level of engagement and participation throughout the interventions. Their mutual interest in literature facilitated a collaborative learning environment where students could freely exchange ideas and insights.

Methodological aspects

Research approach

This research adopted a qualitative approach, supplemented by certain quantitative aspects to better interpret the data collected. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017) combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods can enhance the understanding of a research problem. In this study, the predominant use of qualitative methods allowed for an in-depth exploration of the factors impacting reading comprehension in sixth-semester students of the Bachelor's Degree Program in Modern Languages, English and French at the University of Cauca in Santander de Quilichao.

This approach was effective for the data collection since it was essential to know their reading comprehension experiences and evaluate their capacities. "Mixed approaches can be useful in educational research, as they allow a more complete exploration of educational phenomena by combining quantitative and qualitative understanding of them" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 16). For the collection of quantitative data, standardized reading comprehension tests were administered to all participants. The reading comprehension tests were based on well-established academic standards and were designed to provide data on the participants' reading comprehension levels. This data was used to supplement the qualitative data obtained from the interviews and focus groups, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the reading comprehension abilities of the sixth-semester students at the University of Cauca.

To gather qualitative data, in-depth interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of sixth-semester students at the University of Cauca who have volunteered to participate in the study. These interviews were conducted in a one-on-one setting, allowing for a detailed exploration of participants' reading habits, their attitudes towards reading, and

the perceived challenges they face in comprehending written material. Additionally, focus groups were formed to enable students to discuss their experiences with reading and share their opinions on factors that contribute to successful reading comprehension.

The data collection process involved various aspects, such as the appreciation of the intervention and the way the students felt during the process. It included subjective aspects, such as emotions and experiences, which are equally important in understanding the impact of the intervention. The data collection process for this project involved surveys, interviews, and other qualitative methods to capture the students' experiences and perspectives. The analysis of the data collected provided insights into the effectiveness of the reading comprehension intervention program. It helped to identify any patterns and trends that emerged from the data and provided a basis for developing theoretical perspectives.

Research design

This research was a case study design centered on a focus group. This design was chosen for the project because it does not consist of a control group, but it would only have a thorough observation during the sessions. "A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). On the one hand, students will be chosen voluntarily from the sixth semester. For the same reason, neither the subjects nor the cases were randomly chosen. It is important to highlight that this group was chosen because they are in the last semester seeing English as a subject (Advanced English VI) and at this level, the skills and proficiency of the learners should be high.

On the other hand, some tests, interviews, and a field journal were needed for data collection. For this reason, it was essential to collect a lot of qualitative and quantitative data. Taking into account Sampieri (2014) "A single group is administered several pre - tests, then

applied experimental treatment and finally several post - tests" (p.38). The application of the intervention consisted of six sessions of literary workshops where there would be questions specifically focused on the short story (main idea, characters, topic, plot diagram, etc). The sessions were applied during six weeks, to compare changes in the short and long term of the process or the effects of the workshops interventions on the students.

With this design, in the qualitative part, it was necessary to take into account that it did not have a control group, and for that reason, the interpretation of the variables had to be careful when of analyzing the qualitative results because there could exist other variables (or extra possible causes) that can change the intervention's final results. In the quantitative part, it was necessary to use a rubric of the interventions to accurately collect the participants' performance.

Stages and instruments

First Stage: Diagnosis

The first part of this stage was to know the literary preferences of the sixth semester students. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions with one answer and closed multi-answer questions. According to Sampieri (2014) "They usually use questionnaires that are applied in different contexts (interviews in person, by electronic means such as emails or web pages, in a group, etc.)" (p. 159). For this reason, the questionnaire was made in Google Forms to facilitate its completion.

According to Chasteauneuf, (2009, cited in Sampieri, 2014) "a questionnaire consists of a set of questions regarding one or more variables to be measured" (p.217). In many contexts of teaching English, it was made with the students or participants' preferences to improve performance and learning outcomes. This questionnaire was made to learn the literary preferences of the students of sixth semester. It was important to find this kind of

information because it was easier to make the students learn and focus when they read something that they like. In the same way, questions were asked to know and also implement short stories with their respective reading comprehension questions. (See Appendix 2).

The second part of this stage was a semi - structured interview and the main goal from this stage is the relationship of the participants with reading. "Semi-structured interviews are a commonly used method for collecting qualitative data, particularly in the social sciences" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8). It was essential to know the relationship between reading and how they perceived their own progress.

The main idea of this interview was to see how the reading in a foreign language has been for the participants. "Semi-structured interviews provide an opportunity for participants to discuss their experiences in their own words, allowing the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena being studied" (Guest et al., 2006, p. 3). By using semi-structured interviews, the participants had the opportunity to discuss their experiences in their own words. This approach allowed the researcher to capture rich and detailed data about the participants' experiences with reading in a foreign language. (See Appendix 3).

The third part of this stage was to measure the abilities of the participants who were in the interventions. Basically, the diagnostic test sought to know the reading comprehension level of students who will participate in the literary workshops. The diagnostic test that was used is the story "The Case Of the Lowercase Letter" written by Jack Delany (See Appendix 4). This story was taken from a page specializing in short stories in English (eastoftheweb.com) and adapted according to some needs in vocabulary for the understanding of participants. The objective of this diagnostic test is to recognize the students' reading comprehension needs and to know if at the end of the interventions students reading comprehension has improved

Second stage: Design and implementation

The stage was divided into two parts. First, interventions were executed. After that, short questionnaires consisting of 8 questions applied to determine how the participants perceived the interventions. With the results of the questionnaire previously applied (literary preferences), a short story target was chosen for the group of students selected to start with the interventions. Taking into account the literary preferences of the participants, the procedure to follow was to make a literary workshop with short stories that would have some basic questions.

These interventions consisted of 6 sessions with literary workshops. Basically, the intervention workshops were based on textual short story questions. The type of questions considered were open-ended questions, where the student wrote the right answer after reading the short story. (See Appendix 5).

Also, insights into various aspects of the students' perceptions regarding the interventions and the changes or improvements they observed in their reading comprehension skills. The survey was designed to capture not only their initial thoughts about the intervention strategy but also any progress they perceived over time. It included questions that focused on specific reading comprehension skills, such as vocabulary acquisition, understanding of plot and the ability to analyze and interpret texts. Students were asked to reflect on their experiences during and after the interventions, providing a comprehensive view of their learning journey.

This format was based on a survey by Syafi (2018). The table showed the closed questions that students had to recognize if they found changes in their reading comprehension with short story literary workshops. In addition, the measurement of this survey was used likert scale to assess the opinion and attitude of participants.

As specified above, the interventions consisted of three steps to follow, which were: pre-reading, while reading and post-reading. In these activities it was sought to improve the understanding of stories through predictions, prior knowledge of vocabulary, and taking into account some structural aspects. During the interventions, an observation of the attitudes and resolution of questions of the participants in the literary workshops was made with an observation format (See Appendix 15) and a field journal. In order to have better control of the project, it was necessary to keep records of the sessions, events or topics covered. "Field journals are a means of capturing rich, qualitative data in real-time and providing insights into the complexities and nuances of a particular setting" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 84).

The observation format was created based on behaviors usually found in reading comprehension observation. According to Sampieri (2014) "This method of data collection consists of the systematic, valid and reliable recording of observable behaviors and situations, through a set of categories and subcategories." (p.252). For the same reason, the format was created with common behaviors of pre-reading, while reading and post reading activities. The organization of the intervention per week was presented in the following chart. The complete stories are attached in the appendixes 7 to 12.

Session	Time	Shorts' Stories Name	Instruments	Structural aspects
1	1h 30m	Death by Scrabble - Charlie Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present simple ● Past simple ● Present continuous
2	1h 30m	Courage of the heart - Lisa Malice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Past simple ● Present continuous ● Present perfect
3	1h 30m	Old Ghosts - A. J.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present

		McKenna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● simple ● Past simple
4	1h 30m	My brother's keeper - Eve Chancellor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present simple ● Past simple ● Past continuous
5	1h 30m	The detour - Lisa Taylor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Past simple ● Past perfect ● Past continuous
6	1h 30m	Remains - George Nevgodovsky	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Observation format ● Copies with the story ● Field journal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present simple ● Past simple ● Future simple ● Past continuous

Finally, in the last part of this stage, a field journal was used during the sessions to collect experiences during the interventions. "A field journal serves as a repository for data and reflections, allowing the researcher to record observations, experiences, and ideas as they emerge" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 225). It is necessary to have control of the situations and emotions to know how to change these interventions that influence the participant's skills.

Third stage: Evaluation

Once the intervention and survey was executed, the last step was to carry out the final intervention. This stage served the purpose of analyzing whether the literary workshops that focused on short stories had resulted in any significant changes. The final intervention

involved the use of the short story "Ways of attending" written by Harry Readhead (See Appendix 13).

"Ways of attending" was carefully selected from a website that specializes in uploading short stories in English (eastoftheweb.com), just like all the previous stories used in the workshops. This story was used to gauge the effectiveness of the intervention and determine whether there have been any improvements in areas such as comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking.

Analyzing the results of the final intervention helped to determine the overall impact of the literary workshops and whether they were successful in achieving their goals. The rubric (appendix 10) was used for evaluating the participants' performance during the interventions, and collecting data of the reading comprehension skills. This information can be useful in planning future interventions and improving the effectiveness of similar programs in the future.

Results

Qualitative section

Literature preferences survey

The literary preferences and reading frequencies of the students in the study reveal a diverse range of interests and varying levels of engagement with literature. Student 1 has a particular affinity with plots related to love, police, and fantastic literature, indulging in these plots when she has the time. Similarly, Student 2 also enjoys fantastic literature during her available moments. Student 3, on the other hand, shows a broader interest in adventure, love, fantasy, and science fiction topics, dedicating time to reading once per week.

Student 4 preferred adventure and love stories, reading them when she finds the time. Student 5 had a wide range of interests, including adventure, love, police, detective, and fantastic literature, engaging in these plots whenever he had time. Lastly, Student 6 enjoyed adventure, horror, fantastic, and science fiction literature, also reading whenever he has the time. Overall, these students exhibit a keen interest in a variety of literary plots, with a common preference for fantastic literature. Their reading frequency varied, with some engaging weekly and others reading whenever their schedules permit.

Interviews

Teachers interviews

In the dynamic landscape of education, reading comprehension is one of the abilities with most problems. In this case, the English teachers of the participants consider their perspective on the reading understanding of the group of participants.

The teacher's interview started with this question “¿Ha notado algún patrón o tendencia en el nivel de comprensión lectora en inglés de los estudiantes de sexto semestre?”. The first teacher said the students tend to read narrative texts (novels, stories) and this could be the reason why the participants presented a basic or intermediate level. Moreover, they do not use some important abilities (intertextuality and deep analysis) to make a critical reading. Furthermore, the second teacher had other perspectives about them. He explained the participants had difficulties with their reading comprehension because they tend to translate the stories and they do not understand what they are reading. Also, participants have a lot of problems when they go to read aloud, as they do not use good punctuation signs and do not understand what they have just read.

The second question to the teachers was "¿Qué tipos de textos en inglés considera que los estudiantes de sexto semestre deberían ser capaces de comprender con fluidez?". The first teacher affirmed that the students must emphasize academic literature because they are transitioning from Advanced English to English workshop. In this subject, there are other types of dynamics where students are not studying English explicitly but using what they already learn to improve their skills. Moreover, he said “después de eso ya tienen que empezar a trabajar en énfasis (trabajo de grado), entonces allí tienen que poder ser capaces de leer y comprender muy bien la literatura académica”. This type of failure means that students do not have good tools to work on their degree project, which is why academic literature is so necessary.

Based on the second question, the second teacher shared about the participants “el patrón que he notado es que hay una tendencia a traducir y no a entender, porque una de las características de la comprensión lectora precisamente es comprender más no traducir”, where the teacher highlighted they had some issues with their reading comprehension and the

reason was the students translate what they are reading and do not analyze deeply. In another aspect, the teacher added “otra de las cosas que he notado como falencias o como esos patrones es que al no hacer los signos de puntuación correctamente eso evita que usted no entienda y que se preocupe más por la pronunciación, los estudiantes cuando leen en voz alta uno se da cuenta que no entienden porque uno que está escuchando tampoco entiende lo que están diciendo”. This failure means that students do not understand what they read and cannot understand the designated texts. In addition they do not take into account punctuation marks, an essential element when someone is reading.

Additional resources or materials play an important role in learning a language, and a related question was considered for teachers. The question was “¿Qué recursos o materiales adicionales consideras que podrían ayudar a los estudiantes a desarrollar su comprensión lectora en inglés?”. The first teacher said “, lecturas de tipo académico, vuelvo y digo, que puedan leerse en el tiempo de los estudiantes. Son lecturas que no se trabajarían en clase, sino que serían más ejercicios de presentaciones o ejercicios de tipo investigativo a partir de la lectura de estos artículos donde los estudiantes lean y tengan que dar cuenta de lo que leyeron de manera que sean capaces de explicarlo porque ya un nivel superior de comprensión”. Considering his words, it is necessary to work on academic texts and to improve and enrich their ability to understand and talk about them. In addition, he explained not only use academic texts also used literary texts with a level suitable for the semester students were studying. This teacher added “hay otros tipos de lectura, por ejemplo, de textos literarios, es decir textos de lectura no graduada, es decir no los que están diseñados como resumidos para que sea este libro es de nivel B1 o B2, o lo que sea sino los textos originales completos que los estudiantes los puedan leer, que son textos que son diseñados por hablantes nativos”, the practice used by the teacher is an important methodology because it makes the students have

in their hands an authentic material that helps them to have a real context of the English they are learning and that they learned.

However, the second teacher changed his perspective about what resources are used in his classes. The teacher said “Para desarrollar la comprensión lectora en inglés, los recursos que uno utiliza es por ejemplo un “audiobook” que uno puede escuchar y puede ir leyendo al mismo tiempo. Entonces ahí se están combinando estas dos habilidades porque ellos van a entender cómo se hacen las pausas, ellos van a escuchar la pronunciación”. He expressed that this resource is useful to practice two skills (reading comprehension and speaking) . This resource could help them to comprehend the text, ameliorate their pronunciation and use punctuation marks in a better way. Also, it had two options because there exist American English and British English, which means they have two opportunities to understand the different dialects as well.

The next question in the interview emphasized about some difficulties with academic, technic, or literary texts. The question was “¿Has notado alguna dificultad particular que los estudiantes tienen al leer textos específicos, como textos académicos, literarios o técnicos?”. The first teacher said “A veces parece que tuvieran como una especie de bloqueo mental en cuanto a la actitud, con respecto a abordar un texto que no sea de su disciplina... entonces falta eso, tener una actitud más abierta respecto a que la lectura es un camino de abordaje del conocimiento de cualquier disciplina, no solamente de la disciplina que cada uno de nosotros estudia”, he explained that students put boundaries to new topics that have nothing to do with the Modern Languages career. This mental block of students means that they do not have good attitudes to learn in different types of texts necessary for a good overall understanding of texts, not only literary but also academic.

The other teacher said “Claro, cuando nos encontramos con estos textos académicos literarios se encuentran con un vocabulario, con mucho vocabulario desconocido. Lo que hace que ellos se frenen un poco y se torne la lectura aburrida.” He talked about another frequent problem, which is the vocabulary. In many cases, the lack of ability of students to understand unknown texts due to the lack of knowledge of vocabulary is notorious. For the same reason, it is difficult for them to read complex texts, since there was no good introduction into the basic texts and their understanding.

When it comes to understanding a text, readers face various challenges, and the following question was asked for teachers to explain about it. The question was “¿Cuáles son los principales desafíos que los estudiantes enfrentan al intentar comprender textos en inglés?”. The first teacher said “Por ejemplo en los textos académicos, se dificulta mucho a veces que entiendan la parte metodológica cuando se trata de textos de investigación, de experimentos, donde explican la metodología por la cual probaron una hipótesis (...) allí hace falta un poco más de análisis para poder entender este tipo de lectura, donde hay intertextualidad, explicaciones más elaboradas, donde no simplemente se está contando una historia”. This teacher reiterates in the difficulties that students go through with academic texts, because in many moments their weaknesses are evidenced by talking and studying about the methodology.

The second teacher talked about some challenges that the students face all the time. He explained “Uno de los desafíos que los estudiantes se enfrentan al intentar comprender... los desafíos que tienen, primero que todo no existe el hábito de la lectura. Cuando yo digo el hábito de lectura es que ellos por sí solos no leen textos cuando no se les ha dejado”. This deficiency could be improved or eradicated by emphasizing autonomous learning. Students have a habit of reading only what is assigned as work and they lose interest in having

readings to enrich their learning. Then, the next problem “pues si no hay ese hábito de lectura, la falta de vocabulario es impresionante. (...) Entonces si no existe también esa costumbre de estar repasando pues viene a ser muy difícil.”. This problem is related to vocabulary and grammar because there are many gaps reflected from school. In many occasions, students do not take the time to study what they previously saw.

Each teacher had different perspectives on students and their processes. The sixth question for them was “¿Cuál es tu percepción general del nivel de comprensión lectora en inglés de los estudiantes de sexto semestre?”. The first teacher explained that on multiple occasions the participants did not have a good attitude with new topics on the readings because most of the time they used expressions like “I do not understand it” or “why are we going to read this?”. The teacher explained the type of behaviors that students present to new texts and that this deficiency marks their performance when reading other texts (academic texts).

The second teacher perspective was broader. He started by talking about their efficiency “Bueno, de 1 a 5, creo que llegaría a un 3. Más o menos un 3 raspado, pues estamos en el proceso, hemos avanzado en cosas y en contextos han sido más o menos agregando un poquito de dificultad”, Explaining that students have a minimum of performance in their reading comprehension, where he as a teacher has intensified and helped in their process to improve the problems they face when they go to read texts. In other aspects, he talked about some problems related to emotional “también he notado que existen problemas como emocionales que afectan también como el entendimiento. Hay un tema y entonces se ponen muy susceptibles, les traen recuerdos. Entonces eso también es como la generación que tenemos ahora”, these kinds of problems affect their ability to analyze and understand what they read.

And the last question was “¿Hay algo que desees agregar al respecto sobre los estudiantes y su habilidad de comprensión lectora en inglés de sexto semestre?”. The first teacher said “Creo que al respecto con la comprensión lectora no hay otro camino que exponer a los estudiantes a más ejercicios de comprensión lectora, exponerlos a más textos, asignar más lecturas porque esto de la comprensión lectora es algo que no se desarrolla en la teoría sino en la práctica”. He explained the only way to the students comprehend better the texts they had to face is reading all the time, reading it repeatedly and in the same way, change the way of comprehension and writing about academic texts.

According to the second teacher the solution to the problem of students with their reading comprehension is to consider their literary preferences to encourage reading. He added: “Hay gente que le interesa mucho lo de las redes sociales, entonces trabajar también con eso que les llama la atención a ellos para poder incrementar o poder aumentar ese nivel de comprensión que existe y ese problema que nos enfrentamos nosotros porque uno como profesor se preocupa mucho por el micro currículo y por lo que está allí y a veces hay muchos avances”. This change can cause students to make the habit of reading, because they have a preference that helps them with deficiencies in their reading comprehension. Likewise, adapt this measure with academic texts.

Student’s interview

Interviewing the participants was an important aspect to recognize how they perceive their reading comprehension. In the same way, some crucial questions were asked to learn about their experience with reading in English. The first question was “¿Puedes contarme tu experiencia leyendo en inglés? ¿Cuándo empezaste a leer en inglés y con qué frecuencia lees en inglés?”. This interview was done in Spanish so that students could talk openly about what they thought about their reading comprehension from the beginning. The participants have

different beginnings with reading in English. Some students started with these experiences from school; others had the opportunity to be in an English course. Instead, did other students have the opportunity/ability? to learn through online games and are currently trying to have close contact with the English language.

Student 1 began by discussing her early school experiences, noting that her exposure to English during childhood was limited and consisted of small activities that did not significantly enhance her reading comprehension. She went on to explain that her engagement with English reading has increased during her time at university due to the assignments given by professors and the English materials she encounters. She mentioned that reading in English has become more frequent for her at university, adding that she tries to immerse herself in the language by changing her phone settings to English and using various applications to learn new vocabulary and specific terms. Through these practices, she believes her language immersion has become more consistent, allowing her to learn specific vocabulary and improve her language skills.

Student 2 also discussed her school experience. She mentioned having an English teacher from a young age, which provided her with early immersion in the language. Additionally, she took courses with a university in Popayán, where she consistently engaged in reading and writing activities in English. Regarding her current reading habits, she explained that reading in English is now primarily driven by university assignments, requiring her to read English texts regularly. However, she also dedicates some time to reading for leisure, managing to read English texts about twice a week outside of her academic responsibilities.

Student 3 shared her experience with reading in English, starting by mentioning that she initially read stories on Wattpad in Spanish before transitioning to reading them in

English. Although she didn't fully understand the stories at first, this method helped her acquire more vocabulary and gradually improve her comprehension. Unlike the previous participants, she faced challenging readings and learned to understand stories through context. Currently, she reads in English about three times a week, balancing her time between English and French. This practice aids in maintaining proficiency in both languages and enhances her reading comprehension skills in English.

Student 4 briefly described her experience with reading in English, she began reading in English during school when they were assigned texts to read. This early exposure gave students some knowledge of reading, analysis, and comprehension, although it was not always effective. Regarding her current reading habits, she mentioned that she reads short articles in English daily on the internet but rarely reads books in English voluntarily. This suggests that she might have a deficiency in understanding the more complex narratives or plots of books, as her reading is primarily focused on shorter articles.

Student 5 had a distinct experience compared to others. He explained that his process of language acquisition had been more deliberate, having been enrolled in English courses for as long as he can remember. He also mentioned that he has independently used various methods to study and acquire vocabulary. However, he acknowledged that he does not habitually read English books on his own; rather, he primarily reads the books assigned by his teachers. Additionally, he mentioned employing other methods to immerse himself in the language, which suggests a proactive approach to learning beyond just reading.

Student 6 had a notably different experience compared to the other participants. His exposure to English started at a young age through video games, which were predominantly in English. He would try to read the text in these games, despite not understanding much initially. This early exposure sparked his interest in the language and motivated him to

understand what he was playing. Over time, this interest evolved into a more consistent practice. He mentioned that he engages with English texts daily, although unconsciously, indicating that his immersion in the language has become a natural part of his daily routine. This approach helps him maintain a high level of engagement with the language.

As language learners, they encounter challenges of all kinds daily. In this context, this question arises from the interview that seeks to know about the challenges that each of them faces with the following question "¿Cuáles son algunos de los retos a los que te enfrentas al leer en inglés? ¿Te resulta difícil entender el vocabulario o las estructuras de las oraciones?". Almost all participants explained the difficulties they go through when reading and understanding in English, the difficulty they all named the most was "vocabulary" but they all have different ways of dealing with it.

Student 1 expressed that she often struggles with unfamiliar vocabulary while reading, which can lead to feelings of being lost or blocked if she doesn't fully understand the text. She also noted that she is meticulous when it comes to grammar but faces minimal difficulties with sentence structures. On the other hand, Student 2 echoed similar sentiments regarding vocabulary challenges, emphasizing the importance of grasping the main idea of the text. She relies on contextual clues to decipher unfamiliar words, although she admitted that this method can be challenging at times. Regarding sentence structures, she mentioned that she may have become accustomed to reading frequently, which has helped her navigate through texts more smoothly.

Student 3 identified vocabulary as her primary challenge when reading in English, noting that she often encounters unfamiliar words. Despite this difficulty, she continues reading and relies on context to infer meanings. Regarding sentence structures, she mentioned that she does not encounter many problems as she automatically grasps them while reading.

Similarly, Student 4 emphasized vocabulary as her main obstacle to understanding texts, explaining that encountering unknown words can lead to a sense of being blocked or unable to comprehend the sentences. She mentioned that she tries to make sense of the sentences despite the vocabulary challenges and doesn't face significant issues with sentence structures.

Echoing the sentiments of his peers, Student 5 also highlighted vocabulary as a common difficulty when reading in English. He mentioned adopting a strategy of forming a general idea of the text to overcome vocabulary hurdles, although he admitted that this approach may falter when a more detailed understanding is required, especially when encountering unfamiliar words.

Student 6 highlighted that when reading academic articles in English, the primary challenge lies in unfamiliar vocabulary, which can make it difficult to infer meanings from context. He noted that some words are particularly challenging because they don't resemble anything he knows, further complicating the process of understanding. Conversely, when reading texts written by individuals outside of academia, he finds that sentence structures can pose difficulties due to their tendency to deviate from standard conventions. This variation in structure can sometimes hinder comprehension, particularly when authors fail to adhere to linguistic norms.

The next question in this interview was about strategies to improve your reading comprehension. The question was "¿Qué estrategias utilizas para mejorar tu comprensión de la lectura en inglés? ¿Lees con un diccionario o intentas adivinar el significado de las palabras desde el contexto?". This question was asked to recognize whether students can realize their methods and abilities when they are reading in English.

Student 1 described her approach to handling unfamiliar words both during her school days and currently. She mentioned relying heavily on the dictionary in school, as it was a common requirement from teachers. However, she also noted the limitations of this method, particularly when encountering phrasal verbs, which often led to changes in expression or meaning. As a result, she developed a strategy of guessing the meaning based on context before resorting to using a translator to clarify uncertain terms.

Student 2 outlined her unique approach to managing unfamiliar vocabulary while reading. She described a strategy of skimming through the text initially to get a general idea, while also identifying and looking up unknown words. After clarifying the meanings of these words, she revisits the text to ensure her initial understanding was correct. This method allows her to overcome vocabulary obstacles without relying heavily on dictionaries or translators, instead focusing on contextual clues to infer meanings and commit new vocabulary to memory. She also highlighted the advantage of this approach in aiding concentration during reading sessions.

Student 3 relies heavily on contextual clues to grasp the meanings of unfamiliar words while reading, avoiding the use of dictionaries. She expressed a willingness to continue reading even when she encounters unknown words, trusting that their meanings will become clear as she progresses through the text. This approach underscores her confidence in deriving meaning from context, allowing her to maintain engagement with the story without interruptions.

Both Student 4 and Student 5 utilize a comparable approach to bolster their comprehension skills. When encountering unfamiliar vocabulary or expressions, they choose to revisit the passage, striving to glean contextual clues to infer meaning. Should this method prove ineffective, they reluctantly resort to consulting a dictionary for clarification. However,

they express a preference for maintaining the fluidity of their reading experience, avoiding disruptions wherever possible. This inclination reflects their prioritization of uninterrupted engagement with the text, even if it means occasionally glossing over unfamiliar terms in favor of comprehending the broader narrative.

Student 6, like his peers, opts to infer word meanings from context rather than resorting to dictionaries. He emphasized he did not use dictionaries. Generally, he tries to guess the meaning of the word from the context. If he did not understand the word and the context did not reveal its meaning, then he had to look up what it exactly means, but usually, he avoids them. However, he conceded that sometimes contextual clues are insufficient, leading him to reluctantly consult dictionaries for precise definitions.

Reading is a habit that most participants admitted having for the specialization of the career. In the same way, the following was thought of: "¿Cómo te sientes acerca de la lectura en inglés en comparación con la lectura en su idioma nativo? ¿Te gusta, o te parece más difícil?" to know the ease that students have in a language that is not their mother tongue.

Student 1 acknowledged her struggle with maintaining focus while reading in her native language, noting that distractions often lead her to lose track of what she has read, requiring her to restart from the beginning. However, she expressed that reading in English poses less of a challenge in terms of concentration, finding it more engaging. She clarified that while vocabulary may hinder her reading process, overall, she finds reading in English more captivating.

Student 2 discussed the challenges she encounters when reading in both English and Spanish. She pointed out that reading in English can be more difficult due to the concise and direct style commonly used by authors, which contrasts with the more imaginative and expressive nature of Spanish writing. While she finds English more challenging due to its

concise nature and vocabulary, she appreciates the freedom of expression afforded by Spanish,

Student 3 acknowledged the challenge of reading in a foreign language but expressed her enjoyment of the experience. She found reading in another language more difficult, primarily due to unfamiliar vocabulary, which sometimes impedes her understanding of the text. Despite this challenge, she appreciates the opportunity to read in another language and makes efforts to comprehend the text, often needing to read it multiple times to grasp the full meaning allowing for greater imagination and creativity in writing. Student 4 echoed the sentiment shared by Student 2, expressing that reading in English requires heightened concentration compared to reading in her native language. This shift in focus is necessary for her to achieve a thorough understanding of the text.

Student 5 articulated that he finds reading in English notably more challenging than reading in Spanish, noting that he typically has a clearer understanding of the author's intentions when reading in his native language. Despite his affinity for reading in another language, he finds the process considerably more intricate in English.

Student 6 shared that he encounters challenges when reading, regardless of whether it's in English or Spanish. However, he noted a distinct difference in his experience between the two languages. While he initially feels a sense of resistance when approaching English texts, once he begins reading, he finds it easier to comprehend compared to Spanish. This suggests that despite initial hurdles, he is able to navigate through English texts more smoothly once he immerses himself in them.

Reading in English can have significant impacts on other skills such as writing and speaking. For the same reason, the following question was asked "¿Cómo crees que tus habilidades de lectura en inglés han impactado tu dominio general del idioma? ¿Crees que

leer en inglés te ha ayudado a mejorar tus habilidades para hablar o escribir?”, to know if students are aware of the impact that reading has on learning English.

Student 1 shared how her English skills, particularly in speaking, have shown improvement as she integrated reading into her daily routine. She noted that previously, she struggled with vocabulary and the correct usage of connectors and prepositions, leading to confusion in her speech. However, she acknowledged progress in her writing skills, albeit with some remaining difficulties. Despite these challenges, she expressed a sense of improvement over time, indicating a gradual enhancement in her language proficiency.

Student 2 highlighted a distinct area of improvement resulting from her reading habits: pronunciation. She emphasized that reading has particularly aided her in refining her pronunciation skills, unlike memorizing vocabulary or speaking ability. While she finds writing less challenging, she acknowledges the struggle of memorizing new vocabulary as a separate issue. Despite this, she credits reading for contributing positively to her ability to articulate words accurately.

Student 3 conveyed her belief in the reciprocal relationship between reading and writing skills. She expressed the notion that extensive reading enhances one's ability to write effectively, asserting that exposure to various writing styles and expressions through reading contributes significantly to skill development. This practice of reading not only enriches vocabulary but also cultivates writing proficiency, as one observes and internalizes different writing techniques and styles from diverse sources.

Student 4 articulated the view that reading in English enhances lexical skills, thereby improving both writing and speaking abilities. This participant's experience stands out from others, as they have witnessed tangible improvements in their writing and oral communication as a result of engaging with English texts. Similarly, Student 5 echoed this

sentiment, emphasizing the invaluable learning opportunity presented by reading. According to them, reading provides insights into various writing styles, authors' techniques, and paragraph structures, facilitating a deeper understanding of the text. They acknowledged that this practice has been beneficial not only for expanding vocabulary but also for grasping the intricacies of language usage and composition. Additionally, they highlighted the applicability of this learning across different languages, suggesting that reading serves as a valuable tool for language learners.

Student 6 delineated a distinctive approach to language acquisition, particularly in speaking and writing. He emphasized a primary focus on reading informal communications, such as chat conversations with others, which has enabled them to grasp colloquial language, slang, and varied vocabulary commonly used by people in everyday interactions. This immersion in informal language contexts has significantly facilitated their communication skills, allowing for a better understanding and integration of language nuances and expressions in both speaking and writing contexts.

To conclude this interview, participants were asked the following questions: “¿Hay algún tema o género en particular que te guste leer en inglés? ¿Por qué te parecen interesantes estos temas o géneros?” The idea of this question is to recognize their preferences and how that preference might have a change in your reading understanding.

Student 1 reflected on her literary preferences, noting a particular fondness for certain themes and genres, albeit acknowledging a limited exposure to English literature. She recounted her enjoyment of a book she read last semester about World War II, appreciating its narrative style and descriptive qualities. This experience has steered her towards historical narratives, novels, and stories that delve into the intricacies of history.

Student 2 emphasized her enduring interest in certain genres, noting that her preferences remain consistent across languages. She expressed a particular fascination with fantasy literature, citing its ability to stimulate her thinking and encourage deeper exploration. For her, reading in this genre presents a challenge that enhances her vocabulary acquisition, as she must fully understand the ideas presented in order to grasp the context or storyline.

Student 3 shared her reading preferences, noting a preference for romance and short stories, particularly in the realm of young adult fiction. She expressed a lack of interest in genres such as horror, suspense, or mystery, finding them less appealing. Additionally, she mentioned finding fantasy literature more challenging to read in English, leading her to gravitate more towards romantic narratives.

Student 4 shared her reading preferences, indicating a fondness for mystery stories with fewer characters to avoid confusion. She also enjoys delving into scientific topics or psychological articles, despite finding the vocabulary in these areas challenging. This suggests that she is drawn to intellectually stimulating content, even if it presents linguistic difficulties.

Student 5 emphasized his openness to diverse genres, stating that he does not gravitate towards any specific category when choosing what to read. Instead, he sees value in exploring a wide range of texts, believing that each one contributes to his learning experience. This approach allows him to encounter different vocabulary and sentence structures, ultimately enhancing his comprehension skills.

Student 6 expressed his strong preference for reading horror stories in English, particularly those written by authors like Stephen King and Edgar Allan Poe. He finds these narratives captivating and immersive, as they transport him into their worlds and evoke

powerful emotions. For him, delving into such thrilling tales is one of the most exciting experiences he can have while reading.

Field diary sessions

Diagnostic session:

The session started and lasted one hour and a half, with a small group of students, totaling four out of six, while the others arrived late. The story of the day was “The Case of the Lowercase Letter” written by Jack Delany. Their journey into the story began with a collective attempt to decipher its topic from the title, though they found themselves grasping at straws as it failed to provide substantial clues. Despite this problem, their focus remained as they delved into the narrative, with some students jotting down unfamiliar words for later reference.

As the reading progressed, the students exhibited varying approaches to comprehension. While one participant opted for a concurrent reading and answering strategy, others preferred to absorb the entirety of the story before tackling the questions. The dynamics shifted when additional participants arrived, seamlessly integrating into the reading process. However, the plot thickened when the narrative introduced a murder riddle, prompting a momentary lapse in comprehension for some students. This challenge was compounded by the diagnostic test, where several students struggled to grasp the narrator types, resulting in some confusion and uncertainty.

Despite these hurdles, the post-reading activities proved to be a lively affair. Students actively participated in discussions, offering creative alternative endings that diverged significantly from the original storyline. Speculations ranged from the survival of the teacher

seeking vengeance to entirely new narrative trajectories showcasing the students' imaginative prowess and engagement with the material.

The diagnostic session provided valuable insights into the participants' reading abilities and the techniques they employ to enhance comprehension. Some individuals encountered challenges, particularly in grasping the story's main idea or theme at specific junctures. It was evident that ongoing practice and the adaptation of strategies could improve their comprehension levels significantly.

Nevertheless, the session concluded on a positive note, with the participants thoroughly enjoying the process of crafting alternative endings. This collaborative activity not only added an element of fun to the session but also allowed each participant to contribute their unique perspective to the narrative, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement with the story.

Session 1:

During the intervention, participants received reading recommendations aimed at improving their comprehension. The story of the day was "Death by Scrabble" written by Charlie Fish. Initially, they speculated about the content based solely on the title, drawing parallels to shows like "Squid Game." However, they quickly realized the necessity of reading for accurate understanding. Despite occasional disruptions, such as noise, participants remained focused and engaged. Some struggled with vocabulary, seeking clarification when necessary. While they generally read fluently, pronunciation posed occasional challenges. Nonetheless, the group demonstrated collaboration and assistance.

Upon completing the story, participants were surprised by the unexpected ending, prompting discussions and re-reading for clarification. During question-answer sessions,

some referenced materials for assistance and encountered difficulty with questions not directly addressed in the text. In conclusion, participants utilized internet resources to aid comprehension and expand vocabulary. They crafted alternative endings, relating more closely to the historical context of the story. Ultimately, each member provided a succinct summary of the narrative, adhering to established guidelines.

Throughout this intervention, students encountered difficulties understanding due to limited vocabulary, often relying on context for comprehension. However, the choice of genres seemed to resonate with them, fostering improved concentration and engagement with the text. Despite persistent vocabulary challenges, external distractions occasionally disrupted their focus, potentially hindering reading comprehension.

Session 2:

The session commenced when they finished their class. The story's name was "The Courage of the Heart" written by Lisa Malice. They started with customary discussions surrounding the story's title. Vocabulary exercises were employed to glean insights into the plot. Despite initial expectations of a romantic topic, the participants were surprised by the fantastical elements woven into the narrative. Building upon techniques introduced in previous sessions, such as skimming and scanning, participants refined their predictions, demonstrating improved accuracy and depth in thematic analysis.

While some participants engaged attentively in reading, others struggled with distractions from their surroundings. Pronunciation varied among participants, with some exhibiting proficiency while others faced challenges, potentially hindered by unfamiliar vocabulary. Difficulties in comprehension prompted searches for word meanings, emphasizing the need to bolster students' vocabulary to facilitate reading comprehension.

By the session's conclusion, participants recognized the enhanced accuracy of their predictions compared to previous sessions. Engaging in creative exercises, they crafted alternative endings closely intertwined with the story's themes, employing simple vocabulary. Discussions ranged from love triangles to the fates of characters, showcasing the participants' comprehension and imaginative engagement with the text.

This session provided participants with a boost in confidence regarding their reading skills, despite ongoing struggles with vocabulary hindering comprehension. The duration of this session was one hour and fifteen minutes. The lengthier story proved overwhelming for some, leading to feelings of desperation to complete the reading. While they managed to grasp the storyline, their expectations diverged from the actual plot, with one participant noting its clichéd nature except for the protagonist's unique abilities. The primary challenge identified lies in vocabulary acquisition, as participants often found themselves lost within the narrative due to unfamiliar terms. While they exhibit understanding of grammatical structures and tenses, expanding their vocabulary remains imperative for improved comprehension.

Session 3:

The session started after the participants had completed an exam. The story's name was “Old Ghosts” written by A. J. McKenna. As usual, they made an exercise with additional words and the title. They tried to predict the storyline, their guesses ranged from a focus on childhood to themes of past traumas, ghosts, and mental illnesses. Pronunciation during the reading was generally good, yet comprehension suffered as the plot became convoluted, and unfamiliar vocabulary impeded understanding.

It became evident that expanding vocabulary was essential for future sessions, as this would enhance comprehension and enable them to craft alternative endings. Despite

improvements in punctuation, confusion persisted regarding the storyline's timeline, leading to a lack of engagement and reluctance to create alternative endings. Fatigue and stress stemming from end-of-semester pressures further compounded their difficulties and hindered their mood for reading.

In future interventions, expanding participants' vocabulary was essential to combat comprehension challenges stemming from unfamiliar words. It's imperative to devise strategies addressing these obstacles for upcoming sessions. Limited vocabulary did not let them improve their ability to construct alternative endings, underscoring the importance of linguistic enrichment. Additionally, end-of-semester stress and recent exams contribute to distraction and fatigue, diminishing their motivation and concentration during sessions.

Session 4

In this session, the first one after the vacations, participants had just finished a class when we began. The story's name was "My brother's keeper" written by Eve Chancellor. They kicked off with the customary activity, pondering the meaning of "keeper," with one suggesting it might involve secrets. However, as they delved into the story, they encountered difficulties, particularly with British English terms like "hungover" and "burrow." Despite grappling with these linguistic differences and the story's length, they persevered with the reading, aided by keywords for guidance.

Concentration proved to be a challenge, resulting in some struggles with answering questions effectively. Many participants found it difficult to organize their thoughts and grasp the story's plot, with only one managing to produce a summary, albeit using his own vocabulary rather than that of the story. Despite these hurdles, the session concluded, marking the end of their efforts.

There were many problems with this literary intervention. In this session, participants encountered numerous challenges, including issues with vocabulary, where they faced a lot of problems comprehending some words and the environment's noise levels. Despite their best efforts to engage with the story, they expressed dissatisfaction with its length and struggled. Another problem they faced at the end of the intervention was making the summary and changing the end of the plot.

Session 5

The story's name was "The detour" written by Lisa Taylor. The session started with participants grappling with new vocabulary, attempting to decipher the title's meaning. Some struggled with unfamiliar terms, such as "detour," hindering their initial comprehension. Despite these challenges, they read aloud with good pronunciation and endeavored to answer questions.

The plot posed further difficulties, particularly with its exploration of past and present contexts, intertwined with the protagonist's nightmares inducing sickness and anxiety. However, when summarizing the story, they adeptly highlighted key events despite its brevity. Vocabulary remained a persistent barrier, limiting their understanding of the narrative. Despite their efforts to overcome this obstacle, comprehension remained elusive at times. Nonetheless, they showcased creativity in crafting alternative endings, ranging from tragic outcomes to spiritual resolutions, reflecting diverse interpretations of the story's themes.

The session proved beneficial for the participants as they initially struggled to understand the text but eventually navigated it with the help of vocabulary. They could decipher the story at the end and enjoyed it as it had plot moments with lots of intrigue. They utilized their available tools to summarize the text and create interesting alternative endings.

Session 6

The story's name was "Remains" written by George Nevgodovsky. The session began with participants discussing the title of the story and introducing new vocabulary to aid in understanding the plot. Some struggled to infer the story's theme from the title, while one participant speculated it might involve human remains or secrets.

During the reading, some participants read aloud, possibly to enhance concentration, while others asked about unfamiliar words encountered in previous sessions. Confusion arose when the protagonist, a girl, was referred to with a man's name or as a month. Despite efforts to summarize the story, many participants struggled to capture all its key aspects and organize their thoughts effectively.

In the alternative endings segment, participants proposed various creative endings, such as suggesting Philip as the killer or speculating about his relationship with August. Though some details may have been overlooked or omitted, the participants found the story's conclusion to be highly variable and open to interpretation.

The participants faced challenges in inferring the story's theme from the title, with many struggling in this aspect of the intervention. Despite this, there were instances where students could formulate ideas about the story based solely on the title and additional vocabulary. Complications arose during the intervention, particularly with character names, leading to difficulties in summarizing the plot coherently. However, by the session's end, they demonstrated understanding by creating plausible alternative endings, indicating a solid grasp of the story's elements and themes.

Final session

The last story's name was "Ways of attending" written by Harry Readhead. Participants engaged in their customary exercise of deciphering words related to the story's title to deduce its theme, although they encountered difficulties due to unfamiliar vocabulary. Amidst a noisy environment, characterized by disruptions from other students, they demonstrated commendable pronunciation and intonation while reading the story. Although they navigated through the plot, some found it challenging to grasp due to frequent changes in location.

During the summary phase, participants struggled to organize the storyline, often omitting crucial details. However, one student made a valiant attempt, albeit with occasional difficulties in explaining phrasal verbs, relying on their own vocabulary to articulate the narrative.

In the final segment, crafting alternative endings proved challenging for most participants. Despite this, they generated several imaginative scenarios, such as the protagonist becoming blind or struggling to find their loved one's new home. Despite the difficulties, they enjoyed the creative exercise of reshaping the story's conclusion.

In this session, participants encountered challenges such as noise disturbances and difficulty grasping certain concepts solely from the title. Despite this, their reading and intonation skills were commendable, and they successfully answered questions related to the story. However, they confessed to losing track of the plot due to the frequent changes in character locations during the summary phase. While attempting to create alternative endings, they struggled at times to articulate their ideas coherently, but nonetheless, they all made earnest efforts to contribute.

Quantitative section

After all this was collected, the collected data needed a categorization based on the key competencies essential for the participants (understanding the text, vocabulary, analysis ability, organization and clarity, coherence, and relevance). Moreover, the manner of rating participants' performance was measured from 1 to 4 (where 1 was “not achieved”, 2 was “with difficulty”, 3 was “not entirely” and 4 was “accomplished”). The chart below shows the results of the participants in the diagnostic session.

Diagnostic Session						
Participants	Understanding the text	Vocabulary	Analysis ability	Organization and clarity	Coherence and relevance	Mean
Student 1	4	4	4	3	3	3,6
Student 2	3	3	2	4	2	2,8
Student 3	3	3	2	2	2	2,4
Student 4	3	2	3	2	3	2,6
Student 5	3	2	2	2	2	2,2
Student 6	4	3	3	3	4	3,4
Average of each item	3,3	2,8	2,7	2,7	2,7	2,8
					Gral Mean	2,8

Chart 1. Diagnostic session

In the last chart, it is visible that most of the participants can understand the text, where the main goal of this section is to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the text read. The students 1 and 6 demonstrated a complete and accurate understanding of the text, where they expressed and explained with precision the key points. Furthermore, these participants had a clear and deep understanding about the diagnosis test. Instead, the other

participants did not show a complete understanding of the diagnostic test. Some questions were lacking in the analysis ability, coherence and relevance and vocabulary. The overall average of this section was 3.3, where the vast majority demonstrated an adequate level of understanding regarding the diagnostic test.

In the part of the vocabulary, student 4 and student 5 demonstrated struggles using an adequate and appropriate vocabulary in their response. Also, there are lapses of vocabulary, which was basic and repetitive in the diagnostic session compared to the other participants. On the one hand, it was evident that the students 2, 3 and 6 had an adequate command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response, in some times they had lapses of vocabulary, but it was not as repetitive as the other participants. On the other hand, student 1 demonstrates an excellent command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response as well as a sophisticated and good fluency. The overall average of this section was 2.8 where it was a varied average among people who managed to use an appropriate vocabulary with difficulty and others in a suitable manner and some others had trouble achieving it.

In terms of analysis ability, students 2, 3, and 5 had struggled to analyze the text in a critical way with well-founded arguments. In other aspects, they could not identify the main ideas or supporting details of the text. Students 4 and 6 analyze the text critically, and these students provide well-founded arguments. Talking about these participants they had the ability to analyze, identify, and make coherent arguments well-supported on the text. Student 1, unlike all her partners, had the highest score in this section. This student demonstrated an exceptional ability to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments. Moreover, this participant adeptly identifies and articulates the primary concepts and accompanying specifics within the text. Her arguments are well-supported with evidence from the text. The overall average of this section was 2.7 where it was a varied average

among people who managed to analyze a text critically and give arguments with difficulty and others adequately and some others had trouble achieving it.

In the organization and clarity part, this item was designed to determine if their response was well organized and easy to follow. It is written in clear and consistent English. Students 3, 4 and 5 had struggles organizing their response effectively and may have difficulty writing in clear and consistent English. Their writing may be somewhat disorganized, with poorly structured paragraphs and sentences that lack coherence. It was also evident that these participants had problems with their grammar, spelling, and punctuation. The response of students 1 and 6 in this section was adequately organized and generally easy to follow. They used a clear and consistent writing style for the most part, with well-structured paragraphs and sentences that flow logically and coherently. Besides, they used clear and precise language to communicate their ideas about the text. Student 2 had exceptionally well-organized and easy-to-follow abilities. This participant uses a clear and consistent writing style throughout their response, with well-structured responses and sentences that flow logically and coherently. The overall average of this section was 2.7 where it was a varied average among people who managed to be able to write a consistent and well-organized response with difficulty and others in a suitable manner and some others achieved it exceptionally.

In the coherence and relevance section, students 2, 3, and 5 demonstrated that their responses were somewhat coherent and may have difficulty directly addressing the question. Their argument may be somewhat disorganized or difficult to follow. Students 1 and 4 changed their score a little in comparison to the last participants, their response was generally coherent and addresses the question posed. Their arguments were developed and organized, with each point supporting their overall thesis and effectively communicating their

understanding about the topic of the story. In contrast, the student 6 showed in his response is highly coherent and directly addresses the question posed. His argument was well-developed and logically organized, with each point building on the previous one. The response uses appropriate examples and evidence to support their claims, and the language was clear and precise. The overall average of this section was 2.7 where it was a varied average among people who managed to be able to write a coherent and relevant answer to the question asked with difficulty and others in an appropriate way and some others achieved it in a highly coherent manner.

Individually speaking of the participants, all performed differently with respect to aspects related to their reading comprehension, Student 5 had many general difficulties on the indispensable points to have a successful understanding of the text, where in most sections he showed a grade of 2 (which means "With difficulty"), only one section showed a grade of 3 (he did not achieve a successful understanding of the text).

At the end, there were some changes in the results compared between the diagnostic session and the final session and it is showed in the next chart:

Final Session						
Participants	Understanding the text	Vocabulary	Analysis ability	Organization and clarity	Coherence and relevance	Mean
Student 1	4	3	4	4	4	3,8
Student 2	3	3	3	3	3	3,0
Student 3	3	3	3	2	3	2,8
Student 4	3	3	3	2	3	2,8
Student 5	3	3	3	2	3	2,8

Student 6	3	3	4	4	4	3,6	
Average of each item	3,166	3,0	3,3	2,8	3,3	3,1	
						Gral Mean	3,1

Chart 2. Final session chart

In the “understanding the text” section, participants had an average of 3. The student who stood out in this section was student 1 as she scored 4, which means that she demonstrated a complete and accurate understanding of the text read, identifying and explaining with precision most or all key points of the text. Comparing the diagnostic test with the final intervention, the participants performed better in the diagnostic test, but there were external problems that altered the concentration of the participants. Similarly, there was a negative change of 0.14 in this section.

In the “vocabulary” section of this final session, all the participants demonstrated an adequate command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response, although there may be some lapses in their use of vocabulary. They use a range of vocabulary accurately and effectively. Comparing the diagnostic test with the final intervention, all the participants had the same average in the score. This change could demonstrate they ameliorate the use of appropriate vocabulary in their responses. Besides, the average of the final session had a positive change of 0.2 in this section.

In the “analysis ability” section of this final session, most participants had a significant change. Participants demonstrated this ability in an adequate and exceptional way to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments. They could identify and explain with precision the main ideas and supporting details of the text compared to the diagnostic session. Comparing the diagnostic session with the final intervention, participants

improved and remained on their score. This change demonstrated they improved their ability to analyze in a coherent way. The average of the final session had a positive change of 0.6 in this section.

In the “organization and clarity” section of the final session, the participants had a better overall performance in the session. It was evident that the scores of the students were almost the same compared to the diagnostic session. The participants’ responses were exceptionally and adequately organized. In addition, they demonstrated to use a clear and consistent writing style throughout their response with well-structured responses and sentences that flow logically and coherently. The average of the final session had a positive change of 0.1 in this section.

In the “coherence and relevance” section of this final session, most participants had a significant change. The participants’ responses were highly coherent and directly addressed the question. Their argument was well-developed and logically organized, with each point building on the previous one. Comparing the diagnostic session with the final session, participants remained on their score, and some had a better score.

During the data collection of the diagnostic test and the final session, participants had different results in these tests where some were increased more than others. Also, as seen in the following table:

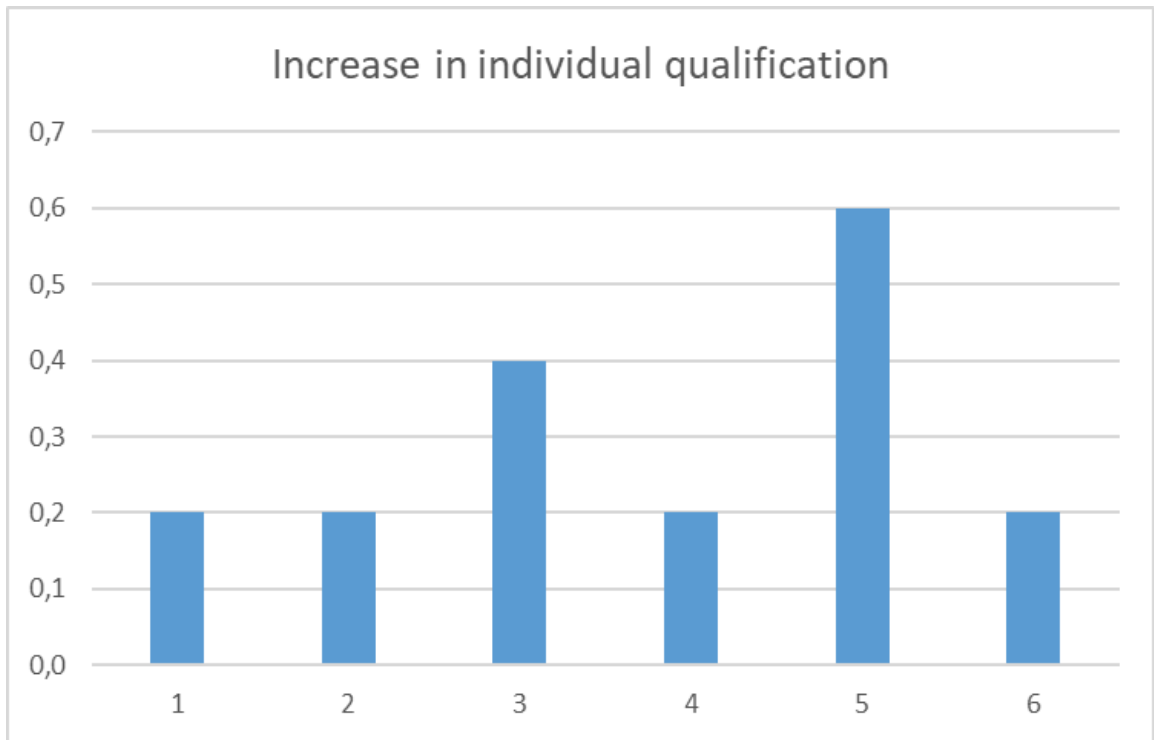


Chart 3. Increase in individual qualification graphic

From the outset, student 1 consistently demonstrated outstanding performance during interventions, marked by both adequacy and effectiveness in their contributions. Her dedication and prowess were clearly reflected in a noteworthy increase of 0.2 in their individual average. This uptick not only underscores their commitment to learning but also their ability to absorb and apply acquired knowledge effectively.

Similarly to student 1, student 2 exhibited an excellent performance throughout the interventions with both proficiency and efficacy. Mirroring their counterpart, student 2 also demonstrated a commendable increase of 0.2 in their individual average between the diagnostic test and the final assessment. This parallel improvement not only underscores the dedication and aptitude of student 2 but also highlights the effectiveness of the learning process employed. Their achievement serves as a testament to the transformative power of focused effort and underscores the importance of diligence in academic endeavors.

In contrast to the preceding participants, student 3 distinguished herself with a performance that surpassed expectations. Throughout both the diagnostic and final tests, she demonstrated a remarkable individual increase of 0.3 in her average score. While initially displaying an acceptable level of performance in the diagnostic test, the comparative analysis between the two assessments illuminates a significant enhancement in her individual average.

Student 4, much like the initial two participants, showcased a performance that paralleled their peers. With an average increase of 0.2, student 4 maintained a consistent level of proficiency throughout the course. Demonstrating a commendable level of competency, this participant displayed both adequacy and progress from the diagnostic test to the final assessment. Despite starting with a solid foundation in the diagnostic test, she exhibited tangible growth and improvement as evidenced by her performance in the final test.

Student 5 ascended as a beacon of academic excellence within the group, distinguishing himself as a standout performer among his peers. With a remarkable increase of 0.6 in his individual average, he set himself apart as one of the top performers in the group. Throughout the evolution from the diagnostic test to the final assessment, Student 5 exhibited a commendable level of proficiency and an unwavering commitment to personal growth, manifesting in the substantial enhancement of his average score.

Student 6, much like most participants, experienced a modest yet significant increase in their individual average, registering a commendable rise of 0.2. This incremental improvement, while seemingly modest in isolation, underscores the collective trend observed among the group. The consistency in the pattern of individual increases highlights the systemic nature of the learning process employed throughout the course. While each participant may have varied in their starting points and initial skill levels, the overarching trend of marginal improvement signifies the efficacy of the instructional methods utilized.

Turning the attention to the collective performance of all participants, it delved into dynamics of their overall average scores. The following table lays out the individual differences in the overall averages of participants across the interventions. This analysis provides a nuanced understanding of the diverse array of outcomes observed within the cohort, shedding light on the varying degrees of progress and achievement among participants.

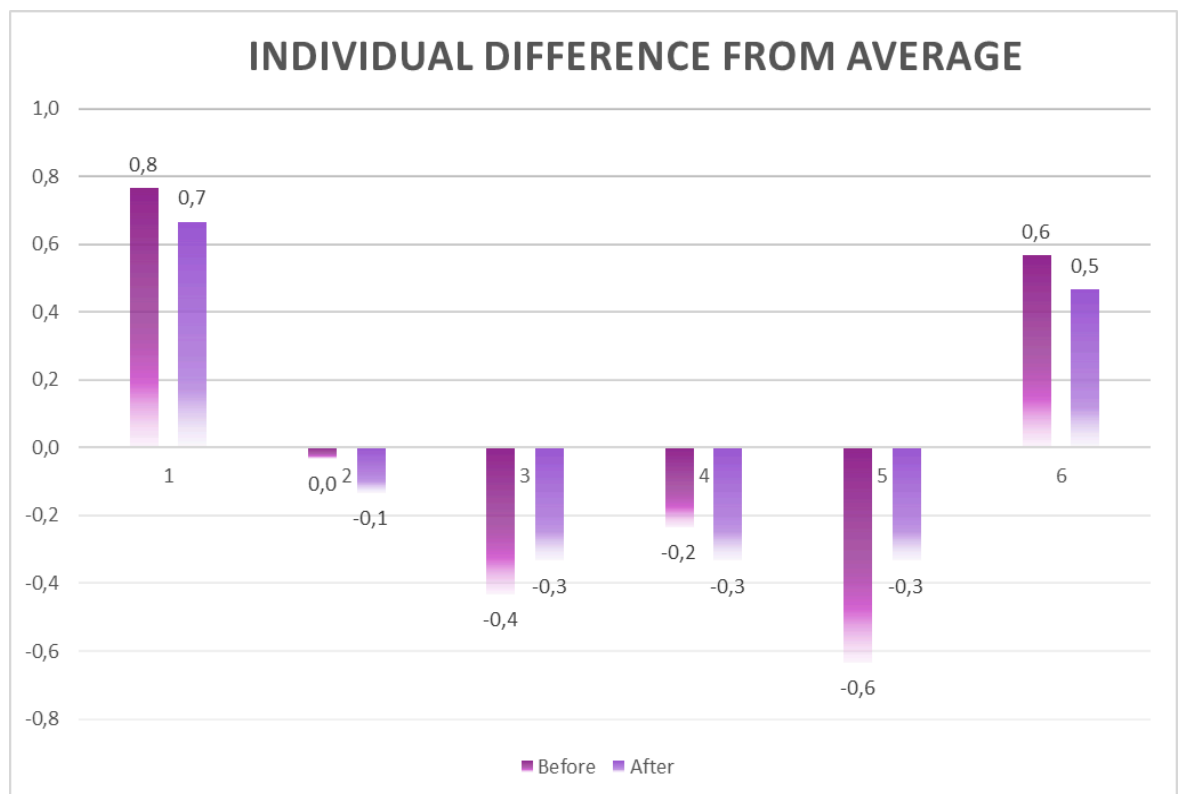


Chart 4. Individual difference from average graphics.

As it scrutinized the data presented in the table, patterns began to emerge, offering valuable insights into the collective trajectory of the group, from notable spikes in performance to more modest increments. In addition, student 1 consistently demonstrated exceptional performance skills, maintaining an excellent and effective average throughout the

interventions. While initially aligning her score with the global average, upon closer examination, a slight decrease in her individual performance compared to her established average was noted. This deviation prompted reflection on the natural fluctuations inherent in the learning process, underscoring the importance of challenges. Student 1's response to this setback exemplified her determination and commitment to continuous improvement, reaffirming her dedication to excellence.

Considering the broader context of the students' overall average, participant 2's performance was notably close to the group average. However, despite her earnest efforts, she fell short of surpassing the average due to some skills where she did not attain favorable scores. Consequently, participant 2 remained slightly below the overall average, despite their diligence and commitment to improvement. Regrettably, despite their efforts, participant 2 experienced a decrease in the score by -0.1. This decline serves as a reminder of the inherent challenges and fluctuations that can occur within the learning process.

Student 3's individual average diverged notably from the collective average, with an overall score of -0.4, placing her considerably below the mean of their partners. Despite this deviation, student 3 consistently demonstrated adequacy and proficiency in showcasing her skills during both the diagnostic and final sessions. However, in the final session, she went on to have an average of -0.3 where she showed that she had a fluctuation in her average and came a little closer to the global average. Her score was not enough to pass the global average, but she had an improvement in her individual average.

Turning our attention to student 4, their performance paralleled that of Student 2. Beginning with a diagnostic test score -0.2 below the overall average, Student 4 showcased a mix of strengths and weaknesses across various skills. While demonstrating proficiency in some areas, they encountered challenges in others, indicative of a nuanced skill set. However,

despite efforts to address these disparities, Student 4 found themselves drifting further from the collective performance of their peers. Their overall average of -0.3 below the global average reflects a widening gap over time despite their endeavors to improve.

Student 5 was the one who was the furthest from the overall average, as he had a negative result of -0.6 compared to his other classmates. He was one of the participants who had the most problems when successfully performing the skills required during the diagnostic test. In the final test result, it was noted that this same participant rose to -0.3 from the perspective of his average. Despite his efforts during his process, this score was not enough to be above average, but he did improve his abilities individually at the time of understanding.

Student 6, akin to Student 1, had a role in maintaining an overall average above par. This student distinguished themselves through outstanding performance, boasting an impressive score of 0.6, indicative of consistently excellent or adequate skills demonstrated during the diagnostic session. However, despite this initial flourish, the final test saw a slight dip to 0.5. Nonetheless, even with this decrease, Student 6 remained positioned above the collective average compared to their peers.

As mentioned above, some people remained on average, and others remained below average, as seen in the following graphic:

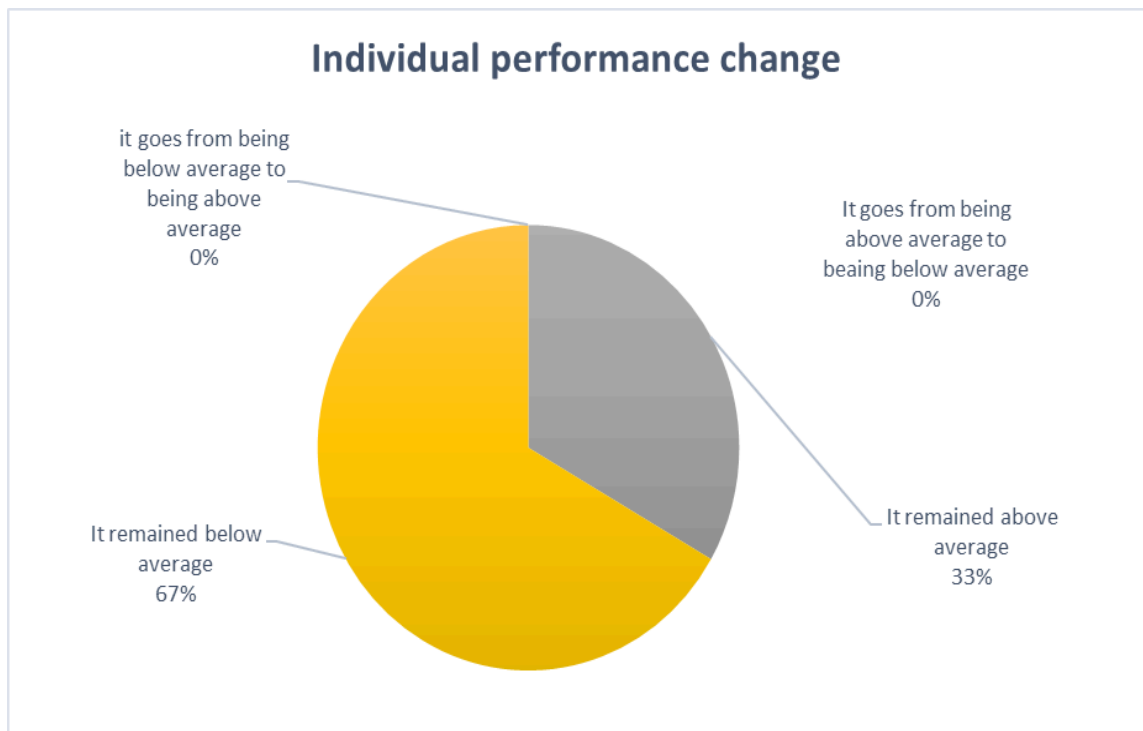


Chart 5. Individual performance change graphic

As depicted in the table, a notable 67% of the participants maintained a position below the average. Within this majority, each participant showcased a unique trajectory, with some showing improvement while others experienced a decline between the diagnostic test and the final assessment. This diverse array of outcomes underscores the varied nature of academic progress and the individualized experiences encountered by students within the cohort. Despite these fluctuations, the collective data provides valuable insights into the dynamic nature of learning and the multifaceted journey toward academic achievement.

On the one hand, we have the remaining 33% of all participants who distinguished themselves by consistently remaining above average. Despite their commendable efforts demonstrated during the diagnostic test, their performance in the final test failed to elevate their individual averages. This subset of students represents a unique cohort that, while

initially performing above the norm, encountered challenges in maintaining or surpassing their high standards.

On the other hand, two specific characteristics stood out with a 0% occurrence, indicating that no participant achieved such a result. One of these characteristics was the transition from going below average to above average. Despite the collective efforts of participants, none managed to elevate their performance to surpass the average, although some came tantalizingly close. The other characteristic that had a 0% was "going from being above the average to being below the average," which means that although they did not manage to increase, neither was their reduction so much to lower their average.

The variation of the individual qualifications before and after had many differences and fluctuations, as can be seen in the following graphic.

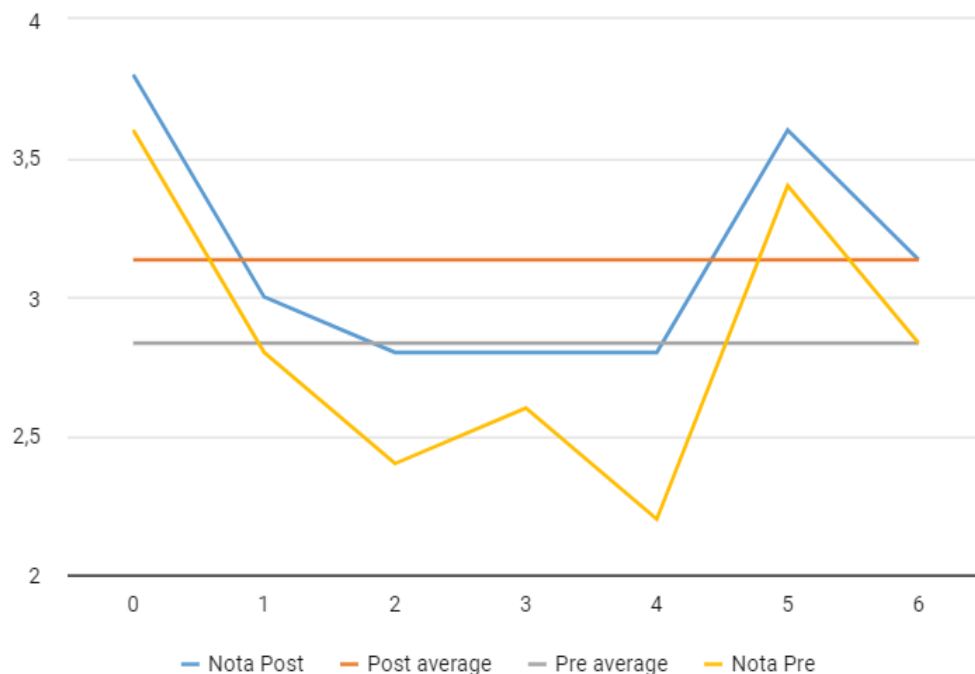


Chart 6. Variation of individual ratings before and after

The initial benchmark used to discuss overall performance is the diagnostic score, which began with student 1 receiving a grade of 3.6. Subsequently, there was a noticeable decrease to 2.8 with student 2, indicating a shift in performance. Between students 3, 4, and 5, there were fluctuations in their diagnostic scores, with grades of 2.4, 2.6, and 2.2, respectively, reflecting varied levels of initial proficiency. Considering the assessment of diagnostic scores, it was highlighted by student 6, whose grade of 3.4 falls below that of student 1. This comparison highlights the diversity in performance levels across the cohort, with student 6 trailing behind student 1, albeit by a narrower margin compared to some of their peers.

Starting with student 1, who exhibited a notable advancement to a score of 3.8, which indicates a significant improvement across various skills. This rise not only demonstrates a global enhancement in performance but also reflects an increase in his overall average grade. Across all assessed abilities, student 1 consistently showcased excellent and appropriate proficiency, indicating a thorough understanding of the material and a commendable mastery of the subject matter.

Shifting our focus to student 2, her initial test result amounted to 3.0, indicating a modest but noteworthy improvement in her skills. While her progression may not be as pronounced as that of student 1, it nonetheless signifies a subtle yet proper enhancement in her abilities. This improvement suggests a conscientious effort to refine her skills and adapt to the academic challenges presented. Student 2's journey reflects a commitment to continuous improvement and a willingness to embrace opportunities for growth, positioning her as a determined and resilient learner within the cohort.

Touching upon student 3's progress, she experienced a noteworthy advancement to a score of 2.8, marking a substantial increase compared to her initial test performance. This

significant improvement underscores her dedication and effort in enhancing her reading comprehension skills. Through diligent practice and focused attention, student 3 demonstrated proper growth and development in her ability to understand and interpret written material. Her remarkable progress highlights not only her academic potential but also her resilience and determination to succeed.

Regarding student 4's advancement, she demonstrated notable progress with a promotion to 2.8. This improvement particularly manifested in her reading comprehension skills, reflecting her commitment to academic growth and development. Transitioning to student 5, he marked a significant shift among all peers. Unlike others who experienced minimal increases, student 5 stood out with a more substantial improvement, distinguishing himself as the sole participant with a higher advancement. Despite this, the progression of student 5 aligned with his peers, ultimately reaching a grade of 2.8, emphasizing the collective effort and relative parity within the group. This observation underscores the dynamic nature of academic progress and the collaborative spirit fostered among participants as they strive for excellence together.

Turning our attention to student 6, notable progress was observed as she achieved a promotion to 3.6. This achievement positioned her as the second student with the highest score, closely following student 1. Both student 1 and student 6 maintained their exceptional performance throughout, managing to elevate their grades slightly compared to their initial test. Their ability to sustain high scores underscores their dedication to academic excellence and their capacity for consistent improvement. As key contributors to the cohort's success, student 1 and student 6 serve as role models for their peers, inspiring a culture of excellence and achievement within the group.

Considering the performance between the averages of the diagnostic test and the final test, it's notable that the diagnostic test average was lower, with a score of 2.8. During the diagnostic test, discernible weaknesses were observed in various skills such as vocabulary, organization and clarity, coherence and relevance, and the analysis ability. Many students received grades of 2 or 3, indicating challenges in mastering these skills, which they struggled to achieve with difficulty and incompletely. This underscores the initial hurdles encountered by students in grappling with the complexities of the subject matter and highlights areas in need of improvement as they progress through the interventions.

Considering the average of the final test, the average result increased to 3.1, marking a notable improvement of 0.3 compared to the diagnostic test. Upon analyzing the results of the final test, it became evident that many skills exhibited an increase compared to the initial assessment. However, the “organization and clarity” part remained a challenge for some students. Despite efforts to enhance this aspect, certain students received intermediate grades, indicating that there was still room for improvement in this area. This highlights the complexities involved in mastering all facets of the subject matter and underscores the need for continued support and targeted interventions to address specific areas of weakness. Nevertheless, the overall upward trend in scores signifies progress and growth among the students, reflecting their dedication and perseverance in striving for academic excellence.

Survey data

The data collection process for the survey encompassed two distinct phases aimed at capturing changes and developments throughout the interventions. The first phase occurred during the interventions, offering a real-time glimpse into the ongoing progress of participants. During this initial collection phase, several noteworthy observations emerged.

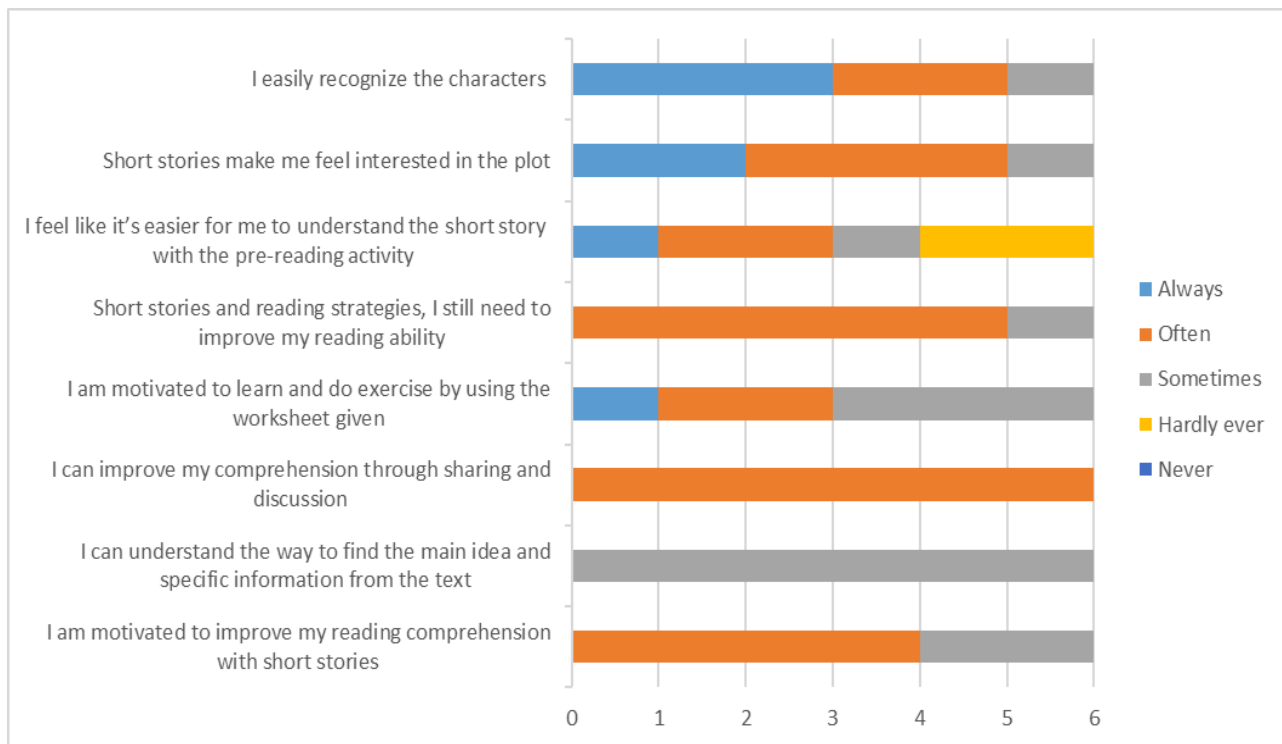


Chart 7. Graphic of middle survey data

In the first item called "I easily recognize characters," the students 2, 4, and 6 consistently affirmed achieving this goal "always." These students demonstrated a strong ability to recognize characters effortlessly throughout the stories. However, two students (3 and 5) indicated achieving this behavior "often," suggesting occasional difficulties in certain situations. Interestingly, student 1 reported achieving this objective "sometimes," indicating some challenges in recognizing characters in a straightforward way.

In the second item called "Short stories make me feel interested in the plot," students 3 and 5 consistently expressed feeling intrigued by the plot, marking "always." Conversely, students 1, 2, and 6 indicated that their interest in the plot of short stories was "often," particularly during the first half of the interventions. However, student 4 admitted that this behavior was less frequent for her, opting for "sometimes" as her response.

In the next item, "I feel like it's easier for me to understand the short story with the pre-reading activity," perceptions varied. Student 6 admitted pointing out the "always" option, as these activities helped him understand short stories well. In another aspect, students 1 and 4 pointed to the "often" option, indicating that these activities did not always help them. In addition, it was found that student 3 "sometimes" meets this goal short stories with pre-reading activities. Concluding with this item, it was observed that students 2 and 5 were not so successful with the other classmates; for that reason, they pointed out the option "hardly ever". This variability in responses underscores the individualized nature of learning experiences, with students exhibiting differing levels of engagement and effectiveness with instructional strategies.

In the context of the fourth item, which revolves around the need for improvement in reading ability when it comes to short stories and reading strategies, a prevailing sentiment emerged among the students. Most students opted for the "often" option, indicating a recognition of the ongoing need for enhancement in their reading skills within this context. However, it's noteworthy that student 1 stood out from her peers by selecting a different option. While most of her classmates chose "often" to express their perceived need for improvement in reading ability when it comes to short stories and reading strategies, Student 1 opted for "sometimes." This deviation suggests that her assessment of her own skills differs from the majority, indicating that her perceived need for improvement in these strategies may not be as pronounced as that of her peers.

In the fifth item, called "I am motivated to learn and do exercise by using the worksheet given", the students expressed their opinions in the following way, the student 4 chose the option "always" indicating she felt motivated using the interventions to exercise her reading comprehension. In another aspect, the students 2 and 6 chose the option "often",

indicating that not all the time they felt interested in the worksheets they worked in the interventions. Finishing with this item, there are students 1, 3 and 5 who chose the option "sometimes", stating that maybe the worksheets made were not motivating for their learning reading comprehension.

In contrast to the previous items, the sixth item, titled "I can improve my comprehension through sharing and discussion," revealed a unanimous response among all students. Remarkably, each student selected the option "often," underscoring a consistent and robust belief in the efficacy of sharing and discussing their perceptions and ideas to enhance their understanding of short stories. This collective consensus suggests a shared understanding among the students of the value and importance of collaborative learning experiences. By engaging in discussions and sharing their insights with one another, students not only deepen their comprehension of the text but also benefit from the diverse perspectives and interpretations offered by their peers. This collaborative approach not only enriches their understanding of the material but also fosters critical thinking skills and promotes a sense of community within the classroom.

In the seventh item, titled "I can understand the way to find the main idea and specific information from the text," a remarkable consistency emerged among all students, mirroring their responses from the previous item. Once again, they unanimously selected the option "sometimes." This collective choice underscores a shared recognition among the students that while they possess the capability to identify aspects of reading, such as the main idea and specific information from the text, it is not a skill they consistently apply. Rather, they acknowledge that there are occasions where they can successfully extract these elements from the text, but it is not a constant or automatic process.

In the final item of the midterm survey, titled "I am motivated to improve my reading comprehension with short stories," a divergence in responses emerged, reflecting the varied motivations and interests among the students. Notably, students 1, 3, 5, and 6 opted for the "often" option, indicating a consistent and robust motivation to enhance their reading comprehension skills through the exploration of short stories. These students exhibited a genuine interest and enjoyment in the stories selected, finding resonance with narratives that aligned with their personal tastes and preferences. Notably, students 1, 3, 5, and 6 opted for the "often" option, indicating a consistent and robust motivation to enhance their reading comprehension skills through the exploration of short stories. These students exhibited a genuine interest and enjoyment in the stories selected, finding resonance with narratives that aligned with their personal tastes and preferences.

The next chart shows the results of the final survey. This survey was made after the last intervention finished and showed their perceptions:

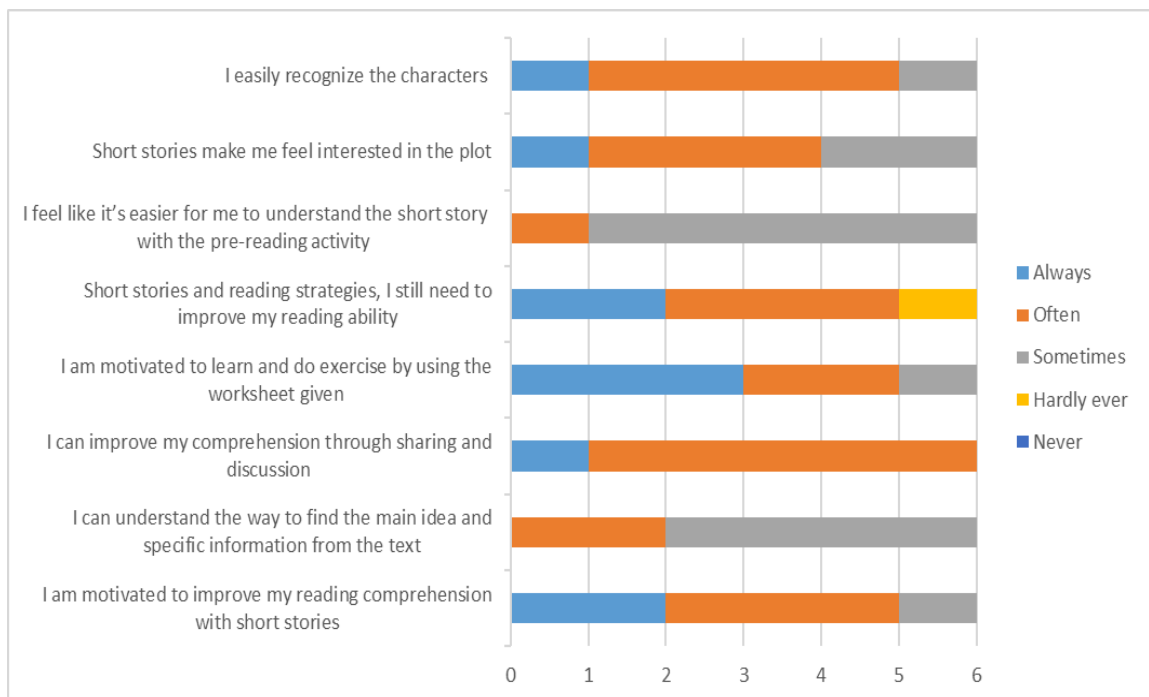


Chart 8. Graphic of final survey data

The first item, compared with the first survey, had some changes. The only student who previously marked the option "always", and kept marking it after finishing the interventions, was student 2. On the one hand, students 4 and 6, who had previously answered the same answer as the previous student, on this occasion marked the option "often", taking into account that in the rest of interventions they might have small difficulties in finding the characters. Student 3 chose again "often", expressing her perspective did not change. However, students 1 and 5 changed their options and in this survey, they chose "sometimes", manifesting that after all the interventions, it was hard to recognize the characters.

The second item, compared to the first collection, had changes in perception in almost all participants. Student 2 changed her mind and chose the option "always" and she had previously chosen "often", specifying that she was attracted by the plots of the remaining stories. Then students 3, 5 and 6, who chose the option "often", were previously the same students (3 and 5) had chosen "always" and the student 6 was still with his perception about that item. They proved that they struggled to be drawn to the remaining short stories. At the end of this item, we find students 1 and 4, who chose the option "sometimes." In this context, student 1 did change her mind since, in the previous survey, she chose "often" implying that now she did not feel so interested in stories for their plot. Student 4 kept her mind the same and chose the same answer as before.

In the third item, there was a common result among the vast majority of students choosing the option "sometimes", specifying that only pre-reading activities helped them in certain stories. Previously, students had chosen other options where some improved with pre-reading activities (2 and 5), others who changed their mind regarding their performance

with activities (1 and 6), and student 3 continued to choose the same option. However, one student had a perception similar to that of the previous survey.

In the fourth item in the previous survey, almost all students chose two options, which were "often" and "sometimes". On this occasion, student 1 chose "rarely" as she does not need to improve her reading skills so much. On the one hand, students 3, 4 and 6, chose the option "often", because they had certain difficulties with their skills at the time of understanding a text, and they also chose this same option in the last survey. On the other hand, there are students 2 and 5, who chose "always", demonstrating that they need to improve their overall understanding of the short stories.

In the fifth item, some changes were noted. Students 2, 4, 5 chose the "always" option, specifying that they were motivated to learn with worksheets. These students had previously chosen other options, such as "often" and "sometimes", where they changed their perception of the activities, and student 4 continued with their perception. Students 3 and 6, on this occasion, chose the option "often", where student 3 stated with the option she chose that she had a change of perspective regarding her motivation, and student 6 remained with her response from the previous survey. At the end of this item is student 1, who kept her perspective of "sometimes" feeling motivated with the worksheets.

The sixth item's response pattern remained consistent with the previous survey. Once again, all students except for student 2 selected the option "often." This alignment underscores a shared belief among the majority of students in the efficacy of sharing and discussing their perceptions and ideas to enhance their comprehension of short stories. However, a notable deviation was observed in student 2's response, who opted for the option "always." According to student 2, engaging in discussions with peers not only improves comprehension but does so consistently and without fail. This outlier response suggests a

particularly strong conviction in the power of collaborative learning experiences to deepen understanding.

In the seventh item, in the last survey, a common behavior was observed that all students chose the option "sometimes". They stated with their answer that on certain occasions they can find the idea of the text and textual questions. In the second interview, two options were observed as the most chosen, which were "often" and "sometimes". Students 1, 3, 4, and 6 indicated the same option from the previous survey, recognizing having the same results. However, students 2 and 5 on this occasion pointed out the option "often", noting that they had changes in item and improved in recognition and understanding of the short story.

In the last item, students perceived a shift with short stories. With the second survey, students 2 and 5, pointed out the option "always", showing that they are motivated to improve their reading comprehension. On the one hand, students 3, 4 and 6, pointed out the option "often", showing some interest in continuing to improve their reading comprehension with short stories. In this sense, student 3 kept her mind the same since the first survey. On the other hand, student 1 changed her mind, pointing to the option "sometimes", showing that not all times she was motivated by short stories.

Discussion

The study's results were analyzed to answer the research question. This information was collected through field notes, surveys, observation formats, reading comprehension interventions, diagnostic tests, and a final test.

Reading strategies were employed within the framework of the Language-based approach. These strategies encompassed pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities, all of which played a crucial role in guiding students to alter their perspectives and approaches to understanding literary elements. By engaging in these activities, students were able to delve deeper into the plot, grasp the sequences of events, and gain insights into the characters' motivations and behaviors.

According to O'Malley & Pierce, (1996), as cited in Syafi (2018), "those include establishing reading purpose, determining the main idea, organizing information, and monitoring their comprehension." By integrating these pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities, the Language-based approach proved effective in transforming students' reading experiences, encouraging them to adopt more nuanced methods in exploring literary works. As noted in the study, the increase between the diagnostic session and the final session was 0.4, as previously seen in the overall average of participants. The vast majority of students who participated had significant changes in their reading comprehension.

Given the activities, emphasis was placed on while-reading activities. As Febriani et al. (2018) said "the while reading activities include helping students understand the plot, helping students understand the characters, helping students with difficult vocabulary and helping students with style and language." Taking into consideration the vocabulary, is one of the most important tools when the students are reading a story. Notably, in the interviews conducted with teachers, a recurring concern surfaced regarding students' struggles with

vocabulary. Teachers accurately identified vocabulary as a common stumbling block among students.

During student interviews, this sentiment was echoed unanimously, with every student highlighting vocabulary as their primary challenge when it comes to reading and comprehending texts. Undoubtedly, a robust vocabulary is essential for grasping the nuances of a text, as it forms the foundation of comprehension. Teachers also mentioned the possibility of employing contextual clues to infer the meaning of unfamiliar words within a historical context.

This observation was echoed by students themselves, as many acknowledged employing such strategies to navigate through challenging texts. Some participants even noted success using contextual cues to advance their reading comprehension skills and gain a deeper understanding of the text. This alignment between teachers' observations and students' experiences underscores the significance of vocabulary acquisition and contextual understanding in the process of reading comprehension.

Field journals and surveys helped document events and behaviors found during interventions. In the cases below, it is evident that the interviews resulted in information about their motivation and work during the interventions.

As documented in the field diaries, there were several instances when the participants engaged in meaningful interactions with one another, sharing ideas about alternative endings, various points of view, and related topics. This collaborative approach aligns with the concept of cooperative learning, where students work together to deepen their understanding of a subject through shared experiences and collective problem-solving.

Cooperative learning, as evidenced by the participants' interactions, promotes an environment where students can freely exchange ideas, challenge each other's perspectives, and collaboratively explore different interpretations. As Syafi (2018) “It has also positive

effects not only on students' achievement but also on other important factors such as motivation, social skills (including relationship skills and acceptance of diversity level of ability) and fond of learning at school." (187). In the last study, it was found that those students had a significantly higher effect by working collaboratively as same as the participants of this study.

Workspaces play an important role in the moment of concentration and motivation, but also other aspects lead to changes or variations in results. The participants of Syafi (2018) observed "the significant progress could be seen from the comparison on the test achievement before and after the treatment. The findings that the score of some students decreased might be influenced by the students' internal factors such as the condition of healthiness or motivation"(187). Certain things were observed in common with the last study, where concentration and the spaces for carrying out interventions played an important role in this process. On some occasions, students demonstrated tiredness and attitudes related to the noise of their environment, which could be a reason for the variation in their motivation with interventions.

Considering the results from previous studies and the recent study conducted with the sixth semester participants, there has been a significant improvement in the reading comprehension skills. The majority of them showed measurable progress. However, it's important to note that these activities might not yield the same outcomes for every participant. For example, in the study by Yeni (2020), the researcher noted, "Regarding the result of the following activities, the mean score of students in action one was 70.28. It increased in action two to 85.71, and the mean score from the last action was 87.71." This demonstrates that students' learning results in all actions were successful, meeting the criteria for success.

Focusing on the scores from this particular study, the diagnostic test had a mean score of 2.8, which then increased to 3.1 in the final test. This variation in scores indicates positive changes, suggesting that participants improved their reading comprehension skills through the use of short stories. This consistent improvement, while less dramatic than in other studies, still points to a beneficial impact of the interventions, highlighting the potential effectiveness of using short stories to enhance reading comprehension.

Conclusions

Considering the findings and discussion on the effectiveness of language-based reading comprehension interventions for sixth-semester students, it can be concluded that this study offered significant insights into the research question.

The primary effect observed in the study was that most participants demonstrated an increase in their scores when comparing the diagnostic test with the final test. Nearly all participants experienced a consistent increase of 0.2, with a few showing a more substantial growth, reaching up to 0.4. This general trend of improvement indicates that the interventions had a positive impact on the reading comprehension abilities of most participants.

Despite this upward trajectory, it is noteworthy that the individual score increases, while consistent, were not sufficient to push most participants above the general average.

Although all students improved their scores from the diagnostic test to the final test, only two participants achieved and maintained scores above the general average.

The study employed a Language-based approach, incorporating pre-reading, while-reading, and post-reading activities to guide students in understanding literary elements such as plot, character motivations, and sequences of events. These strategies proved effective in fostering deeper engagement with texts and enhancing comprehension skills. Notably, the second effect of the study emphasized the importance of vocabulary acquisition in reading comprehension. Teachers and students alike identified vocabulary as a significant challenge, underscoring the need for targeted instruction and strategies to address this issue. The use of contextual clues emerged as a promising approach to inferring word meanings within the context of historical narratives.

Moreover, the third effect is cooperative learning that was found to be conducive to improving reading comprehension. Through meaningful interactions and collaborative problem-solving, students were able to deepen their understanding of texts and develop essential social and cognitive skills. The positive effects of cooperative learning were evident in both the current study and previous research, highlighting its potential as a valuable instructional approach.

However, it is essential to acknowledge that individual differences may influence the outcomes of interventions. While most participants showed measurable progress, variations in motivation, environmental factors, and internal conditions may impact students' performance and engagement.

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore the importance of implementing evidence-based strategies and fostering collaborative learning environments to promote reading comprehension among students. By leveraging effective instructional approaches and addressing individual needs, educators can empower students to become confident and

proficient readers equipped with the skills necessary for academic success and lifelong learning.

Future research

This study has provided valuable insights into vocabulary acquisition, cooperative learning, and reading strategies. However, several areas warrant further exploration to expand our understanding and contribute to existing knowledge.

First, future research could delve into vocabulary-building techniques and their effectiveness across English students in university contexts. This exploration could focus on the impact of targeted vocabulary instruction and how it influences reading comprehension and overall language proficiency.

Second, the role of cooperative learning in vocabulary development could be another area of interest. Investigations could examine how collaborative activities and peer interactions contribute to vocabulary acquisition, and whether these methods yield different results compared to traditional teaching approaches.

Third, researchers could explore specific strategies to improve vocabulary, analyzing which methods are most effective in enhancing language skills. This could include studying the impact of reading aloud, using multimedia resources, or incorporating interactive activities to bolster vocabulary retention.

Lastly, future studies could investigate the impact of organization and clarity on vocabulary learning. This area could focus on how structuring content and providing clear explanations affect students' ability to grasp and retain new vocabulary. Researchers could also examine the correlation between improved organization and overall language comprehension.

In summary, future research directions could encompass a broad range of topics related to vocabulary development, cooperative learning, vocabulary-building strategies, and the importance of organization and clarity in learning. Addressing these areas would contribute to a deeper understanding of effective educational practices and offer valuable insights for educators and learners alike.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Consent letter

Apreciado estudiante, se le solicita si está de acuerdo firmar esta carta de consentimiento para hacer parte del proyecto de investigación titulado: “A Language-Based Model Intervention Based On Short Stories Reading Comprehension of the Sixth Semester Students at University of Cauca”. Elaborado por la estudiante Marian Camila Quintero Bastidas y asesorado por el profesor Julian David Guevara del programa de Lenguas Modernas de la Universidad del Cauca.

Al aceptar ser parte del proyecto participará en unas intervenciones basadas en un modelo (Language Based Approach), en las cuales se harán talleres de comprensión lectora en inglés, un pre-test, seis intervenciones y un post-test. Además, tendrá dos encuestas durante las intervenciones para reconocer su punto de vista durante las sesiones.

Recuerde que usted es libre de participar voluntariamente en esta investigación el cual puede dar por terminado cuando desee y no tendrá ninguna sanción académica. En caso de tener algún inconveniente lo puede manifestar. Sus datos personales y resultados serán tratados de manera discreta.

Nombre: _____

Firma del voluntario: _____

Appendix 2: Student's preferences survey

N°	Questions
1	Nombre
2	Género
3	Edad

4	¿Qué clase de literatura lees? (aventuras, terror, amor, policiaca, fantástica, ciencia ficción)
5	Si existe otro género que sea de tu gusto, ¿Cuál es o cuáles serían?
6	¿Qué tan a menudo lees?

Appendix 3: Students' interview questions

No°	Questions
1	¿Puedes contarme tu experiencia leyendo en inglés? ¿Cuándo empezaste a leer en inglés y con qué frecuencia lees en inglés?
2	¿Cuáles son algunos de los retos a los que te enfrentas al leer en inglés? ¿Te resulta difícil entender el vocabulario o las estructuras de las oraciones?
3	¿Qué estrategias utilizas para mejorar tu comprensión de la lectura en inglés? ¿Lees con un diccionario o intentas adivinar el significado de las palabras desde el contexto?
4	¿Cómo te sientes acerca de la lectura en Inglés en comparación con la lectura en su idioma nativo? ¿Te gusta, o te parece más difícil?
5	¿Cómo crees que tus habilidades de lectura en inglés han impactado tu dominio general del idioma? ¿Crees que leer en inglés te ha ayudado a mejorar tus habilidades para hablar o escribir?
6	¿Hay algún tema o género en particular que te guste leer en inglés? ¿Por qué te parecen interesantes estos temas o géneros?

Appendix 4: Pre-test

Link of the story:

<https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/CaseLowe950.shtml>

Pre test

Short story: The case of the lower case letter

Writer: Jack Delany

1

She breezed into my office one cold September morning. I'd been enjoying a hot cup of Starbucks finest and surfing the web for local news. The famous lexical semanticist Professor Edgar Nettleston had been found dead, a gunshot wound to the head. The police verdict was suicide.

She held out an elegant hand as she floated towards me and I glimpsed a wedding band with a stone the size of a peanut M&M.

"I'm Edith Nettleston."

"Sorry about the old man."

"I'm not. He loved me, but he loved words more. I'll be brief. My husband was working on a paper that will rock the very foundation of lexical semantics. It's worth a fortune in lecture tours, but nobody can find it. I believe his suicide note is a clue to its whereabouts."

She removed a scrap of paper from her blouse.

"edith. i'm not going to whine, i've had a good life. i've found wealth and happiness as a teacher, a seller of knowledge. but i find myself depressed beyond hope... and so i'm choosing the hour and manner of my own demise. i have treated you badly. i demanded you dyed your brown curls blonde. i thought i could buy you when i should have won your love. i called you a witch. i'd complain: where's the woman i married? i said you ate too much. if i wanted change, i could have used a carrot rather than a stick. you probably wanted to wring my neck. forgive me. farewell."

"It's all written in lower case. My husband was a stickler for correct grammar. I refuse to believe it doesn't mean something."

"Mrs. Nettleston, I think I can help you. There's a couple of odd things about this letter. Firstly, as you say, it's written entirely in lower case. Mr. Nettleston was a world-renowned lexical semanticist, not a teenager texting his BFFs."

"Secondly, it has a more than usual number of homophones, words where there is another word with the same sound but different spelling and meaning. When dealing with a lexical semanticist, that's surely no accident."

2

"If we read those homophones in order, we have: whine, seller, hour, manner. And translating to their homophones: Wine cellar our manor."

Several hours later, we arrived at the Nettlestons' country house and immediately headed for the basement. A flip of a light switch revealed tunnels filled with rows of dark bottles.

"Where is it? It would take years to search this place."

"Not so fast, Mrs. Nettleston. First I have to ask you something: your wedding ring diamond, how large is it?"

"It's eight carats. Edgar wouldn't stop talking about it."

"That's what I feared." I pulled out my trusty revolver. "How you must have hated him and his lexical semantics! You figured you'd kill him and keep the money from the paper yourself. You forced him to write that suicide note, thinking you knew where it was. But he was suspicious and he'd already hidden it. And he had another surprise for you: the rest of the note, it doesn't reveal where the paper is, it reveals his killer. The final homophones: dyed buy won witch where's ate carrot wring. That is: died by one which wears eight carat ring."

As the cops left with Mrs. Nettleston I took a quick trip round the maze of tunnels. It didn't take me long to find it. Most of the wine lay unpacked on racks but in one corner two cases sat stacked, one on top of each other. Carefully, I opened the lower one.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
5. What was Mrs Nettleston' reason to kill her husband?

Appendix 5: Questions of the interventions

No	Type of questions
	Who is the main character?
	Who are the secondary characters?
	What is the topic of the short story?
	Where does the story happen?
	What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator)

N°	Specific questions per intervention
1	What kind of activities would he do rather than play Scrabble? How did he die and why do you believe this happened? What is the protagonist's current state of mind?
2	Who was/were clairvoyant in the story? What's the special place that Calvin and Kate share?

3	How could you describe Jim's life? What happened between Ellen and Jim when they were young? Why do you think Jim could talk to Ellen and his mother? What is the main theme of the story, and how does the author convey it through character, plot, and setting?
4	Why do you think David didn't tell his parents about his breakup? What was Adam's secret and where did he tell his brother his truth? Describe the relationship between two or more characters in the story. How does it develop or change over time?
5	Why do you think she passes or this situation every night? How did her husband realize that his wife didn't have a heart attack?
6	What do you think happened to August? Why do you think Ed stopped digging?

Appendix 6: Survey to know their experience with the intervention

No°	Statements
1	I am motivated to improve my reading comprehension with short stories
2	I can understand the way to find the main idea and specific information from the text
3	I can improve my comprehension through sharing and discussion
4	I am motivated to learn and do exercise by using the worksheet given
5	Short stories and reading strategies, I still need to improve my reading ability
6	I feel like it's easier for me to understand the short story with the pre-reading activity
7	Short stories make me feel interested in the plot
8	I easily recognize the characters

Appendix 7: Intervention 1

Link of the story: <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/DeatScra.shtml>

Intervention 1

Short story: Death by Scrabble

Writer: Charlie fish

1

It's a hot day and I hate my wife.

We're playing Scrabble. That's how bad it is. I'm 42 years old, it's a blistering hot Sunday afternoon and all I can think of to do with my life is to play Scrabble.

I should be out, doing exercise, spending money, meeting people. I don't think I've spoken to anyone except my wife since Thursday morning. On Thursday morning I spoke to the milkman.

My letters are crap.

I play, appropriately, BEGIN. With the N on the little pink star. Twenty-two points.

I watch my wife's smug expression as she rearranges her letters. Clack, clack, clack. I hate her. If she wasn't around, I'd be doing something interesting right now. I'd be climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. I'd be starring in the latest Hollywood blockbuster. I'd be sailing the Vendee Globe on a 60-foot clipper called the New Horizons - I don't know, but I'd be doing something.

She plays JINXED, with the J on a double-letter score. 30 points. She's beating me already. Maybe I should kill her.

If only I had a D, then I could play MURDER. That would be a sign. That would be permission.

I start chewing on my U. It's a bad habit, I know. All the letters are frayed. I play WARMER for 22 points, mainly so I can keep chewing on my U.

As I'm picking new letters from the bag, I find myself thinking - the letters will tell me what to do. If they spell out KILL, or STAB, or her name, or anything, I'll do it right now. I'll finish her off.

My rack spells MIHZPA. Plus the U in my mouth. Damn.

The heat of the sun is pushing at me through the window. I can hear buzzing insects outside. I hope they're not bees. My cousin Harold swallowed a bee when he was nine, his throat swelled up and he died. I hope that if they are bees, they fly into my wife's throat.

2

She plays SWEATIER, using all her letters. 24 points plus a 50 point bonus. If it wasn't too hot to move I would strangle her right now.

I am getting sweatier. It needs to rain to clear the air. As soon as that thought crosses my mind, I find a good word. HUMID on a double-word score, using the D of JINXED. The U makes a little splash of saliva when I put it down. Another 22 points. I hope she has lousy letters.

She tells me she has lousy letters. For some reason, I hate her more.

She plays FAN, with the F on a double-letter, and gets up to fill the kettle and turn on the air conditioning.

It's the hottest day for ten years and my wife is turning on the kettle. This is why I hate my wife. I play ZAPS, with the Z doubled, and she gets a static shock off the air conditioning unit. I find this remarkably satisfying.

She sits back down with a heavy sigh and starts fiddling with her letters again. Clack clack. Clack clack. I feel a terrible rage build up inside me. Some inner poison slowly spreading through my limbs, and when it gets to my fingertips I am going to jump out of my chair, spilling the Scrabble tiles over the floor, and I am going to start hitting her again and again and again.

The rage gets to my fingertips and passes. My heart is beating. I'm sweating. I think my face actually twitches. Then I sigh, deeply, and sit back into my chair. The kettle starts whistling. As the whistle builds it makes me feel hotter.

She plays READY on a double-word for 18 points, then goes to pour herself a cup of tea. No, I do not want one.

I steal a blank tile from the letter bag when she's not looking, and throw back a V from my rack. She gives me a suspicious look. She sits back down with her cup of tea, making a cup-ring on the table, as I play an 8-letter word: CHEATING, using the A of READY. 64 points, including the 50-point bonus, which means I'm beating her now.

3

She asks me if I cheated.

I really, really hate her.

She plays IGNORE on the triple-word for 21 points. The score is 153 to her, 155 to me.

The steam rising from her cup of tea makes me feel hotter. I try to make murderous words with the letters on my rack, but the best I can do is SLEEP.

My wife sleeps all the time. She slept through an argument our next-door neighbours had that resulted in a broken door, a smashed TV and a Teletubby Lala doll with all the stuffing coming out. And then she bitched at me for being moody the next day from lack of sleep.

If only there was some way for me to get rid of her.

I spot a chance to use all my letters. EXPLODES, using the X of JINXED. 72 points. That'll show her.

As I put the last letter down, there is a deafening bang and the air conditioning unit fails.

My heart is racing, but not from the shock of the bang. I don't believe it - but it can't be a coincidence. The letters made it happen. I played the word EXPLODES, and it happened - the air conditioning unit exploded. And before, I played the word CHEATING when I cheated. And ZAP when my wife got the electric shock. The words are coming true. The letters are choosing their future. The whole game is - JINXED.

My wife plays SIGN, with the N on a triple-letter, for 10 points.

I have to test this.

I have to play something and see if it happens. Something unlikely, to prove that the letters are making it happen. My rack is ABQYFWE. That doesn't leave me with a lot of options. I start frantically chewing on the B.

4

I play FLY, using the L of EXPLODES. I sit back in my chair and close my eyes, waiting for the sensation of rising up from my chair. Waiting to fly.

Stupid. I open my eyes, and there's a fly. An insect, buzzing around above the Scrabble board, surfing the thermals from the tepid cup of tea. That proves nothing. The fly could have been there anyway.

I need to play something unambiguous. Something that cannot be misinterpreted. Something absolute and final. Something terminal. Something murderous.

My wife plays CAUTION, using a blank tile for the N. 18 points.

My rack is AQWEUK, plus the B in my mouth. I am awed by the power of the letters, and frustrated that I cannot wield it. Maybe I should cheat again, and pick out the letters I need to spell SLASH or SLAY.

Then it hits me. The perfect word. A powerful, dangerous, terrible word.

I play QUAKE for 19 points.

I wonder if the strength of the quake will be proportionate to how many points it scored. I can feel the trembling energy of potential in my veins. I am commanding fate. I am manipulating destiny.

My wife plays DEATH for 34 points, just as the room starts to shake.

I gasp with surprise and vindication - and the B that I was chewing on gets lodged in my throat. I try to cough. My face goes red, then blue. My throat swells. I draw blood clawing at my neck. The earthquake builds to a climax.

I fall to the floor. My wife just sits there, watching.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who is the secondary character?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?

5. What kind of activities would he do rather than play Scrabble?
6. How did he die?
7. What is the protagonist's current state of mind?

Appendix 8: Intervention 2

Link of the story:

<https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/CourHear1227.shtml>

Intervention 2

Short story: Courage of the heart

Writer: Lisa Malice

1

Calvin's grandmother had always told him that his ability to foretell the future was a "gift from the heart" passed on to him from her side of the family. To Calvin, however, it was a white elephant, something he would have readily returned or re-gifted long ago if only he could have. In his experience, being clairvoyant was a meddlesome burden with far too many costs and too few benefits. The worst drawback was how people reacted after learning of his supernatural powers--folks either shunned him out of fear or harassed him for help with every little life decision.

But it wasn't until one fateful Saturday morning that the reluctant seer saw his psychic skill as something worse — an insufferable curse, an affliction that would kill his spirit, if not his body. The prophetic vision that came to Calvin as he flipped open his cellphone that day was devastating, dashing long-held hopes and dreams for his own future. In panic, he bolted out the door in a race against time with only an hour to figure out how to change the future if he possibly could.

Calvin's apartment was only a few minutes' walk from the small, red-brick house his Grandma Helen lived in, but that morning he covered the distance between them almost as fast as a world-record sprinter. As he burst through her front door, Calvin was greeted by the sweet smell of vanilla and coconut — his grandmother had baked his favorite cookies. Obviously, she'd seen him coming even before he decided to seek her advice. This wasn't anything new. The far-sighted old woman was often a step ahead of her grandson.

"Hello, Calvin dear. I'm so happy you're here." The petite, white-haired old woman pulled her only grandchild inside and kissed him on the cheek. "I had a dream last night that you'd stop by today, and here you are. I baked coconut macaroons just for the occasion." She sat Calvin down at the kitchen table and set a plate of cookies in front of him. "Would you like some milk? Lemonade?"

"No thanks, Grandma," he said, pushing aside the cookies.

2

"I can tell that something is bothering you, something big. It would have to be to turn you away from my macarons. What's on your mind, sweetie?"

Calvin struggled through his heartache, trying to find the words to explain his predicament. The oven timer beeped loudly, offering him a startling reminder that time was running short. His panic returned, causing him to tremble uncontrollably then burst out in a loud, incoherent babble.

"Calvin, honey, I can't understand a word you're saying," Grandma Helen shouted over her grandson's frantic gibberish. She pulled the finished batch of cookies out of the oven, then took a seat next to Calvin and hugged him tightly. "Oh, my! You're quivering like a canary in a roomful of cats."

With a booming groan, Calvin threw his elbows on the table and buried his face in his hands.

"Just take a deep breath, dear. Think through what you want to say and start over — slowly this time."

Calvin pulled his head up and did as instructed but struggled to get out his first sentence. Finally, he spoke.

"Grandma, you know that Kate is my best friend, has been for the last fifteen years," he said, still trembling. "I'm crazy in love with her. Have been since the day we met during our freshman year of high school. I've always wanted to tell Kate how I feel about her, but now it may be too late. When she called this morning and asked me to lunch, I had a vision. I was sitting across from Kate at Al's Diner, and she was showing off a large diamond ring on her left hand."

Calvin paused to wipe away the wetness forming in the corners of his eyes. He took another deep breath and found the strength to continue.

"Grandma, Kate's engaged. She's going to tell me at lunch and then ask me whether she's making the right decision in marrying Jake, the man she's been dating. I want nothing more than for Kate to be happy, but I don't want her to be happy with Jake, I want her to be happy with me. I want her to marry me."

3

Calvin's fear kept him from asking his grandmother if she saw his fate differently than he did. Instead, he looked into her eyes, hoping to see the future he wanted reflecting at him, but all he saw was compassion and concern.

"I'm afraid to look into her future. What should I do if I see a happy marriage for Kate and Jake, or worse if I don't see it for Kate and me?"

"It pains me to see you so brokenhearted, my dear," Grandma Helen replied as she took his hands in hers. "The whole family loves Kate. She's always been so sweet and kind to everyone, especially me. I think of her as the granddaughter I never had. I always hoped you two would end up together, but neither your desperation nor an old woman's wish can change Destiny. What will be will be. You must summon up the courage in your heart to accept what you see with your special gift."

The words stung Calvin to his core, but he knew his grandmother was right. Only a fool ignored the wisdom of the prescient woman who spoke those words. Whether it was predicting something as minor as a fender bender, or something as life-changing as a surprise

pregnancy, Calvin had never known his grandmother to be wrong about what the future held in store. No matter how hard people tried, nothing they did ever kept the future, as Grandma Helen had seen it, from coming to pass.

###

Al's Diner wasn't a big place or a fancy one. It was a small neighborhood cafe that served satisfying home-style meals atop plain, white restaurant china on brown Formica tables. It was known for its homey atmosphere, the kind of place where customers were treated like family, and everyone felt instantly comfortable being on a first-name basis, sharing personal stories and life events. The walls were covered with thirty years of photos displaying Al and his best customers as they celebrated birthdays, engagements, anniversaries, graduations, and other special moments in their lives. Like many of Al's other regulars, Calvin and Kate had fallen in love with the diner on their first visit. To Calvin, it was "their place."

4

As he slid into their booth, his eyes fell upon a faded photo hanging on the wall showing short, gangly, plain-faced eighteen-year-old Calvin standing next to Kate--tall, curvaceous, stunningly beautiful Kate--as she proudly displayed her letter of acceptance to Stanford University to study Biotechnology. The look of relief on his face in the picture was apparent, reminding Calvin of the uncertainty and worry he'd put himself through with that letter. With a straight-A transcript, a near-perfect SAT score, and numerous science-related awards in his academic record, Calvin had easily won early acceptance and a full four-year scholarship to study Computer Engineering at Stanford, but Kate hadn't been the shoo-in he was. Waiting day after day for Kate's letter to arrive had made Calvin as nervous as a man wrongly accused of murder awaiting his jury's verdict, but because he couldn't bring himself to look into the future where the woman he loved was concerned. He'd lived for nearly five months with the fear that she'd receive a rejection letter. If that had come to pass, he would've abandoned his dream of attending Stanford to follow Kate to her second pick school, Georgia Tech, where she'd already been accepted. Calvin knew it was a desperate, clandestine effort on his part to stay near Kate. It wasn't really a choice for him. She was like oxygen to Calvin, a life-giving breath of air that he needed to stay alive.

Calvin sighed and continued gazing at the photo of the woman he adored more every day.

"You waiting for Kate?"

Calvin turned his head and nodded in response to the question asked by the wiry, black-haired waitress standing next to him. "I could really use a cup of Al's coffee, Betty." After realizing his heart was already racing with anxiety over Kate's impending announcement, he added, "Better make that decaf."

The coffee the diner served was on the bitter side, but Calvin had grown to love its taste because, with every drop, he saw himself sitting across the table from Kate, sharing her life over a pot of Al's coffee. He stopped by the restaurant for a cup every morning on his way to work just to start his day with pleasant thoughts of the woman he loved.

5

Betty soon returned with two white porcelain mugs, a carafe of coffee, and a small pitcher of cream. "Anything else I can get you, hun?"

"No, thanks, Betty," Calvin said as he quickly poured the hot brown liquid into his cup and added a splash of cream. With his first sip of the comforting brew, he recalled the day he had met Kate.

Fourteen-year-old Calvin had been on his way to the school cafeteria when he nearly tripped over a chubby, pimple-faced girl frantically scampering across the crowded floor of his high school's English hallway. Dozens of students had walked by the girl, laughing as she chased after the contents of a backpack that had spilled all over the floor, but not Calvin. He had come to her rescue without even a chuckle. As he helped Kate to her feet, his eyes had met hers, so soft and blue, mesmerizing. Then, as if under some kind of spell, Calvin had done something he had never done before--he asked a girl to join him for lunch. Kate had said yes, and it had been a magical meal for the shy teenage boy. Kate had turned out to be different than the other girls Calvin had approached — sweet, attentive, and easy to talk to. He found they had a lot in common, from the classes they liked best (Science and Math), the foods they preferred (Thai and Mexican), to the books and movies they enjoyed (Science Fiction and Fantasy).

"Hey, Cal!"

Calvin's heart skipped a beat when he heard the familiar voice. He turned around. The sight of Kate coming towards their booth took his breath away. She always had that effect on him, even bare-faced and dressed down in jeans and a t-shirt, as she was now. Kate had emerged from her pubescent cocoon in their junior year as a rare beauty with everything that made a man drool from a block away: a silky mane of chestnut-colored hair; clear, ivory skin; a face that Da Vinci would've called "perfectly, classically proportioned"; and a lithe body with ample curves and long, slender legs. But even if Kate had remained the plain, awkward girl that she was at fourteen, Calvin would still have thought her the most beautiful girl in the world--that was how much he loved her.

6

The two friends hugged then sat down. Betty quickly appeared with silverware, napkins, and menus. After setting everything down on the table, she proudly announced the birth of her first grandchild, a girl weighing in at seven pounds nine ounces named Olivia.

"I have big news, too, Cal," Kate said after Betty left with their orders. "Jake asked me to marry him last night."

Calvin's eyes darted to Kate's left hand. There it was, the engagement ring, just as he'd seen it earlier that morning--a glistening teardrop diamond set with two smaller rubies on a platinum band. As he grasped Kate's outstretched hand to examine the ring, another vision thrust itself upon him--Kate and Jake, old and gray, dancing with each other, smiling as a crowd of people, young and old, applauded. The image was more than Calvin could bear, and reflexively, as if he had just burnt his hand on hers, he pulled away, and the vision vanished.

"You know I've never asked you to see my future, but I need to be sure that Jake is my Mr. Right. Please, Cal, please tell me if Jake and I will be truly happy together."

The anxiety Calvin saw in her eyes couldn't be more than what he was experiencing himself. He had always feared the future where Kate was concerned, dreaded it for years, but it had been inevitable that she would ask this favor. He'd never mustered the courage to find out if Kate loved him as he did her, and it didn't take a sixth sense to foresee that eventually, some other man would capture the heart of the sweet, lovely angel sitting with him now. Now that the future was finally here and the request made, Calvin realized he had no choice in the matter. He had to be honest with Kate, not because of his grandmother's advice, but because he loved her too much to lie. So, after feigning a smile, Calvin looked deeply into the eyes of the only woman he ever loved and choked out the truth of the unbearable vision forced upon him moments earlier.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
6. Who was/were clairvoyant in the story?
7. What's the special place that Calvin and Kate share?
8. What did Calvin see when took Kate's hand?

Appendix 9: Intervention 3

Link of the story: <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/OldGhos.shtml>

Intervention 3

Short story: Old Ghosts

Writer: A. J. McKenna

1

It is Jim Brennan's birthday. He wakes on this humid August morning, startled by birdsong echoing across the garden outside and, for a long time, he stares in confused remembrance towards where the swelling orange sun is burning the faded floral wallpaper across from his tumbled bed.

'It's my birthday,' he finally realizes. 'I'm seventy-six today. Where did it go?'

Climbing painfully from a sore mattress, standing in striped pyjamas by the window, Jim stares gardenwards. There's much too be done. Later. Much later. These days it's all weed killing, backache and wishes. Outside in the sunrise garden roses are already awake, clematis climbs like a growing child and all the border marigolds are on fire.

'It's my birthday.'

Next door's dog barks. A cat scales a glass sharp wall and drops beside its shadow under an apple tree, stalking anxious sparrows with the first sun. Under the broken birdhouse a mouse plays with a nibble of yesterday's bread. Shadows shrink in bright shyness against all the garden fences and the last star melts into dawnrise. There's heat in the breathless August day already.

Jimmy Brennan, seventy-six, sitting in his kitchen. Silent. The house, holding its breath around him, the roof heavy and oven baked. Jim's thick veined hands brush toast crumbs from the plastic tabletop and when he moves his faded slippered feet dust dances giddily on the sun patched carpet. He listens to the awakening of the new day: the clock on the dresser ticks hurriedly and the letter box snaps awake.

Jim walks to the hall and picks up bills and ads that promise discounts and holidays abroad. Jim has never been out of Ireland, never crossed the sea. His tired eyes examine the envelopes at arm's length. There are no birthday cards to sigh over - these days who would know?

Returning to the familiar kitchen he slides a knife along his letters, slitting out their folded information. It's better than nothing. Even if the electricity is red and overdue. At least, they keep in touch. No longer absorbed in his letter opening task Jim looks at the sunlight shining blindly on his glazed, brown teapot and then, laying the bad news aside for later, he pours more lukewarm tea. He sits and thinks about birthdays back then. Cakes and ale, songs and celebrations and the long dead who cared. Back when.

2

'Time flies,' he says.

He's talking to himself most days - who else will listen? Up in the still shadowed parlour a clock chimes the hour and Jim rises tiredly and prepares to face the day. When he turns on the wireless the news assaults his soul. The world is littered with dead children and pain. Bad news amuses while the ad men slip in a jingle. The world has gone mad with cruelty and nobody seems to have noticed. He turns a dial and foreign voices cackle urgently in the ether. Talking violence in tongues, telling of the rapes of children, no doubt. The media loves abusing the innocent with their excited updates and urgently breaking stories. It was different back then. It seemed quieter and children could play on the streets. Back when.

Ring- a- ring- a- rosy!

Jim smiles and finds Mozart and the morning is saved by Cherubino. Then he dresses and walks, cane and cloth cap, to the front door and checks the windows and the bolts and all's secure. When the nighttime house creaks with its own age, Jim thinks of burglars and imagined violations and trembles in case they invade him.

What a world!

Jim swings open the front door and sees Ellen Kelly stands there, smiling like sunlight.

'Happy birthday, Jim.'

No longer astonished, Jim smiles back and sighs because Ellen isn't really there.

Ellen Kelly, fourteen last week. He's been seeing Ellen a lot lately. She walked behind him all the way to the hushed library yesterday and when he sat to rest in Carolyn Park she was standing under a tree, waiting in its shade.

'I didn't forget,' Ellen says.

'I know, I know.'

'Will you come out to play?'

3

'I can't Ellen. You're dead.'

The sun slides down the street and settles on Jim's house and Ellen fades like a startled shadow.

'Poor Ellen,' Jim whispers sadly. 'My poor dead darling.'

Jim avoids the supermarket. It's too complicated. Grim checkout people urgent to get home. Kids breathing asthma. Babes bawling immediate needs. Bald headed young men pushing forward, rings in their ears, rape in their shiftless eyes. Never stare back. Girls demanding more. Car parks cluttered with stress earned money. Housewives hurrying, car exhausts, liberated women with little freedom. The exhaustion of super markets and too much choice. Too big, too modern. Too lonely for Jim.

He goes to smaller stores, chats with familiar people and gets milk and eggs and a small loaf of fresh bread. Further along, outside the charity shop, Mrs Barret from number twenty-nine nods an inquisitive greeting.

'How are you keeping?' she asks, looking past him at the bargains in the window.

'Grand, thank God. Yourself?'

'Couldn't be better.'

Life is strangled with polite lies.

Jim walks home through the heating streets towards sanctuary at seventy six.

In his armchair in the parlour looking out on the road. Hearing the parlour's ten time chime and the long day stretching ahead like a dreadful eternity. The terror of ten a.m. Nothing to do and outside bright girls hurry through the morning, sun on their heads, time on their hands. Feet clattering, black tights, skirts just short of sin. Making promises.

I'm glad I'm not young anymore.

Jim despises this time of day. Already too hot for the garden and nothing to fill the mind until making something at lunchtime. Light sustenance for the long afternoon lengthening drearily ahead like an empty road going nowhere. Jim tries to read but even in glasses the words are a blur.

4

'Ellen,' he whispers and her name rings in his head like a tolling bell.

Ellen Kelly, Kelly Ellen, Kellen Nelly.

Jim plays with her. His eyes close. He becomes delirious with dreaming and hears distantly the brass handle under the Brassoed letterbox clattering once. Jim shuffles down the hall and when he cautiously opens the wide door Ellen is there, fifteen and lovely, framed in the sun like a miracle. Ellen Kelly, budding with womanhood and childfresh happiness.

'Will you not come out to play, Jim?'

From behind, a different ghost in the dark hallway, Jim's mother, smiling.

'He's got to do some shopping for me, Ellen dear.'

Jim, sixteen, between women, inter Ellen's, adolescently happy.

'I'll come along with you, then,' Ellen, always agreeable. 'We'll go to the shops together. If that's all right?'

Mother agrees, loving neighbour Ellen like the daughter her grey age longs for.

'Of course it's all right with me, darling.'

Jim and Ellen walking down the path with mama at the door, waving like a mother, waiting until they are beyond the gate, forever worrying about crossing roads and unsuspected illnesses. Tuberculosis, Pneumonia. Polio. Measles. Mumps. You name it. Young people often died young back then.

Jim and Ellen, heads tilted, magnetic affection drawing them closer, talking, laughing, a pair apart from others. In love. Ellen's raven hair curling around her tiny, elfin ears. Ellen, quiet and reliable as the moon.

'Will you love me forever?' Jim asks.

'Forever and ever,' Ellen assures, squeezing his hand.

On the way back they shortcut through the August woods. A long short cut. Still talking, their words tumbling like thistledown on the hot butterflyed silence. In the deep green they settle in the shade and kiss among fern leaves, innocently. They kissed like that for years.

5

Life, a summer holiday until seventeen. Then. Jim goes to Cork with his father. A business trip. Magnificent Cork and boat bobbing, cathedraled Cobh and then the Metropole Hotel. Swanky. Dinner and desserts. Black ties, brown cigars. Gin and tonic with a twist of lemon. Now Cork is always dry gin and a twist in Jim's fading memory. Bitter lemon.

Jim with father's friends. A party and the talcum smell of sex. Dad leaves early with a friend. Dad feels only half married. Winking a man's signal. Permission to sin. A bird in the bush.

Jim danced until dawn with a necklace and pearls. Back at her oak roomed upstairs house she says her parents are away and Jim is still not sober.

'Let me help you to bed,' he says, learning the rules of the game and when to cheat.

Sixteen Ellen smelled of love and roses. This girl is twenty and slick with gin. Pearls in her ears, stones in her heart. Bath naked she drips rich. Jim falls into her and is devoured. Ellen, the sweetest sixteen, gave him everything except that. Her tended flesh is reserved for the marriage bed. Jim wanted more. Pearls before swine.

Mea culpa, Ellen -mea maxima culpa!

The blonde one came to Dublin with the snow, passion pursuing Jim all grown up and knowing. Blood on snow. Seventeen Ellen, discarded, like a toy wound down, broken and useless.

Don't you want me anymore?

'No.'

Tears on Ellen's bitten lips. Eyes red with pain. Soul seared. Ellen goodbye.

'No. I don't want you.'

Jim brave and final, cruel as winter. Abandoned Ellen, quietly waiting for him to mature.

Next year he took the pearly girl away. Holidaying. Not even saying goodbye to pale Ellen, eighteen and alone with sickness teasing her young pink lungs, her heart dark with love. Ellen's innocence is like petals blowing on grass, dancing redly away. Crowns of thorns for Ellen's virgin bridehood. Veils of tears.

6

Ellen ill.

On Jim's return his mother greets him with rubbing, folded fingers. Wet cheeks.

'Poor Ellen,' mama whispers. Respect for the dead.

Jim matures. Instantly.

Too late.

Ellen's black blood on her spitting lips. The flowers on her grave stiff in frost. Brown leaves tumbling, flying wildly in the frozen air, reburying her. No more warm kisses and a heart soaring with love. Ellen is nineteen, never twenty. Mama behind the coffin, mama in her own maternal grave. And rain for fifty long years and more, after that.

My darling is gone for evermore!

Clock chimen. Ding. One. Ding. Two. Et Cetera.

Jim struggles from a dream speaking her name into the listening shadows.

'Ellen?'

The pitch dark shadows silent as love words from dead mouths. Marble graveyard lips, cold as stone. Ivy and moss. Memories haunting his present. Jim shivers and steps into the window sun. Rubs his thick veiny hands. Prays. Then he makes lunch. Tomatoes and ham. He dreams the evening away - half out of life. On the radio a woman sings Four Last Songs. You don't have to know the language.

Such sweet sorrow. Who said that?

Later, a seat in the garden looking towards the singing sunset. There is nothing to see except blackbirds and sparrows; nothing to hear except the noise of butterflies' wings.

Even later, the clock in the parlour chimes twelve heartbeats. Night comes hot and bothered.

Climbing into an empty bed, Jim turns off the sidelight and watches the shadows huddling against the floral wallpaper. Stars look in at his greying face. A hot August moon in the open window. Soft as silence, quiet as apple blossoms falling, gentle as Ellen's dimpled smile. Ellen's same sad glad smile standing there by his bed. Faithful Ellen, waiting.

7

'Do you want me now?'

Yes! Dear sweet God - yes!

He says 'I can play now, Ellen, if you like. I'm finally, properly dead.'

'I'm glad. I've been waiting for such a long time!'

Jim rises from his bed, leaving his seventy-six years between the laundered sheets. Soaring through the moonlight with Ellen in his arms, the pair of them shoot like comets into Eternity while the clock in the parlour stops.

Forever and forever.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
5. How could you describe Jim's life?
6. What happened between Ellen and Jim when they were young?
7. Why do you think Jim could talk to Ellen and his mother?
8. What is the main theme of the story and how does the author convey it through character, plot and setting?

Appendix 10: Intervention 4

Link of the story:

<https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/BrotKeep1275.shtml>

Intervention 4

Short story: My brother's keeper

Writer: Eve Chancellor

1

My brother's name is David. Our parents called him that because it means "beloved," in case you didn't know. In the Bible, the story about David and Goliath is one of the best ones, when that kid slings a rock at the giant's head and kills him dead.

My name is Matthew. Most people call me Matt.

'Matthew,' Mum says, lighting the Christmas candle. 'Would you like to say Grace?' Mum always puts the posh plates out when we have guests round. Now I guess we have to treat my brother like a "guest." Mum got out the candle cos she's trying to be fancy, even though we always forget to light it on the first day of advent.

'Go on,' Dad says, offering my brother a beer.

I guess that's a thing. I guess my brother drinks alcohol now he goes to uni, even though Mum never let him when he went to parties at school. Sometimes he would get in really late and wake me up and be well moody the next day, so I sort of figured he was hungover. Anyway, David says no to beer and helps himself to wine.

Grace raises her eyebrows at me across the table. So this is a thing, me and my sister making fun of David behind his back.

Grace is the middle child. She doesn't talk to anyone in the family - apart from me.

'Thank you, God,' I say, bowing my head and closing my eyes, 'for bringing my brother home from uni and making sure the trains were ok.' Mum was fretting that David was gonna get stuck cos of the snow. 'And for giving us lasagna. Amen.'

I opened one eye. In my head, secretly, I pray that my sister will eat something.

'So,' Mum says, once we all open our eyes. 'How's Hannah?' Honestly, my brother's been home for literally five seconds, and she's already staring in on him about girls.

2

'Yeah, fine,' David says, taking a swig of wine.

Hannah is my brother's girlfriend. They met at uni. David hasn't really told me much about her, but I reckon they're doing it.

I'm fourteen, and I've never done it. I don't really have a girlfriend.

'Seems like a nice girl,' Dad says, trying to be all chummy. 'Must have good taste. Hang on to her, mate.'

I hate the way our dad talks. He talks like this more when we're in front of people, or David has his mates round, or something. He goes on about how he's "self-made" and

"self-employed," and how he left school at sixteen, and look at him now. Then he made us go to a grammar school, so I've no idea what that's about.

When David got into Durham, Dad went really quiet for ages. I think he realised he'd run out of stuff to say.

Dad just ignores me most of the time. I flick a pea across the table at my sister, and she smiles. Dad catches me and gives me a look.

We have to be on our best behaviour cos David's here.

'She was more than welcome to come here for Christmas,' Mum says, trying not to sound all offended. But there's that guilt-tripping edge in her voice. 'It would be nice to finally meet her.'

David presses his lips together tightly. He does this when he's stressed or thinking. 'Mum, there's not enough room. You know that.'

Me and my brother shared a bedroom growing up. David never lets me touch his things, and he used to get annoyed when I was practicing my violin, and he wanted to revise. David acts like he's more important than me just cos he's the oldest.

When David moved out, I took his side of the room. Now I have to go back to my corner.

3

'Grace has space in her room,' Mum says, making everyone feel worse. One, my sister likes her own space. Two, her room is full of weird cut-out pictures of girls from magazines.

I think my sister might be a lesbian, but I'm not sure. How do lesbians even do it?

'Matt wouldn't mind moving downstairs.' Dad winks. 'Give you kids some space.'

Why is everyone suddenly obsessed with my brother getting married and having babies?

'No,' I say. 'Why do I have to sleep on the couch?'

'Matthew,' Mum says in her tone. 'David is an adult now.'

Grace snorts and covers her mouth with her hand. David gives her a funny look. He doesn't get her like I do.

'Mum,' David says, running a hand through his hair. 'Hannah doesn't want to come down to Peterborough for Christmas, alright?'

Everyone goes quiet. What's wrong with Peterborough? Just cos my brother thinks he's all posh now he goes to uni...What's wrong with us?

'Why didn't you come to my recital?' I pipe up.

'What?' David says, looking at me like he'd forgotten I was there. 'For God's sake, Matt. Does it really matter?'

What he means is, do you really matter? I'm mad at him cos he didn't come to my school concert to see me play, even though he only had to come back a day early and Mum was

really excited cos she likes things like carol concerts. David is the smart one, and Grace is the only girl, but I have my music. That's the one thing I have.

And David doesn't even care.

I'm trying to get to sleep when David comes to bed. He's been watching TV with Dad, and they have the volume up really loud cos Dad's basically deaf. David shuts the door quietly and starts getting changed in the dark.

4

'Matt?' (He can tell I'm pretending).

'What?' I turn over in bed. This is how I used to sleep when I was a kid, with the wall on this side.

'I'm sorry I didn't come to your concert.' David switches on his bedside light and charges his phone.

My brother is one of those people who never really sleeps. I sort of got used to it, but every time I used to wake up in the night, he'd been wide awake, looking stuff up on his phone. I had problems getting to sleep when David moved out.

'No, you're not,' I say. My brother's never really cared about me. Not really. I'm just a piece of furniture that gets in the way.

'Matthew.' Sometimes David calls me Matthew. 'I didn't know it meant that much to you. You should've said.'

What's the point in saying anything in this family when no one ever listens? Just cos I'm the youngest, people treat me like a baby. But I see things they don't.

'You were too busy with your Durham friends.'

David switches off his bedside light, and we both lay there in silence. I open my eyes, and I can still see the glare from his phone.

'It's not that great, to be honest,' David says finally. 'It's just like school, only more cliquey.'

David was always popular in school, in the way that everyone knew about him cos he was always top in everything and won loads of awards. When teachers see my name on the register, they just say, Oh, you're David Harris' little brother. Then they're always disappointed when I'm just moody and don't really talk much.

'You like school,' I mumble.

David doesn't say anything. He always had loads of friends in school, but they were always the smart, nerdy kids, not cool people. I'm not really cool enough to fit in with cool kids, but I'm not a geek, so I don't hang out with the David types either.

5

'Me and Hannah split up,' David sighs. I don't know why he's telling me and no one else.

Why was he lying about her all through dinner?

'What happened?' I can't tell if my brother is sad. I'm not really good at stuff like that, like when Dad makes Mum sad for no reason. I just go up to her and give her a hug or something, and that seems to make her better.

'We just work better as friends,' David says. 'Don't tell Mum and Dad, yeah? It's just... I'm waiting for the right time to tell them.'

Why does he have to keep it from Mum? She'll be mad if she finds out he lied to her. The Bible says it's wrong to tell lies.

'But I thought she was fit?' I say.

'Yeah, well, it's more than that.' You can hear Dad's footsteps stomping upstairs, and my brother lowers his voice. 'Please, just...I don't want to make things weird at Christmas. I'm telling you cos I trust you, yeah?'

My brother trusts me. I am the keeper of my brother's secrets. I am my brother's keeper.

'I kissed this girl,' I say, closing my eyes and breathing in the dark.

'You what?' David whispers. 'Matt, do you have a girlfriend?'

'She's not my girlfriend,' I murmur. 'We just kissed.'

'Do you like her?'

'She's alright.' I try to picture Kate's face. She's not really pretty or nothing. But she has an interesting face, and I get this feeling in my belly.

'Who is she?' David's making fun of me.

'She's just this girl from orchestra.' My eyes start getting tired. 'David, how do I ask her if I want her to be my girlfriend? What do I say?'

6

'You just ask her.' David yawns.

My brother wakes me up with a shake. I burrow down further under my duvet and try to get back to sleep. 'Matt? Matt?'

'What?'

'Wake up, mate.'

'Piss off.' People are only allowed to wake me up if the house is burning down. I make a loud groaning sound that comes out like a snore.

David switches on the bedside light. He's mental.

'What time is it?'

'Early,' he says, checking his phone. 'Come on, get dressed.'

The light is too bright. Why does my brother have to be such a weirdo?

I swing my legs out of bed and find an old hoody on the floor. It's still basically night-time.

David tells me to be quiet so we don't wake anyone up.

'What's going on?'

'We're going out,' he says.

'Where?'

'Driving.'

I get up and shove some clothes on over my pyjamas, then follow my brother downstairs. He's already wearing a tracksuit, and he grabs Mum's car keys from off the side and pulls a beanie hat down over his hair. My brother has been promising to teach me how to drive since he was seventeen, but Dad says I'm too young.

Outside, it's that cool, quiet time between night and morning. Everyone is asleep, and we are the only two people awake in the whole world. I get this feeling like anything could happen.

Me and David could go anywhere, and no-one would ever know.

You can still see the moon, big and hazy, and it reminds me of this piece of music by Beethoven called 'Moonlight Sonata.'

I hum to myself as we get in Mum's car. Dad drives a white van, and David's only been behind the wheel of it a couple of times. Once he picked one of his mates up, but he didn't ask Dad first, and they got in a row about it, and Dad said he wouldn't get David insured. David said that he would go out and do what he wanted anyway, and it was not his fault Dad's a miserable old git.

David checks the mirrors. Then he winds down the window and takes a packet of cigs out of his pocket. He lights one. 'Don't tell Mum and Dad, or I'm scratching all your CDs.'

'When did you start smoking?'

You can tell from the way my brother leans his head back and inhales that he's done it before. 'Just at uni on nights out,' he says. 'Want to try?' David holds out the fag and presses the button to wind down my window, letting in all the cold air.

'I've done it before.'

'When?' he laughs, but it comes out more as a cough.

'With Kate.' I take the cigarette to show him. I've only done it once, but I can still remember how to do it. Loads of people say that smoking tastes bad, but it just tastes like going to the football with Dad, and how Grandpa used to smell.

'You're a dark horse, Matthew Harris.'

I don't know what that means, so I don't know if it's a bad thing. Sometimes David comes out with weird stuff.

David finishes his fag and flicks the ash out of the window. Then he finds an old crisp packet on the floor and stubs it out in there, so Mum won't know. He takes us out onto the road, and the tarmac glistens with frost. It looks like someone's sprinkled Christmas everywhere, fairy lights twinkling in the trees, the sky thick and heavy with snow.

David drives us out of the cul-de-sac and around a few of the neighboring streets on our block. It's been strange not having him here. Empty.

After a few streets, he pulls over. 'Matthew, I'm gay.'

'Since when?'

'Well, I've always been gay,' he says. 'I just didn't know until Hannah and me... I guess, I realised I wasn't feeling the way I should. It's complicated.'

'It's not that complicated,' I say.

'No,' David says. 'I guess you're right.'

'I think Grace is a lesbian,' I say, pulling my cuffs down over my hands.

'Don't be daft.' David snorts.

'How come she has all them pictures of girls?'

'I dunno, Matt,' he says. 'She's a sixteen-year-old girl. She's a mystery.'

Maybe I don't know my sister as well as I thought.

David gets out of the car and tells me to climb over. I scoot across to the driver's seat, and he shows me about all the pedals and stuff.

'We'll just go slow,' he says. 'I'm here. There's no-one else on the road.'

I put my foot down on the pedal and started driving. I try to pretend I'm Dad, driving his van. But me and Dad are too different, and I can't get into his head. I wish that I could get into David's head, and now I know him better, it makes a bit more sense.

'Concentrate,' David tells me.

I think of all the times the teachers ignore me at school. All the times that Mum and Dad picked David's side over mine.

Does it really matter?

I keep going, and a turn comes up at the end. David warns me to indicate and start turning, but that's too many things to do at once when you are trying to keep your eyes on the road. I stall it, then push forwards.

9

Then I hit left too hard, and the wheel skids on the ice - and we go bump onto the pavement - straight into a signpost.

'Fuck!' my brother says. 'Fucking hell, nice one, Matt.' He rushes out of the car to take a look at the damage. When he gets back in the car, my brother doesn't say anything. Then he says, 'That looks expensive.'

'Sorry!'

'It's alright,' he says. 'It's my fault.'

I want to ask David how it's his fault, but my throat dries up.

When we get back home, the lights are on downstairs. Mum opens the door before David even has a chance to get out his keys.

'Where have you been?' Mum sounds mad. She's wearing a dressing gown and slippers, clutching her mobile phone.

I turn to my brother. This is where Mum starts crying, and Dad has a go at me and makes me spend all my pocket money on fixing the car.

This is where Mum and Dad act like I was just a mistake, even though they pretend that I'm not when everyone knows they wanted to stop at two.

This is where, actually, my brother steps forward and says, 'Mum, I'm sorry. I just wanted to take Matt out for a drive, cos I couldn't sleep, and I didn't really think about the ice. The car slipped while I was driving, I'm really sorry...'

My brother is lying for me, I think. Maybe he's my keeper after all.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
5. Why do you think David didn't tell his parents about his breakup?
6. What was Adam's secret and where did he tell his brother his truth?

7. Describe the relationship between two or more characters in the story. How does it develop or change over time?

Appendix 11: Intervention 5

Link of the story: <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/Deto1249.shtml>

Intervention 5

Short story: The detour

Writer: Lisa Taylor

1

"How did you sleep?" Elizabeth's husband asked, but he already knew the answer. She had been twitching and gasping all night. It wasn't unusual. Night terrors plagued her. She'd had garden-variety nightmares since she was a child. Her parents divorced when she was three, and her father visited on weekends. According to Elizabeth, he was awkward and nervous when he came to visit — well-intentioned but clueless in the care and keeping of small girls. The choices for the day's outing were always the same: ice cream, bowling, or the movies. Ice cream seemed a no-brainer, but she and her sisters quickly discovered that after he had spent the money on ice cream, there was no more money, nothing else — just sitting for hours in a booth at the ice cream shop. Bowling was not much better; there was only one ball in the alley that Elizabeth could lift, and if it wasn't available, she couldn't bowl. But the movies — they were the worst. Once, they had seen the Jungle Book. It was a day she remembered fondly, but her movie choice was canceled out by the votes of her father and older sisters more often than not. They chose horror movies. One haunted her for years — the plot of the movie escaped her, but the burned, disembodied hand crawling from the fireplace in search of a victim crept into her dreams many a night. In her preschool years, soon after the divorce, her sleep was often interrupted by a cackling witch that hunted her — eager to sweep her away from the safety of her grandmother's lovely fuchsia-encircled terrace. It didn't take a psychotherapist to figure out that dream, but this new dream, this new nightly dose of terror, she told her husband, was something altogether different. It physically exhausted her. It was terrifying and had no beginning and no end, no escape. The storyteller in her mind came, unbidden, every night.

It began in a high rise, on the top floor; the urgency of escape was palpable. With the elevator predictably unavailable, the stairs were Elizabeth's only option, and so she ran for them. She ran as if her life depended on it — as if being chased by the hounds of Hell. Down, down, down she ran. At some landings, the stairs below her were a mere mass of twisted steel and concrete rubble, as if a bomb had exploded. On these floors, she leaped to the next landing, trying unsuccessfully to tuck and roll. She crashed onto the floor below — battered and cut, but too terrified to stop. There was no fight — only flight. She didn't know why, but she had to get out of that building. Flight after flight, through the dilapidated stairwell...running, leaping, crashing, and running again until, at last, she reached the ground

floor. Panting, bleeding, and desperate, she pulled open the heavy fire door and stepped outside to the sidewalk, where she paused just a moment behind a large bush to catch her breath. She was still in danger. She knew it; she could feel it. She had to get farther away. She dashed out into the street, glancing quickly to her right in time to see a car screaming towards her... "No! No, no, nooooo...!" The thud of impact was deafeningly loud, and then there was silence. It was over — but it wasn't. It began again...she was back in the high rise, the top floor. She made the same desperate race to the bottom and rushed out from behind the large bush — only to meet the same end...that sickening thud...over and over and over and over again.

2

It was no wonder she woke exhausted every morning. She told and retold the story to her husband so many times that he became increasingly concerned for her health. Already thin, she was becoming haggard and gaunt. Perhaps she should see a therapist. But no, she was too busy, too stressed. She was needed at work. She hurried to her car, fretting about the time.

He watched her drive away — fatigued, drained, spent.

"A detour! What a wonderful addition to an already miserable day," Elizabeth thought sardonically as she approached the orange sign blocking her usual exit. Now she'd be late for sure. She sped past her intended turnoff and followed the orange detour signs that rerouted her into the old part of town.

"Damn!" she muttered as she looked around. She usually avoided this street. She didn't like this neighborhood of run-down tenement buildings and boarded-up stores. There was no one around, and yet, she didn't feel safe here. The sooner she could get back to the county road, the better. Would she be late for work? She glanced at the clock on the dashboard and then back to the road. She instantly broke into a cold sweat, every nerve ending in her body tingling painfully, ominously. "No, she said." "No! No! It can't be — it's... No, no, nooooo...!" Her scream trailed off.

The officer stood up, finished writing, and clapped his notebook shut. "Someone call the coroner. There's nothing more we can do here. She's dead," he said flatly.

About twenty minutes after receiving the call, her husband arrived at the scene, distraught, distrustful, and bewildered. What was she doing in this part of town? How could she be dead when there was no damage to her car? If it wasn't an accident, what was it? To the officer, he simply asked, "How? How did it happen?"

"We're not sure yet," the officer answered. "There were no witnesses, but we think she died of a heart attack. Based on the skid marks, it looks like she swerved to miss something, hit the brakes, and skidded over to the shoulder. She started braking right near that big bush next to the high rise. Someone could have run out into the street from there, but it's not likely. That building's been abandoned for years. It's just rubble inside. I'm so sorry. We'll never know for sure. There's just no telling what happened...no telling."

3

Her husband paled, the inexplicable suddenly eerily clear to him. "No... you're mistaken," he thought. There was telling. There had been telling — night after night after night.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
5. Why do you think she passes or this situation every night?
6. How did her husband realize that his wife didn't have a heart attack?

Appendix 12: Intervention 6

Link of the story: <https://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/Rema1312.shtml>

Intervention 6

Short story: Remains

Writer: George Nevgodovskyy

1

Deacon Park is where they bury the bodies. For a cold-blooded killer, a huge tract of wild land in the middle of the city can be an indispensable resource.

Some of those bodies, if discovered, become resurrected as news stories. He'd heard the same reporters on T.V. recycle the same lines his entire life. Still, most of them remain buried forever, and after a while, you become acclimated to a certain lack of closure.

You live in this town long enough; eventually, you learn never to get too close.

August first arrived in the rain. Her grown-out bleached hair stuck to her face as she carried musty boxes up six flights of stairs to the apartment across the hall, a one-eyed German Shepherd panting heavily behind her. Phillip watched her through the kitchen window, through the fisheye in his door. He liked the way the world looked from his fish tank.

In many ways, the modern world seemed to be tailored to people just like Phillip. He got his groceries and take-out delivered. He met with friends in the glossy realities of video games. Even his job as an insurance broker he could do from bed, shirtless, in his underwear. He didn't hate his life. You couldn't fail if you didn't take any chances.

So when August knocked on his door one afternoon in a tight red dress, asking him to dog-sit Ed for a few days while she "ran some errands", Phillip almost had a panic attack.

"He's really sweet, I swear," she told him.

"Is he...well-trained?" Phillip was so shaken he didn't know where to begin asking questions.

"He just chills all day. Please? I'll pay you in weed when I get back." He barely had time to respond before he realized that he was already holding the leash.

After August left, he watched from his window as a black Pontiac Sunfire with tinted windows pulled up outside the building, collected her, and drove off into the smog.

2

The first night with Ed was an exercise in crisis management. Phillip couldn't remember the last time he'd been so anxious, tiptoeing around the domesticated wolf in his living room, spending most of his time in the bedroom scouring canine-based subreddits. But eventually, realizing that Ed really was just a stoner of a dog who was so old that he barely registered Phillip's presence, he decided to make the best of an unsalvageable situation.

Over the next two days, he and the dog spent nearly all their time together – mostly because Phillip didn't trust Ed enough to leave him alone. They went for walks to Deacon Park after Phillip got off work, they lay together on the couch while he played video games. They even ate their meals at the same time – one at the table, the other underneath.

Later, he would learn from August that Ed was a stray who'd one day sauntered in through the open door of a trap house in Koreatown – though she was also entirely convinced that he was an ex-police dog, abandoned after an injury in the line of duty. She said that she'd been around enough police dogs to know.

Phillip laughed when he first heard her extravagant backstory, but at times even he was taken aback by Ed's uncanny ability to detect things that were meant to remain undetected. Like on their second day together, when they passed by a gas station on their way home from an evening walk. Phillip felt the leash suddenly tighten, his arm jerking outward, and he watched in bewilderment as Ed began to sniff and scratch at a hubcap of a tricked-out Audi. He continued like this until the owner – an inked-up skinhead with what looked like infected nose piercings – sprang out of the 7-11 to scream at Ed so irately that he pissed himself right there on the asphalt. Phillip didn't know for sure if there had been anything stashed away inside that hubcap. But he wouldn't say the idea was particularly far-fetched.

Phillip would take Ed on many more occasions after that first time, each beginning with the exact same pattern: the knock, the red dress, the leash, the black car. Sometimes it would be a few days. Sometimes close to a week.

3

It was hard to say whether he was in love with August. He'd never been in love – hell, he'd never even had a girlfriend – but he knew for a fact that he'd never been happier than when he heard the ever-unexpected knock at his door. Whenever August came around, he felt like some kind of secret agent, prepared to take a job at a moment's notice. Prepared to do anything she asked.

Of course, he had no illusions about how August made her living. He watched it all from his fisheye lens across the hall – how the men came all swaggering and slicked back, how they'd leave all dazed and disheveled. The late-night calls, groups of men that would leave her

apartment with bulging duffel bags. It wasn't that he cared – at least not from a moral perspective. It was only her safety that concerned him.

He just hoped to God that she knew what she was doing.

That time began the same way all the others did. He heard the telltale knock, navigated through small talk, grazed her fingers as she handed him the leash. *Next time*, he told himself. *I'll ask her next time*. He and Ed both watched as the black Sunfire pulled up to the building, her red dress smoldering as she clicked her heels along the sidewalk to the passenger side. He heard Ed whimpering softly beside him as the car disappeared into the shadows of the office towers.

Two weeks later, it was he who reported her missing.

Maybe she saw something she shouldn't have seen. Maybe there'd been a deal gone wrong. Maybe she got a little too close.

The cops had her apartment blocked-off with crime scene tape for a while. When they came by to ask him questions, he told them only about what he had seen. Then he asked if anyone was coming for Ed.

"We've had no contact with any family," the officer told him. "If you want him, the dog's yours. Doesn't look like he got much time left anyway."

4

None of us do, thought Phillip, stroking the back of Ed's neck.

He didn't notice when the yellow tape had come off or when the new tenants moved into August's apartment. He didn't cry at the thought of never seeing August again.

Over the years, he too had become acclimated to a certain lack of closure. One hot summer day, he and Ed were walking the main path in Deacon Park. Ed was being especially lackadaisical, stopping to investigate nearly every passing bramble and tree. Phillip didn't mind. Neither of them had anywhere else to be.

As they wandered along the path, Phillip marvelled at how much his life had changed since that rainy day when August first moved in next door – no longer the lonely shut-in that he was back then. All around, people strolled and jogged and whipped past them on rollerblades, some rubber-necking to glare at Ed's scraggly face and his missing eye. Then, out of nowhere, Phillip felt a force from Ed unlike any he had ever exuded, dragging him to a droopy Willow tree out of the way of the main path with such intensity that Phillip was nearly knocked to the ground. Brutishly, Ed led them to a patch of dirt, across which were strewn a melange of needles, balled-up tinfoil, empty cigarette cartons, and all shades of disposable lighters.

As soon as Ed reached his destination under the Willow tree, he began to dig. He was manic, summoning all of his available strength to uncover the loose dirt. Ed dug for a while – forming a hole that was nearly four feet deep – until he seemed to forget what he was doing and became distracted by a passing Doberman.

As they abandoned the hole under the Willow tree, a dark thought suddenly occurred to Phillip. Was it possible? Could that have been –?

But Phillip too grew distracted by the owner of the Doberman, a pretty, young woman in athletic clothes and naturally golden hair in a tight ponytail.

5

After all, Ed was an old dog, far along in his years. It could've been anything – or more likely nothing – buried underneath that Willow tree.

And when they walked far enough into the distance, that patch of dirt escaped Phillip's mind completely.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the secondary characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. What kind of narrator does this short story have? (Omniscient narrator, witness narrator, protagonist narrator). Why?
5. What do you think happened to August?
6. Why do you think Ed stopped digging?

Appendix 13: Post - test

Post- test

Short story: Ways of attending

Writer: Harry Redhead

1

The day after I returned from the art show in Bonn, I got an eye test. The opticians called me in; apparently I was overdue for a check-up. It was the look on the face of the woman in the hijab that told me something was wrong. She smiled weakly and left the room, with its awful green walls, and returned with another woman, who asked me to come with her. There was a long conversation then, and many qualifications and a great deal of sympathy; but the long and short of it was that I had aggressive macular degeneration, which is a fancy way of saying: I was going blind.

Such a thing is tricky for anyone, let alone an art critic, to hear. In truth I really didn't hear it. The news sort of bounced off me. I went out for dinner that evening at the local Italian restaurant where I often have dinner, and I spoke to Marco, the owner, as if nothing was wrong. He greeted me in the way he always does, and gestured proudly to one of my reviews, framed and on the wall, to a customer. It was embarrassing; it always is. But I appreciated it.

The next morning it hit me. I woke up with the phrase "I'm going blind" on my lips. It was accompanied by a kind of numbness, rather than panic. A flatness. I felt nothing. So I did what I normally do when I feel that way: I went for a walk. I went for a walk and I stared at the pavement, and I tried to figure out what to do. And eventually, it came to me.

"I'm resigning."

"What?"

"I'm resigning. I don't want to work here anymore."

"What? Why?"

"I'm going blind."

Sam, the Herald's youthful and overzealous editor, opened his mouth and closed it again.

And so I handed in my notice. Sam said all the right things. He offered to throw me a going-away dog. I declined; he insisted; and then I told him I'd already booked a flight to Rome, and would be leaving that afternoon. We shook hands, and parted for what I imagined would be the last time.

2

On the plane I met an American who told me excitedly how he'd never been to "Europe". I'd been to Rome many times, I told him; I was an art critic, I told him; and though Florence was the seat of Italian art, I told him, I'd always preferred Rome. I studied there many years ago. We exchanged numbers and agreed to meet for a drink one evening.

I went out once I'd dropped my things off at the hotel and showered and changed. Rome is beautiful at dusk: it's neither too hot nor too cool and the dying sun bathes the city in gold. I walked to the Piazza Farnese, and I studied the decoration of Constantine's Arch, and because it was the end of April, I went to the Spanish Steps, which were covered in flowers.

I spent much of the next day in Trastevere, and the day after that I used my Herald credentials to get into the Vatican. They were all very excited that I was there; I hadn't written about the museums for decades. But I said I wasn't there to work. I was there just to take it in, and the man I was speaking to — young, with a dark complexion but striking blue eyes — nodded sagely.

And then, one evening, I met Chester, my American friend. It was only really because I felt obliged to. He was wearing a cap and a bum bag and his cheeks were flushed from the heat. But then he began to speak about the dignity of the city, its richness, and the way it seemed to pulsate with history, and he talked with such sincerity and passion that I was charmed. And despite all my best intentions I felt a sort of longing then, something like the sorrow that the Portuguese call *saudade*; because it struck me that in his way he seemed to have seen Rome more truly than I had for years. When we made to leave, I held out my hand and he hugged me.

On my last night in Rome, I stood on the Palatine Hill and looked out over the city. And I thought of my first visit to Rome, and I thought of Chester, and I tried to give what I could see all of my attention, all of it. Simone Weil was right. Attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer.

3

My plane was late to depart but it landed at about the scheduled time. I collected my things and followed the signs for the Underground. But I was going through the double doors, something stopped me, and I frowned; and instead of taking the lift down to the Tube I went out to the taxi rank, and got in the next waiting car.

I gave the driver the address.

"It 's far."

"That 's fine."

"Sure? Alright then."

We set off.

Several hours later we arrived. She opened the door.

"Michael."

"I'm sorry I didn't call ahead."

"No, it's ... um, come in."

I followed her in and through to the kitchen.

"I just made some tea, actually."

"Oh."

"Would you like some?"

"Please."

"Same as always?"

My heart stung.

"Yes."

She made the tea with the milk first, as she always did, and put the cup on the table on a square of kitchen towel, as she always did.

"I would have called ahead ... I've been feeling more spontaneous lately."

"Is everything alright?"

I said nothing. I looked down into my tea. I spoke quietly.

"I put myself ahead of us."

I looked up. She blinked.

"Michael — "

"I did. I put myself ahead of us." Now she looked down. "I'm sorry."

4

"It's alright. It was a long time ago."

"I regret it. Every day."

"I know."

There was silence.

"I spent my life in search of beauty. And it was right there, in front of me. It was in front of me all along." She held my gaze. "I'm very happy you moved on. You deserved a lot more than I gave you. You deserved everything."

She walked me to the end of the drive. My cab was waiting. We embraced, and as we parted, I thought to myself that if what I saw then was the last thing I ever saw, that would be alright.

Questions:

After reading the short story, answer the following questions:

1. Who is the main character?
2. Who are the supporting characters?
3. What is the topic of the short story?
4. Where does the story happen?

5. What was his diagnosis?
6. Why did he regret leaving her?

Appendix 14: Rubric

Abilities	Accomplished (4)	Not entirely (3)	With difficulty (2)	Not achieved (1)
Understanding the text: The student demonstrates an accurate understanding of the text read	The student demonstrates a complete and accurate understanding of the text read, identifying and explaining with precision most or all key points of the text. Additionally, the student is able to make connections between the main and supporting ideas in the text and demonstrate a clear and deep understanding of the material.	The student demonstrates an adequate understanding of the text, although there may be some gaps in their understanding. The student is able to identify most of the key points of the text, but may struggle to explain some of them with precision. Additionally, the student may have difficulty making clear connections between the main and supporting ideas in the text.	The student struggles to demonstrate an adequate understanding of the text, and there may be several gaps in their understanding. The student is able to identify some key points of the text, but may struggle to explain them with precision. Additionally, the student may have difficulty making clear connections between the main and supporting ideas in the text.	The student does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the text, and there are several gaps in their understanding. The student is unable to identify or explain with precision the key points of the text, and is unable to make clear connections between the main and supporting ideas in the text.
Vocabulary: The student uses an appropriate and varied vocabulary in his response	The student demonstrates an excellent command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response. They use a wide range of	The student demonstrates an adequate command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response, although there may be some	The student struggles to use appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response, and there may be several lapses in their use of	The student does not demonstrate an adequate command of appropriate and varied vocabulary in their response, and there are

	<p>vocabulary accurately and effectively, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of word meanings and their contextual use. Their language is precise, sophisticated, and demonstrates a high level of fluency and coherence.</p>	<p>lapses in their use of vocabulary. They use a range of vocabulary accurately and effectively, but there may be some repetition or over-reliance on common words or expressions. Their language is generally clear and coherent, but may lack some precision and sophistication.</p>	<p>vocabulary. They may have difficulty selecting appropriate words to convey their meaning, and may rely on basic or repetitive vocabulary. Their language may lack precision and sophistication, and may be somewhat difficult to follow.</p>	<p>several lapses in their use of vocabulary. They may rely heavily on basic or repetitive vocabulary, and may use words inaccurately or inappropriately. Their language may be difficult to follow and lack coherence.</p>
<p>Analysis ability: The student is able to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments</p>	<p>The student demonstrates an exceptional ability to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments. They are able to identify and explain with precision the main ideas and supporting details of the text, and make connections between them to develop a coherent and insightful analysis. Their arguments are well-supported with evidence from the text, and they demonstrate a</p>	<p>The student demonstrates an adequate ability to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments, although there may be some gaps or lapses in their analysis. They are able to identify most of the main ideas and supporting details of the text, but may struggle to develop a fully coherent and insightful analysis. Their arguments are generally well-supported with evidence from the text, but may lack</p>	<p>The student struggles to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments, and there may be several gaps or lapses in their analysis. They may have difficulty identifying the main ideas and supporting details of the text, and may struggle to develop a coherent and insightful analysis. Their arguments may lack sufficient support from the text, and may be somewhat</p>	<p>The student does not demonstrate an adequate ability to analyze the text critically and provide well-founded arguments, and there are several gaps or lapses in their analysis. They may have difficulty identifying the main ideas and supporting details of the text, and their analysis may be incomplete or inaccurate. Their arguments may lack support from the text, and may be weak or unfounded.</p>

	nuanced understanding of the author's perspective and the larger context of the text.	some depth or nuance.	superficial or incomplete.	
Organization and clarity: The student's response is well organized and easy to follow. It is written in clear and consistent English	The student's response is exceptionally well-organized and easy to follow. They use a clear and consistent writing style throughout their response, with well-structured responses and sentences that flow logically and coherently. Their language is precise and sophisticated, with a range of sentence structures and vocabulary that effectively convey their meaning. Overall, their response is highly effective in communicating their ideas.	The student's response is adequately organized and generally easy to follow. They use a clear and consistent writing style for the most part, with well-structured paragraphs and sentences that flow logically and coherently. Their language is generally clear and precise, although there may be some lapses in consistency or sophistication. Overall, their response is effective in communicating their ideas, although there may be some room for improvement.	The student struggles to organize their response effectively and may have difficulty writing in clear and consistent English. Their writing may be somewhat disorganized, with poorly-structured paragraphs and sentences that lack coherence. Their language may lack precision and sophistication, and there may be errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Overall, their response is somewhat difficult to follow and may require additional revision and editing.	The student does not demonstrate an adequate ability to organize their response effectively and write in clear and consistent English. Their writing may be disorganized and difficult to follow, with poorly-structured paragraphs and sentences that lack coherence. Their language may be imprecise and lack sophistication, and there may be frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. Overall, their response is difficult to understand and may require significant revision and editing.
Coherence and relevance: The student's	The student's response is highly coherent	The student's response is generally	The student's response is somewhat	The student's response lacks coherence and

response is coherent and relevant to the question posed	and directly addresses the question posed. Their argument is well-developed and logically organized, with each point building on the previous one. The response uses appropriate examples and evidence to support their claims, and the language is clear and precise. The response is highly relevant to the question and effectively communicates the student's understanding of the topic.	coherent and addresses the question posed. Their argument is developed and organized, with each point supporting their overall thesis. The response uses some examples and evidence to support their claims, and the language is mostly clear and precise. The response is relevant to the question and effectively communicates the student's understanding of the topic, although there may be some minor lapses in coherence or relevance.	coherent and may have difficulty directly addressing the question posed. Their argument may be somewhat disorganized or difficult to follow, with some points lacking support or relevance to the overall thesis. The response may use some examples and evidence, although they may not be effectively integrated into the argument. The language may be imprecise or unclear at times. The response is somewhat relevant to the question but may require revision for clarity and coherence.	fails to address the question posed. Their argument is disorganized or nonexistent, with points lacking support or relevance to the overall thesis. The response may lack examples and evidence, or they may be insufficient to support the claims. The language may be imprecise, unclear, or contain frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling. The response is not relevant to the question and fails to effectively communicate the student's understanding of the topic.
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Appendix 15: Observation format

Pre-reading	
1	Uses previous knowledge
2	Has the ability to make inferences about textual clues
3	Makes assumptions or predictions about the content of the text

Problem statement, objectives and justification						x														
Previous studies							x													
Conceptual Framework								x												
Contextual framework										x										
Research approach and design																				
Instruments																				
Stages																				
References																				
Research Project stage II 2023.1																				
Months	March				April				May				June				July			
Weeks	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Reading articles	x	x																		
Building the instruments			x	x	x															
Field work													x							
Data collection														x	x	x	x	x	x	
Data analysis																				
Conclusions																				
Presentation to the adviser																				
Research Project stage III																				

Months		June				August				September				October					
Weeks		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4		
Correction		x	x	x	x														
Correct APA style						x	x	x											
Practicing the presentation										x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		
Oral defense																		x	

Appendix 17: Budget

	SOURCES		
	OWN RESOURCES		
CATEGORIES	EFFECTIVO	ESPECIE	TOTAL
PERSONAL	\$80.000		
EQUIPO	\$	\$ 2'200.000	\$ 2'200.000
MATERIALES	\$	\$30.000	\$30.000
IMPRESIONES	\$ 84.000		\$84.000
VIAJES	\$40.000		\$40.000
SALIDAS DE CAMPO	\$40.000		\$40.000
COMUNICACIONES	\$50.000		\$50.000
TRANSPORTE	\$25.000		\$25.000
SUBTOTAL COSTOS DIRECTOS	\$319.000	\$2'230.000	\$2'469.000
TOTAL	\$319.000	\$2'230.000	\$2'469.000