The Impact of Reading for Pleasure - Examining the Role of Videos as a Tool for Improving Reading Comprehension

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Abstract – **In this study we discuss the value of videos editing designed to enhance reading comprehension in students from the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Valencia. First, we present the role of reading for pleasure by summarizing research findings related with multimedia and reading comprehension. In the following part, we describe the methodology with 80 students from 3 different grades which participate in our study. Our results show the positive impact of creating videos in understanding the value of visual literacy in the classroom and the important role of reading for pleasure. Finally, we present the lack of mechanisms of digital video for some students without background knowledge in digital literacy and problem solving in technology.**

Keywords – **digital video, reading comprehension, reading for pleasure, multimedia, technology**

1. Introduction

Reading for pleasure is the appropriate method for students to increase and master reading comprehension, vocabulary, reading strategies, cultural awareness and general knowledge [1].

Many educators have found that reading for pleasure also improves reading speed and writing and has an important role on a student's educational success compared to their family's socio-economic status [2]. Reading for pleasure is different from reading for study. When a student reads for pleasure, he chooses the book and he knows that he will not be tested about what he has read. The main goal for reading is the purpose, the reasons for reading, which allow students to approach written texts and to achieve a sufficient level of reading comprehension [3]. Consequently, students use certain reading skills and effective reading strategies that increase their understanding and the awareness of what they are reading. According to [4], reading with purpose is vital to comprehension and retention of information.

Pleasure reading involves thinking and emotions and has social consequences [5], it is what students do for entertainment or to admire an author's style. Other advantages of reading for pleasure involve positive reading attitudes, better learning outcomes and pleasure in reading in later life as well as a better understanding of other cultures. A study conducted by [6], suggested that pleasure readers at all grade levels developed greater general knowledge, fluency and reading comprehension skills. According to [7], reading is related to the increase of cognitive process over time, and thus, it is necessary to guide and encourage students to read during their spare time and to be effective and strategic readers.

The current study represents the results of the impact of reading for pleasure in 80 students from the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Valencia who elaborated videos in order to improve reading comprehension. Studies carried out by [5] showed that an increasing number of children doesn't read for pleasure. Our research pretends to find out if students of this study read for pleasure and to demonstrate that students who create videos based on books chosen by them have a positive impact in understanding the value of visual literacy in the classroom and the important role of reading for pleasure. Finally, our findings indicate the lack of

mechanisms of digital video for some students without background knowledge in digital literacy and problem solving in technology.

2. Literature Review for Pleasure Reading

The term "pleasure reading" or "reading for enjoyment" is defined by taking into account the original purpose of the reading. Without a purpose, the students would find reading inefficiently and aimlessly. Reading for pleasure is interpreted as leisure reading [8], recreational reading [9], independent reading [6] or voluntary reading [10]. [5] defined reading for pleasure as "reading that we do of our own free will, anticipating the satisfaction that we will get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else's request we continue because we are interested in it" (p.5). According to [11] pleasure reading is seen as a pleasing task for the reader and is considered as any form of reading that is socially and essentially prompted. The reader is not forced to read, but he can read on his own and feel emotions he may never otherwise experience. This kind of reading involves critical thinking, a process that engages reader's mind and emotions through enjoying literature.

[12] described pleasure reading with a certain purpose: enjoyment and recreation. From his point of view, reading includes a wide range of genres and books that students can enjoy within a school context and it is not limited to the written documents and could contain multimedia reading as well.

Recently, [13] defined pleasure reading as a voluntary activity that involves a book of interest to the reader and a form to spend time and for enjoyment. The author explained also that pleasure reading has an important role in the purpose of reading.

Other researchers have investigated the process of reading for pleasure and described it as a form of "pleasure of play" [14], a creative activity [15] and an "aesthetic reading" [16]. These concepts can be employed interchangeably. [14] pointed out that feeling is the most important tool to other three pleasures: work, social and intellect. Thus, aesthetic reading is primarily the feeling a reader gets when he finds the "pleasure of play" in a book that he can't put down.

Several studies demonstrated that reading for pleasure has positive effects on the acquisition of skills related to written expression and reading comprehension [1], [17], [18], [19], and also a positive impact on second language acquisition [20] and on learning outcomes [21], [22].

3. Reading and Digital Forums

[23] and [24] have pointed out that the existence of the digital media has significantly influenced the ways in which people read in our contemporary context. We have to bear in mind that digital technologies are used worldwide. As a consequence, digital media is rapidly becoming widespread in the field of reading.

Forums are an important tool in education and they have many benefits in the online classroom, helping learners share their knowledge and grow together. Students can discuss different topics and make comments in order to facilitate the understanding of a lecture content. The degree of collaboration between the students and between the students and teacher is a basic form to achieve connectivity among them and create interaction in online training.

Cooperation and learning to collaborate with other students and teachers is an essential skill in a knowledge based society. Success requires to communicate messages, to solve different tasks, to work collaboratively and to create new knowledge through the innovative technologies.

The learning environment and the digital technologies play an essential role in the education context. [25] argue that e-learning represents an efficient way to overcome traditional learning during Covid-19 crisis.

Numerous studies have suggested that there is imperative for students to participate within online platforms in order to encourage a community of students [26], [27]. The results deriving from these researches do demonstrate that the degree of social interaction between students, and students and teachers, is a determining factor in promoting community development. Fundamentally, forums showing a greater percentage of learner interactions between learner–learner and learner–content prove a stronger sense of community.

According to [28], forums in digital media have positive effects (less shyness, greater freedom of expression) but also negative impacts (lack of participation of the "invisible" members). Forums provide contexts for interaction and create an interactive relationship between all the participants who bring with them new reading experiences and skills [29]. When students are producing content, they are aware of the audience and context in order to choose the correct path to reach the goal of the task.

Forums in digital media offer immense potential for active knowledge creation. The durability, immediacy and reading choices of the students are essential to create a context of interaction determined by their digital literacy skills and motivation.

4. Methodology

The total number of people within the study is 80 students (13 males and 67 females) and were aged between 19 and 22 years. The research data was gathered from the students among 1st, 2nd and 3rd courses between January and April, 2020 by the authors. The sample was divided in 3 groups from 3 courses: *Spanish language for teachers* (1st course), *Literary for teachers* (2nd course) and *Development of communicative skills in multilingual settings* (3rd course).

The objectives of our study were:

- to analyse the impact of reading for pleasure of our students in order to improve reading comprehension
- to evaluate videos made by students based on books read
- to develop students' reading and literary competence through the consolidation of the ability to interpret and value literary texts
- to encourage a teamwork of teachers to elaborate a set of strategies in relation to literacy competence

With this purpose in mind, we offered the students the opportunity to choose a book from a list of 8 books written by Spanish, Catalan and foreign authors (see Table 1.). Therefore, the students read the books in the original or translated languages. The books were assigned in relation to the topic of the project: *Women teachers, readers and writers on social media*. In this project participated 9 teachers from the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature of the Faculty of Teacher Training of the University of Valencia, most exactly, from 3 sections: Catalan, Spanish and English.

Table 1. Students' choice books

Books		
	Frequency	Percentage
Five Breads of Barley	29	36,3
The Uncommon Reader	4	5,0
The Bookshop	7	8,8
Loyalties	2	2,5
The Wife	11	13,8
The Teacher	9	11,3
The Reader	13	16,3
Story of a Teacher	5	6,3
Total	80	100,0

The students' preferences regarding readings were: *Five Breads of Barley* by Lucía Baquedanos, *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink, *The Wife* by Meg Wolitzer, *The Teacher* by Victor Labrado, *The Bookshop* by Penelope Fitzgerald, *Story of a Teacher* by Josefina Aldecoa, *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennet, *Loyalties* by Delphine de Vigan.

The participation in this activity was not compulsory. All the students involved in this project obtained an additional point, or 0,5% to the final grade of the course. Thus, their participation was considered for assessment and we offered our students a small amount of "extra credit" of their final course grade.

Regarding the elaboration of videos, we can point out some important rules:

- copyright and image protection: the students had to avoid including in the videos their faces. They could show other things such as panels, puppets, pictures, posters, etc.
- explanation in 2 minutes of something interesting about the book, as for example, analyse the subject to clarify an idea, analyse the facts about a subject, evaluate the book for importance, objectivity, interest and accuracy, respond to the author's opinions, explore issues the book raises, compare it to other books on similar subjects.

Every student from 1st and 2nd grade submitted the video in Spanish and the students from 3rd grade, with specialization in English, created the videos in English. All the videos were uploaded to MMedia platform (a privacy web of the University of Valencia) and shared the link in one forum created on Moodle platform.

5. Statistical Analysis

For the elaboration of videos, the following variables were taken into account: visual literacy, visual communication, quality of videos, time, music-sound effects, location or setting of the videos, messages, pictures and techniques. The most important variables were: visual literacy and visual communication. On one hand, visual literacy includes the use of technology to represent visual imagery, and the development of strategies to understand and interpret how students communicate and produce information and ideas in appropriate video formats. On the other hand, visual communication consists of using pictures, graphics, and other images to express ideas and to construct meaning.

To analyze quantitative data, a statistical analysis was performed using SPSS ver.16.0. ANOVA test was employed to assess if there was a significant association between visual communication and the 3 groups of students and also between video techniques and all the groups. In order to see the difference between the visual communication and the books read, we used Pearson Correlation.

6. Results

In order to compare Visual communication values based on the gender of the participants (Figure 1.), we employed an Independent Sample T-Test and no significant difference was found between men and women in relation to the elaboration of videos in all aspects: pictures, graphics, posters, words, drawing images and film images: $t(18) = -1.19$, $p = 0.25$.
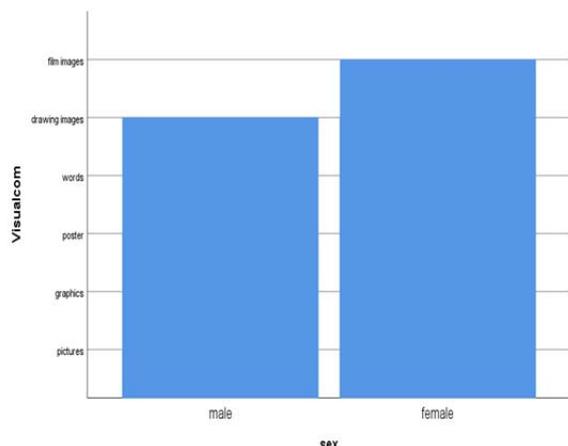

Figure 1. Difference between men and women in relation to the elaboration of videos

Regarding the choice of books (Figure 2.), no significant statistical differences were found between men and women, but there is a slight tendency for women to prefer all kinds of books compared to men. In general, we can consider that the groups are equal in terms of choice of books. The variable is relatively homogeneous for both sex classifications.
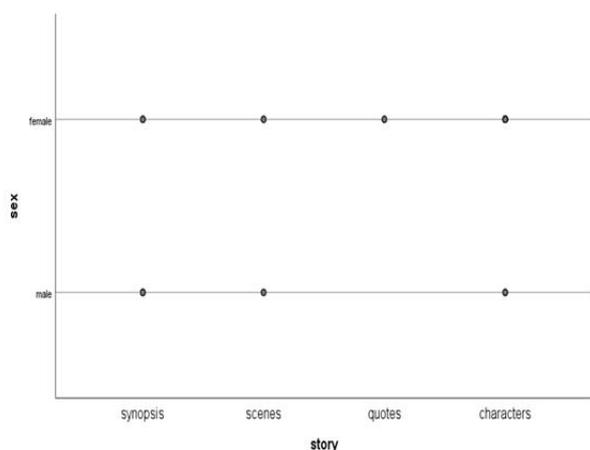

Figure 2. *Difference between men and women in relation to the choice of books*

A one-way ANOVA test was performed in order to analyze the differences between the 3 groups and Visual Communication (Figure 3.). The results indicate that statistically significant differences cannot be observed ($F = 1.8$, $p = 0.166$). This finding explains that all groups employed symbolic images: pictures and words and construct meaning from what

they read. Students are proficient in the use of videos and they produce a variety of formats to communicate information and ideas. In Figure 3., we can observe that the 3rd group uses less resources of visual communication than the 1st and 2nd group.
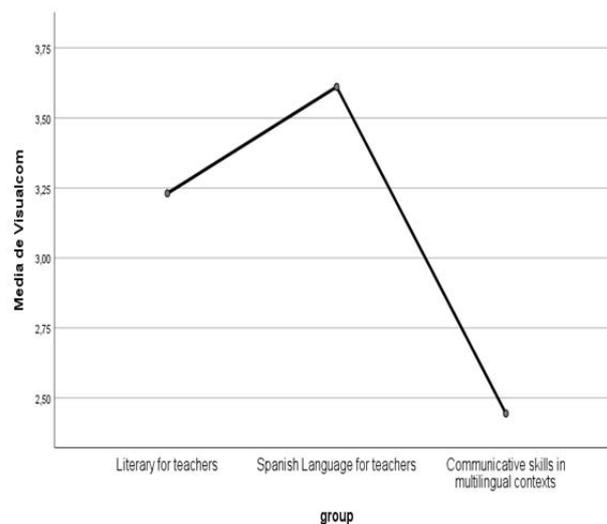

Figure 3. Differences between the 3 groups and Visual Communication

Overall, students do not use graphics and very few images from movies or posters. What they use the most are the drawings made by themselves and all kind of images.

Due to this indicator, we performed another one-way ANOVA. The statistical test indicates that the differences between all the groups and the variable techniques is statistically significant ($F = 17.6$, $p = 0.000$). The students from 3rd grade did not elaborate videos, only narrated power points. Those who create most videos are 2nd grade students, followed by 1st grade and 3rd grade students (Figure 4.). Therefore, students from 3rd grade with more experience in the academic career display disinterest towards mechanisms of digital video.
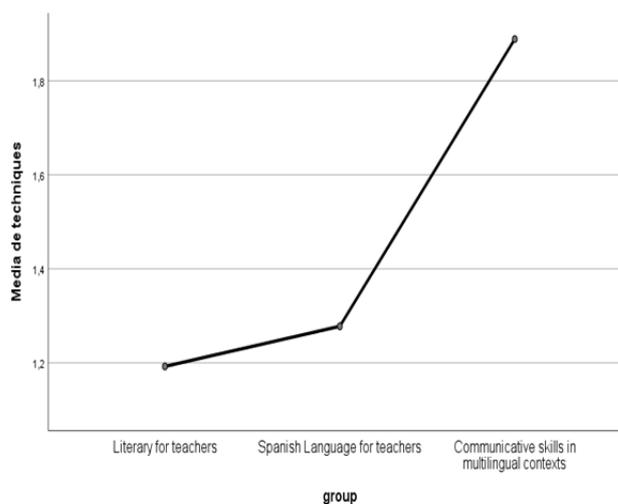

Figure 4. Differences between the 3 groups and video techniques

In relation to the forums, as spaces for reflection on the books read, we highlight, firstly, that 25 questions were formulated, categorized as follows:

- Analysis / comments: on some aspects related to the content or structure of the books (characters, structure, etc.)
- Reflection / evaluation: questions that imply a critical thinking on some aspect of the reading
- Reading: about the reading process or general aspects of the author

Questions that imply some aspect related to the analysis or comment of the texts predominate (48%), along with those that propose reflection or evaluation (44%) based on certain aspects that reading offers. It should be noted that some questions formulated in the forums could be considered mixed since they are double questions in which, after formulating a question of analytical typology, the students have to reflect on what this implies when reading the work. Finally, and although much less frequently, it is interesting to point out the questions that we have called "reading" (8%) and which refer to questions related to the reading process or general aspects of the author.

Regarding the answers to the questions and the interactions produced, both those relating to the students and those in interaction with the teacher, it should be noted that 84 were selected. Although the number is much higher, we considered only those that supposed some contribution on the proposed reading. The answers with the attached link to the video without any previous comments or reflections in the forum have been rejected.

As we can see, and this was predictable, the responses and interactions produced by the students to the questions of the teachers predominate; in general, they interacted when the student's responses implied a new question to which both teachers and students responded. In fact, one of the objectives of the forum was to promote free dialogue among the students.

The questions proposed by the English teacher were:

1. "Do you really enjoyed the book? If yes, why? Mention anything you perhaps didn't enjoy about the book."
2. "What was your favourite part of the book and your favourite quote which inspires you and keeps you motivated? How does it influence you?"
3. "How did your opinion of the characters change throughout the story? Did you connect with some characters?"
4. "How did you feel about the ending? Explain what did you like and what do you wish had been different."

From time to time, each teacher monitored the discussion and responded to all students in order to maintain the quality of the online forum and to increase student participation and involvement in the discussion. The richness of instant feedback was important for all students and allowed them to know the quality of their written answers regarding the task and topic presented.

We present the results obtained in the participation in the forum of the group whose vehicular language was English, and not Spanish or Catalan, both official languages in the Valencian Community.

We can affirm that the participation of the English group has been considerably higher than that of the other groups; in fact, 32 of the responses and interactions evaluated belong to this group.

We point out that, from a qualitative point of view, the responses and interactions of this group imply greater reflection and depth, with the presence of much longer responses and with a greater quantity and quality of the arguments:

1. "I have read the book in French, it's easier for me, and I prefer to read a book in original version. I enjoyed the book because it is a "sweet" book, a bit nostalgic, highlighting empathy, but not much, clear, and I felt close to Marie because she slightly realises that Michka (who is like a mother or grandmother) becomes older and that no one could stop this process. It reminded me, when I began to understand and to feel that my grandmother lost her words and some stories, even my name. I was glad to read a book about speech therapists, people that work with words, pronunciation, how to express yourself, how to present to the others. Speech therapists work with children, old people, but also with people that suffer from a disease of after an accident. I don't find a part that can motivate me, the whole book is melancholic and in the same time, full of hopes." (student who read *Les Gratitudes* (*Loyalties*) by Delphine de Vigan).
2. "This book was so refreshing, completely different to the kind of books I'm used to reading for myself, because the characters, and the story by itself, was really human, something you could feel and do in your real life, something with a meaning behind every word. The book is really fluid, and the way it just swings from the present to the past and back on, it just makes the reader more conscious that the memories that people keep are even better when you just don't live them, you analyze them, so you can understand everything that happen and reflect your actual life with the past. That's something I loved about the book." (student who read *The Wife* by Meg Wolitze).
3. "It is a very refreshing book, where you can enjoy without a lot of furniture. The author's style in this case is very clean and concrete, that is why the reading is very easy and open. I said 'open' because

you can decide if you want to make a deeper reflection about it or not" (student who read *The Uncommon reader* by Alan Bennett).

4. "During my first two years at university, some of my teachers have referred several times to the book "Story of a Teacher", so I really wanted to read it. It's true that the book captured my attention from the first moment, maybe it could be because its main character was a teacher and, sometimes, I felt identified with her. Her name is Gabriela and she tells us the story of her life. That is why I think this novel gets you hooked on reading it, because you want to know more and more about the characters. I really enjoyed the book because it was a kind of journey into the past in which I was able to discover how teachers lived certain situations, such as the "Second Republic". (student who read *Story of a Teacher* by Josefina Aldecoa).

5. "Without a doubt, my favourite part of the book is in general the whole process of transformation that the main character, Muriel, undergoes, which makes her end up loving the place where she lives and works. This is very inspiring for me, because it is possible that I might also see myself in a situation like hers in a while, and it gives me an optimistic view of the situation. I've connected with the characters in the book, but mostly I've connected with Muriel. Although I haven't lived her story yet because I'm still studying and training myself to become a teacher, I see it very close to me. At no time did I ever blame her for her initial reaction when she was sent to such a small town, because perhaps I would have reacted in a similar way at first. "(student who read *Five Breads of Barley* by Lucía Baquedanos)

6. " I consider that the book is really interesting to know about the Valencian history between the 1974-1982 and also to know the real oppression that the Valencian speakers and the defenders of the Valencian language suffered in this period. In my opinion, it is also interesting because the book shows the history of Marifé Arroyo. For me, it is a pride to see how a woman becomes such an important character of innovations and the principal of the centre in Barx. She has a great personality because she fights for the language and the reform, and also she doesn't lose her hope. I connect with Marifé because I want to look like her. I want to fight for a good quality in the education. I also want to introduce new innovations like the adequate use of TICS or more interesting materials, etc. Especially, as a future language teacher, it is also important for me that the children learn languages and they will become good language speakers of Spanish, Valencian, English, French…" (student who read *The Teacher* by Victor Labrado).

7. "The truth is that this book has really fascinated me. On the one hand, I personally think that, during the period of the Second Republic, the education experienced a change and development that, until then, it had never experienced. Therefore, one of the

motives why I have enjoyed reading this book is because it really interested me seeing the development and improvement of education through this period and especially this was possible thanks to implicate and passionate teachers, such as Gabriela. On the other hand, the character of Gabriela has transmitted me loads of feelings during the reading of the book. I think that she is a very courageous person and that she has a real vocation about her job, teaching. This can be seen throughout the novel, as Gabriela is not only concerned with educating the children, but also with the whole population: adults, elders, and so on. Thus, we can say that her objective is to educate a whole country, not only the children. She thinks that everybody deserves the fact of receiving education; that everybody must be capable of reading; that everybody should have the chance of becoming cultured person. Finally, I think this is a very nice gesture on her part and says a lot about her personality and the way Gabriela was." (student who read *Story of a Teacher* by Josefina Aldecoa).

The students were able to summarize, organize and emphasize the most relevant content of the books in a coherent way. On the one hand, the summaries of the information were a good measure of comprehension and on the other hand, the quality of the arguments become especially important due to coherence, as a fundamental characteristic of the students' skills and knowledge. Our participants perceived the texts as coherent and in their written discourses, the ideas were presented in an organized, meaningful and synthetic manner.

The students demonstrated deep knowledge which consisted of coherent explanations of the texts read. In the written texts posted by the students on the online forum, deep knowledge was essential for generating, integrating and synthesizing new ideas, making decisions, solving problems and applying knowledge to real situations. The information presented in the written texts with their own words was clear, explicit and emphasized the relations between the main ideas.

The variables which measured the quality of written texts were:

- cohesion and coherence
- conciseness
- presence of personal opinion
- appropriate and correct Spanish, Valencian and finally, English language, as a third language used in the classroom
- appropriate and relevant content

The teachers evaluated positively the use of correct synthesis, explanations and relevant ideas based on the student's prior knowledge of the topic. The negative aspects such the inclusion on unnecessary information and the repetition of ideas were evaluated negatively.

The results obtained suggest that the written discourse in online forum can be used as a predictor of reading comprehension and guarantee the quality of a written text. Therefore, writing texts on forums

can be said to have a predictive value for reading competence and reading comprehension.

For the students, reading for pleasure was a way of connecting with books. They read with a sense of purpose which increased the participation of all students [30] in a forum activity and enhanced their social skills [31].

Our findings are in line with [32] who also found that pleasure for reading depends on some antecedents as: reading ability, positive expectations, correct book selection (see Figure 3.). The students of our study chose what they read and were motivated by the choice made. Thus, the choice was fundamental and a key motivator to read.

Teachers of our faculty who participated in the current study provided choice in reading because they believed as other researchers, that choice increased motivation, achievement and effort [33].

Other important aspects related to the reading process include comprehension and attention (Figure 5.). The consequence of reading for pleasure are the cognitive effects, but we have to bear in mind the key role of social interaction and the social context [34]. In our study, the students actively participated through an online forum and they had the opportunity to interact with other students and teachers, to construct knowledge, hypotheses and reflect on some topics about books.
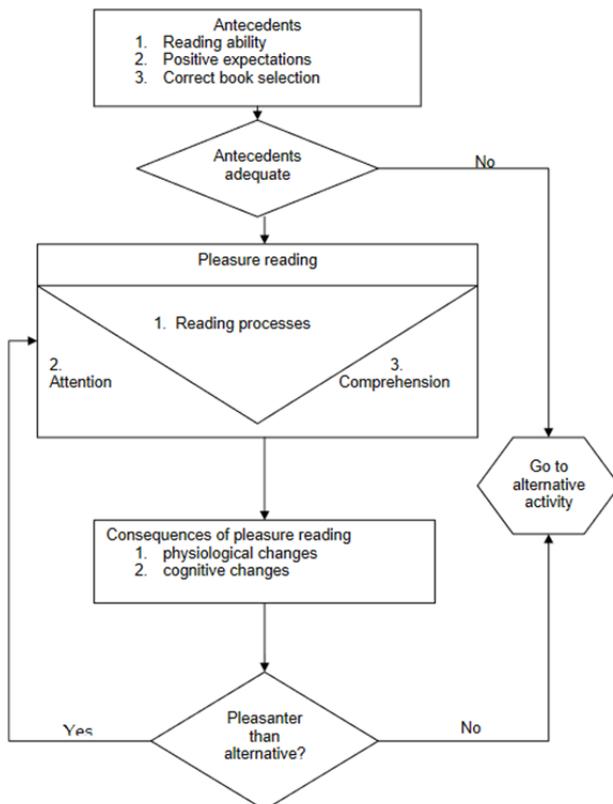

Figure 5. Antecedents and consequences of reading for pleasure, based on Nell (1988, p.8)

The online discussion forum was a pedagogical tool based on constructivist learning, which engaged all students in an active process of developing knowledge [35]. The forum was helpful and provided a safe place for students' reflection to prepare responses in written messages [36].

Regarding the model proposed by [32], we highlight the need to recognize the role of creating videos that lead to reading for pleasure and to many academic benefits [37]. Almost all students of our study created videos to communicate their thoughts and feelings, a message from a book and they had the opportunity to express themselves, to learn and present concepts more clearly. They used different editing software to develop writing skills and speaking. Despite the benefits of creating videos, students from 3rd grade display disinterest towards mechanisms of digital video and also faced obstacles because video-making tools were more sophisticated.

7. Strategies for Cultivating the Pleasure for Reading

We present ten reading techniques which can help students to improve reading and build the connection between reading and pleasure:

1. Invite and encourage students to participate actively in reading process through interactivity.
2. Enlist other students and teachers to be "readers". Taking time to share a book with the students will reinforce the value and pleasure of reading. It's especially important for teachers to read to and with their students as much as possible. Reading together will aid students in discovering which books and authors inspire them.
3. Maintain a "reading ritual" in classroom.
4. Provide a warm "reading atmosphere" free of distractions.
5. Return to favorite books as often as possible.
6. Choice and select books students like.
7. Create a "Reading Corner" in the classroom.
8. See movies based on books.
9. Experiment with support activities using technologies such as creating videos and participating in online forums in relation to different topics.
10. Help students make their own videos.

It is well known that students who read do better in all aspects of live, both at university and beyond. There is a direct relationship between reading skills and the ability to communicate effectively and achieve personal fulfillment.

By employing these strategies, teachers can help students discover the connection between reading and pleasure and to explore the ideas of great writers of the books they choose to read.

8. Conclusions

This study has demonstrated that students read for pleasure with an aesthetic purpose [16] in order to improve comprehension. The students were able to create digital videos where they defined their purpose for reading a book and they transformed themselves into more active readers. Reading with purpose is vital to the comprehension and retention [4]. As active readers, the students absorbed information and they involved themselves in receiving an opinion, an idea or a message from other students or teachers through forums.

In general, all students accomplished the task. However, differences have been noted between the 3 groups of students. We observed that those who created most videos were 2nd grade students, followed by 1st grade and 3rd grade students. The group 3 elaborated only narrated power points and they used less resources of visual communication than the 1st and 2nd group. It was interesting to note that on one hand, students from 3rd grade with more experience in the academic career displayed lack of mechanisms of digital video. On the other hand, the results also suggest that this group had a greater awareness and understanding of the readings. This group of students demonstrated complex reading strategies (e.g., making interpretations, summarizing, rereading, asking questions) and they developed new knowledge. In our study, student characteristics (e.g., reading skills, working memory, knowledge) and student's purpose for reading interacted with lexical and syntactic text complexity and text cohesiveness [38].

Some students focused on creating digital videos with special techniques and for others elaborating videos was not essential for the transmission of a message. We noted an important diversity in responses and interactions regarding the level of reflection and critical competence that students have shown.

The use of technology inside and outside the school through creating digital videos has a positive impact on the reading performance and on the learning outcomes [21], [22]. Reading for pleasure and the use of technology must foster the quality of education and promote learning opportunities for all students [39].

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