UNIVERSIDAD NACIONAL AUTÓNOMA DE NICARAGUA, MANAGUA

UNAN-MANAGUA

Área de Conocimiento de Educación, Arte y Humanidades

Department of Foreign Languages

English major

The application of cognitive techniques: activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning, to enhance the identification of main ideas and details in narrative texts by 8th-grade students at Colegio Experimental México.

Research report completed

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December, 2024

Acknowledgements

With deep gratitude and emotion, we dedicate this space to those who have been fundamental pillars in this journey of sacrifice and perseverance throughout five unforgettable years.

First of all, we thank God, who has been our guide and strength in every step of this journey. His wisdom enlightened us in moments of uncertainty, and His infinite love sustained us when our strength seemed to run out. This achievement is a testimony of His faithfulness and blessing in our lives, for which we humbly and gratefully dedicate this accomplished goal to Him.

To our fathers and mothers, tireless guardians of our dreams, for your unconditional love, your words of encouragement and your unwavering faith in our abilities. You have been our driving force in the most difficult days, our refuge in moments of uncertainty and our constant inspiration to never give up.

To our brothers, life partners and accomplices in this journey, thank you for your sincere support, for celebrating our victories and for reaching out to us when the burden seemed unbearable.

To our mentor teacher, M.A. Roberto Carlos Villarreal Martínez, his guidance, patience and wisdom were beacons that illuminated the path of our formation. In every advice and every correction, we found the motivation to achieve excellence. His dedication marked us deeply and will always be remembered with admiration.

To all the teachers who accompanied us throughout these five years, sowing knowledge and values in our lives, we thank you not only for teaching us academic lessons, but for molding us as integral human beings. Your commitment to education inspires us to be better and to carry with pride what we have learned.

To the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua (UNAN-Managua), our great alma mater, we pay a sincere and grateful tribute. Thank you for providing us with a quality education, for opening the doors to a future full of opportunities and for being the stage where we grew as professionals and as people. This achievement is also yours, for being a cradle of

knowledge and a beacon of hope for those of us who seek to transform our lives through knowledge.

Today, at the end of this chapter full of challenges, learning and sacrifices, we recognize that we did not do it alone. This triumph is the fruit of a collective effort, of a network of support that sustained us and of a shared dream that we celebrate today with pride and infinite gratitude.

Abstract

This study investigated the application of cognitive techniques on the enhancement of reading comprehension skills, specifically the ability to identify main ideas and details, among 8th-grade students at Colegio Experimental México during the academic year 2024. The necessity for improving reading comprehension skills in narrative texts, coupled with students' need for effective strategies, prompted the implementation of cognitive techniques such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning. The primary objective was to evaluate the impact of these techniques on students' reading comprehension abilities.

Specific objectives were the following: diagnose students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts, identify students' strengths and weaknesses in this area, and evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in enhancing these skills. Data was collected through a diagnostic test, a during-test, a post-test, and an observation guide, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of students' progress and engagement with the cognitive strategies.

Main results revealed that the application of cognitive techniques significantly improved students' ability to identify main ideas and details. The diagnostic test highlighted challenges, such as limited prior knowledge activation and difficulty in clarifying ideas, while the post-test demonstrated marked progress in comprehension and critical thinking. Observation results further confirmed active student participation and strategy application during reading tasks.

Some conclusions include the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in fostering deeper comprehension and critical thinking skills. The findings emphasize the value of integrating these strategies into educational practices to improve reading comprehension. Moreover, the study highlights the importance of continued application and adaptation of cognitive techniques to meet diverse student needs, providing a framework for future research and practical classroom implementation.

Resumen

Este estudio investigó la aplicación de técnicas cognitivas en el mejoramiento de las habilidades de comprensión lectora, específicamente la habilidad para identificar ideas principales y detalles, en estudiantes de 8º grado del Colegio Experimental México durante el ciclo escolar 2024. La necesidad de mejorar las habilidades de comprensión lectora en textos narrativos, aunada a la necesidad de estrategias efectivas por parte de los estudiantes, impulsó la aplicación de técnicas cognitivas como la activación de conocimientos previos, el monitoreo-clarificación y el cuestionamiento. El objetivo principal era evaluar el impacto de estas técnicas en las habilidades de comprensión lectora de los estudiantes.

Los objetivos específicos fueron los siguientes: diagnosticar la capacidad de los estudiantes para identificar ideas principales y detalles en textos narrativos, identificar los puntos fuertes y débiles de los estudiantes en esta área y evaluar la eficacia de las técnicas cognitivas para mejorar estas habilidades. Los datos se recogieron a través de una prueba diagnóstica, una prueba durante, una prueba posterior y una guía de observación, garantizando una comprensión global del progreso de los estudiantes y su compromiso con las estrategias cognitivas.

Los principales resultados revelaron que la aplicación de técnicas cognitivas mejoró significativamente la capacidad de los alumnos para identificar ideas principales y detalles. La prueba de diagnóstico puso de manifiesto la existencia de dificultades, como la escasa activación de conocimientos previos y la dificultad para aclarar ideas, mientras que la prueba posterior demostró un notable progreso en la comprensión y el pensamiento crítico. Los resultados de las observaciones confirmaron además la participación activa de los estudiantes y la aplicación de estrategias durante las tareas de lectura.

Algunas conclusiones incluyen la eficacia de las técnicas cognitivas para fomentar una comprensión más profunda y habilidades de pensamiento crítico. Los resultados subrayan el valor de integrar estas estrategias en las prácticas educativas para mejorar la comprensión lectora. Además, el estudio subraya la importancia de seguir aplicando y adaptando las técnicas cognitivas para satisfacer las diversas necesidades de los estudiantes, proporcionando un marco para futuras investigaciones y para la aplicación práctica en el aula.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is a critical skill in education, as it enables students to process and understand written information effectively. Despite its importance, many students, particularly in eighth grade, struggle to identify main ideas and supporting details in narrative texts. This issue is evident at Colegio Experimental México, where diagnostic tests reveal significant gaps in students' ability to synthesize key elements of narrative texts and understand deeper meanings. Addressing these challenges requires innovative strategies that engage students actively in the learning process.

The research focuses on applying cognitive techniques activating prior knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, and questioning to improve eighth-grade students' reading comprehension. Specifically, it investigates how these methods can enhance their ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts. Conducted in 2024, this study targets a group of motivated learners at Colegio Experimental México, providing a rich context for evaluating these instructional techniques' effectiveness.

The relevance of this study lies in its potential to bridge comprehension gaps and promote critical reading skills. Cognitive strategies not only improve text understanding but also empower students to become independent learners capable of analyzing and engaging with complex material. These methods encourage active participation, fostering a deeper connection between prior knowledge and new information, and enhancing overall learning outcomes.

By implementing these cognitive strategies, the study aims to provide teachers with practical tools to transform reading instruction. These methods can be integrated into diverse classroom settings, offering significant benefits to both educators and learners. Direct beneficiaries include the participating eighth-grade students, who will improve their reading skills, while indirect beneficiaries are teachers and parents who will observe enhanced academic performance and increased student confidence.

This research contributes to the broader educational community by emphasizing the importance of tailored, student-centered approaches to reading comprehension. It underscores the transformative potential of cognitive techniques in fostering critical thinking

and lifelong learning skills, thereby providing a model for improving reading instruction across similar educational contexts.

Background Information

Reading comprehension of narrative texts remains a significant challenge in secondary education, particularly for students learning English as a foreign language. According to Marzona and Ikhsan (2019), reading comprehension is an active, interactive process that requires not only decoding written symbols but also integrating linguistic skills, cognitive abilities, and prior knowledge. This process allows readers to reconstruct the author's intended meaning while fostering critical skills such as identifying main ideas and extracting supporting details.

Recent studies have shown that while students often excel in recognizing explicit details, they struggle to identify main ideas and establish connections between them (Broek, 2003). In this context, 8th-grade students, such as those at Colegio Experimental México, frequently exhibit limitations in critical skills like analyzing and synthesizing information. A significant number of students rely on translating individual words, a strategy that hampers their ability to understand the broader context. Furthermore, skimming texts or jumping to questions without fully reading the material often leads to misunderstandings and poor performance.

Specific challenges include limited vocabulary, difficulty recognizing implicit meanings, and a lack of strategies for monitoring comprehension. For example, some students fail to identify emotional nuances in characters' actions or infer the underlying themes of a narrative. These issues suggest that traditional teaching methods may not adequately address the needs of all learners, particularly when it comes to developing higher-order thinking skills like analysis and synthesis.

Research suggests that cognitive techniques such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning can significantly enhance students' reading comprehension. These strategies not only engage students more deeply with the text but also promote independence in learning. Activating prior knowledge allows students to connect new information to their existing experiences, providing a foundation for understanding unfamiliar material. Monitoring and clarifying help students identify areas of confusion and employ corrective strategies, such as rereading or seeking clarification. Questioning, both

teacher-guided and student-generated, encourages critical thinking and deeper interaction with the text, helping students uncover central themes and essential details.

Empirical evidence supports the effectiveness of these techniques in improving reading outcomes. Suyitno (2017) found that students who employed cognitive strategies, such as summarizing and self-monitoring, demonstrated higher comprehension levels than those who did not. Additionally, activating prior knowledge has been shown to compensate for gaps in linguistic proficiency, enabling students to better interpret texts even when vocabulary is limited (Yin, 1984). These findings suggest that cognitive techniques not only improve comprehension but also foster greater engagement and motivation, which are critical for sustained learning.

At Colegio Experimental México, the implementation of these cognitive strategies aims to address the specific needs of 8th-grade students. By integrating these techniques into guided reading practices, teachers can provide structured support that enables students to navigate narrative texts more effectively. Over time, this approach has the potential to transform students' reading abilities, equipping them with the tools to independently analyze and interpret complex texts. Such interventions are not only vital for academic success but also for cultivating lifelong reading habits and critical thinking skills essential for future learning.

Research Objectives:

General objective:

1. To evaluate the impact of cognitive techniques on the improvement of reading comprehension skills in the ability to identify main ideas and details in 8th-grade students of Colegio Experimental Mexico.

Specific objectives:

1. To diagnose students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts.

2. To identify students' strengths and weaknesses when identifying main ideas and details

3. To evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in enhancing 8th-grade students' ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension.

Theoretical framework

Introduction to Reading Comprehension in Narrative Texts

Definition of reading comprehension.

Reading is one of the most complex linguistic skills, as it requires readers to comprehend and interpret the meaning of written discourse. According to Marzona and Ikhsan (2019), "Reading comprehension is the act of understanding a text. It is an intentional, active, interactive process that occurs before, during, and after a person reads a particular piece of writing."(p.36). They further explain that reading results from the interaction between the perception of graphic symbols representing language, the reader's language skills, cognitive abilities, and world knowledge. In this process, readers attempt to reconstruct the meaning intended by the writer. This suggests that readers must draw on their prior knowledge, which facilitates text comprehension, and employ mental strategies, such as self-questioning, to make better sense of what they read and critically engage with the content from a new perspective.

The development of comprehension of main ideas in Narratives

Understanding the development of comprehension of main ideas involves recognizing the relationships between text elements. As the study outlines, "identifying a main idea is a clear indication that readers have formed a coherent mental representation of the text" (Broek, 2003). This study shows how children progressively grasp these structures across different age groups. Readers, especially younger ones, rely on narrative goals to connect episodes in a story, leading to Improved comprehension. This paper shows that the ability to identify the main idea strengthens with age, enhancing the educational strategies needed to foster narrative comprehension.

Challenges faced by 8th-grade students in reading comprehension.

During the application of a diagnostic reading comprehension test about the identification of the main idea and details in narrative texts. It was applied to 8th-grade students from Colegio Experimental Mexico and showed several common challenges. A significant number of students had difficulty understanding the meaning of key vocabulary,

which affected their ability to grasp the main idea of the narrative text. Many requested translations of specific words, indicating a gap in knowledge of vocabulary that is crucial for comprehension of the text. In addition, it was evident that some students did not fully engage with the text, choosing to skim or look for answers directly in the questions rather than reading the entire passage. This strategy tended to lead to misunderstandings and incorrect answers, as important details and contexts of the text were missed. In addition, the difficulty in identifying the main idea and supporting details led to confusion in answering comprehension questions, highlighting the need to improve reading strategies.

Despite these problems, the sample we took of 10 students, 8 students demonstrated a high capacity for reading comprehension, as they read the text attentively and answered the questions correctly according to what was asked of them. This group showed a better ability to decode unfamiliar words and understand the narrative structure. Overall, these challenges underline the necessity for focused instruction in active reading strategies to support comprehension and improve overall reading proficiency among the students.

Cognitive Techniques in Learning

Overview of cognitive learning theory (e.g., Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner)

Cognitive learning theories focus on the process by which the human mind interprets, learns and processes information. These theories provide a perspective for understanding how we learn throughout life and how we develop intellectually. Yilmaz (2011) states that Piaget's theory of cognitive development emphasizes how individuals construct knowledge and adapt to their environment. He explains that Piaget compares cognitive development to a biological process of adaptation, where learners modify their mental structures, or schemas, through assimilation and accommodation. Piaget also mentions that learners are active participants, naturally exploring and interacting with their environment to understand it.

Yilmaz (2011) also states that Vygotsky's Social Cognitivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction in cognitive development. Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) shows how students can complete tasks with guidance that they could not do independently. Vygotsky's theory, as mentioned by Yilmaz (2011), states that learning precedes development and is mediated by language and dialogue.

Finally, Yilmaz (2011) states that Bruner's discovery learning focuses on how students interact with their environment, formulate questions, and explore concepts to construct their knowledge. He mentions that Bruner's approach encourages students to take responsibility for their learning, fostering higher-order thinking and problem-solving skills. This teaches that learning theories, such as those of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Bruner, emphasize how students actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment, social context, and prior understanding. These theories emphasize the importance of tailoring learning to individual needs and developmental stages, making learning more effective. In terms of reading comprehension, these principles help students engage with texts more deeply by encouraging them to use prior knowledge, ask questions, and explore new ideas, leading to a more meaningful understanding of the material.

Cognitive Strategies used in reading comprehension and its contributions to students' Achievement.

The use of cognitive strategies in reading helps students actively process text and overcome comprehension challenges. According to (Suyitno, 2017) "students who applied coherence-detecting moves, like integrating information and anticipating content, showed higher comprehension levels". This study found that various strategies either aid or hinder comprehension, depending on their appropriateness for the text. Through techniques like rereading or summarizing, students improve comprehension. Ultimately, the paper shows how teachers can guide students in selecting effective strategies to enhance text understanding and academic performance.

Benefits of the application of cognitive techniques in reading comprehension.

Cognitive reading comprehension techniques involve strategies that help readers actively engage with texts. Techniques such as activating prior knowledge, questioning, and monitoring or clarifying promote a deeper interaction with the material, enhancing readers' ability to identify main ideas and essential details. Kh, Nurun, Dollah, Syarifuddin, and Munir (2024) mention that "some of the benefits of students' reading interest include increased comprehension, deeper understanding, reading more strategically, retaining information longer, and putting more cognitive effort into what they are reading" (p. 253). This suggests that using cognitive strategies not only enhances reading comprehension but

also increases student interest in the learning process. Furthermore, these techniques positively impact classroom learning activities by motivating students to engage more actively. As a result, cognitive strategies empower students to become independent learners who can think critically and make connections between their prior knowledge and new information, ultimately leading to more effective and long-lasting learning outcomes.

Application of cognitive techniques in education.

Cognitive techniques have significantly influenced educational practices by providing information about how students learn and think, they play a very important role in education and help a lot in students' reading comprehension. According to Kozuli Alex (2015) expresses that "the application of cognitive techniques helps students in their thinking skills and curricular performance furthermore these cognitive strategies create a framework for dialogue so that students are encouraged to investigate, make judgments, answer more open-ended questions, think before answering and encourage them to expand and develop their answers". These strategies enable students to thoroughly engage in reading comprehension, their application leads to improved academic performance, and better prepares students for future challenges in their reading comprehension.

Activating Prior Knowledge

The role of prior knowledge in reading comprehension.

This article investigates how prior knowledge affects reading comprehension across different text types and student groups. "Readers use whatever resources they have in store… in making sense of the text" (Yin, 1984). The study found that prior knowledge significantly impacts comprehension, sometimes compensating for lower linguistic proficiency. Familiarity with a topic enables students to better interpret texts, underscoring the importance of activating students' background knowledge in teaching. Ultimately, it shows that comprehension is a resource-based activity where linguistic skills alone are insufficient.

Strategies to activate prior knowledge in classroom settings.

Activating prior knowledge is essential for effective learning in the classroom, as it connects new information to students' existing understanding. Al-Humaidi Salma (2015) affirms that "teachers should be aware of what prior knowledge and experiences students

bring to the reading task. Thus, teachers can activate prior knowledge before reading a text through appropriate pre-reading activities, such as establishing the purpose of reading, building text-specific knowledge, pre-teaching key vocabulary, and making predictions. Besides that, there are strategies to activate prior knowledge and they are the following: brainstorming, class discussion, semantic mapping, graphic organizers, anticipation guide, audiovisual aids, questioning, prediction, linking the topic with the students' culture". Strategies to activate prior knowledge, such as brainstorming and the use of graphic organizers, are critical in helping students relate new information to their existing experiences and knowledge, which facilitates a deeper understanding of the content. For example, by conducting class discussions, students can share their ideas and perspectives, thus enriching collective learning and fostering a collaborative environment.

Monitoring-Clarifying

Definition and significance of monitoring comprehension

In the field of reading comprehension, monitoring is recognized as a key skill that allows readers to monitor and evaluate their own understanding as they interact with a text. This ability is fundamental, as it contributes to more conscious and reflective reading, facilitating the identification of possible misunderstandings and promoting clarification strategies that enhance deeper learning. Zargar, Adams, and Connor (2020) define comprehension monitoring as "the conscious and unconscious strategies used to evaluate comprehension and identify inconsistencies that might occur during text reading and regulate comprehension or repair the misunderstandings and facilitate reading"(p.3). This means that this cognitive skill involves a constant evaluation of comprehension during reading, which allows the reader, in case of finding inconsistencies or misunderstandings, to consciously or unconsciously adjust his or her understanding to repair coherence and improve his or her overall understanding of the text.

This process not only focuses on detecting problems but also on applying corrective strategies that strengthen the connection between ideas and allow the reader to move forward smoothly and efficiently. In addition, comprehension monitoring contributes to reader autonomy, fostering active and critical learning that optimizes retention and incorporation of the information read.

Techniques for monitoring-clarifying

Monitoring and clarification techniques are essential elements in the reading comprehension process, as they allow readers to actively evaluate their understanding of the text and make adjustments when they encounter difficulties. These strategies are fundamental to building independent, autonomous reading, allowing students to effectively identify and resolve obstacles in the interpretation of a text. Through these processes, readers not only recognize areas of confusion but also implement modification actions that facilitate deeper and more meaningful comprehension of content.

Laraba (2012) highlights several comprehension monitoring and clarifying strategies essential for developing metacognitive abilities in readers. These techniques enable individuals to actively engage with texts and assess their understanding. One key strategy is thinking aloud, where readers verbalize their thought processes, helping to clarify complex ideas and address confusion. Another effective method is restating, which involves summarizing key points in one's own words, reinforcing comprehension and identifying misunderstandings. Additionally, asking questions using the "5 Ws" (who, what, when, where, why) prompts readers to delve deeper into the text and enhance critical thinking. Coding text allows readers to mark important information and areas of confusion, facilitating tracking of their thoughts and clarifications needed.

Furthermore, the monitoring-clarifying process enables students to address unknown vocabulary by looking up definitions in a dictionary or consulting their teacher. This approach prevents students from becoming frustrated by unclear words, as they can construct or verify meanings and expand their vocabulary. By actively engaging with difficult words, readers not only improve their comprehension but also assess their strengths and weaknesses in reading. This constructive approach encourages students to continually build meaning, and in turn, become more confident and skilled readers.

In essence, the application of monitoring and clarification strategies helps students recognize errors in their text comprehension and apply solutions through guided practice. Together, these strategies enable readers to become more reflective and independent in their learning processes, resulting in students developing greater confidence in their ability to comprehend and analyze complex texts.

Rereading

Among the monitoring and clarification strategies, the rereading technique stands out for its simplicity and effectiveness. It is one of the most accessible tools for students, as it does not require advanced skills or additional resources, making it a useful practice in the classroom. By rereading a section of the text, students can increase their comprehension and pick up on details they may have missed on the first reading.

This technique is especially useful when difficulty in understanding arises, allowing for stronger comprehension and promoting reader autonomy. Mariadass, Mohd Yazib, and Philip (2023) describe re-reading as the process of revisiting previously read material to enhance understanding, especially during intensive reading sessions. In this context, re-reading also involves analyzing specific words and phrases within the reading material. The researchers emphasize that instructors play a critical role in this phase, guiding students by reading aloud together and pausing to explain terms and phrases. When instructors do not engage in this stage, students may struggle to retain information and understand new vocabulary within the text.

This process, although time-consuming, helps students improve their comprehension, as it often takes more than two hours to read a short story. Students' active participation in reading aloud allows them to develop skills in predicting the meaning of new words within context, which further improves their comprehension skills. This teaches that the rereading technique not only improves immediate comprehension of texts but also fosters students' analytical and predictive abilities. In addition, it strengthens students' ability to identify main ideas and important details, improving their ability to understand the central message and information within a text. By engaging them in active, guided reading, fosters deeper learning

and students' ability to tackle complex texts with ease, developing both their reading comprehension and their confidence in the process.

Summarizing while reading

Another effective strategy that improves reading comprehension is the summarizing technique. This technique allows students to strengthen their understanding by extracting the main ideas and key concepts from a text, thus facilitating better retention of information. Sadikova (2024) mentions that "Summarizing involves creating a mental, spoken, or written summary of new information obtained from reading. It is a beneficial strategy that helps students understand the original text more effectively and demonstrates their comprehension. Furthermore, the act of summarizing enables students to analyze and evaluate the original text using the knowledge they have acquired" (p. 103). Summarizing while reading has numerous benefits in improving comprehension of reading passages and, in turn, identifying main ideas and key details. This technique allows students to grasp main ideas in greater depth by encouraging them to condense information. It helps retain crucial concepts by synthesizing material from the text. By focusing on essential details, summary writing improves comprehension and helps avoid distractions from less important points.

In general, it is recognized that by summarizing, readers not only identify what is most relevant but also develop critical skills that help them analyze and reflect on the content, becoming more active readers. Integrating this cognitive technique into reading sessions helps students create meaningful connections with the material, promoting deeper and more lasting learning.

Research on the impact of monitoring and clarifying on understanding narrative texts.

The impact of monitoring and clarification strategies on the comprehension of narrative texts is a crucial aspect of reading instruction, as these techniques allow students not only to identify and overcome obstacles in their comprehension but also to develop cognitive skills that enhance their analytical abilities.

By applying these strategies, students can interact more effectively with the text, resulting in a more enriching comprehension of narratives. Abu Bakar, M., & Rafika. (2020)

emphasize that monitoring and clarification techniques cause proficient readers to perform an internal monologue that helps them select relevant information and organize it into their prior knowledge, while their ability to reflect on their thinking allows them to adapt when difficulties arise. Monitoring and clarification techniques are especially impactful in this context, as they teach students to recognize what they understand and what they do not, thus promoting active and reflective learning. By implementing these strategies, students not only improve their comprehension of narrative texts but also develop effective problem-solving skills and become more confident readers.

In other words, monitoring and clarification strategies are essential in the comprehension of narrative texts, as they allow students to identify and overcome difficulties in their reading. These techniques foster a reflective approach where students can organize their prior knowledge and adapt it to their learning strategies. By improving text comprehension, they also develop confidence and security. Therefore, their implementation not only strengthens reading comprehension but also forms more skilled readers in their educational process.

Questioning

Effectiveness of questioning techniques

The article explores the effectiveness of questioning techniques to improve students' reading comprehension in narrative texts, particularly among tenth-grade students. This classroom action research, conducted in two cycles, involved various assessment tools like reading comprehension tests, diary notes, observation sheets, and questionnaires to measure both quantitative and qualitative outcomes. Results indicated that the student's reading scores progressively improved through each cycle, showing greater engagement and enthusiasm for learning. The questioning technique engaged students by focusing attention on key elements of texts, prompting critical and interpretive thinking, and enhancing active participation (Sinabariba, 2021). This method also fostered an interactive learning environment where students felt motivated to explore and understand text content deeply. The study concludes that questioning techniques can effectively enhance reading comprehension, suggesting that teachers implement this approach to improve comprehension skills and foster a more interactive classroom environment.

Literal, inferential and evaluative questioning

The article Examining the Structure of Reading Comprehension: Do Literal, Inferential, and Evaluative Comprehension Truly Exist? Explores whether reading comprehension can be effectively divided into the three commonly accepted types: literal, inferential, and evaluative. The authors analyze these distinctions by examining student performance data to determine if comprehension operates as a unified construct or distinct categories. They question whether these traditional categories accurately capture students' abilities in reading comprehension, or if a different approach might be more valid. According to Basaraba et al., their findings suggest that while these categories are widely used, the evidence does not clearly support their independent existence. Instead, comprehension may function as a more integrated process, where literal understanding, inferences, and evaluative judgments interact closely rather than operate separately. This research calls for a more nuanced view of reading comprehension, suggesting that educators and test designers may benefit from considering the interconnectedness of these comprehension types.

Reflection-based questioning

In this article, Oo and Habok examine the role of reflection-based questioning in enhancing reading comprehension among Myanmar students. They argue that effective questioning techniques can foster deeper understanding and retention of texts by engaging students in reflective thought processes. The authors emphasize that comprehension is not merely about recalling information but involves interpreting, analyzing, and connecting ideas. Reflection-based questioning, they note, encourages students to think critically about the material, which helps them grasp underlying concepts and themes. Furthermore, Oo and Habok identify several factors influencing the effectiveness of this technique, such as students' prior knowledge, their engagement level, and the learning environment. They suggest that when teachers employ reflection-based questions, students are more likely to interact meaningfully with the text, which boosts comprehension skills. As (Tun Zaw Oo, 2022) explains, "Reflection encourages students to become active readers, which is essential for mastering comprehension skills." The study concludes by recommending that educators integrate structured questioning strategies to foster a culture of critical reading in classrooms.

Teacher-guide vs. Student-generated questions

In this paper, (Rakes & Susan, 1983) explore how both teacher- and student-generated questioning techniques can enhance reading comprehension. They suggest that teachers improve questioning practices by giving clues before answers, using eye contact, encouraging multiple answers, and allowing students time to respond. Another method, the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR), involves cues like "Right There" for detail-based questions, "Think and Search" for inferential questions, and "On Your Own" for critical-thinking questions, helping students locate answers based on question type (Raphael, 1982). For student-driven strategies, the authors discuss the ReQuest method, where students ask the teacher questions after reading a passage. Other methods include SQ3R, which involves surveying, questioning, reading, reciting, and recalling, and Structured Comprehension, where students self-question for clarity (Robinson, 1962). These strategies, whether teacher-directed or student-initiated, aim to foster greater independence and retention in reading comprehension.

Interrelationship between cognitive techniques

How activating prior knowledge, monitoring clarifying and questioning work synergistically to enhance comprehension?

The article Essential Elements of Fostering and Teaching Reading Comprehension presents fundamental strategies and practices for developing reading comprehension in learners. The authors emphasize the importance of active engagement and strategic instruction, stating, "Comprehension is both a process and a product" (Duke, 2011). Effective comprehension instruction should include a blend of teaching strategies, modeling, and scaffolding to help students construct meaning from text. Duke and her colleagues advocate for incorporating questioning, summarizing, and visualizing techniques to support students in identifying main ideas and details. The chapter also underscores the role of background knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension monitoring in enhancing understanding. According to Duke et al., these strategies should be adapted to meet the diverse needs of students, and they recommend a balanced approach combining both direct instruction and student-centered learning.

Integration of these techniques in reading instruction

       The paper explores how English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers implement reading strategies in Indonesian high schools. The study employs classroom observations to analyze how effectively teachers use strategies such as predicting, questioning, summarizing, and inferring to enhance students' reading comprehension. Apriani notes that while teachers are aware of these strategies, their application often lacks consistency and depth, particularly in fostering students' independent reading skills. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of teacher training in strategy instruction, suggesting that more extensive professional development could bridge gaps in current practice. Apriani emphasizes that "the effectiveness of reading strategy instruction largely depends on teachers' commitment and skill" (Apriani, 2021, p. 45). The research concludes that, for students to benefit fully, teachers must not only model strategies but also encourage active engagement, allowing students to practice and internalize these approaches.

Integrating cognitive Techniques in Guided Reading

 Combining activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying and questioning in structured reading tasks.

       The combination of activation of prior knowledge, monitoring-marking and questioning in reading tasks are essential in students' reading comprehension. Balog Fanni (2023) expresses that it is critical to assist students in independently applying comprehension strategies to reading tasks such as: combining the prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying and questioning first it is important for "readers to activate their prior knowledge and use it to better understand what they are reading. Background knowledge is made up of a person's experiences with the world (including what he or she has read) as well as concepts for how written text works, such as word identification, print concepts, word meaning, and text organization. Second, the use of monitoring-clarifying involves readers' ability to recognize when they understand what they read when they do not, and when they need to use appropriate strategies to improve their understanding when it is obstructed in a reading task. Third, the use of questioning readers asking themselves questions as they read a text is especially helpful in integrating information, identifying main ideas, and summarizing information in a comprehension reading" (p.22, 23). In other words to enhance reading tasks,

start by activating students' prior knowledge to help them connect new information with what they already know. Then, encourage them to monitor and clarify their understanding as they read, using strategies like rereading or identifying key terms when needed. Finally, motivate them to ask questions to spark curiosity and critical thinking. This combination makes reading more active and meaningful.

How guided reading exercises help students practice all three techniques to identify main ideas and details.

Guided reading exercises are very effective in helping students develop key reading strategies, especially in the areas of activating prior knowledge, monitoring and clarifying their comprehension, and questioning the text. Shanahan Timothy, Callison Kim, Carriere Christine, Nell K. Duke, Pearson David, Schatschneider Christopher, and Torgesen Joseph (2010) point out that to read with comprehension. To begin with, teachers can explicitly teach several strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning, as these three techniques help students comprehend what they read and identify main ideas and details. For example, teachers activate prior knowledge by asking them in advance about what they read, and after activating their prior knowledge, they start reading. While they read, teachers monitor, clarify, question them, and stop periodically to ask if they understand what they have just read as this makes it easier for them to identify the main idea and details of the reading. By combining these two strategies mentioned above, it is easier for them to question as teachers ask key questions about the text. In general, guided reading exercises provide a structured environment in which students practice and perfect their reading skills.

Classroom strategies for guiding students through texts with prompts that activate prior knowledge, monitor understanding, and encourage questioning while reading.

To guide students through texts, teachers can use strategies that activate prior knowledge, monitor understanding, and encourage questioning in reading comprehension. Brod Garvin (2021) points out that Activating prior knowledge is integral to various generative learning strategies. For example, generating predictions relies on prior knowledge to hypothesize expected outcomes before introducing new content. This process encourages students to connect what they already know with the new information, enhancing their

curiosity and engagement. Monitor understanding involves the ability to reflect on one's own understanding and identify gaps in knowledge. This skill is often fostered through self-questioning, in which students are encouraged to ask questions about content. By generating questions, students actively participate in identifying areas of confusion, thus clarifying their understanding with their teacher. In addition, while reading, learners can use the following techniques: making annotations in the text (underlining, sticky notes, writing in the margins, etc.). For learning to be effective, teaching learners to question themselves allows them to manage their cognitive processes, making them aware of their learning progress and areas that need further review. These strategies make reading more interactive, helping students build connections, clarify understanding, and dive deeper into the material.

Research questions:

1. What is the current level of 8th-grade students' proficiency in recognizing main ideas and supporting details within narrative texts?

2. Which abilities do students have to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts?

3. How effective are cognitive techniques in improving 8th-grade students' skills in identifying main ideas and details in reading comprehension?

Variables and Descriptors:

Variables	Definition	Sub- variables	Indicators	Measurement method	Scale	Instrument
Cognitive Techniques	Methods to enhance reading comprehension	Activating prior knowledge	Frequency of linking prior knowledge	Observation and tests	Always, Sometimes, Never	Observation guide
		Monitoring-clarifying	Ability to clarify ambiguous sections	Observation	Always, Sometimes, Never	Observation guide

		Questioning	Frequency and relevance of student-generated questions	Observation	Always, Sometimes, Never	Observation guide
Reading Comprehension	Ability to identify main ideas and details	Main idea identification	Accuracy in summarizing the main idea	Reading comprehension tests	Excellent, Good, Average, Poor	Diagnostic test, During-test, Post-test
		Detail identification	Accuracy in identifying supporting details	Reading comprehension tests	Excellent, Good, Average, Poor	Diagnostic test, During-test, Post-test
Effectiveness of Cognitive Techniques	The degree to which cognitive techniques improve reading comprehension	Improvement in main idea identification	Change in during-test and post-test scores for main ideas	Comparison of during-test and post-test results	High, Moderate, Low	During-test, Post-test

		Improvement in detail identification	Change in during-test and post-test scores for supporting details	Comparison of during-test and post-test results	High, Moderate, Low	During-test, Post-test
Strengths and Weaknesses	The specific abilities that either aid or hinder students in identifying main ideas and details	Strengths	Number of correct main ideas identified	Diagnostic test	Strong, Weak, Moderate	Diagnostic test, During-test
		Weaknesses	Number of incorrect or missing details	Diagnostic test	Strong, Weak, Moderate	Diagnostic test, During-test

Methodological Design.

Paradigm

The philosophical focus of the study is rooted in constructivism. Constructivism, as a theory of learning, posits that learners actively construct knowledge through experiences and cognitive engagement, rather than passively receiving information. This study focuses on the application of cognitive techniques such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-marking, and questioning that align with the principles of constructivism by encouraging students to actively engage with texts to improve their comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the philosophical stance of the study leans toward an interpretivist approach as it seeks to understand students' cognitive processes and the efficacy of these techniques in an educational context. The research does not pursue objective, universal truths, but rather a detailed understanding of how students process narrative texts and how specific cognitive techniques influence their learning experience. This fits with the qualitative and descriptive nature of the study, which focuses on the individual and collective experiences of students in a specific educational setting.

Type of Research

The research approach is descriptive, which ensures a clear presentation of the data found. The qualitative and descriptive research methods are suitable for studying cognitive processes in educational contexts, as they provide clear and understandable information.

This study employs a qualitative research design, in which data are collected and analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of the application of cognitive techniques: activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning, to enhance the identification of main ideas and details in narrative texts. Qualitative methods facilitate a deep understanding of complex situations, allowing for in-depth research and analysis.

The research design is applied, also known as empirical, and is inspired by solving problems and providing solutions. In empirical research, important knowledge and solutions are generated to solve real-life situations. This approach provides valuable information on how to apply cognitive techniques in the classroom, and the effectiveness and impact of cognitive techniques on students' reading comprehension in a real-world setting. The

evaluation of student's abilities and the effectiveness of the applied techniques was carried out through the administration of, pre-, during and post-tests.

Population and Sample

The study focused on a population of 10 students from the 8th grade F at Colegio Experimental México, aged between 13 and 16 years. These students were selected due to their strong interest in the English subject and their demonstrated ability to engage with and apply cognitive strategies, specifically in the identification of main ideas and details in narrative texts. They consistently showed advanced critical thinking skills and the ability to analyze complex texts, as well as the maturity to reflect on their learning processes. Furthermore, they displayed a solid work ethic, discipline, and a proactive attitude toward academic challenges. Their openness to adopting new learning strategies, combined with their capacity to adapt and persist in the face of difficulties, made them ideal candidates for the application of cognitive strategies aimed at improving reading comprehension. Their consistent academic performance and eagerness to enhance their skills further validated their selection for this study.

Data Collection Techniques

Diagnostic Test: A diagnostic test was administered at the beginning of the study to evaluate students' initial ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts. This test helped identify the strengths and weaknesses of each student before the application of cognitive techniques.

During-Test: The during-test was conducted throughout the implementation phase of cognitive techniques. It was used to monitor students' progress and assess how well they applied the cognitive strategies, such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning, in identifying main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Post-Test: The post-test was applied at the end of the study to evaluate the effectiveness of the cognitive techniques introduced during the intervention. It assessed the improvements in students' reading comprehension skills, specifically their ability to identify main ideas and details after the cognitive techniques were taught.

Observation Guide: An observation guide was employed during reading activities to track how students applied cognitive techniques. This method ensured that students actively engaged in strategies like activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning while reading, and provided qualitative data on their participation and skill application

Theoretical Methods

The method used in this research was analytical-synthetic. This method involved separating the reading comprehension process into its individual components, such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning, and studying them independently (analysis). Once the components were understood, they were synthesized into a holistic approach to enhance reading comprehension. This method was particularly useful for evaluating how cognitive techniques improved students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Empirical Methods

The methods used in this research were the following:

Diagnostic Test: This test assessed students' initial ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts. It provided measurable data on their strengths and weaknesses before the application of cognitive techniques.

During Test: The during-test evaluated students' progress in applying cognitive techniques like activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning. It tracked their improvement in reading comprehension throughout the study.

Post-Test: The post-test measured the effectiveness of cognitive techniques by assessing improvements in students' ability to identify main ideas and details after the intervention.

Observation Guide: The observation guide tracked how students applied cognitive techniques during reading activities. It recorded qualitative data on student behavior, participation, and skill application during reading comprehension tasks.

Tabulation and analysis plan

Diagnostic test

The diagnostic test included multiple-choice and open-ended questions to diagnose students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts. The tabulation was done in the following way:

Exercise	Question	Correct Answer	Number of correct answers	Number of incorrect answers
Exercise 1	What is the main idea of the text?	B) Emily and her friends enjoy a day at the park.	2	8
Exercise 2	What time do Emily and her friends arrive at the park?	They arrive at 10 AM.	7	3
Exercise 3	What do Emily and her friends see at the pond?	They see ducks swimming.	10	0
Exercise 4	Where do they play frisbee?	They play frisbee on the grass.	10	0
Exercise 5	How do Emily and her friends feel about the day at the park?	Everyone agrees it is a wonderful day.	3	7

During the data analysis, how the students' responses help diagnose their proficiency in identifying main ideas and details was discussed by the researchers, supporting the study's objective.

Diagnostic Test for 8th-Grade Students

The diagnostic test included one multiple-choice question and several open-ended questions. All responses were tabulated, with the multiple-choice question analyzed

quantitatively and the open-ended questions categorized for qualitative analysis. This approach ensured a thorough evaluation of students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts, supporting the conclusions and recommendations of the research.

Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis and discussion for the Diagnostic test

Number of Correct Answers Per Questions
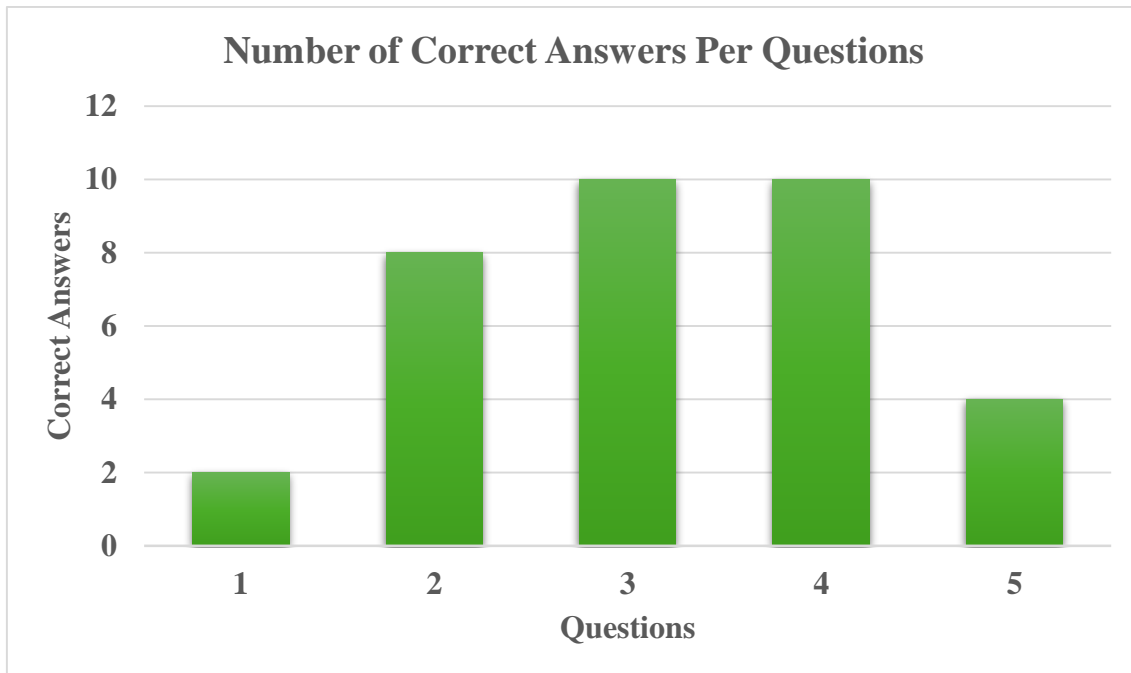
As seen above, the diagnostic test was based on a narrative reading about A day at the park, it was structured in a multiple choice item and 4 open questions, which will guide the end of this work. The multiple-choice item was as follows and also the 4 open-ended questions were as follows:

1. What is the main idea of the text?

- Correct answer: 2
- Incorrect answer: 8

Possible answers to this question were as follows:

A) Emily and her friends play frisbee and feed the ducks.

B) Emily and her friends enjoy a day at the park.

C) Emily and her friends have a picnic at the park.

D) Emily and her friends enjoy watching ducks at the pond.

Only 20% (2) of students correctly identified the main idea of the text, while 80% (8) failed. The fact that 80% students) failed to identify the main idea suggests difficulty in distinguishing details in narrative text. This suggests a need for more guided practice in identifying overarching themes in texts. Also, could point to a need for targeted instruction in synthesizing information and understanding the overall purpose of a text. Students who answered correctly likely demonstrated their ability to synthesize information and discern the overall purpose of the text.

2. What time does Emily and her friends arrive at the park?

- Correct answer: 7
- Incorrect answer: 3

Seven students (70% (7) ssuccessfully answered this question, showing their strength in recalling specific details. These students likely paid attention to explicit information providedin the text. However, the 30% (3) students who answered incorrectly may have struggled with attention to detail or failed to identify the specific passage containing the information. This indicates a need for exercises focusing in details in a reading.

3. What do Emily and her friends see at the pond?

- Correct answer: 10
- Incorrect answer: 0

All 100% (10) students answered this question correctly, demonstrating that they are very capable of recalling explicit details of a text. This success may be due to the

straightforward nature of the question and the clarity of the information in the text. Questions that focus on factual recall seem to fit well with the current skill levels of the students and it appears to be a fairly easy question

4. Where do they play frisbee?

- Correct answer: 10
- Incorrect answer: 0

Similarly, 100% (10) of students answered this question correctly, reinforcing their ability to locate and recall specific actions and locations from the text. This high performance likely stems from the clear presentation of this information in the narrative, as well as students' comfort with identifying details in narrative text.

5. How do Emily and her friends feel about the day they spent at the park?

- Correct answer: 3
- Incorrect answer:8

Only 30% (3) of the students answered this question correctly, indicating a difficulty in interpreting implicit or emotional content. Students who answered correctly probably demonstrated the ability to infer emotions based on the facts of the narrative text. However, the majority had difficulties, suggesting the need to improve the skills to identify details of the characters in the text. This difficulty highlights the importance of teaching students to analyze the deeper meanings and emotional undertones of texts.

The diagnostic test results revealed key areas of strength and improvement in students' reading comprehension. While all students excelled in recalling explicit details, as demonstrated by the perfect scores in Exercises 3 and 4, difficulties arose in exercises requiring deeper analysis and inference:

Exercise 1 (Main Idea): Only 20% of students correctly identified the main idea, indicating challenges in distinguishing key themes from supporting details. This highlights the need for targeted practice in synthesizing information and focusing on overarching ideas.

Exercise 5 (Emotional Content): With only 30% of students answering correctly, this exercise proved challenging due to the need for interpreting implicit emotional cues. The results suggest that students require more guidance in analyzing character emotions and drawing inferences.

Overall, the test confirmed that students are adept at recalling factual details but struggle with higher-order comprehension skills, such as identifying main ideas and interpreting emotions. These findings underline the importance of incorporating strategies that develop critical thinking and inferencing abilities, ensuring a well-rounded approach to reading comprehension.

Tabulation and analysis plan

During-test.

The during-test included a combination of true/false and multiple-choice questions aimed at identifying students' strengths and weaknesses in recognizing main ideas and details in narrative texts. The tabulation was done in the following way:

Exercise	Question	Correct Answer	Number of Correct Answers	Number of Incorrect Answers
Exercise 1 (main idea)				
1	Ben's life changes after he goes to the circus.	A) True	10	0
2	Ben wanted to have his own circus so he could earn lots of money.	B) False	9	1

|				
3	The main purpose of Ben's circus was to bring happiness to others.	A) True	10	0
Exercise 2 (Details from the Story)				
1	The circus coincided with Ben's _____.	A) birthday	7	3
2	The people at the circus wore _____ costumes and had brightly colored hair.	B) funny	10	0
3	Outside the circus, people could get _____ drawn by an artist.	B) portraits	9	1
Exercise 3 (Ben's Experience and Choices)				
1	Ben was unhappy before going to the circus.	A) True	7	3
2	Ben decided to work hard and study business to create his own circus.	A) True	5	5
3	Ben was motivated by the desire to make children happy, not by money.	A) True	8	2

During the data analysis, how students' responses reflect their proficiency in identifying these elements was examined by the researchers, supporting the study's objective to enhance comprehension skills through targeted cognitive techniques.

During-Test for 8th-Grade Students

The during-test was designed to identify students' strengths and weaknesses when identifying main ideas and details in a narrative text. It included a mix of true/false and multiple-choice questions, all of which were tabulated and analyzed quantitatively. This analysis helped the researchers evaluate students' performance and gain insights into their reading comprehension abilities, aligning with the test's objective. The results were used to inform the conclusions and recommendations provided in the research.

Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis and discussion for the During-test
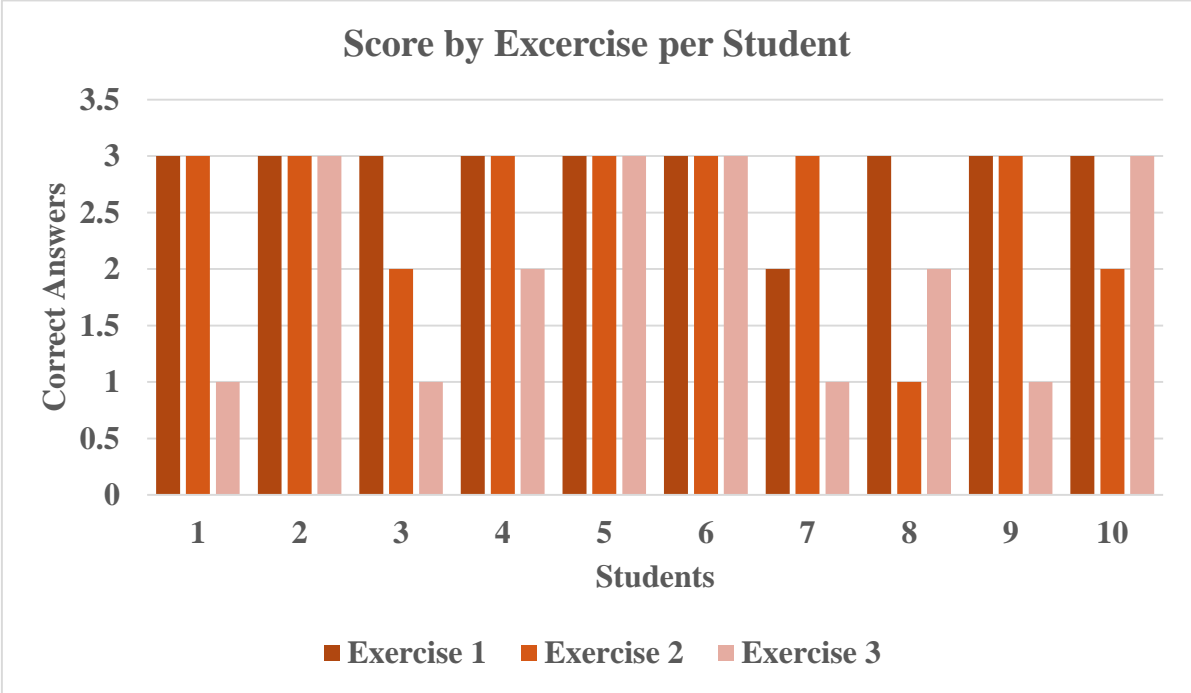
The "during test" was conducted to evaluate the 8th grade students' reading comprehension skills, specifically their ability to understand the main ideas and details of a

narrative text. The during test contained two true and false exercises and one choose the correct option if the answer is A, B or C, the reading was based on the circus, it was done in order to achieve and see the students' ability to identify the key aspects of a reading.

Exercise 1 (Main idea)

1. **Ben's life changes after he goes to the circus.**

   A) True

   B) False

   - Correct answer: 10
   - Incorrect answer: 0

All students (10) responded correctly to the true-false item that was based on identifying the main idea, which means that they all understood and focused on identifying the main idea of the narrative reading.

2. **Ben wanted to have his own circus so he could earn lots of money.**

   A) True

   B) False

   - Correct answer:9
   - Incorrect answer: 1

The 90% (9) out of the 100% (10) students got this question right, while one student answered incorrectly. Most students understood Ben's motivation, which was not driven by a desire for wealth but by other goals.The high percentage of correct answers demonstrates that students were able to discern Ben's true intentions, highlighting their ability to understand deeper motivations within the story.

3. **The main purpose of Ben's circus was to bring happiness to others**

   A) True

   B) False

   - Correct answer: 10

- Incorrect answer: 0

All students answer this question correctly 100% (10). This demonstrates their understanding of the purpose of the circus and Ben's altruism. Correct answers reveal that students were in tune with the text and that they grasped the main idea which is an important part of reading comprehension.

Exercise 2 (Details from the story)

1. The circus coincided with Ben's _____

A. birthday

B. graduation

C. vacation

- Correct answer: 7
- Incorrect answer: 3

Only 70% (7) of the students responded correctly, while (3) responded poorly. The result suggests that while most of the students understood the key plot points, the others who did not respond well may need to focus more on remembering specific details that are relevant to the narrative text.

2. The people at the circus wore and had brightly colored hair _____ costumes

A. fancy

B. funny

C. traditional

- Correct answer: 10
- Incorrect answer: 0

All the 100% (10) students got this question right, showing great attention to descriptive details. The perfect score suggests that students grasped and remembered key elements of identifying details which is an important skill for both reading comprehension and reading comprehension.

3. Outside the circus, people could get drawn ___ by an artist.

A. landscapes

B. portraits

C. animals

- Correct answer: 9
- Incorrect answer: 1

The 90% (9) of the students answered correctly with the details from the story and only one student got it wrong. The majority recalled the detail accurately, which highlights that some students could benefit from further exercises in extracting and retaining key information from the text.

Exercise 3 (Ben's Experience and Choices)

1. Ben was unhappy before going to the circus.

A. True

B. False

- Correct answer: 7
- Incorrect answer: 3

In this item, 70% (7) of the students answered correctly, which indicates that they can extract details from the narrative reading, while the remaining 30% (3) could not answer. It

is possible that some students did not have a good understanding of Ben's emotional state before the circus experience. This could indicate that some students need more support in understanding the emotions and circumstances of the characters so that they can extract those details from the reading that may often be implied rather than directly expressed.

2. Ben decided to work hard and study business to create his own circus.

A. True

B. False

- Correct answer: 5
- Incorrect answer: 5

This question highlights a possible weakness in students' ability to understand the characters' actions and future plans. More focus may need to be placed on teaching how to identify and interpret the characters' goals and decisions.

3. Ben was motivated by the desire to make children happy, not by money.

A. True

B. False

- Correct answer: 8
- Incorrect answer: 2

The 80% (8) of the students answered correctly, while 20% (2) made an error. The high percentage of correct responses suggests that most students understood the main motivation for Ben's actions. However, the other students may need further clarification on how to discern the character's motives. Overall, students demonstrated a good understanding of the main ideas and key details of the story, however, there were some areas requiring improvement, particularly in the retention of specific details. This analysis suggests that

future lessons might benefit from increased attention to reading comprehension strategies, such as identifying character motivations and recalling narrative details.

The results showed a significant improvement in students' ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension of narrative texts. Most of the students obtained fairly good scores and only 1 exercise showed errors:

Exercise 3, Question 2: This true/false question had an even split between correct and incorrect answers, with 50% of students (5 out of 10) answering incorrectly.

The difficulty likely arose because this question required a deeper understanding of Ben's actions and future plans, which were implied rather than explicitly stated in the text. Students may have struggled to connect the character's goals with the narrative context or misinterpreted the question.

This highlights an important aspect of reading comprehension: the ability to extract both explicit and implicit details from a narrative text. While some students successfully grasped key elements of the story, the question tests not only comprehension but also the ability to interpret subtler, more implied information within the narrative.

Tabulation and Analysis Plan

Post-Test

The post-test included multiple choice, true/false, and fill-in-the-blank questions to assess the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in improving students' ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension. The tabulation was done in the following way:

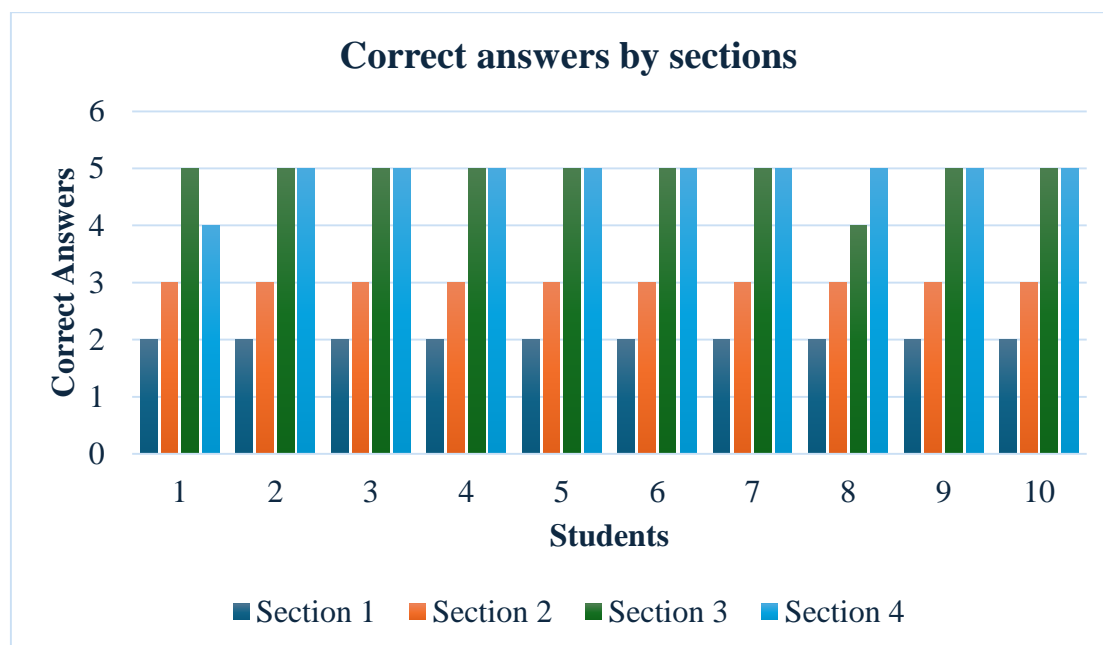| Exercise	Question	Correct Answer	Number of Correct Answers	Number of Incorrect Answers
Section 1 (identifying main ideas)				

Exercise 1	What is the main idea of the second paragraph?	b) The ghost had a scary voice but wanted to help children.	10	0
Exercise 2	What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?	b) The ghost wanted the children to escape danger.	10	0
Section 2 (identifying details)				
Exercise 3	Why were the children playing by the river?	b) They were having fun with their pet.	10	0
Exercise 4	What happened when the weather became bad?	b) The river started rising.	10	0
Exercise 5	How did the ghost help the children in the end?	b) She used her power to lead them home.	10	0
Section 3 (true or false)				
Exercise 6	The ghost became angry with the children because they didn't listen to her.	False	9	1
Exercise 7	The ghost scared the children to help them survive.	True	10	0

Exercise 8	The children knew exactly where they were when it started raining.	False	10	0
Exercise 9	The ghost used her power to guide the children home.	True	10	0
Exercise 10	The story teaches that sometimes ghosts can help people.	True	10	0
Section 4 (fill in the blanks)				
Exercise 11	The ghost had a _____ voice, which frightened the children.	Scary	10	0
Exercise 12	The children were playing by the _____ when the weather became bad.	River	10	0
Exercise 13	The ghost yelled, "_____!" to scare the children away from danger.	"Go away"	9	1
Exercise 14	After seeing the ghost, the children ran a long _____ to get home.	Distance	10	0
Exercise 15	In the end, the ghost felt _____ because she saved the children from the rising river.	happy	10	0

During the data analysis, students' post-test results were compared with their diagnostic test scores to assess progress. How students' responses reflect their ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension, with a particular focus on the improvements made after applying the cognitive techniques. This comparison was considered crucial in evaluating the effectiveness of the techniques in enhancing the students' reading comprehension skills, directly supporting the study's objective.

Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis and discussion for the Post-test

The post-test was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in enhancing 8th-grade students' ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension. The test included a mix of exercises, such as identifying main ideas, recalling details, answering true/false statements, and filling in the blanks. The primary objective was to assess the progress students made after the application of cognitive strategies.

Section 1 (Identifying Main Ideas)

1. Exercise 1: What is the main idea of the second paragraph?

Correct Answer: The ghost had a scary voice but wanted to help children.

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

All students (10) correctly identified the main idea in the second paragraph, demonstrating that the cognitive techniques were effective in helping them focus on the core message of the text. This result indicated a significant improvement in recognizing main ideas from narrative paragraphs.

2. Exercise 2: What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?

Correct Answer: The ghost wanted the children to escape danger.

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

Again, all students responded correctly, indicating that the cognitive strategies were effective in helping students grasp and focus on the main ideas of the reading. This reflects a solid understanding of the story's key themes.

Section 2 (Identifying Details)

3. Exercise 3: Why were the children playing by the river?

Correct Answer: They were having fun with their pet.

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

The fact that all students answered this question correctly suggests that the cognitive techniques facilitated the students' ability to recall specific details. Students were able to connect the event with the characters' motivations and actions in the story.

4. Exercise 4: What happened when the weather became bad?

Correct Answer: The river started rising.

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

Perfect accuracy in this exercise showed that students effectively recalled important details related to the plot. This improvement implies that the techniques employed helped enhance memory retention for key events in the story.

5. Exercise 5: How did the ghost help the children in the end?

Correct Answer: She used her power to lead them home.

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

The students' perfect score in this item suggested that they successfully identified important narrative details, reflecting an improved ability to connect character actions with their outcomes in the story.

Section 3 (True or False)

6. Exercise 6: The ghost became angry with the children because they didn't listen to her.

Correct Answer: False

- Correct answers: 9 (90%)
- Incorrect answers: 1 (10%)

Most students (90%) answered this question correctly, but one student made an error. This mistake might have been caused by a misunderstanding of the ghost's emotional state. It could be inferred that the student focused more on the ghost's actions rather than her feelings, which made this question more challenging.

7. Exercise 7: The ghost scared the children to help them survive.

Correct Answer: True

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

All students provided the correct answer, indicating a clear understanding of the ghost's purpose. This result highlighted their ability to comprehend the character's motivations.

8. Exercise 8: The children knew exactly where they were when it started raining.

Correct Answer: False

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (10%)

This question was answered correctly by all students, reflecting their skill in using context clues. The students effectively understood the situation described in the story.

9. Exercise 9: The ghost used her power to guide the children home.

Correct Answer: True

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

The perfect score showed that students tracked the plot accurately and identified the ghost's key actions. This reinforced their comprehension of the story's progression.

10. Exercise 10: The story teaches that sometimes ghosts can help people.

Correct Answer: True

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

All students answered this question correctly, indicating that they understood the broader lesson or moral of the story, suggesting improvement in interpreting underlying themes.

Section 4 (Fill in the Blanks)

11. Exercise 11: The ghost had a _____ voice, which frightened the children.

Correct Answer: Scary

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

Perfect accuracy in this exercise indicated that students successfully recalled descriptive details. Their comprehension of sensory elements was reinforced.

12. Exercise 12: The children were playing by the _____ when the weather became bad.

Correct Answer: River

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

All students answered correctly, showing they could recall specific details about the setting. This demonstrated their improved ability to retain narrative details.

13. Exercise 13: The ghost yelled, "_____!" to scare the children away from danger.

Correct Answer: "Go away"

- Correct answers: 9 (90 %)
- Incorrect answers: 1 (10%)

Most students (90%) answered correctly, but one incorrect response suggested difficulty recalling specific dialogue. It could be inferred that students focused more on the actions than the exact phrases, making this question slightly more difficult.

14. Exercise 14: After seeing the ghost, the children ran a long _____ to get home.

Correct Answer: Distance

- Correct answers: 10 (100%)
- Incorrect answers: 0 (0%)

The perfect score indicated that students effectively recalled key plot actions. Their understanding of the story's sequence was evident.

15. Exercise 15: In the end, the ghost felt _____ because she saved the children from the rising river.

Correct Answer: Happy

- Correct answers: 10
- Incorrect answers: 0

All students correctly identified the emotional resolution of the story, which showed improved inference skills regarding characters' feelings.

The results demonstrated significant improvement in students' ability to identify main ideas and details in reading comprehension. A majority of students achieved perfect scores, with only two exercises showing errors:

Exercise 6: The misunderstanding regarding the ghost's emotions highlighted the challenge of interpreting subtle emotional cues.

Exercise 13: The incorrect response in this exercise suggested difficulty recalling specific lines of dialogue, indicating that greater focus was placed on broader plot elements.

These errors, though minor, revealed areas where additional practice could be beneficial. Overall, the cognitive techniques activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning were shown to be highly effective in enhancing comprehension skills. The strategies helped students improve their ability to identify key ideas, recall details, and interpret narrative elements, aligning with the study's objectives.

Tabulation and analysis plan

Results comparison between the three tests

The comparison of results among the three tests diagnostic test, during-test, and post-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of cognitive techniques on reading comprehension. The tabulation was done in the following way:
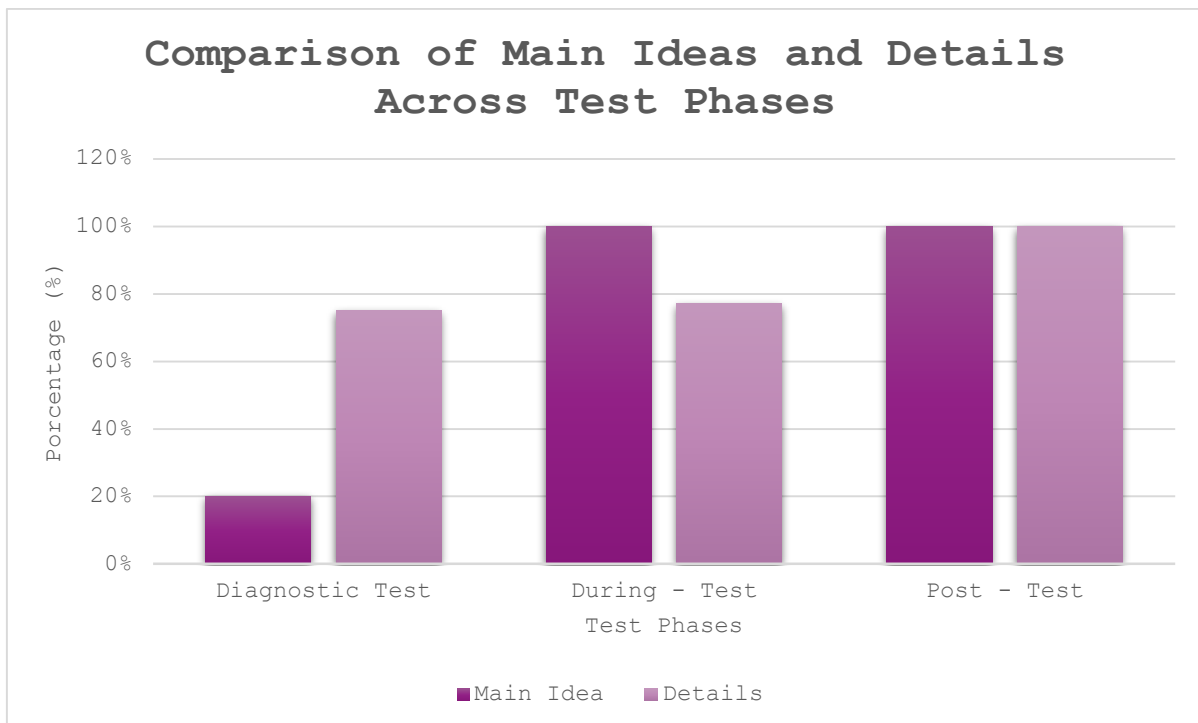
Test	Percentage of correct answers for identification of main ideas sections	Percentage of correct answers for identification of details sections
Diagnostic Test	20%	75%
During-Test	100%	77%
Post-Test	100%	100%

During the data analysis, students' scores from the Post-Test were compared with their Diagnostic and During-Test results to evaluate progress in reading comprehension. The analysis reflected how students' responses improved in identifying main ideas and details after applying cognitive techniques. This comparison was crucial in assessing students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as measuring the techniques' effectiveness in enhancing

reading comprehension skills. The findings aligned with the study's objectives, demonstrating that cognitive strategies significantly contributed to the development of these skills.

Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis and discussion of the results of the three tests (Main ideas and details sections).

Comparison of Main Ideas and Details Across Test Phases

A bar chart titled "Comparison of Main Ideas and Details Across Test Phases." The y-axis is labeled "Porcentage (%)" ranging from 0% to 120%. The x-axis is labeled "Test Phases" with three groups: Diagnostic Test, During - Test, and Post - Test. The legend shows Main Idea (dark purple) and Details (light purple). Diagnostic Test: Main Idea 20%, Details 75%. During - Test: Main Idea 100%, Details 77%. Post - Test: Main Idea 100%, Details 100%.

The analysis of the three tests diagnostic test, during-test, and post-test provides a clear view of the students' progress in identifying main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Diagnostic Test

The Diagnostic Test results revealed significant challenges in identifying main ideas, with only 20% of correct answers. This indicates that most students struggled to extract central ideas from the texts, reflecting a key weakness in their reading comprehension. On the other hand, 75% of the students correctly identified details, showing that while they could

recognize supporting information, their ability to discern main ideas needed substantial improvement. These findings highlighted the importance of intervention to address their weaknesses.

During-Test Analysis

The During-Test showed substantial improvement in identifying main ideas, with 100% of students answering correctly. This suggests that the cognitive techniques introduced were highly effective in enhancing their understanding of central concepts. Meanwhile, the percentage of correct answers for identifying details showed a slight increase to 77%. Although the improvement in detail identification was minimal at this stage, it indicated steady progress in students' comprehension abilities.

Post-Test Analysis

In the Post-Test, students achieved perfect scores in both areas. All students (100%) were able to correctly identify main ideas and details, demonstrating mastery of the skills. These results underline the success of the applied cognitive techniques in addressing their initial weaknesses and enhancing their overall reading comprehension. The Post-Test outcomes suggest that students had internalized the strategies and could effectively apply them independently.

Comparative Analysis.

The comparison of the results across the three tests revealed that significant improvement had been achieved in students' reading comprehension skills, particularly in identifying both main ideas and details. In the Diagnostic Test, only 20% of main ideas were correctly identified, which highlighted a major area of weakness. However, this skill was remarkably improved in the During-Test and Post-Test, with perfect scores of 100% in both, indicating that complete mastery of identifying central ideas had been attained. Similarly, while 75% of details were correctly identified in the Diagnostic Test, this percentage was slightly increased to 77% in the During-Test and then reached 100% in the Post-Test. These results demonstrated that the application of cognitive techniques had a substantial impact, as students' comprehension skills were progressively improved, leading to mastery in identifying both main ideas and details by the Post-Test.

Tabulation and analysis plan

Observation guide

The observation guide assessed the application of cognitive techniques, including activating prior knowledge, monitoring and clarifying, and questioning, as well as students' ability to identify main ideas and supporting details. The guide also included three additional questions: overall engagement, strengths in applying cognitive techniques, and areas for improvement. The tabulation was done in the following way:

Section	Percentage of Students Who Applied	Percentage of Students Who Did Not Apply
1. Activating Prior Knowledge	70% (7 out of 10)	30% (3 out of 10)
2. Monitoring and Clarifying	80% (8 out of 10)	20% (2 out of 10)
3. Questioning	90% (9 out of 10)	10% (1 out of 10)
4. Identification of Main Ideas	85% (9 out of 10)	15% (1 out of 10)
5. Identification of Supporting Details	95% (10 out of 10)	5% (0 out of 10, negligible)
Additional Notes (for the observer):		
1. Overall Engagement: Was the student actively engaged during the reading activity?	Answers may vary depending on individual observations.	Answers may vary depending on individual observations.

2. Strengths: What are the student's strengths in applying cognitive techniques?	Responses will depend on each student's performance.	Responses will depend on each student's performance.
3. Areas for Improvement: What areas need further development**?**	Answers may vary based on observed weaknesses.	Answers may vary based on observed weaknesses.

During the data analysis, responses to the observation guide were examined to evaluate how students applied the cognitive techniques and whether this contributed to their ability to identify main ideas and details. The overall engagement of students was also observed, noting their active participation in the reading activity. The strengths and areas for improvement were identified based on their responses, providing insight into the effectiveness of the techniques in improving reading comprehension. This analysis directly supported the study's objective.

Analysis and discussion of results

Analysis and discussion for the observation guide

Activating Prior Knowledge

■ Applied   ■ Not Applied

30.00%

70.00%
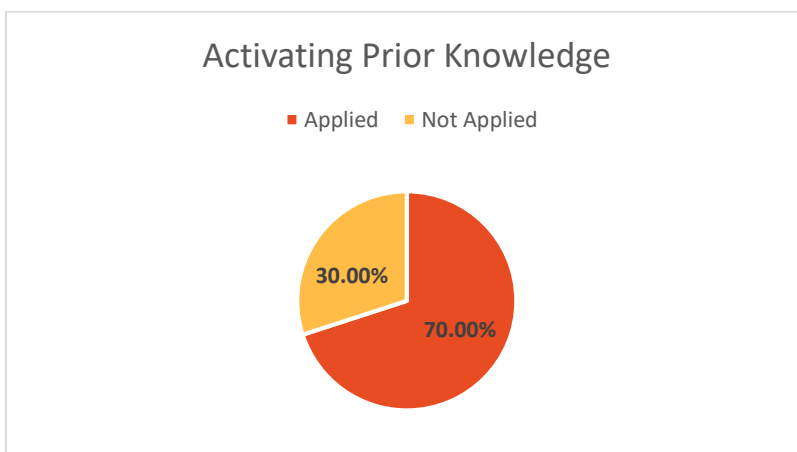
Activating Prior Knowledge

70% of students (7 out of 10) consistently applied the technique of activating prior knowledge. These students were able to connect the narrative text to their own experiences or prior readings. However, 30% (3 out of 10) did not fully apply this technique, which could indicate challenges in recalling relevant information or making meaningful connections. The 5% (1 out of 10) likely represents a student who made an effort to apply the strategy but did so inconsistently or superficially, perhaps due to limited background knowledge on the topic.

Activating prior knowledge helps build a foundation for understanding new content. Students who successfully employed this technique likely found it easier to comprehend the narrative text. However, those who struggled might need guided activities, such as brainstorming or pre-reading prompts, to strengthen their ability to relate new information to what they already know.
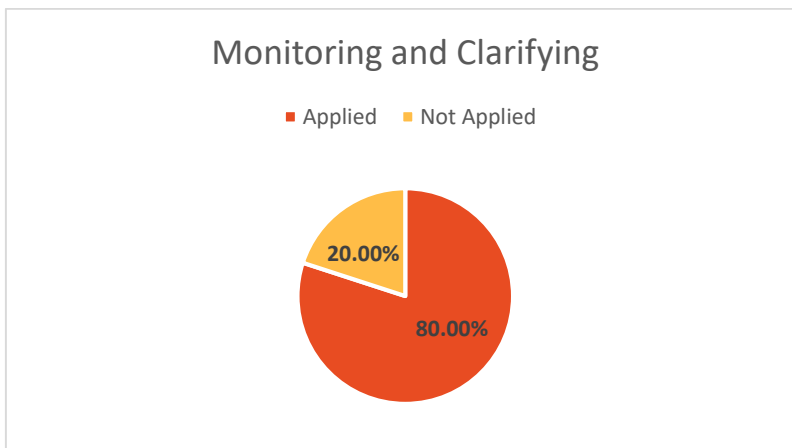

Monitoring and Clarifying

80% (8 out of 10) of students successfully used monitoring and clarifying techniques while reading, which demonstrates their ability to identify unclear sections of the text and resolve confusion through strategies like paraphrasing or seeking clarification. However, 20% (2 out of 10) of students did not fully apply this technique. Among these, 5% (1 out of 10) represents a student who recognized unclear elements but failed to take further steps, such as asking for help or using a dictionary to clarify meaning.

Monitoring and clarifying are essential for maintaining comprehension throughout the reading process. Students who applied this technique effectively were likely better at

summarizing and understanding the text. Those who did not fully engage with it may require structured interventions, such as explicit instruction on clarifying strategies or guided reflection on their reading process.
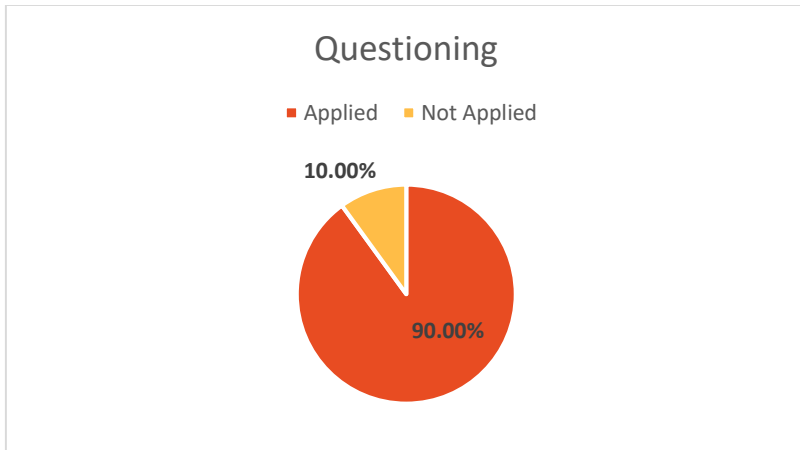
Questioning

This technique had the highest application rate, with 90% (9 out of 10) of students demonstrating the ability to ask meaningful questions or formulate predictions during the reading process. The remaining 10% (1 out of 10) struggled to apply this strategy. The 5% (1 out of 10) indicates a student who posed basic or surface-level questions but failed to engage in deeper inquiry, such as anticipating events or analyzing the text critically.

Questioning promotes critical thinking and deeper engagement with the text. Students who actively asked questions were better able to explore the narrative's themes and ideas. The one student who only partially applied this technique might need further practice in framing higher-order questions, possibly through modeled examples and collaborative questioning exercises.
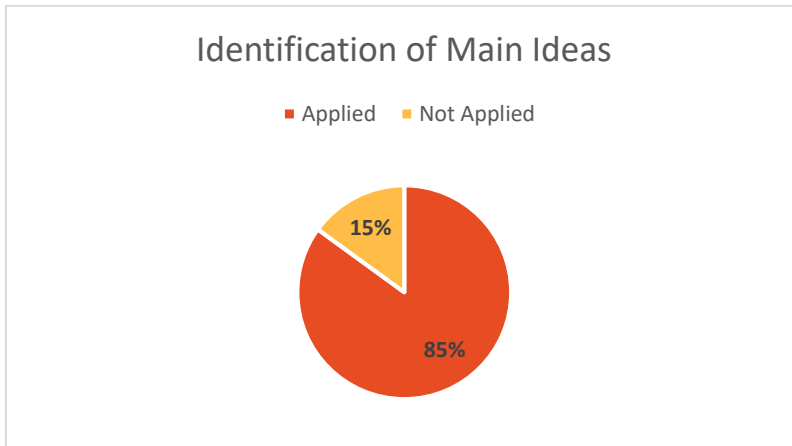
Identification of Main Ideas

85% (9 out of 10) of students successfully identified the main ideas of the narrative text. However, 15% (1 out of 10) had difficulty isolating the central themes, possibly because they focused too much on specific details. The 5% (1 out of 10) reflects a student who attempted to identify the main ideas but misinterpreted or oversimplified them.

Identifying main ideas is crucial for understanding the text's structure and message. Students who mastered this skill likely had a clear sense of what each paragraph conveyed. The one student who partially applied this strategy may benefit from exercises that contrast main ideas with supporting details to build their ability to distinguish between the two.
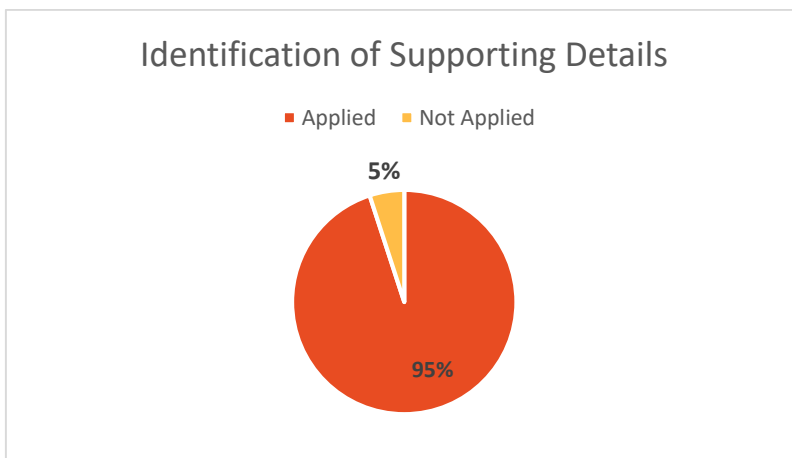
Identification of Supporting Details

This skill had the highest success rate, with 95% (10 out of 10) of students identifying supporting details that aligned with the main ideas. The 5% (1 out of 10) likely indicates a student who identified some details but struggled to discern whether they were directly relevant to the main ideas.

Mastery of this skill highlights students' ability to analyze text and extract evidence that supports key ideas. The student who only partially succeeded might require targeted instruction in differentiating between relevant and irrelevant details, perhaps through annotation exercises or guided reading sessions.

Additional Notes

Overall Engagement:

1. Was the student actively engaged during the reading activity?

From the observation guide results, 80% of the students demonstrated active engagement during the reading activity, participating consistently by asking questions, clarifying ideas, and interacting with the text. Meanwhile, 10% showed partial engagement, applying some techniques but not fully committing to the process, likely due to distractions or difficulty understanding the material. The remaining 10% displayed minimal engagement, often appearing disengaged or hesitant to participate. It is noteworthy that most students showed genuine interest in applying the techniques, which reflects their motivation to improve their reading skills. However, the limited engagement of a few suggests the need for strategies to foster inclusivity and maintain attention during the activity.

Strengths:

2.What are the student's strengths in applying cognitive techniques?

According to the observation guide, 90% of the students demonstrated strong questioning skills, such as asking thoughtful questions and making predictions about the text. Additionally, 85% successfully identified main ideas, and 95% identified supporting details, showcasing their ability to analyze and extract key information. These results highlight their proficiency in comprehending and interacting with the text. Interestingly, only 5% showed

partial application of these techniques, suggesting that some students may still lack the confidence or clarity to fully apply them. Overall, these findings emphasize the students' growing strengths in critical thinking and detail-oriented analysis, which are crucial for developing advanced reading comprehension skills.

Areas for Improvement:

3. What areas need further development?

The observation guide revealed that 30% of the students faced challenges in activating prior knowledge, indicating that not all were able to connect the text to their personal experiences effectively. Additionally, 20% struggled with monitoring and clarifying their understanding during the activity, suggesting a need for more guided practice in identifying and resolving unclear concepts. While most students excelled in identifying main ideas and supporting details, a small percentage (5%) did not fully apply these skills, possibly due to a lack of focus or confidence. These areas highlight the importance of incorporating pre-reading activities and ongoing support to address gaps and ensure all students can fully benefit from the techniques.

Conclusions

This research investigated the difficulties faced by 8th-grade students of Colegio Experimental Mexico in identifying main ideas and details in narrative texts. The study aimed to evaluate the impact of cognitive techniques on improving reading comprehension skills, diagnose students' abilities, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and assess the effectiveness of these techniques.

The findings indicate that implementing cognitive techniques—activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning—significantly enhanced students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts. The diagnostic test revealed a major weakness in identifying main ideas, with only 20% of students succeeding in this task. However, after applying the techniques, all students (100%) correctly identified main ideas in both the during-test and post-test stages. This demonstrates that these strategies effectively addressed one of the students' primary challenges, aligning with the study's general objective.

Regarding the identification of details, the diagnostic test results showed a relatively higher success rate of 75%. Nonetheless, a gradual improvement was observed, culminating in a 100% success rate in the post-test. This progress underscores the value of monitoring and clarifying techniques, which helped students focus on key information and organize their understanding systematically. Combining cognitive strategies targeted at different comprehension levels proved essential for achieving comprehensive learning outcomes.

Additionally, observations highlighted an integral improvement in the use of metacognitive strategies. A majority of students effectively applied the techniques, with 70% activating prior knowledge, 80% engaging in monitoring and clarifying, and 90% utilizing questioning. This indicates that these strategies not only improved reading comprehension but also fostered critical thinking and autonomy. However, the data suggest that a small group of students needs further support in consistently activating prior knowledge, which could be addressed through more guided pre-reading activities.

In summary, the study confirms the effectiveness of cognitive techniques in overcoming the challenges faced by 8th-grade students in identifying main ideas and details

in narrative texts. These findings align with the research objectives and highlight the potential for these strategies to enhance critical reading skills. Future efforts could focus on tailoring interventions to reinforce specific areas of difficulty and ensure sustained improvement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the difficulties in identifying main ideas and details in narrative texts and to enhance the application of cognitive techniques:

1. Teachers should design lesson plans that explicitly incorporate cognitive techniques such as activating prior knowledge, monitoring-clarifying, and questioning. These strategies should be introduced progressively, with guided examples, modeling, and opportunities for students to practice in small groups before moving to independent tasks.

2. It is essential for teachers to receive regular training on the use of cognitive techniques to improve reading comprehension. Workshops and seminars can help educators stay updated on effective strategies and learn how to adapt them to the needs of their students.

3. Students should be motivated to engage actively in pre-reading tasks, such as brainstorming or predicting the content of a text. Teachers can foster this by creating interactive and contextualized activities that make activating prior knowledge easier and more relatable.

4. Students should be guided to reflect on their reading process through activities like maintaining reading journals where they document what strategies helped them, what confused them, and how they resolved issues. Teachers can also provide self-assessment checklists or reflection questions at the end of each activity, such as: "What helped me understand the main idea?" or "What will I do differently next time?" These practices build awareness and ownership of their learning.

5. Future studies should assess how well students retain and apply cognitive techniques after the intervention ends. This could involve longitudinal research, where students are monitored for months or years to evaluate whether they continue using these strategies independently and how it affects their reading comprehension over time. The research could also compare these students with a control group to measure the sustained benefits of the techniques.

6. Further research could examine how cognitive techniques work with different types of texts (e.g., expository or argumentative) or subjects like science and history, where understanding technical language and concepts is crucial. Researchers could also explore their application across different age groups or in multilingual settings to assess their adaptability and overall effectiveness. This broader investigation could provide insights into optimizing cognitive techniques for diverse educational challenges.

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Diagnostic Test example

Colegio Experimental Mexico

This diagnostic reading comprehension test is intended to diagnose students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Student's name:

Subject: Academic year:

Grade: Date:

Read the following narrative text carefully. After reading, answer the questions based on the main ideas and details.

A Day at the Park

Every Saturday, Emily and her friends go to the park. They arrive at 10 AM and feel excited to spend the day outside. The park is full of families having fun and kids playing on the swings.

While walking, they see a pond with ducks swimming. Emily takes pictures while her friends feed the ducks some bread. They enjoy their time by the water and laugh together.

Later, they play frisbee on the grass. They play until they are tired and decide to have a picnic. By the end of the day, everyone agrees it is a wonderful day.

Exercise 1: Main Idea

For the first question choose the best option that represents the main idea of the text.

1. **What is the main idea of the text?**

    A) Emily and her friends play frisbee and feed the ducks.

B) Emily and her friends enjoy a day at the park.

C) Emily and her friends have a picnic at the park.

D) Emily and her friends enjoy watching ducks at the pond.

Exercise 2: Details from the text

Answer the following questions in complete sentences based on the details from the text.

2. **What time does Emily and her friends arrive at the park?**

3. **What do Emily and her friends see at the pond?**

4. **Where do they play frisbee?**

5. **How do Emily and her friends feel about the day they spent at the park?**

During-Test example

Colegio Experimental Mexico

<u>This reading comprehension test for main ideas and details aims to identify students' strengths and weaknesses when identifying main ideas and details.</u>

<u>Student's name:</u>

<u>Subject:</u>   <u>Academic year:</u>

<u>Grade:</u>   <u>Date:</u>

Read the following narrative text carefully. After reading, answer the questions based on the main ideas and details.

The Circus

Ben was unhappy. He lived on a ranch near a small town, and he didn't have many friends. Then one day a messenger came to the ranch. He showed the headline in the town newspaper. The circus was coming to the town. It even coincided with Ben's birthday!

Ben was very excited as his father steered the car through the town. The circus couldn't accommodate all the people who wanted to see the show, but Ben had a ticket.

Ben peered at the activity around him. He watched people of both genders dance all around. They wore funny costumes, and their hair was dyed many different colors. Also, tame tigers with stripes on their fur did tricks. Outside, people could commission an informal portrait. They posed in front of a funny picture while an artist quickly drew them. Ben couldn't believe it.

He was happier than he had ever been before.

That day, Ben knew what he wanted to do. He loved the circus to such an extent that he wanted to have his own circus when he grew older.

Seeing the circus was like a dose of medicine for him. He wasn't unhappy anymore. He felt special. He inquired about what he needed to do to have his own circus. He studied hard and learned about business.

Ben worked very hard, and one day, he had his own circus. It was a great circus. People told him that he could be very rich. But he wasn't tempted by money. He just wanted to make children happy. He knew the circus had changed his life, and he wanted to do the same thing for others.

These exercises were designed to help students identify the main ideas and details of "The Circus" story. Each exercise has three items, a mix of multiple-choice and true-or-false statements.

Exercise 1: Main Idea

Circle true or false the correct answer based on the main idea of the story.

1. Ben's life changes after he goes to the circus.

   A. True

   B. False

2. Ben wanted to have his own circus so he could earn lots of money.

   A. True

   B. False

3. The main purpose of Ben's circus was to bring happiness to others.

   A. True

   B. False

Exercise 2: Details from the Story

Choose the correct option and write the answer in the blank space to complete each detail.

1. The circus coincided with Ben's _____.

  A. birthday

  B. graduation

  C. vacation

2. The people at the circus wore _____ costumes and had brightly colored hair.

  A. fancy

  B. funny

  C. traditional

3. Outside the circus, people could get _____ drawn by an artist.

  A. landscapes

  B. portraits

  C. animals

Exercise 3: Ben's Experience and Choices

Determine if the following statements are true or false.

1. Ben was unhappy before going to the circus.

  A. True

B. False

2. Ben decided to work hard and study business to create his own circus.

   A. True

   B. False

3. Ben was motivated by the desire to make children happy, not by money.

   A. True

   B. False

Post-test example

Colegio Experimental Mexico

This post-test is intended to evaluate students' ability to identify main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Student's name:

Subject: Academic year:

Grade: Date:

Read the following narrative text carefully:

The Friendly Ghost

A nice woman lived by a large river. She loved children. She wanted to help them in any way. She loved her community, and everyone in the community loved her. She lived a very long time and became very wise.

When she died, she became a ghost. She was dead, but every night she returned to her community. She wanted to help children and not to cause them fright. But she had a scary voice. Children were afraid of her, but the ghost was a good one. She only scared them to help them.

One night, some children and a dog were playing by the river. They were having fun with their pet. But they were far from home. Then the weather became bad. It rained and rained. The river was rising. It was very dark. The children knew they were lost. They needed to go north, but they didn't know which direction it was. When the moon came out, they saw a ghost by the river. The ghost said, "Go away!"

The children felt great fright. They knew it was a ghost. Then the ghost moved closer. She yelled again, "Go away!" The children became very upset. Some of them began to cry. The children knew they had a choice: they could escape, or they could stay and face this scary individual in the dark.

The children ran a long distance away. The ghost followed them all the way. Finally, the children reached home. The ghost was very happy. Soon the river rose higher and higher. It was very dangerous. The ghost had helped the children survive! She had saved them from the rising water. She also used her power to lead them home. Sometimes, meeting a ghost has advantages. A ghost can save your life!

After reading the narrative text, complete the following activities:

Section 1: Identifying Main Ideas

Choose the correct main idea for each question.

1. What is the main idea of the second paragraph?
   a) The ghost loved children.
   b) The ghost had a scary voice but wanted to help children.
   c) The children were not afraid of the ghost.
   d) The ghost was mean to the children.

2. What is the main idea of the fourth paragraph?
   a) The children were brave.
   b) The ghost wanted the children to escape danger.
   c) The river was very calm.
   d) The children stayed at the river.

Section 2: Identifying Details

Choose the correct detail for each question.

3. Why were the children playing by the river?
   a) They were looking for the ghost.
   b) They were having fun with their pet.

c) They were fishing.

d) They were lost.

4. What happened when the weather became bad?

a) The children went home immediately.

b) The river started rising.

c) The children called for help.

d) The ghost disappeared.

5. How did the ghost help the children in the end?

a) She scared them until they cried.

b) She used her power to lead them home.

c) She stayed by the river.

d) She left them by themselves.

Section 3: True or False

Write **T** for true and **F** for false.

6. ___ The ghost became angry with the children because they didn't listen to her.

7. ___ The ghost scared the children to help them survive.

8. ___ The children knew exactly where they were when it started raining.

9. ___ The ghost used her power to guide the children home.

10. ___ The story teaches that sometimes ghosts can help people.

Section 4: Fill in the Blanks

Complete the sentences using the words provided below:

(scary, river, "Go away", distance, happy, children, storm, home)

11. The ghost had a _____ voice, which frightened the children.

12. The children were playing by the _____ when the weather became bad.

13. The ghost yelled, "_____!" to scare the children away from danger.

14. After seeing the ghost, the children ran a long _____ to get home.

15. In the end, the ghost felt _____ because she saved the children from the rising river.

Observation Guide example

Observation Guide for Cognitive Techniques in Reading Comprehension

| *Student Name:* _____ | *Date:_____/*

| *Observer:* _____ | *Time of Class:_____/*

Cognitive Techniques	Always	Sometimes	Never	Comments
1. Activating Prior Knowledge				
a. The student makes connections between the narrative text and their own experiences, prior readings, or background knowledge.	☐	☐	☐	
b. The student attempts to recall information relevant to the topic before reading the text.	☐	☐	☐	
2. Monitoring and Clarifying				
a. The student identifies unclear words, phrases, or ideas and attempts to clarify them (e.g., using a dictionary or asking for help).	☐	☐	☐	
b. The student checks their understanding by paraphrasing or summarizing sections of the text as they read.	☐	☐	☐	

c. The student stops reading and reflects when something in the text doesn't make sense or contradicts previous understanding.	☐	☐	☐	
3. Questioning				
a. The student asks questions about the narrative text while reading (e.g., "What is the main idea here?" or "Why did the character act this way?").	☐	☐	☐	
b. The student formulates predictions or anticipates upcoming events in the narrative.	☐	☐	☐	
4. Identification of Main Ideas				
a. The student is able to correctly identify the main idea of a paragraph or section of the text.	☐	☐	☐	
5. Identification of Supporting Details				
a. The student correctly identifies key supporting details that explain or support the main idea.	☐	☐	☐	

Additional Notes (for the observer):

1. *Overall Engagement*:

Was the student actively engaged during the reading activity?

_____

_____

_____

2. *Strengths*:

    What are the student's strengths in applying cognitive techniques?

    _____

    _____

    _____

3. *Areas for Improvement*:

    What areas need further development?

    _____

    _____

    _____

Observer´s Signature_____.   Student's Signature_____.

Images of the application of the diagnostic test in 8th grade students.

Images of the explanation of cognitive techniques to 8th grade students.

Narrative text used to explain cognitive techniques for identifying main ideas and details.

The Starfish

Last summer I took a trip to an island. I had a lot of fun. I sat and watched the waves and listened to the ocean. I learned to identify birds. I discovered pretty things and enjoyed the taste of new foods. It was a very nice time.

One evening I took a pleasant walk by the ocean. When the waves came in, many starfish* fell on the beach. Some starfish went back into the water, and they were safe. But other starfish were still on the sand. They would die if they did not get into the water. There were many starfish on the beach that night. It made me sad, but I knew I could not fix the problem. I stepped very carefully so I did not damage them.

Then I saw a little girl. She was also sad about the starfish. She wanted to prevent all of them from dying. She asked me if I could perhaps help her.

"To be frank, I don't think we can do anything." I said.

The little girl started to cry. She sat back against a rock and thought for a while. Finally, the emotion was gone. She stopped crying and stood up. Then she picked up a starfish and threw it into the water.

"What are you doing?" I asked her. But she did not answer me. She just threw as many starfish as she could. "You cannot save all of them!" I said.

She stopped to look at me. "No, I cannot save them all," she replied. Then she picked up a very big starfish and said, "But I can save this one." And then she smiled and threw the starfish as far as she could into the ocean.

Exercises based on the text "The Starfish" used to explain cognitive techniques for identifying main ideas and details in narrative texts.

Exercise 1: Multiple Choice

1. The narrator thought it was impossible to save all the starfish on the beach.

   a) True

   b) False

c) Unsure

2. The little girl gave up and left the starfish on the sand.

   a) True

   b) False

   c) Not mentioned

3. The narrator felt sad about the starfish but didn't try to help at first.

   a) True

   b) False

   c) Undecided

Exercise 2: Main Idea Identification (Multiple Choice)

1. The story's main idea is about a girl who decides to help the starfish, even if she can't save them all.

   a) Correct

   b) Incorrect

   c) Partially correct

2. The narrator went to the beach to enjoy a peaceful vacation without planning to help any animals.

   a) Correct

   b) Incorrect

  c) Uncertain

3. The girl's actions demonstrate that small efforts can still make a difference.

   a) True

   b) False

   c) Not related

Exercise 3: True or False

1. The little girl was inspired to help the starfish after seeing how many were on the beach.
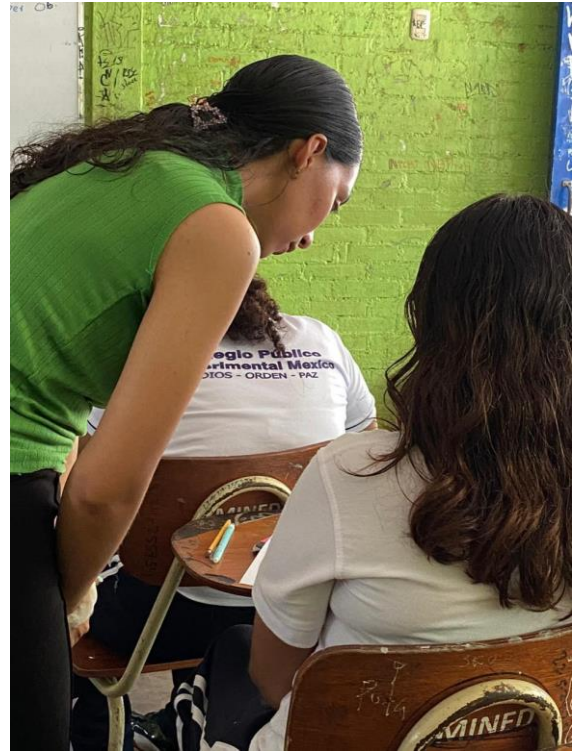
    a) True

    b) False

2. The narrator helped the girl throw all the starfish back into the ocean.

    a) True

    b) False

3. The main lesson is about saving every life, no matter how impossible it seems.

    a) True

    b) False

Images of the application of the During-test to 8th grade students.

Images of the application of the Post-test in 8th grade students.