



## Methodological Strategies to Enhance Reading Comprehension in Third-Year High School Students



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### Article history:

**Submitted:** 09 September 2025

**Revised:** 18 October 2025

**Accepted:** 27 November 2025

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### Keywords:

*comics;*

*gamification;*

*methodological strategies;*

*reading comprehension;*

*reading workshops;*

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### Abstract

The ineffectiveness of the methodological strategies employed by teachers in teaching reading comprehension to third-year high school students is a significant challenge that requires a deeper understanding and detailed consideration. This problem not only affects students' academic performance in this specific area but also has broader implications for their educational and personal development. The objective was to establish methodological strategies to enhance reading comprehension in students. A quantitative approach was used, considering a sample of 100 students and 10 teachers from the third year of high school at the Educational Unit during the 2023 academic year. The results showed that methodological strategies such as the integration of comics, gamification, and reading workshops could be beneficial in promoting reading comprehension in students, due to the predominantly positive receptiveness to this tool. A systematic literature review allowed for the identification of the most relevant and research-supported strategies for improving reading comprehension, which contributed to optimizing resources and efforts in the educational field.

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## 1 Introduction

Internationally, it is common to find students who have difficulty understanding what they read, due to a lack of strategies and skills for reading comprehension. These deficiencies in the area of reading prevent students from responding effectively to the demands of academic texts and the required pace of work. Many higher education students fail to understand what they read in different subjects; that is, they are unable to relate two ideas that are not explicitly connected in the text, to compare ideas expressed in different texts, and therefore, to use the content they are supposed to have learned in an innovative way (Fernández Martínez & Uculmana Cabrejos, 2025).

On the other hand, in Latin America, reading habits are considered institutional responsibilities outside of students, which shows that it is the educator's duty to promote a love of reading as a practice inherent to their human condition, and this can only be achieved by communicating with young people through their language and adapting to contemporary forms of learning (Amézquita et al., 2024).

Regarding research conducted in Ecuador, schools and classrooms have become the main place where the practice of reading should be encouraged daily, directly, and in a diversified manner. In this school context, reading depends largely on the teacher's proposals, the approaches presented to the students, and the activities that the educator promotes, whether with or without a specific purpose, to help them understand a variety of texts (del Jesús García-Cajape, 2024).

The ineffectiveness of the methods used by teachers to teach reading comprehension to third-year high school students represents a considerable challenge that requires a deeper understanding and careful examination. This situation not only impacts students' academic performance in this particular subject but also has broader consequences for their educational and personal development. Students who cannot adequately understand what they read face difficulties assimilating new information, participating in meaningful classroom discussions, and applying learned concepts to real-world situations, which negatively impacts their overall academic performance and their ability to compete in an increasingly demanding, knowledge-based world (Baptista & Oliveira, 2019).

A lack of reading comprehension skills can affect students' self-esteem and motivation. When they constantly face difficulties understanding assigned texts, they are likely to experience frustration and discouragement, which can lead to a decrease in their interest in school and learning in general, and consequently perpetuate a cycle of poor performance and academic difficulties, making it even harder for students to overcome their reading comprehension deficiencies.

## 2 Materials and Methods

Quantitative research was applied, using standardized instruments to consistently collect data on reading performance and confirm the learning outcomes (Sulbarán-Brito, 2025). Two variables were defined: the independent variable (methodological strategies) and the dependent variable (reading comprehension). The study population consisted of 100 third-year high school students and 10 teachers from the Language and Literature department.

These samples were carefully selected to ensure they accurately reflect the target study group, focusing on the specific areas of the variables: methodological strategies (independent variable) and reading comprehension (dependent variable). The instruments used were a closed-ended questionnaire and an observation checklist, administered to both students and teachers. These techniques were strategically chosen to address the two fundamental variables of the research. Additionally, a closed-ended questionnaire or survey was used, being a necessary instrument to collect quantifiable and specific data in relation to the established variables.

The observation sheet was also used; this technique serves as a valuable resource for capturing qualitative and contextual aspects of the variables under study. Its application aims to obtain detailed information about student behavior, participation, and interactions during reading activities. The combination of these techniques is presented as a comprehensive approach, aligned with the study variables, allowing for a complete evaluation of the improvement in motivation and interest in reading, as well as the development of reading comprehension skills in the students and teachers involved in the research.

### 3 Results and Discussions

The comic strip encompasses various elements, including characters, facial expressions, shots, lighting, color, typography, and speech bubbles. Facial expressions are the physiognomic features that uniquely distinguish each character. Framing serves to highlight important aspects of the protagonists, thus guiding the interpretation of the narrative. For example, the close-up focuses on the characters' faces and commonly communicates emotions and feelings; the medium shot focuses on the middle of the body, while the wide shot shows the environment where the story unfolds. The lighting in the panels contributes to creating the illusion of reality in the graphics. Speech bubbles indicate the way the characters speak, whether whispering, thinking, shouting, or having a conversation (Ribeiro dos Santos, 2022).

In this context, in comic book design, it is essential to condense the most relevant elements that the story should contain, creating icons with the fewest possible details to communicate the message efficiently (Arroyo Cruz, 2023).

The results derived from the educational use of comics demonstrate that it is a wise choice, since it can interact effectively with the reader. Comics not only seek to entertain, but also to motivate and facilitate learning. Therefore, the distinctive characteristics of comics generate interest, encourage reading, and facilitate the learning process, making them remarkable teaching resources due to their ability to motivate students, especially because of their emphasis on the visual. The drawings contribute to stimulating the imagination and the ability to create stories (Ribeiro dos Santos, 2022).

According to reading rates in Ecuador, they are remarkably low. According to information from the Regional Center for the Promotion of Books in Latin America and the Caribbean, the average resident reads approximately half a book per year. Furthermore, young people express that their motivation for reading is based more on fulfilling academic requirements than on seeking pleasure or entertainment. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses, 52% of the Ecuadorian population dedicates one to two hours per week to reading. Additionally, the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses highlights that 25% of Ecuadorians lack a reading habit. This situation negatively impacts the comic book industry, as comics are not widely consumed due to the lack of a strong comic book reading culture in the country (Organization of Ibero-American States, 2022).

Workshops represent a highly effective and stimulating tool, as they enable the implementation of diverse activities designed to encourage potential readers to participate in recreational reading activities. This statement highlights the importance of workshops as a versatile means to foster interest and participation in reading, offering a wide range of activities that can be adapted to the preferences and needs of the participants. In this way, this methodological strategy becomes a viable practice to implement with first-year high school students (Díaz & Insúa, 2024).

According to the above, it is indicated that the planning and use of methodological strategies, established in diverse contexts, have demonstrated positive performance in motivating, engaging, and developing reading and writing skills (Sulbarán-Brito, 2025, p. 235). Another effective learning tool is Gamification, which is an innovative pedagogical approach that uses game elements so that the student assimilates reasoning and experiences learning as a positive and successful experience, allows the creation and use of motivating pedagogical strategies based on play, making the teaching and learning process vigorous, and enabling effective interaction between teacher and student from anywhere (Laca Olivos Chang et al., 2024).

As it points out, Carmona et al. (2025), gamification, in particular, stands out as a novel tool for developing and promoting literacy in education, because it allows for increased motivation and commitment from students. Gamification is related to the dynamics of the game, seeking to ensure that participants experience satisfaction when carrying out the proposed task or activity (p.241)

Vera Yépez et al. (2025), address gamification as a way to make learning more engaging and competitive, which has proven effective in creating a dynamic and motivating learning environment. Students feel more involved and willing to participate in reading activities when these are presented playfully and competitively, which reinforces their interest and enjoyment. (p. 20)

This research proposes gamification as a strategy, since it represents game-based learning, which, when implemented in the field of Language and Literature, makes it possible for the motivation and evaluation of student learning to facilitate a more dynamic and meaningful understanding. This allows them to delve deeper into the topics of study, generate dynamism in the classroom, align with their interests, and show respect for the game, since it is something they enjoy and are willing to do (Manzano et al., 2022).

Furthermore, the game is highly motivating for the progress and development of individual skills, as it contributes to strengthening the abilities necessary to face challenging activities or tasks (Rosales, 2025). Since language topics are not always appealing to them, this strategy is considered the best way to motivate them and make the teaching-learning process more dynamic. Promoting the development of reading comprehension skills in students involves implementing educational strategies and methods aimed at improving their ability to understand, interpret, and analyze texts. Reading comprehension encompasses the ability to extract meaning, identify main and secondary ideas, and relate information to prior knowledge (Rojas Pinto & Fernandez Monge, 2025).

Reading comprehension skills can be classified into several components, including decoding, fluency, and vocabulary. Decoding refers to the ability to convert written symbols into spoken words, fluency addresses speed and expression in reading, and vocabulary relates to understanding words and their meaning in context (Maldonado Alegre, 2023). Based on the identified dependent and independent variables, comprehensive methodological strategies have been formulated to enhance reading comprehension in third-year high school students at the Amazonas Educational Unit during the 2023 academic year.

#### *Surveys administered to students and teachers*

Table 1 shows the results of surveys conducted with third-year high school students at the Educational Unit regarding methodological strategies for enhancing reading comprehension. Table 1 highlights the relevance of comics as a useful tool for better understanding reading content.

Table 1  
Relevance of comics as a useful tool for student reading comprehension

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	70
No	5	5
Don't know	25	25

The survey revealed that 70% of participants consider comics a useful tool, while only 5% responded negatively and 25% expressed uncertainty. The majority of students showed a positive perception of comics' usefulness in improving reading comprehension, suggesting a potential use for this tool in the design of teaching strategies; however, the minority who expressed doubts provides valuable information about possible areas for improvement in students' perceptions. The results suggest that integrating comics as a pedagogical resource could be beneficial for promoting reading comprehension in students, given the overwhelmingly positive reception of this tool. Table 2 shows how reading workshops can contribute to improving students' reading interest.

Table 2  
Application of reading workshops to contribute to students' reading comprehension and improve their reading interest

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	95	95
Don't know	5	5

Source: Third-year high school students from the Amazonas Educational Unit of the Chone Canton

Ninety-five percent of participants stated that they believe reading workshops incorporating technology would be beneficial, while 0% responded negatively. Additionally, a small percentage (5%) indicated they were unsure. The high proportion of affirmative responses suggests strong student support for incorporating technology into reading workshops as a methodological strategy. This result could support the implementation of workshops that integrate technological resources to improve the reading experience and achieve the objectives established in the research variables.

Teachers were consulted about methodological strategies to enhance reading comprehension and the importance of reading comprehension for students' academic development. In this context, 100% responded that it is very positive, considering that reading comprehension is essential, reflecting the connection between reading

comprehension and academic success; all of this supports the implementation of strategies to improve motivation and reading skills in third-year high school students. Table 3 shows the results regarding the application of comics by teachers to promote reading comprehension.

Table 3  
Use of comics to promote reading comprehension in their students

Alternative	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	7	70
No	3	30

As observed, 70% of the teachers surveyed responded affirmatively, indicating that they have considered using comics for this purpose, while 30% indicated that they have not considered their use. The results indicate that there is significant interest among teachers in the possibility of using this tool to promote reading comprehension, supporting the idea of considering the use of comics as part of the methodological strategies to improve reading comprehension in third-year high school students.

#### *Analysis of results from the observation sheet directed at students and teachers*

The results of the observation checklist administered to students regarding methodological strategies to enhance reading comprehension showed a positive outcome, demonstrating that concentration during reading can indicate a level of interest and engagement with the content. This positive finding suggests that students may be receptive to strategies that promote reading comprehension.

Regarding the text read, it was noted that the students were able to maintain concentration for an extended period, demonstrating a generally positive indicator that they have the capacity to engage in sustained reading. This could be leveraged to implement strategies that strengthen reading comprehension. Furthermore, they demonstrated comprehension of the text, a key outcome indicating that the students are not only reading but also understanding the content. This suggests that the strategies implemented so far may be contributing to improved reading comprehension (Moghadam et al., 2012).

#### *Clear presentation of the session's objective on reading comprehension*

The teacher clearly presents the session's objective related to reading comprehension, which can positively contribute to students' understanding of what is expected in terms of reading comprehension. In this sense, the teacher creates a motivating learning environment, which is fundamental to fostering student interest, as this can influence their willingness to actively participate in reading and comprehension activities (Thomas et al., 2021).

The incorporation of writing activities related to reading comprehension where the Incorporating writing activities to reinforce text comprehension can be beneficial for consolidating this practice. This comprehensive approach, which combines reading with writing, can strengthen students' comprehension and expression skills. The implementation of methodological strategies for teaching reading comprehension has been the subject of analysis in education. Comics stand out as an effective tool for visually engaging students (Amézquita et al., 2024), while workshops offer a participatory approach. Gamification, for its part, is also presented as an innovative strategy (García & Larreal, 2023).

Comics, as a form of sequential art, engage the reader in the narrative, allowing for a personal interpretation that, while following the main plot, fosters individual creativity. In this context, visual elements such as facial expressions, framing, lighting, colors, and dialogue influence the reader's experience (Arroyo Cruz, 2023).

Gamification also seeks to motivate students through challenges and internal rewards (García & Larreal, 2023). The results obtained reveal a majority interest among teachers in using comics and workshops to improve reading comprehension. However, a discrepancy is observed between the effectiveness of these strategies and the reality of the low reading rate in Ecuador, which could indicate a gap between educational intention and its effective implementation. Furthermore, the lack of a deeply rooted comic book reading culture in the country could limit its effectiveness (Organization of Ibero-American States, 2022).

The implementation of gamification presents a challenge in itself, since, although its potential is recognized, its effectiveness in the educational context is still being evaluated (Manzano et al., 2022). The need to assess the initial situation before implementing these strategies highlights the importance of creatively adapting educational methodologies (Amézquita et al., 2024). Ultimately, while the proposed methodological strategies show potential for improving reading comprehension, their effectiveness could be limited by contextual and cultural factors, underscoring the importance of considering these aspects when designing and implementing educational interventions (Bazurto-Minaya & García-Loor, 2022).

For the most part, the methodological strategies being applied by teachers are not yielding good results in the reading comprehension of texts among third-year high school students. Bajaña et al. (2024), mention that methodological strategies comprise techniques, methods, and didactic resources used by teachers to guide and direct the educational process in the classroom (p. 698). Similarly, Amézquita et al. (2024), maintain that methodological strategies are pedagogical tools designed to promote active student participation, foster the development of cognitive skills, and facilitate knowledge construction (p. 92).

As argued by Fernández Nistal (2022), reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that significantly influences students' academic and personal development. In this sense, it is imperative to address effective methodological strategies that foster both comprehension and motivation for reading among third-year high school students at UE Amazonas. Furthermore, the implementation of pre-reading, reading during, and post-reading strategies, as indicated by Fernández Martínez & Uculmana Cabrejos (2025), promotes collaborative, meaningful, structured, and autonomous learning and increases motivation. (p. 23).

### *Limitations*

This process under study presents some limitations, one of which is the sample size, so it is recommended to broaden the scope of the research by including a more representative sample of students and teachers. This would allow for more generalizable and robust results, as well as a more complete understanding of the perceptions and practices related to the use of comics and other methodological strategies in improving reading comprehension.

The lack of exploration of areas of doubt or uncertainty regarding the high acceptance of comics as a useful tool for improving reading comprehension, coupled with the significant percentage of negative or uncertain responses, suggests the need for further investigation into the reasons behind these perceptions. Furthermore, a limitation was identified in the lack of exploration of alternative strategies. Although the research focuses on the use of comics, it does not explore other possible methodological strategies that could be equally effective or complementary for improving students' reading comprehension. Considering a broader range of pedagogical approaches would be beneficial to enrich the analysis and conclusions of the study.

The lack of in-depth analysis of the results in the demonstration of text comprehension and the students' ability to concentrate for extended periods means that the research does not delve into the analysis of these results to understand how they relate to the methodological strategies implemented and their real impact on the teaching and learning process. Therefore, it is recommended to carry out a more detailed analysis of the data to identify patterns, trends, and possible areas for improvement in the implementation of pedagogical strategies.

## **4 Conclusion**

Conducting a systematic literature review allowed us to identify the most relevant and research-supported strategies for improving reading comprehension, which helped to optimize resources and efforts in the educational field. The presence of negative or uncertain responses indicated the need to address possible lack of knowledge or reservations about the proposed strategies. This finding highlighted the importance of providing additional information and guidance to strengthen the understanding and acceptance of these strategies. In this sense, the objective of diagnosing students' reading comprehension skills is fundamental to identifying areas for improvement and designing appropriate interventions.

The assessment of school performance in the pre-reading, reading, and post-reading phases for textual comprehension provided valuable information on the impact of the methodological strategies implemented in the teaching and learning process.

*Conflict of interest statement*

The author declared that she has no competing interests.

*Statement of authorship*

The author has a responsibility for the conception and design of the study. The author has approved the final article.

*Acknowledgments*

I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on the earlier version of this paper.

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