

**UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS  
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**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND FOREIGN  
LANGUAGES**

**ENCOURAGING READERS' AUTONOMY  
THROUGH BALANCED LITERACY  
APPROACH IN 4TH GRADERS AT SAINT  
MICHAEL SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST  
QUARTER OF 2022**

**Thesis Submitted to Obtain the Bachelor in English with Concentration in Teaching**

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introductory Framework**

When writing any document, there are structures and guidelines to follow in order to have accuracy. Every single part of a document is important; however, one of the most important parts is first paragraph of an essay; in other words, the introduction, as it allows not only to explain the main idea and importance of a topic, but also catching the interest of the readers. As Wilkinson states, “the introduction is the part of the paper that provides readers with the background information for the research reported in the paper. Its purpose is to establish a framework for the research, so that readers can understand how it is related to other research.” This means, the writer provides interest in the topic for the reader or readers and reaches out a specific audience, among others. In this chapter, the reader will analyze all the information collected from other investigations and of course, other researchers, who include information about the main topic of the present investigation.

In addition to that, the researcher intends to take the acquired knowledge, as well as the methodology, processes, and recommendations on a larger scale, far beyond the target population. Anyone can read and, although, not everyone has the same opportunities, this research aims to provide tools for anyone to find understanding, as well as recommendations. Consequently, it is intended to use the Balanced Literacy Approach, which has many methods and practices that encourage autonomy in a creative and different way to improve literacy, reading, and even some subskills such as writing.

#### **1.1 Problem Statement**

Today's society is, on a large scale, a constant and changing product of globalization, which in turn demands progressive changes in the educational area. This would suppose that education

provides resources so that its participants can progress. Now, the question does not come from having the necessary tools, but rather how the participants, which are students, know how to use them. The use of these supplies is accompanied by many skills in which autonomy stands out. Following this line, autonomy is necessary and effective in students, as the lack of it establishes a problem. Student's autonomy brings opportunities, even for those who are not endowed with many resources. Smith, et al. explain that those who own the resources and exploit them through autonomy are successful learners. It is for this reason that the lack of resources is a problem, and the lack of autonomy is strictly related.

In one of the areas where the ability of autonomy can be developed without much problem is through readings. Reading is a highly effective means for a student to be autonomous since according to Izquierdo A., & Jimenez S., (2002), "Reading is an interactive process in which the reader gives sense and meaning to the issues he or she gets in touch with." This document aims to expose the consequences of the lack of autonomy in readers and how, through the Balanced Literacy Approach, it aims to promote autonomy. That is why, the investigator of the present document aims to any person who will read the present investigation to ask, how does Balanced Literacy Approach encourage autonomy on fourth grade readers at Saint Michael School during the first quarter of 2022?

## **1.2 Objectives of the Investigation**

### **1.2.1 General Objectives**

To encourage readers' autonomy through Balanced Literacy Approach in fourth graders at Saint Michael School during the first quarter of 2022.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

- To design reading comprehension strategies based on Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.
- To apply reading comprehension strategies based on Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.
- To assess the outcomes of applying Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.

### **1.3 Justification of the Study**

The purpose of this investigation is to promote readers autonomy through Balanced Literacy Approach in 4th graders at Saint Michael School. This investigation turns out to be convenient for the target learners, since it will provide students with the tools to improve their reading comprehension, which at the same time involves skills such as fluency, comprehension, among others. In addition, the approach under study, naturally provides the opportunity to build and improve the learners' personal skills and build a strong character to overcome educational challenges when learning a second language. This is going to be possible by comprehending the relationship between the approach and the autonomy every learner might have and, at some point, could build in order to comprehend reading. That is, the moment the student feels that it is difficult, he/she can take that difficulty as an educational challenge in personal inclusive to overcome the task. Attitude is something that is asked of students, intrinsically being a trait of the human being as a natural and, perhaps, even evolutionary reaction. On the other hand, aptitude is a quality that comes directly from those who feel fit to do the homework and not if you are able or not, or if you have the resources or not.

Reading comprehension refers to the ability to understand written words, and not recognize words in isolation, although these are two different aspects they might be confused. Recognizing words on a page, but not knowing what they mean does not fulfill the purpose or goal of reading, which is comprehension. Comprehension adds meaning to what is read. Reading comprehension occurs when the words on a page are not just words, but thoughts and ideas, and these leads to a bunch of opportunities to communicate. Comprehension makes reading enjoyable, fun, and informative. Moreover, it is necessary for success in school, work, and life in general. To omprehend a reading, a person should be able to identify the main idea of the text and express it in their own words. Children must classify information to determine what information is important and what is not. They take the most important information and put it in their own words and use as few words as possible to explain the text. This strategy should not be applied only at the end of the story. Instead, children should be taught to summarize throughout the story.

Autonomy in a student is an area that, when worked in a constant and correct way, can become a beneficial tool for the student object of the investigation, the tutor, or teacher, and even, on a larger scale, for society, since autonomy goes far beyond being a concept, as it encompasses many relevant and considerably important socio-political factors. Moreover, it is important to recognize that students are like muscles, and the knowledge they acquire, is what makes that muscle grow more and more. The advantage of these times is the knowledge that human beings and, especially young people, have available. It is important to have that knowledge ordered, distributed, and finally ready for use by the knowledge acquirer. In fact, it would be much better to think of a knowledge acquirer who decides on his own to search, order, distribute, and finally acquire knowledge, leaving aside the traditional model: the

knowledge acquirer cannot do any of the above variables if there is no someone to provide that information for him or her first. That is, a model contrary to autonomy, being this totally dependent, following in the footsteps of someone else, which can often be (in the educational context) a teacher, tutor, or parent.

Autonomy allows the expression of creativity, security in people, and resilience. These qualities can be essential for success, not only for students, but for anyone who seeks to be autonomous and all what this ability entails. By providing people the opportunity to make their own path, they are directly empowering the decisions they make and allowing them to embark on their own learning journey creatively, resiliently, and safely. The researcher feels intrigued and uncomfortable with something that she could personally experience in her educational and personal stage in the periods of childhood and pre-adolescence: the little interest in reading and much beyond that, the lack of understanding; that is, look for the positive or charming in reading.

The investigator of the present document finds Balanced Literacy Approach as a component that tights both reading comprehension and autonomy, while comprehending texts. “Balanced literacy” is a term that grew out of the “reading wars” of the 1980s, between the “whole languages” and “phonics-first” camps, with the idea that a combination of the two approaches would work best.” This approach looks to balance explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration. It balances language and phonics, into a literacy program that guides students and readers to comprehend reading not only in short, but also in long terms. A typical balanced literacy framework consists of five components including read aloud, guided reading, shared reading, independent reading, and word study. It also allows group interactions in reading workstations; meaning that children will learn in

different ways. Balanced literacy involves two main points: Phonics (which involves explicit instruction on the parts of language) and whole language (involves teaching reading through the act of reading), which is the contrast of phonics. In other words, children are surrounded by lots of different types of written language, and they choose the books and texts that they want to read. Moreover, balanced literacy is a combination of whole language and phonics. Just like the name implies, balanced literacy is about balancing explicit language instruction with independent learning and language exploration.

This research does not seek to force students, and indeed any future reader, to read out of obligation, since it is obvious that human beings have different tastes and qualities, and it is understandable that not everyone likes reading; however, that is not the main goal of this research. Rather, it focuses more on promoting reading as a positive task, by creating reading habits outside and inside the classroom. This will be possible by putting into practice the methods that the Balanced Literacy Approach offers. For this, the researcher needs to soak up the subject in a comprehensive way. The practices that it offers in broad terms are read aloud modeled reading, shared reading, interactive reading, guided reading, independent reading, and, secondarily, shared writing, interactive writing, guided writing, and independent writing. For the purposes of this research, everything that is not related to reading will be secondary; however, this does not mean that it does not matter. Nevertheless, the objective is not to lose focus on the initial topic: reading and its relationship with autonomy.

An example of these reading strategies is, if a child who knows the word car, he who will find that this is helpful when trying to read the word carpark. Good readers know and use words parts or chunks to decode unfamiliar words (Pressley, 2006). For instance, a child who knows the word run and the ing pattern, is likely to succeed when reading the word running.

Another example is semantic context and syntactic cues to help students to understand what they read. This is helpful for students who struggle with word meaning; therefore, context. When practicing and having more experience to find out context, students create prior knowledge and easily build connections. A good strategy to ensure the mentioned practice is reading aloud, as students learn new words and ensure new vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Provide interactive oral reading experiences, where adults read to children, stopping periodically to highlight and discuss individual words and sometimes other aspects of what they are reading.

Teach children how to use reading comprehension strategies with a gradual release of responsibility by the teacher is crucial to build comprehension and enhance autonomy. This could be done by identifying and using the text's organizational structure, focused, high quality discussion on the meaning of text, with teachers modelling ways to think about the text that can help students when they are reading independently. Because both parts (skill and approach) are strictly related to build a solid educational process in students, it is intended to put both into practice, with real fourth grade students. With this, it is expected to obtain real, but encouraging results, and thus, in the future, consider this research as a guide to eradicate, even in small but constant steps, factors that are considered as setbacks in Costa Rican education, such as dropout lack of motivation, lack of autonomy (which in turn leads to insecurities in an intrinsic way due to lack of autonomy), and, at the same time, replace that with skills and tools that promote a quality education and much more improved. Moreover, it is thought that each student feels that reading and being autonomous is almost natural and does not mean an obligation.

## 1.4 Antecedents

Autonomy is a used concept in education and, of course, in many fields. According to Wermke & Salokangas (2015), the etymology of the concept comes from the Greek word *autonos* which means “having its own laws” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2015). Moreover, Benson (2007) states that the early history of autonomy in language education begins with the Council of Europe’s Modern Languages Project. The Council of Europe is the oldest of the European intergovernmental political organizations. It was set in 1949 in the post-war atmosphere, the erection of the “iron curtain,” and the fear of disintegration of several countries in Western and Southern Europe (Trim, p.81, 1996). The Council programs looked and still look for benefits in culture, heritage, sports and mainly, in education. This happens by promoting the learning and teaching of modern languages, since its foundation. The relationship between the concept of autonomy and the Council is the “aims of successive projects” as Trim explains, which look to facilitate free movement of people, information, and ideas in Europe. This “freedom” encourages people to use interpersonal communication, promote personal development, growing self-awareness, self-confidence, among others.

As Trim explains, the above makes the process of learning more democratic, by providing the conceptual tools for the planning, construction of courses geared to the needs and motivations, enable them to control their own process. Over the past 25 years, these actions combined with social responsibility has become a “... liberal theory that underpins the provision of public education in democracies: a regard for autonomy is intrinsic to such important liberal values as freedom, rights, democracy, legitimacy, justice, and some versions of equality” (Kerr, p.13, 2002). This means, based on Kerr’s point of view, that the essence of a person when it comes to live one’s life, is a “prime justification of education.” The projects on those 25 years have promoted principles in education such as: objectives, methods, materials, assessments, learners’

needs, learner-centered approaches instead of teacher-centered approaches, facilitation of effective learning, among others (Trim, p.81, 1996). Furthermore, Barrantes (2013) considers that “Education, like in a pendulum, has moved from one end to the other; one end represents the teacher-centered end and the other the student-centered end. This evolution in education has been mostly dictated by the transformation of the students’ roles in the classroom from highly dependent to interdependent, and later to independent.” Later, Barrantes states that Henry Holec was the one who first introduced the concept of autonomous learning in foreign language teaching (FLT), which “minimizes the teacher’s domain to a certain extent. The teacher is not a transmitter of knowledge anymore but an instructor or supervisor in the learning process.”

Within the field of education, there are many approaches that might be selected, as they might be convenient to promote autonomy in learners. For purposes of this investigation, reading through the usage of Balanced Literacy Approach will be the main focus. By saying this, when teaching reading, in the mid 1960’s, “the United States Office of Education published comparative research on reading instruction and models for first grade.” From these debates, there were two points of view when it came about reading: the skills-based approaches, which deal with the use of phonics and the meaning-based approaches, which emphasize reading comprehension (Frey et al, p.2).

For some time, research was focused on debating which approach or technique was better. Later, recent studies supported the idea that successful reading required all in one: skill instruction (including phonics and phonemics), stimulating reading, and writing experiences. They looked for a balance in reading instruction as Frey, et al. explained. Moreover, the term Balanced Literacy appeared in California, specifically in 1996, in the California Department of Education, due to low reading scores on a national examination. Therefore, balanced reading

instructions were implemented from this year on in the curriculum. In the original form of Balanced Literacy Approach, “it focused on presenting both skills-based teaching and meaning-based teaching during separate literacy blocks.” In these days, according to Frey, et al., Balanced Literacy is way more complex than it was in 1996. It is a philosophical orientation, which “assumes that reading and writing achievements are developed through instructions and support in multiple environments using various approaches...”. Balanced Literacy programs involve factors such as community, home, library involvement, structured classrooms plan, use of activities, shared and independent readings. Based on Frey, et al., well-implemented balanced literacy programs are involved in community and authenticity, which reinforce the need of autonomy in learners.

### **1.5 Scope**

This investigation seeks to design reading comprehension strategies, in order to prepare and assess students while learning a second language. The subject which was chosen by the investigator is focused on reading comprehension using the Balanced Literacy Approach, which intends to balance reading. Naturally, this approach is related to writing as a skill, and allows teachers to focus on subskills such as vocabulary, motivation, and socio-cultural acquisition, as Cowen (2005) stated “with the purpose of learning to read for meaning, understanding and joy.” However, for the purposes of the present investigation, the subskills mentioned before, and the writing skill will be seen just as part of the Balanced Literacy Approach, but they are not included in the scope. All of this will be supported by teachers and coordinators in the institution throughout interviews the investigator will create in order to collect and analyze weaknesses, strengths, possibilities, and aspects to improve among others, which might contribute to the investigation.

## **Chapter II**

### **Theoretical Framework**

In this section, the elements that prove to be relevant for the main topic of the investigation are discussed and analyzed. In this chapter, the reader will find a variety of concepts related to the Balanced Literacy Approach with the objective of promoting reader's autonomy through reading. This will be possible due to the components, including history, implementation of both concepts (Balanced Literacy Approach and Autonomy) in the educational and personal lives, development of skills when promoting both concepts, comprehension strategies which allow students to acquire knowledge and give them tools to use outside of the classroom, to achieve both skills and approach, among others.

#### **2.1 Reading Comprehension**

To read and comprehend are more than just actions performed by someone. Both of them depend on the other. There is no comprehension without something to read which, naturally, is something to comprehend, and there is no real reading without taking a moment to analyze what that a bunch of paragraphs mean. Among various definitions of what is to read, it could be said that reading refers to an action performed by someone to develop an understanding of a subject or topic. At the same time, it is an essential skill that individuals need to process in order to understand and substract information in life in a general basis. The action of reading means information, analysis, thoughts, and ideas. "Reading requires the utilization of many mental processes as information is collected, processed and analyzed. Also, reading is a source of enjoyment for individuals" (Li and Wilhelm, 2008).

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As stated before, reading constitutes an important part of an individual's personal and educational growth, which is consequently related to comprehension. This can be because of for a simple reason, an individual, independently of the fact that he is a student or not, might be able to break down, analyze, and to reorganize ideas, and information. On the other hand, the construction of meaning of any type of communication by interchanging ideas between someone (usually called the interpreter) and a message, it is known as reading comprehension. In the same way, the meaning resides in the intentional problem-solving, thinking processes of the interpreter. The content of the meaning is influenced by that person's prior knowledge and experience (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Moreover, when reading the last definition, it is implied problem-solving as a consequence that relies on the reader and how he constructs meaning and how they change depending on the reader. The contrast of ideas can be seen not only in educational fields or contexts, but also in everyday life. To mention a clear example, in some countries, every four years or so, people vote to choose their president, and differ on their votes, taking in consideration that they read the same information, as their decision depends on how they analyzed it based on their own experiences, thoughts, ways of seen life, possibilities, and other predispositions. It is about the information people read and how they then analyze and construct meaning. Following that line, it means that background knowledge "affects how well they comprehend what they read" (Adams & Bertram, 1980; Durkin, 1981; Pearson et al.,1979). This type of background provides importance for inferential comprehension, which is the information implied and not directly explained in a text.

The process of reading and constructing meaning involves a natural implication of strategies that readers use to make connections (or interact) between the text and their own

background knowledge or schemata (a model or plan to read in this case). These interactions lead to new schemata (adding to one's background knowledge) or to greater elaborations of existing schemata (making modifications to what one already knows). For purposes of this investigation, the schemata readers use and teachers teach them to apply when reading are known as: reading strategies. As Brandon, D. (2021) states, there are four comprehension strategies which The National Reading Panel Report identified as useful to increase reading comprehension in young children and help to increase the reading comprehension of young children who are struggling with reading, as well.

### **2.1.2 Predicting**

Good readers engage and connect their knowledge and understanding of a text by asking themselves what they think might occur in the story, which is defined as predicting. Consequently, this strategy “involves asking children to make informed predictions based on what they obtain from the story or text.” Predictions require asking children to guess about different possibilities, based on their senses, which means, what they see, hear, or read related to the book's cover, titles of stories, pictures, graphics, table of content, comments etc. Undoubtedly, predictions allow students to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Students or readers, extract and infer the meaning of the text; therefore, improve their comprehension skills. Prediction might be related with their engagement in the story, as well. As the website K5 Learning explains, “...students will find that when they use prediction, they are more engaged with the story, finding that they connect their knowledge of what they have read to new information they are learning.” Moreover, predictions are usually constructed when making questions that generate intrigue, doubt, or curiosity. Questions such as “What do you think this

book will be about?” or “What do you think will happen next to/if ...?,” The process of predicting builds interest and understanding of the text, and it establishes a purpose for reading.

### **2.1.3 Making Connections to Prior Knowledge**

In addition to construct meaning by predicting, and as stated before, making connections to prior knowledge involves the unification of previous experiences and new or present knowledge, ideas, or contexts which are already known or are going to be known. The objective is to encourage young readers to use their prior knowledge to make sense of the text they read. Connections are important and are also related with their ages and life contexts. As they grow older, connections are made between different books, texts, or ideas by identifying similarities. However, young children might not know how to connect prior and present knowledge, or even how to build and/or interpret knowledge and backgrounds. That is why, it is important to recognize the role of the teacher to implement strategies in the classroom that will help students to effectively activate prior knowledge when reading.

As Allen explains “A majority of students in the upper elementary and middle grades are beyond decoding instruction and need more assistance with comprehension to help them become successful, independent readers.” The author explains that this strategy helps children from third to sixth grade, which can learn how to dig deeper in meaning. Moreover, Allen also mentions some questions that might help students to focus on connecting their own relationship with real life experiences and literary experiences. Questions such as: Does anything in this story remind you of anything in your own life? Can you relate to the characters in the story? What does this story remind you of? On the other hands, there are questions which are focused not on personal experiences as a single component, but on the connections from one text to another, which are

know as: text-to-text connections. For example, What does this remind you of in another book you have read? How is this text similar to other things you have read? How is this text different from other things you have read? In the third place, Allen allows a final category of questions to ask, which combines the previous questions in one category, the “text-to-world connections.” For instance, What does this remind you of in the real world? How are events in this story similar to things that happen in the real world? How are events in this story different from things that happen in the real world?

There are also different strategies that can be developed in the classroom to build prior knowledge. Just as Bailey, E. (2019) mentions, “Using prior knowledge is an important part of reading comprehension” and is also relevant to build a strong comprehension for children with dyslexia. In addition, Bailey recommends two strategies to create prior knowledge: “Pre teaching vocabulary” and “Creating Opportunities and a Framework for Students to Continue Building Background Knowledge.” The first one (Pre Teaching Vocabulary) focuses on all type of students’ needs, including students who may have a difficult time sounding out new words and recognizing them when reading. It is helpful for teachers to introduce and review new vocabulary before beginning new reading assignments, as this constructs a “healthy” relationship between the student, the vocabulary, and the bridge the student constructs to learn new vocabulary. Therefore, students will improve vocabulary skills, as not only their reading fluency will increase, but so their reading comprehension.

The second strategy (Creating Opportunities and a Framework for Students to Continue Building Background Knowledge) deals with reviewing but introducing new topics. Such as the previous example of the teacher providing an overview before reading. This is extremely helpful in providing students with background information. Moreover, in this strategy, autonomy is

crucial, as students must learn to find this type of information on their own. Teachers facilitate help by giving students specific strategies for increasing background knowledge about a new topic. There are substrategies that help students to achieve their goal on building background knowledge such as: reading summaries and conclusions of chapters in a textbook, reading the end-of-chapter questions before reading the chapter, reading the headings and subheadings for books, reading the back of the book for information on what the book is about; in addition, older students can review cliff notes before reading the book, skimming the book, reading the first line of each paragraph or reading the first paragraph of each chapter, skimming for unfamiliar words and learning definitions before reading and reading short articles on the same topic (Bailey, E. 2019).

#### **2.1.4 Visualizing**

There are strategies that result part of the core of reading. A strategy that helps students manage their overall reading comprehension is called visualizing. This occurs when a student is able to “see” what is going on in a story, as we know they are comprehending. Thereby, visualizing is also a strategy used to increase reading comprehension, which requires getting children to create mental images based on what they read. This process contributes to understand, recall details, remember, and draw conclusions from the things they encountered while reading. For example, ask children to make a drawing based on what they read. In addition, while reading a passage to children, ask them to close their eyes and listen and ask them to create a movie in their mind of what the words are describing. Visualizing might seem something useful just for kids, but the truth is that people in general, even when becoming adults, visualize all the time. Brains do not function in language; a large number of thoughts are visual. Being able to

create visualizations makes understanding much easier, interesting, and engaging. Visualization might help to predict (previous strategy) and construct meaning (previous strategy).

## **2.2 Autonomy**

People talk about autonomy as one thing or another; perhaps, without knowing the real definition of that concept or what the concept really represents. The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines autonomy as “the state of existing or acting separately from others” and also as “self-directing freedom and especially moral independence.” “Nomos” is Greek for law, which means that autonomous is someone who makes its own laws. To possess autonomy is to be “directed by considerations, desires, conditions and characteristics, that are not simply imposed externally upon one, but are part of what can somehow be considered one’s authentic self” as Christman, J. (2020) explains.

### **2.2.1 Autonomy and child’s development in education**

Children’s autonomy and young people’s autonomy, during the first years, is a very important part of their development. It is perhaps expected that children develop their own autonomy, and start to decide and think by their own, even if they are looked up for their parents in many cases. The approaches of Rousseau and Montessori possessed influence when referring to autonomy in early stages and education. Their definitions of autonomy lead to Rome, “their educational philosophies each aim to help children seize their own autonomy.” To begin, Rousseau mentioned that “man is born free, and education is intended to build the new free man.” Which means that indirectly, if a child is free, she or he can create a self-autonomous person. Rousseau also stated that without any social intervention or any social manners of raising such as obedience, children would make choices on their own and discriminate between what they can do

and the restrictions. Rousseau emphasized natural children's autonomy. Rousseau explains, there are two types of dependence: dependence on things (a natural dependence) and social dependence; meaning; human intervention. Rousseau believed in choosing based on personal interests and needs; therefore, early stages and activities such as playing to say one, are necessary according to Rousseau to choose freely, with happiness and satisfaction.

On the other hand, Montessori believed that children would constantly look up for their parents or adults and understood and, at some point of their lives, mastered social structures. Once they have understood "the world" socially speaking, they will act as consequence of satisfying their needs to fit and understand even more the world, by going on a line that appealed to them. "Although current life expectancy is much longer than it was in prehistoric times, humans' biological clocks have changed very little, by comparison. Thus, childhood ages are nearly identical, meaning that children indeed have the potential to master some degree of independence, even at a young age" (Blount as cited by Zhao Y, 2014). Time has changed and today's parents and caregivers, face a technological era in which children might not take time to go outside, as they used to in those days. Montessori centers implemented the idea of small groups of children, where they would make their own choices, observe, stay stimulated with natural materials, and as one of the main characteristics of Montessori's theories, to imitate older peers. "Under Montessori principles, children are given the opportunity to engage in the same types of growth-encouraging activities their ancestors did in their childhood. Today's Montessori children therefore learn to possess a sense of fulfilment and confidence, which is essential to one's autonomy" (Blount as cited by Zhao Y, 2014)

Rudolf Steiner, a philosopher, also advocated "child-centered education" just as Montessori did. "There are no standardized textbooks in Steiner's kindergartens. Pupils prepare

the most important learning materials (for example, epoch notebooks) without much instruction from their teachers” (Ulrich as cited by Zhao Y, 2014). Teachers constitute a company but not the ones getting responsibility. In addition, Zhao (2014) states that Grossman illustrates two examples of classrooms. The first one is a 4-year-old classroom that chose their toys and games. They had the choice and felt free to visit other classmates or groups in the class, and none of students “acted out of control.” In the second classroom, students were asked to do things with instructions, such as sitting and listening to the teacher. They felt frustrated and unhappy, different than the first classroom. This proves that environment, is a great deal to invest in when it comes to build autonomy, which will help them to make choices, practice self-control, and self-governance.

The Steiner approach created centers where students feel confidence and free, by doing what they must do, while they are being supported and observed, but not pushed to. They explore their own choices at their own pace. With these actions they can improve their self-regulations. According to Steiner, “imitation is particularly important during young children’s first seven years of life.” This might be helpful for students to imitate rather than listening the tasks to do. Therefore, the teacher’s role focuses on supporting and guiding children, not teaching them all they have to do. Children will model on taking their own choices, which will led them to be autonomous in their adolescent and adult stages. Moreover, this deals with taking responsibility as a crucial role in autonomy. According to Morrison (1997), “decision-making approximates problem solving for children.” This is not easy, and it takes practice. For example, deciding between a task or to play, that needs responsibility and courage, and even more for young kids. In this case, parents, teachers, and caregivers should help children understand the ramifications of a decision, the consequences, and allow them to explore more in the decision-making process.

### 2.3 Balanced Literacy Approach

Providing a skills development strategy is crucial to any teacher who intends to create a curriculum that allows students to obtain a safe and comfortable educational environment and acquiring and improving their skills. Balanced Literacy Approach is one of many approaches which pretends to increase literacy comprehension and student's needs, using tools that allow accurate student's communication. To understand the concept of Balanced Literacy, the researcher believes that the concepts should be segregated first. Based on the Merriam Webster dictionary, balance is the "state in which different things occur in equal or proper amounts or have an equal or proper amount of importance." The previous supports what the researcher mentioned earlier; in other words, that it seeks the same level of importance in the understanding and communication of students. Other synonyms of this concept are equipoise, which is defined as: "between contrasting, opposing, or interacting elements" and also "to bring harmony," which means that when searching for balance, agreement must be one of the main characteristics for the elements of interaction.

On the other hand, Montoya, S (2018), UNESCO, defines literacy as "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts." This makes sense since learning English as a second language constitutes a whole variation of steps that are well summarized in UNESCO'S definition, which the researcher believes should not be avoided, but deeply understood. By joining both parts, Beverstein, S. (2005) understands Balanced Literacy as "a framework that gives equal attention to reading and writing instruction, meaning that even though reading and writing are different and interdependent, instructions support and lean on each other. By mixing and inferring all the definitions, balanced literacy is a combination of communication

approaches, reading and writing instructions which complement each other in an equal way, with the intention of developing the skills of literate learners and attend students' needs, inside and outside the classroom.

### **2.3.1 Balanced Literacy Approach History**

Teaching reading has been a topic of interest in education. Balanced Literacy Approach takes place back in the mid-1960s, when the United States Office of Education “published comparative research on reading instruction models for first grade” (Venezky, Samuels & Kamil, 1984). There were two basic views of reading: the skills-based approach, “a methodology centered on the development of a skill set over a career with a progression in four stages: planning, building, presenting, and validating” (Frischmann, R, 2015), which was more emphasized on the usage of phonics. Moreover, the meaning-based approach was mostly emphasized on reading comprehension. For years, there was a constant debate on which technique was the best way to teach reading.

There are two theories about the first glance of the term balanced literacy. The first theory states that it was originated in California in 1996, according to the California Department of Education, “in response to low reading scores on a national examination.” Originally, the balanced literacy approach was not together, meaning that the meaning-based teaching and the skills-based teaching were in “separate blocks.” On the other hand, Pressley et al (2002) wrote a book in 1998 called *Reading Instruction That Works: The Case for Balanced Teaching*, which intended, as its main message, to balance literacy and skill instructions through a holistic comprehension. Nevertheless, many people did not understand or defend a different position than Pressley on the components of Balanced Literacy, since as Pressley et al (2002) expressed, the imbalanced conceptions of teaching were not anticipated. For that reason, later he and Ellen

McIntyre edited the book coming with a new edition, which offered several conceptions of balanced teaching skills, since people became to realize that balanced literacy meant more than meaning, but useful skill instructions.

Since his 1998 book, nothing has happened to persuade Pressley that he erred in favoring balanced instruction, as conceived in that volume. Consequently, despite the dual perspectives, some skills enthusiasts believed that balanced instruction is simply whole language in thin disguise, and some others believed the whole language theorists who view balanced instruction as skills instruction, warmed over. Language theorists view balanced literacy as instructions; nevertheless, Pressley never thought he erred with this approach, instead of that, Pressley and his colleagues kept studying effective and ineffective elementary instruction. “Whenever they have found an elementary classroom in which literacy engagement was high, they found balanced teaching as conceived in the 1998 book, as well as evidence that literacy development was on course” (Pressley et al, 2002). That increased the confidence in the 1998 conception.

In 1996, Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) surveyed well-respected primary grade teachers about their literacy instruction practices. The first challenge was to identify a sample of teachers. To do so, Pressley et al. wrote to fifty reading supervisors across the nation and asked each of them to nominate one kindergarten, one grade 1 (first grade), and one grade 2 (second grade) teachers in their district as effective in educating their students to become readers and writers. In general, the supervisors nominated teachers whom they had observed directly and who had excellent reputations with administrators, other teachers, and/or parents as being effective in stimulating literacy development.

In the first phase of the investigation, each nominated teacher was asked to list 10 instructional practices essential to his or her literacy instruction. Teachers who responded in the first phase mentioned more than 300 different practices. In the second phase of the study, the teachers responded to a more focused questionnaire, which posed one question for each of the 300 practices cited in the first phase of the study to determine the prevalence of the various practices. The overarching finding in the study was that these primary-grade teachers did many different things to support and encourage the literacy development of their students. The teachers, in this study, reported being extremely eclectic in their literacy instruction. This group favored whole-language principles, with 97% reporting that their instruction reflects at least somewhat the tenets of whole-language instruction. However, they also reported offering frequent skills instruction, both in the context of actual reading and writing and in lessons in which the skills were isolated and presented in a decontextualized situation.

Their responses did not seem to be consistent with any of the more extreme perspectives that have been offered in the literacy debates of the 20th century. They certainly did not advocate skills-first instruction, nor did their responses reveal anything consistent with a whole-word approach. Their version of whole language was tempered by much attention to skills instruction, although the more committed Pressley, Rankin, and Yokoi (1996) surveyed well-respected primary-grade teachers about their literacy instruction practices. The first challenge was to identify a sample of teachers. The researchers kept visiting the classrooms of the 10 initially chosen teachers, the five more outstanding and the other five who were considered as typical, but not outstanding. They had this posture because of the many observations they did and took into consideration as outstanding the group of students which, by the end of the study were reading a book at or above the level, and by the end of the year, wrote stories longer than one page and

reasonably coherent, with accurate punctuation, capitalization and spelling, and the student engagement and its consistency was good. The ones who had these characteristics were chosen as outstanding.

They noticed some patterns on the outstanding classes and on the teachers, too. As an example of this, some patterns were: Teachers of outstanding classes used to monitor their students to find their needs and find those students who needed mini lessons as Pressley et al. (2002) called them, and which were part of the holistic experience based on Pressley's theory. Moreover, outstanding teachers asked them with instructions which were clear and entertained and they also integrated reading and writing by asking them what they wrote and read. The teachers had good attitude and high expectations with their students' skills when referring to read and write, they communicated positively with their students, and encouraged them all the time. They took all these variables into consideration to re-write the book.

### **2.3.2 Implementation**

Traditionally, literacy was about reading words and writing on notebooks, which is not negative; however, in the current times and even more now because of the situation that the world is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic, literacy can and must be seen as an opportunity to develop tools that blend old techniques with new techniques, which are related and somehow oriented with technology. Kress and Kist (as cited by Gail, E, 2017) mentioned that digital ways "to read and write multimedia texts incorporating words, images, and sounds" enhance students to innovate in their own learning with autonomy, creativity, and fun. There are representations that combine computer graphics, video clips, and digital photos, which are different to implement education thinking at the same time in the different students' needs and even disabilities. Some examples, according to Gail, E., included in her book are divided in nine sections: Collaboration,

Communication, Creation, Reading, Games, Interactive Whiteboards, Multimedia Tools, Presentation Tools, Research and Writing.

First, collaboration is developed by using face-to-face calls, photo-sharing, and software's such as E-pal, skype, Google Meets, Flickr, Zoom and other platforms. Second, communication is sharing ideas on blogs, post responses, and messages for example WhatsApp, Zoom, Teams, Google Meats chats, Educational Platforms, and Clouds such as E-campus, Woot it, among others. Next, creation is the action of developing anything that could be useful to learn, retain, or present such as Power Point Presentations, Canva, Kodu, Do Ink, Cartoonster etc. Moreover, reading could be developed by using platforms and apps such are E-readers, that bring interactive activities that will summarize and review the content of the readings or will let students to highlight important information. Later, there are games, which with appropriate and educational content will enhance and entertain students who might put into practice what they learnt by analyzing situations, exposing to new vocabulary, and achieving goals or tasks to reach a level or win something. Games can be found in consoles such as Play Station, Wii, Xbox-one, computer games and smartphone apps.

Furthermore, interactive whiteboards let students and teachers to cooperate when learning and having a fun space to learn. Students use clickers to input answers. These kinds of whiteboards are usually acquired by the school and not by the students, and some can be linked to other devices, which might be the students'. Then, it can be found multimedia tools, which are everything related to music, videos, images, audios, in a document or project such as iMovie, Flickr, Photoshop, Canva, Adobe, Spark Post, Voki, Glogster etc. In addition, presentation tools are programs to show/present and idea, transmit a message or develop a project where students generally use their creativity by adding pictures, sounds, and effects, such as Power Point, Canva,

podcasts, flyers, vlogs (video blogs) among others. Finally, research are engine tools that will allow students to search for information. The ones that are very-well know are Google, Google Chrome, Google Academic, Firefox, Bing, DuckDuck Go, Edge O, Brave, etc.

In Writing, students use, essays, and other compositions. They also use brainstorming tools, which are very common when writing to generate and organize ideas. There are also spelling and grammar checkers, such as Grammarly. On the other hand, it is true that there are plenty of possibilities to mix technology with typical and common types of ways of learning. However, technology is not available for all people, and the education field is not the exception. Before and after the Coronavirus outbreak, there is a real situation: some students face the problem of not having the internet access or a technological device. In that context, technology Winters, M. (2012) suggests 6 ways to support students without internet or technology access at home. The author suggests, in the first place, to get students involved in school, allowing them to cooperate, making an alliance with those students who are “tech-savvy,” as she explains, with the ones that are less familiarized with computers.

In the second place, Winters encourages parents to take advantage of places with free technology accessibility, for example, spots with free Wi-Fi, libraries, and places that allow parents and students to have internet connection. The author encourages both parents and students, as a third recommendation, to attend computer labs once a week after classes. An activity supported by the teacher, where all parties can learn different skills, create, and develop projects, and homework. Moreover, as a fourth way to improve students’ connection with technology, is to have and identify a “support network” formed by parents and friends who might have access to internet and technological devices; this as a way of helping students to understand that the population who cannot have access to internet connection or devices should not feel bad

and should not be seen as weird. Not making them feel as outcasts and see the situation as statistically normal, is the fifth way to make them feel better. Last, a solution that might seem obvious, but it is not, is to boost students' confidence and creativity to develop the tasks through project-based learning. The school might support this last point, as it is important to discuss the solutions that school can give or raise funds to improve inequality.

### **2.3.3 Reading skills**

Fountas and Pinelli (1996) believe that there are five elements of an effective reading instruction when applying it based on balanced literacy: Phonemic Awareness, (which consists of the student's/reader's ability to hear individual sounds in words and identify sounds), Phonics (differentiate the letter-sound relationship and how they are used when reading), Vocabulary (know the relation of words and their meaning), Fluency (the ability to read with good pace, rhythm, phrasing, intonation, and stress in an accurate way, and Comprehension (to construct and decipher meaning from texts.)

### **2.3.4 Components**

Balanced literacy is a curricular methodology which integrates several ways of instructions, which are characterized by explicit skill instruction and the use of authentic texts. "Through various modalities, the teacher implements a well-planned comprehensive literacy program that reflects a gradual release of control, whereby responsibility is gradually shifted from the teacher to the students" Duke and Pearson (2002). There are components that guide students to gradually be responsible and autonomous, as they read and write. It is important to highlight, as Duke and Pearson (2002) mentioned that "The gradual release of responsibility model of instruction requires that the teacher shift from assuming all the responsibility for

performing a task ... to a situation in which the students assume all of the responsibility.” The next components are supposed to be developed by the two parts (student-teacher) with parents, school (institution) support, but all of them independently, as a team.

### **2.3.5 Reading components** (Taken from Wing, M. & Pratt, J., 2016)

**Oral Language:** Students participate in collaborative discussions about a topic throughout a whole day. This is characterized by the instructional conversations and oral responses. The teacher should also read aloud, teach mini lessons about certain topics, and say other oral responses as well, without taking the whole lead.

**Word Study:** The teacher teaches students about letter sound relationships, spelling, decoding, and encoding words and acquire vocabulary. All of these are applied to their readings/writings and not as isolated practices.

**Read Aloud:** Consists of the teacher completing the role as a reader for enjoyment. This means that the teacher models, by reading, “thinking” aloud about the beauty of literature.

**Shared reading:** The teacher creates groups or a whole group, where “teacher models strategies and skills that they want readers to go back and begin using in their own reading.” This allows students and teachers to be actively involved and to explain some higher levels of texts by sharing ideas (that is one of the teachers’ actions); the “teacher thinks aloud strategies they are using to help them navigate the text” and others.

**Guided Reading:** This strategy “provides explicit instruction and guided support needed for students to read beyond their independent reading level.” The teacher can select one student to administer a record, but students read the text/book independently.

**Strategy Group:** It is made by creating groups of 3-6 students, where the teacher names and demonstrates a strategy, inviting students to try it at the end as a closure. This is to resemble a mini lesson. All of these should be applied for readers when reading independently.

**Independent Reading:** This component is developed when the readers have reached a level of 95% accuracy of text reading; that means, students are able to understand what they read, respond to readings and there is a conference with the teacher. This takes place after a mini-lesson and readers building stamina (endurance) for 40-45 minutes.

### **2.3.5.1 Secondary components: Writing** (Taken from Wing, M. & Pratt, J., 2016)

**Modeled Writing:** In this type of writing component, the “teacher acts as scribe and writes in front of the students putting words together to make meaning of print.” Some characteristics are fully supporting, modeling, and demonstrating the process of putting teacher's ideas into written language. The teachers also “thinks out loud” expecting students to do it, as well.

**Interactive Writing:** Consists in composing together by “sharing the pen” with the teacher. All of them construct together a text, and the teacher controls the pace and provides accurate assistance and instruction.

**Shared Writing:** During this process, there is a co-construct of a written text. The teacher asks, prompts, and supports students by starting discussions about an experience or shared topic. These ideas are recorded by the teacher somewhere where students can see the ideas.

**Guided Writing:** The action of writing in small groups, individuals, or the whole group of students, guided by the teacher, which also provided mini lessons before. It is both student-

centered and teacher directed. Teachers asks questions, encourage group dialogues, and make them aware about their responsibility of syntax.

**Independent Writing:** Texts are written independently with teacher monitoring. Students build stamina and know how to use their resources (who were taught before) to write texts.

**Other Literacy Skills** (Taken from Wing, M. & Pratt, J., 2016)

**Grammar:** Before getting into writing texts, grammar needs to be taught explicitly and practiced by students. Their reading and writing skills should be directly related to grammar.

**Literacy Workstation:** This is a space for students to explore literacy, reinforce skills, and engage in their learning through interaction and meaningful independent practice.

**Book Clubs:** Literature circles are spaces where students read and have discussions of a same story, poem, article or book.

## 2.4 Teacher's role and student's roles

One of the goals of literacy instructions is to ensure that all students achieve their potential. As Gail, E. (2017) believes that there are nine effective principals that show the effectiveness of a teacher's role and student's roles in the classroom to have an accurate balanced literacy process when learning. Gail states that effective teachers understand and do not forget how students learn, which is related to what Pressley et al (2002) believed. Until the 1960's, it was common to see an influence of teacher-centered theories. Gail states that in these days, the behaviors where students did not receive much participation, are in the past, since now it is common to have a glance of combinations of both parts to achieve a good communication and learning process.

In addition, Gail mentions theories that are important to understand that point. One of those is Behaviorism, which focuses on “the observable and measurable aspects of students’ behaviors.” This means that behaviors can be learned and unlearned throughout stimulus and response actions. This is a teacher-centered theory, since he or she develops all the information that the student needs. On the other hand, Gail states that constructivism believes that students complete an active role and are engaged on constructing their own learning by associating the existing knowledge (or previous) with the new information.

In a second place, Gail mentions the action a teacher develops to enhance students to use the cueing system, which is the phonological system (the association of sounds with letters to read and write), the syntactic system (the combination of words into sentences that makes sense and part of a speech not isolated), the semantic system (which focuses on meaning through vocabulary that they acquire outside and inside the classroom), and the pragmatic system (the use of language to fit or deal with social aspects and social contexts). The goal based on her argument is to enhance students to deploy all four aspects, knowing that is completely normal if they focus on one. Gail gives two examples that illustrate this point:

“Jimmy is playing ball with his father,” they’re probably using information from all four systems. On the other hand, when they misread certain words, they may be focusing on one cueing system more than the others. For example, a child who substitutes dad for father and reads “Jimmy is playing ball with his dad” is probably focusing on the semantic or pragmatic system rather than on the phonological system.

The third principle might seem easy to achieve, but it takes a lot of commitment from both parts (teachers and students). Gail, E. (2017) states that “effective teachers create a community of learners.” She believes that classrooms are “social settings,” where students must feel safe when it comes to read, write, and learn in general terms. However, there must be a partnership, where all teachers and students contribute to move forward. They are in the same position when it is about responsibility, with different actions, teachers as guiders, instructors but not all the responsibility should remain on the teacher. The fourth principle is directly related to the present investigation, the researcher believes that effectiveness comes when teachers “adopt a balanced approach to instruction.” Moreover, Gail mentions that “literacy is the ability to use reading and writing for a variety of tasks at school and outside of school,” which one more time, supports Pressley’s (2002) concept about balanced literacy as a holistic way of being. In addition, (Afflerbach as cited in Gail, 2017) believes that readers and writers who have chosen balanced literacy should develop both activities with dynamism (meaning that writers and readers are actively involved both skills), strategy (writers and writers monitor their learning), and goal-orientation (reading and writing are executed with purpose).

As a fifth principle, Gail explains that standards should be addressed in effective teachers. At each level, it is supposed the increased of learning. Some of the “strands mentioned by the author are the reading strand, which is about students having phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition; the writing strand, where students compose texts and narratives and conduct projects related to literature; the speaking and listening strand that happens when students “gain mastery of oral language skills, using speaking and listening informally in discussions and more formally in oral presentations;” and the language strand, which is the

application of vocabulary, grammar and Standard English conventions to be sophisticated when writing and speaking.

“Effective Teachers Scaffold Students’ Reading and Writing” is the title of the sixth principle, which means teachers model when some skill or activity is difficult for students, share a reading or write together, and allow them to write and read independently. Teachers organizing for instructions to create “their own program that fits their students’ needs and their school’s standards and curricular guidelines” as the seventh principle. The creation of community learners, the incorporation of the balanced approach in the curriculum and the scaffold of students reading, and writing experiences is part of this principle. In the eight place, teachers know that there are different instructions, and the choice of the instructions varies due to because of their students’ needs should be effective and comfortable. Tomlinson (2014) explains that “the one size-fits-all instructional model is obsolete, and teachers respect students by honoring both their similarities and their differences.” The last principle it is referred to the relationship between instruction and its respective assessment, which is a part of learning and teaching, being a constant practice and not a single-time action. This allows teachers to determine students’ achievement levels, monitor progress, diagnose their weaknesses and strengths, document learning to have as a reference, and in general terms, have a general background of students to improve.

## Chapter III

### Methodological Framework

Along this chapter, technical characteristics will be highlighted and discussed. Moreover, some of them need to be described within this methodological chapter. According to Martin Innes (2020), the methodological framework are practices, procedures, routines, conventions, theories, and techniques, among others. One of the characteristics is a target population, which translated to the present investigation will be fourth graders at Saint Michael School. In addition, it is going to be notated and described all the instruments that are going to be used to gather all the information to get the results, hoping that they will fulfill the intention of the paper, as well as to provide feedback on the process. After setting the instruments, the results that the investigator wants to obtain are also going to be set to have a mental map of where the investigation will go and its importance.

#### 3.1 Research Approach

In this part of the methodological framework, the researcher will describe the three different research approaches along with their characteristics. These research approaches are the qualitative, quantitative, and the mixed approach. The previous information will let the reader to know the approach of the investigation and how this serves as an advantageous document.

##### 3.1.1 Qualitative Approach

The qualitative research is descriptive in nature because it generally deals with non-numerical and unquantifiable things. It also uses cases and context to examine social processes, interprets the meaning of specific settings, looks for points of views, and sees data as highly

meaningful. There might be some numerical data that the researcher would like to document, as for instance the number of observations; however, the observations themselves would be descriptive. Anecdotally, when students are first learning about wave interactions, they must do an experiment that asks them to qualitatively describe what happens when a wave through meets a wave crest. As it can be seen, Beutlich (2020) talks about scientific qualitative research about animals and biology. However, these same characteristics are applied to other investigation research. This research approach is crucial for an investigation because its goal is to achieve the social objective of acquiring certain abilities that can be beneficial. This research approach does not worry about a specific number of people to study nor collects any kind of numerical data, but rather describes a whole society and tries to focus the study on behaviors and to apply new ones within society for their own benefit. This investigation takes benefit from this approach since the objectives is to get the target population to improve engagement and academic performance.

### **3.1.2 Quantitative Approach**

Based on the explanation of Statistics Solutions (2021), a Quantitative Approach most often uses deductive logic, in which researchers start with hypotheses and then collect data which can be used to determine whether empirical evidence to support that hypothesis exists. It requires numeric information in the form of variables. A variable is a way of measuring any characteristic with several values. Some of them are numeric in nature (such as years of education, age, income, etc.).

### **3.1.3 Mixed Approach**

As Tashakkori, I (2010) mentioned, the mixed approach systematically integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches into a research in order to answer research questions.

Quantitative researchers follow a postpositivist worldview and are predominantly interested in collecting and analyzing numerical data with structured methods. Qualitative researchers follow a more constructivist worldview and are predominantly interested in collecting and analyzing narrative data using open-ended (holistic) procedures.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Moreover, according to the website Question Pro (2021), the research design is “the framework of research methods and techniques chosen by a researcher.” The design allows researchers to find research methods that are suitable for the subject matter and set up their studies up for success. In addition, it explains the type of research (experimental, survey research, correlational, semi-experimental, review) and its sub-type (experimental design, research problem, descriptive case-study).

### **3.3 Information Sources**

There are three main types of information sources that will gather information. These information sources will let readers or any interested person to find the background history and the theory that is going to be needed to support the main objectives of the investigation. In this case, the research will commit information sources about the history of Balanced Literacy Approach and how this can be linked to autonomy to form young readers. For this, there are going to be 3 information sources: primary sources, secondary sources, and tertiary sources.

#### **3.3.1 Primary sources**

Primary sources are original materials. They have not been filtered through interpretation or evaluation. Primary sources are original materials on which another research is based on. They

are usually the first formal appearance of results in physical, print, or electronic format. They present original thinking, report a discovery, or share new information. The definition of a primary source may vary depending upon the discipline or context (LIS BD, 2016). Some examples are diaries, newspaper articles, and works of other people. These sources are used regarding the information that will be valuable for the results of the investigation. In other words, these will be the instruments that the person in charge of the study will use to evaluate the target population to eventually work on them depending on the objectives.

Primary sources, in these investigation, were chosen as a guide for the researcher to understand the relationship and development of Balanced Literacy Approach and its relationship with reading comprehension throughout time. At first instance, the researcher listened to podcasts and audios related to the Balanced Literacy Approach to soak up the definition in a general way. Specifically, the podcasts on the Sportify platform called: *Balanced Literacy by Biliteracy Now*, *Balanced Literacy versus Structured Literacy by Reading Teachers' Lounge* and *Balanced Literacy Chat with Melissa Leach by The Classroom Collaborative Podcast*. In addition to this, the researcher looked up for blogs and video blogs about the experiences of other teachers who have used the mentioned method. Furthermore, the knowledge of these tools allowed a greater breadth of general and specific features of the Balanced Literacy Approach, as well as valuable descriptions of their application in the classroom. The usage of primary sources allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding about all the contexts involving the Balanced Literacy Approach. This as it is very important to put into practice the instruments and plans to apply during this research.

### **3.3.2 Secondary sources**

Secondary sources are less easily defined than primary sources. Generally, they are accounts written after the fact with the benefit of hindsight. They are interpretations and evaluations of primary sources. Secondary sources are not evidence, but rather commentary on and discussion of evidence. However, what some define as a secondary source, others define as a tertiary source. Context is everything. The definition of a secondary source may vary depending upon the discipline or context (LIS BD, 2016). Some examples are bibliographies, commentaries from critics, magazines, and journal articles. These will help the researcher get all the theory, so all the aspects within the application phase can be validated with certain information and strong bases.

The research was based mostly on other national (Costa Rican) and international research on the Balanced Literacy Approach or concepts that are directly or indirectly related. It must be taken into account that the research is also focused on the use of the Balanced Literacy Approach as a way to promote reading comprehension; for this reason, research related to the previously topic was also sought. Based on these investigations, valuable and contributing data were found, such as historical contexts, critical perspectives based on education professionals (which were also found in articles and journals of educational nature), which turned out to be favorable, since it contributed to compare and contrast what the researcher had thought, and analyzed it based on her own criteria, as well as with the primary sources.

### **3.3.3 Tertiary sources**

Tertiary sources consist of information that is collected from primary and secondary resources. The examples of tertiary sources are dictionaries, encyclopedias, fact books, and manuals. These are a combination of both, primary and secondary sources. In other words, the

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tertiary sources are all the places or instruments where the information required for the investigation was taken (LIS BD, 2016). As tertiary sources various search strategies were chosen such as Google Scholar, Research Gate, Semantic Scholar, ThoughtCo, K5Learning, Primary Learning, as well as dictionaries and physical textbooks.

### **3.4 Analysis Categories**

In this section, the researcher will analyze all the variables of the investigation through a qualitative point of view. The details that will be analyzed are conceptual definitions. According to Hernandez (2014), the importance relies on all the information placed in the present document; the researcher can place the items of the instrument with accurate precision, so that way the experimentation phase will be better.

#### **3.4.1 EFL Reading**

According to the website TEFL Education, teaching EFL reading is a bit different than the way native speakers are taught to read. While vocabulary is an important part of reading, teaching the reading skills of surveying, skimming, scanning, inference, predicting, and guessing are just as important. The student's reading comprehension can be improved by focusing on teaching students' skills as vocabulary, surveying, skimming, and scanning. For the purposes of saving time, the website Linguapress.com (2009) explains that comprehension exercises presented in the context of exams or test papers are nowadays largely reduced to multiple choice questions (MCQs); however, classic multiple-choice questions are very widely used for testing purposes because marking them is very quick and simple. Moreover, as the website explains, "in other words, classroom preparation for comprehension exams or tests will not be best achieved by simply giving students past test papers or exam papers with nothing but multiple-choice

questions to test their skills, but by resorting to a whole lot of other methods designed to develop, rather than just test, students' ability to understand a text.”

### **3.4.2 Balanced Literacy Approach**

According to the website Primary Learning.Org (2021), the balanced literacy approach is an integration of reading, writing, and word study components, which aims a balance of teacher-directed instruction and student-centered opportunities. Balanced literacy approach provides instruction using both whole and small groups, combined with autonomous learning opportunities. Educators utilize authentic texts to provide meaningful and engaging reading, writing, and word study activities. “Reading instruction is provided through multiple methods: read aloud, shared reading, guided reading, close reading, and independent reading.” On the other hand, writing instruction includes methods such as modeled writing, guided writing, and independent writing. Lastly, there are also word study which focuses on letters, sounds, and words, including vocabulary, phonics, and word-solving strategies through practices and workshops.

Using Balanced Literacy Approach allows students to develop and fulfill their reading skills in a deep and beautiful way. Based on a teachers’ experience on the blog Professional Learning Board (2022), it could be the analyzed several points that stood up when the teacher applied the Balanced Literacy Approach. First of all, a combination and balance of both whole language and phonics, is the best way to teach reading to students. A good way, based on her experience, to apply balanced literacy framework is by “mapping out a whole language classroom where students are taught the meaning of words and texts. Thus, instead of spending

time only focusing on sounding words out and other phonics-related lessons, children in their whole language classroom are surrounded by many different types of written language that they can explore.” This means they are able to choose their favorite reading (texts or books) and literally, read what they want to read, or at least, to make sure they are going to enhance the ability of choosing a book without problem. For example, during a typical balanced literacy session, she reads aloud to the class. She offers an explicit phonics lesson, like different words that include the blend ‘ch’ in them. Then, she gives her students plenty of time to read on their own or in small groups, allowing them to discover language and reading on their own as well. “Creating reading lessons that help students to not only learn to read, but learn to explore reading on their own will help students become lifelong learners.” Rog's (2003) explanation of balanced literacy is, "we work to balance a wide repertoire of teaching strategies and learning activities to meet the needs of all our students. A Balanced program requires opportunities for reading and writing to students, reading and writing with students, and reading and writing by students."

There are many different types of ideas, life contexts, personalities that build a human being, and students are not the exception. Since there are so many differences in students, a balanced literacy approach to learning has become accepted in the past few years. The method allows educators “to stop the pendulum from swinging and finding what works with many different learning;” this because, it uses a blend of both phonics and whole language in conjunction with many elements of best practice in literacy. Balanced literacy is a combination of essential instructional components needed to create a complete literacy program that can reach and instruct all-children. Moreover, balanced literacy gives the chance to students to have efficient instruction in phonics and experiences with rich literature of all forms. Activities designed to enhance meaning, understanding, and the love of literature, which is one of the main

goals of the present investigation, looking for student's growth and development in literacy. According to Lynn, J. (2007), scientists estimate that 95% of children can be taught to read. Many studies have made it possible to understand how literacy develops and what methods can be implemented in order to increase literacy learning among children. Balanced literacy has been found to be a highly effective means in increasing many literacy skills such as, reading, reading readiness, vocabulary development, and comprehension. The multilevel instruction of the balanced literacy approach gives teachers a chance to plan instruction and activities across content areas that can meet a range of needs (Arkebauer, MacDonald, & Palmer, 2002).

### **3.4.3 Autonomy**

Autonomy is a term used to describe “a person's or government's ability to make decisions, or speak and act on their own behalf, without interference from another party.” Sometimes this concept can easily be misunderstood, depending on the context in which it is being used. The website explains that in the case of individual adults, an autonomous person is someone who is capable of making a rational and informed decision on their own behalf, but it does not mean that they have the right to do whatever they want or disobey laws and regulations.

### **3.5 Data Collection Instruments**

To fulfill the objectives of this investigation, there are four instruments that will help the researcher to achieve the goals. In this case, the population under study are the fourth graders at Saint Michael School, located in San José, Costa Rica. Moreover, the instruments will be used to gather all the possible information of the target population. It will be applied one interview, a lesson plan, an observation, and a test in order to know if the students can successfully apply autonomy while using Balanced Literacy Approach.

### **3.5.1 Interview**

The importance of interviews lies in determining and analyzing the weaknesses and strengths of fourth graders at Saint Michael School when it comes to reading. The questions are going to be focused on their engagement during the lessons, their academic performance, and results. The first section will be to know if teachers believe students are autonomous when reading based on what they see in class. Then, the second section will let the researcher know how the students feel about reading outside and inside the classroom, their level of interest, commitment, and thoughts in general. Finally, the last section of questions will deal with their autonomy and the actions they take or not take when it comes to be autonomous.

The interviewer asked questions regarding the students' autonomy to a teacher who had previous experience with second graders and currently with fourth graders. It is important to highlight that the teacher has 2 years working at Saint Michael School, which is a private institution, that constantly encourages both students and teachers to work autonomously in order to achieve bilingualism, among other goals. The interviewer believed that this transition with an inferior level (second level) and the current experience with a superior level (fourth grade) would be very beneficial to investigate, much more thoroughly the subject of autonomy and reading comprehension, as well as the strategies proposed by the teacher in charge. The interview was done in a free lesson of the teacher. She answered a total of 12 questions regarding autonomy, interest on reading and its respective comprehension among other topics. The answers were recorded in the moment with the authorization of the interviewee, who knew that is confidential and research related.

### **3.5.2 Observation**

To observe classes contributes to evaluate the students' performance when they are developing something in particular. In this case, reading comprehension, as well as students' autonomy when reading. Two observations were made: one at the beginning to observe students and teacher interaction and performance, and a second one, in the last class that is going to be imparted, within the activities for that day the researcher will observe the whole process of experimentation. It might be important to stress that there are two students in the class learning through virtuality. The two observations were based on a criteria checklist, which were divided in three main sections: Lesson Structure, which intends to map out the teaching and learning that occurred in class, if it had a clear set of steps that need to be achieved; as a second section, the Students' Behavior, which as well as other environmental or societal issues, plays an important role in effective learning in the classrooms and how they are involved in reading classes (in this case for investigation purposes); and Teacher Management, which intends to analyze the management of the teacher in class and the direct effect it has on the students' abilities to learn, as well as teacher ability to teach in an accurate way.

### **3.5.3 Class Planning**

Classes of how to implement the different tools the balanced literacy approach provides is crucial to maintain the main goal of reading improvement and autonomy performance through classes. The researcher is going to teach three classes to fourth graders at Saint Michael School. Both classes will have a plan with all the strategies and a specific plan for each session which will allow the researcher to analyze a progress of the students within the classes. All the plans will include the objectives and the reading topics that the teacher in charge will need to cover during the week the investigator will work with them, but with the difference that all the planning is going to be adapted to balanced literacy approach.

### **3.5.4 Test (Pretest and Post Test)**

To check the knowledge that the target population has and allow future readers to have information about the results and application of the methods used and mentioned in the present investigation, a test is a crucial instrument. In the educational field, teachers assess their students to confirm that they have understood and correctly apply the methods, approaches, or techniques, or even all of them. In regards to the present investigation, a test will be applied at the end of the investigation to gather all the information and results of the students after the application of the Balanced Literacy Approach to encourage their autonomy when reading.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Analysis**

#### **4.1 Analysis and Interpretation of the Results**

In this section, the results collected through the different instruments applied during the experimental phase, will be analyzed. With this analysis, all the data collected will lead with the conclusion of the whole research, as this can relate the information stated in previous chapters with real life evidence. Consequently, the data provided by each instrument will be mentioned and analyzed. After analyzing the results, proper conclusions and recommendations can be taken out to do better in future related researches.

##### **4.1.1 Interview**

The process of interviewing the teacher would allow to know how much the teacher in charge of the children from 9 to 10 years old at Saint Michael School knew about ways of reading in general, methods or techniques they applied when reading as well as their knowledge about Balanced Literacy Approach and its different techniques. In this case, one teacher was interviewed. Through the answers, the teacher demonstrated that she did not know about the method however she included some reading and writing components with some differences or very similar. This also could be demonstrated after observing the first bimodal classes that she imparted. This led into a better interaction with the students with whom the researcher will work. Moreover, the teacher also explained that the school's objective was to form bilingual students. For this reason, the teachers were actually trying to improve the students' academic performance and interaction during bimodal classes.

These were the questions and the corresponding answers given by the interviewee. First, it is important to present the questionnaire given to the teacher. The next step was to analyze the answers given by the interviewee. Here, the researcher will present the answers and one short analysis of these answers in connection to her research. These are the questions, the answers, and their corresponding analysis:

Question #1: For how long have you been teaching at Saint Michael School?

Teacher: For 8 months. Before I was here, if am not wrong there were two or three different teachers. Kids were kind of sad because they did not feel like they had stability with any other teacher. They thought they were the problem.

By looking up this answer, the investigator believes that even though the teacher in charge does not has years of experience in this place, she has been involved in an interesting situation where she had to start from the bottom.

This means that the teacher already has enough experience working in the school and knows the way in which students learn and their academic performance. By knowing the academic performance, A bond of trust can be built between both parties (teacher and student) which allows the teacher to use different methodologies and combinations to reach their students and know their needs. For the student, it is important to possess this knowledge and about himself, since all learning is received, having greater knowledge of oneself is a step in favor for the acquisition of it, how they should study, how they can be more autonomous, think for themselves, decide for themselves. This can be built in a trust environment, but has to be constructed first.

Question #2: Have you ever heard about Balanced Literacy Approach or have any glance of what Balanced Literacy Approach is?

Teacher: I believe I have a certain idea. If I am not mistaken, is when you give the same amount of importance to reading and writing instructions, it is like both of them are just as important, and one (instruction) needs from the other one.

The answer given proves that the teacher interviewed has a specific concept defined, nor does it give much detail, however she has general knowledge about the Balanced Literacy Approach.

This is important for research since in the educational environment there is a wide variety of approaches, methods and techniques that are used. It is important to know if it is a method that is currently used in the Costa Rican education sector, to know the previous experience or inexperience using the Balanced Literacy Approach, if it is practical or not, if it is effective, or not, and why it ceased to be, among other aspects. That is, to know the depth of the method in the daily use by professionals in education or future interested in using the method.

Question #3: The balanced literacy approach has several components, among which we could mention: guided reading, read aloud, modeled writing, independent writing, shared reading. Do you feel familiar with any of the components mentioned?

Teacher: Sure. The common ones I believe. I use to put into practice Read Aloud and Guided Writing a lot during my classes.

The teacher knew some of the concepts but not where they came from, however this was a positive aspect in terms of the present investigation.

Similarly, having knowledge of the practices used by colleagues is important to test the validity of the method and its effectiveness, even if the interviewee does not know that they are techniques of the method.

Question #4: Did you know that the components mentioned before were typical of Balanced Literacy Approach.

Not at all. It is good to know though.

It is important that colleagues and future educators or those interested in the techniques of the Balanced Literacy Approach, know more about it, so that they apply it in the curriculum. This allows the use of the method to expand, and is a tool that fulfills or helps to fulfill what is intended in this research: Encourage students to read, to have reading comprehension autonomously for the rest of their lives.

Question #5: Based on your experience, do you believe that autonomy can be related or developed through reading?

Teacher: Yes, I do. When students or anyone in general reads, but in this case since we are talking about students, from one way or another there are new concepts they learn and throughout this process they acquire new habits which will generate autonomy, even if these are small steps, right?

The teacher agrees to the relationship between reading as a way to promote autonomy. The two central themes of this research are reading comprehension and autonomy, that is, part of

the research is to test and convince students and educators of the relationship between adequate reading comprehension and independence. "Autonomy is people's need to perceive that they have choices, that what they are doing is of their own volition, and that they are the source of their own actions" it is sought that students are independent it is sought that students are independent and that they resort to the method proposed by the researcher to acquire these skills and lifestyle.

Question #6: Based on your perception, do you believe children feel enthusiastic about reading?

Teacher: Well, it depends on the type of reading they read, they feel good in general, even excited. There are some others however, that they find super boring. Some like to read but they do not know how to start or how to do it and I know this because they have told me that exactly.

This question is intended to know what students feel about reading, not only because reading helps them grow mentally, emotionally, and psychologically, but because this provides an inclusive, respectful and accepting classroom environment, in addition to make them feel empowered to take charge of their own learning, then student-centered learning experiences are essential, Balanced Literacy Approach provides those experiences.

Question #7: Do you think the components mentioned before related to Balanced Literacy Approach can help to promote autonomy and at the same time, develop enthusiasm on fourth grade readers?

Teacher: Yes of course! For example, guided reading or writing will help them out to become more independent and to work with autonomy even outside of the classroom. More than ever, we need autonomy. The situation we are living (the pandemic) is not easy because technology its tricky, it allows low effort sometimes but I do not blame the kids, it's been hard

for all of us, but when giving the right tools and using those components you mentioned before, that could be very helpful for them. They have a life outside the classroom too and one they will be or will have to be more independent and autonomous, so I believe this is a right time to teach and learn that.

It is important to know if the techniques provided by the Balanced Literacy Approach are coupled with what students and teachers are looking for to learn and much more, in the post-pandemic context that is being lived, where many things are constantly changing in the socio-educational sector that affect students in some way.

Question #8: When using the components, did you notice any positive or negative impacts on students?

Yes, totally. They love to read aloud and when mixing it with role playing is even better because they not only have the opportunity to read but to interpret their characters. It is simply amazing to watch them being creative and happy, and knowing that they are learning. Shared writing is also really fun to them, even more if it is about those topics they like, because they have the opportunity to share ideas and have fun. They feel more excited when they get the chance to participate, to share, think, compare.

The researcher is sure about the idea of using Balanced Literacy Approach to develop a combination and balance of both, whole language and phonics, to teach reading, which will allow the student to know the meaning of words and texts, letting children to explore different types of written language, providing to them the ability to choose the books and texts that they want to read, instead of spending time only focusing on sounding words out and other phonics-related lessons.

Question #9: Would you use and recommend Balanced Literacy Approach?

Yes. I am not going to lie, there are moments that we as teachers have to stick to the program, even if our intention is to have fun while learning but I would definitely use this

Even if it is a progressive or minimal use, the researcher aims to promote the use of blah and convince its benefits to anyone who seeks to train their students in an integral way inside and outside the class.

#### **4.1.2 Observation**

In order to analyze the changes students had when adapting from virtual/hybrid to face to face classes, an observation was done. The researcher observed two classes, the first observation in february 2022, and another one on march, 2022. With the observations, the investigator could compare and notice if there was any change in fourth graders after their regular face-to-face classes were modified. Understanding that the previous year, they experienced many changes throughout the whole year because of the pandemic and the Costa Rican government protocols and dispositions. While observing the class, the investigator was verifying through a checklist students' attitudes and capabilities to analyze them later.

##### **4.1.2.1 First observation: before Balanced Literacy Approach**

The class observation was done in February 2022, the class started at 8:00, even though the teacher came to the classroom around 7:45 and greeted her students and asked them how they felt and how they were. Once that happened, the teacher started with with their daily routine, which included taking attendance, listening to the monthly song (every month they have to listen to a song in particular and try to memorize it) and a little prayer, usually the our father, however, the school has a schedule of prayers, and one person always prays using a microphone that allows all the students to listen the prayer. Once they prayed, the teacher created a small talk with them

and introduced them the topic which was sequence of story. She warmed up the class by playing a game about the topic, and then, asked them some questions about it since they already studied that topic the previous year. Teacher placed pictures of sequences in the whiteboard, and she asked the order of the events by asking “what happens first? what happens next? and after? Finally, what is the end of the story? By doing this, all the students tried to answer whether it was correct or not correct their answers, perhaps one or two did not say anything but paid attention. She used a PPT to show the questions as a guide while she was asking. After several examples of stories such as Harry Potter saga or short stories such as Little Red Ridding Hood, and having explained the topic, she asked the students for more examples and asked them to explain to the rest of their classmates the structure to create a sequence, to retell a story and comprehend what happened easily. While this was happening, there were some students in the back of the clas not paying attention. The teacher repeatedly asked them to please take their seats and pay attention. After arguing about the sequence and the questions, the teacher asked to students what words are specially mark in the questions and what they believed was the function of those words. Students wrote the sequencing words in their notebooks. She evaluated the knowledge by asking students to work with practice handout, “Charlie Mc Button” questions.

Some students struggled with that practice since it was reading comprehension, and they asked a lot meanings of words or misunderstood the questions. However, they felt very comfortable with the teacher and asked them all the questions they had. There was an evidential lack of depth in terms of analysis and that is something the teacher higlighted and talked about with the observer. Indirectly, it must be remembered the moment students are facing, and it is a transition from leaving virtuality to return to face-to-face. You may think that they were used to face-to-face attendance before the pandemic, since home school is not very common at least in

Costa Rica, however, this has affected the level of autonomy and bilingual education on Costa Rican students, and the saddest part is the evidential lack of nonexistent sort of backup to face the drop in the level of understanding and analysis and autonomy in students. However, the lack of back up do not relies on the school or students, but in the system that did not planned or was prepared to face something as big as post pandemic consequences.

The use of technology is indisputably a tool that if used with caution and in conjunction with the student and also as an accompaniment of the teacher, turns out to be beneficial and awakens a sea of knowledge. The problem lies in the dependency created and almost naturally imposed by the needs that is, the need and almost obligation of the students, in this case, the fourth grade students belonging to the Saint Michael School, who have received support through technology, as well as the moral support that is needed to continue studying, but the consequence of this, being an excessive time on the screens, since it resulted in that moment where the pandemic was at its peak, the only option to continue studying, the only option to expand, to look for information. The lack of analysis, and consequently the lack of autonomy to perform basic tasks, turned out to be a notable consequence now that students are in the classroom again. The researcher was able to observe indisputably the need and insecurity of the students to carry out the corresponding day-to-day work and assignments and even a lack of communication with their classmates and teachers. The researcher was able to observe how the students preferred to write and finish the work quickly, before stopping to analyze what they were doing. A high dependence and insecurity to express their ideas in written and oral form

In addition to a lot of lack of vocabulary. The interesting thing is that to some extent, it is normal to have vocabulary shortages, since they are students who are in the process of continuous learning English, the majority being native speakers of Spanish. However, it is not about the lack

of vocabulary, but the lack of analysis to align concepts and thus draw conclusions. For example, if a student does not know the meaning of a specific word, but the context in which this word is "surrounded" can establish an idea and even an accurate conclusion or close to being correct of something. However, there was a lot of dependence on the teacher to answer what they did not know, being much easier than stopping to analyze and understand the reading they were reading.

It is for this reason that it is estimated that the use of techniques of the Balanced Literacy Approach will prove to be motivating to achieve or begin to work a certain level of gradual autonomy that allows students to feel comfortable and naturally associated and linked to reading and understand it, analyze it even, learn to have some empathy with reading.

## **4.2 Class Planning**

In order to enhance students with reading comprehension, 4 classes were planned and 2 were allowed to teach using Balanced Literacy Approach techniques with activities that could catch students' attention, following the format asked by the school, as well as the topics that the students should study by this period. With this, student's engagement and performance when comprehending reading autonomously would increase. The lesson plans included objectives for each skill that should be practiced, a warmup, activities, and assessment in order to evaluate them. There were 23 students in total. Throughout the classes, students did appreciate the patience and dedication of the researcher and the new activities that were brought. Some of the students that did not talk at first, started to be more confident about themselves. This made evident that the lesson plans were working for all students. Techniques and activities in lesson plans needed to be adapted to each student, so all could fulfill the objectives.

On February 14th, the first class was taught. There were 23 students in the class, 1 via Zoom platform. The topic elements of a story (plot, theme, settings, characters, conflict, solution). To start, the researcher

stated the objectives; these were To identify the elements of a story and to aid comprehension of a story. Both objectives were intended for reading, however, with different directions. First one to acquire vocabulary and knowledge of the reading, and the second one focused on the autonomy and comprehension skills. The activities that were included in the class addressed the objectives and could help students to fulfill them. The activities that the researcher brought were the following. For the warm up, students had to visit the library and pick a book. They could go outside and read it if they wanted to. They can also make pairs but they have to read it independently, which was the most important part of the warm up since the application of the approach is present by addressing that instruction and making sure they did not depend on other person (whether is a student/classmate or teacher while reading). Afterwards, the researcher asked them to go back to the class, and asked the students to create a story together, where they chose the characters, setting, plot etc. for the story, which they read and wrote on their notebooks. This, in order to complete the first planned objective. Was observed that the students liked this activity and gave them the opportunity to interact and share ideas putting in practice the shared model technique of Balanced Literacy Approach, which consists of practice reading and writing (it is important to point out that writing is not the main skill to be developed in this investigation, but it is used indirectly and it is very much related to Balanced Literacy Approach characteristics) They were creating the story one by one and not all of them had the ability to

construct logical ideas or to address the correct vocabulary, nor participation because they felt afraid or ashamed; therefore, they had to ask for help and talk in order to complete the task, asked their other classmates or simply, ask to skip because they did not know or wanted to participate.

As an assesment, students had to pick 6 post-its, write and develop each element of a story according to the story the researcher and them created together. This assessment was individual and they could not cheat. They also had to answer 6 questions about the story on their notebook. The questions were about the elements of a story: plot, theme, settings, characters, conflict, solution.

Questions were written in a way they had to read, analyze and connect the question formulation with the story element, meaning, the questions were implicit, asking about the story elements. The questions were: Where is the story developed? (this as a referal of the setting), which is the central idea of the story (theme), create a short summary of the sequence of events (referral to the plot), which was the main problem (if any) of the story? (conflict) and which was the main solution (if any)?

When they finished, students kept talking about these activities as they were very motivated and happy, they shared with each other their answers. Irwas observed that students felt more comfortable with this kind of activities and made them interact more even if they had to work alone sometimes.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, the second class was taught. There were 24 students in the class. As a warm up, the researcher showed to the students a Power Point Presentation called “Name that story” They read some clues and guessed the name of the story. Once that happened the reseacher,

introduced with a Power Point Presentation called “Story Elements” characteristics about literary elements.

As Activities, students read the story “On the Banks of Plum Creek” pages 92-107 of their english books (Learning Destinations by Pearson). Once they read, they were asked to chose different students to read and create workstations. The teacher read aloud and students listened in their respective reading workstations outside. Teacher asked them previously to bring a pillow, slippers and a teddy bear if they wanted to make them feel more comfortable. When they finished reading the researchers encourage students to remember the name of characters, settings and ask some questions about the story.

At the end, they had to complete the handout #4 with practice about literary elements of the story “On the Banks of Plum Creek” and create an “Anchor Chart” about Literary Elements as a Summary. They will use P.P “Anchor Chart Story Elements” as a guide but they will create it in their own.

While doing this, the researcher applied the Read Aloud/Modeled Reading strategy to expand the access of children to texts with certain level of complexity and demonstrate proficient reading. This activity was done in workstations to make them feel comfortable and get them used to work independently, to read and analyze by their own even if they are around more people. At the end of the class the researcher explained them that and the importance to comprehend and analyze everything outside and inside the classroom without asking someone else to think for them.

With the lesson plans, which are attached to the annexes, the classes in which the investigator interacted with the target population (students from 9 to 10 years old at Saint

Michael School) could be more organized and, all the times, could be managed. In this way, the students learned all the objectives in a more dynamic way and included more than one ability to complement their learning. In addition, those students got engaged and interacted more, which was one of the main goals of the investigation. Moreover, the researcher gave more than one class to prove the effectiveness of eLearning and its application in this school in Desamparados. In general, the researcher performed her classes successfully during the days she could stay with the students. The great majority of the students performed excellent during the activities and learning the topics, which showed that the use of eLearning could give positive results in their academic performance.

#### **4.3 Pre and Post Test**

People by nature, evaluate the behavior of others based on their own psychology, that is, based on how they see life, on their previous and present experiences, thoughts, contexts in which they develop. However, the evaluation can not only be verbal or mental, it has to be a concrete test and as neutral as possible to criticize or prove something.

For this reason, it is important to know the meaning of the word "test", which, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, it is defined as a "critical examination, observation, or evaluation, or, the procedure of submitting a statement to such conditions or operations as will lead to its proof or disproof or to its acceptance or rejection". For the purposes of this research, the researcher adheres to the previous concept, seeking to make two evaluations: A Pre Test and a Post Test. Both assessments can be found in the anexes, with different names because of the school guidelines of assessments. Academic Coordination asks to change names, to make students and parents feel more comfortable and allow a sort of flexibility with assessments post pandemics.

The first evaluation, is the Pre Test, which aims to examine and observe the performance of fourth grade students of Saint Michael about readings other than those they already know or are familiar with in their books, in order to observe the impact that this means, observe student analysis and their behavior with respect to reading comprehension, this, without previously using the techniques of the Balanced Literacy Approach. The Pre Test was divided in three parts:

I Part Multiple Choice: Containing two readings about national sports, with questions of multiple choice. Students had to read questions about the respective readings and chose the correct option according to the reading by marking an “X” on the correct option. This part was chosen to be like that to analyze their level of reading comprehension without asking them previous knowledge about a reading topic, just pure reading comprehension.

II Part Short Answer: Containing one single short story of four paragraphs. Students had to read and comprehend the story, but besides that, they had to analyze the setting and plot of the story, details from the setting, thoughts of the characters and a final moral about the story, that is, an analysis in their own words. This part was included to analyze their own autonomous thoughts, feelings and analysis of implicit content.

To prove their results on the pre test, the researcher created a chart that can be found in the annexes, to evaluate their performance on six aspects: Reading Comprehension skills at literal level, reading comprehension skills at inferential level Grammar, Writing or Composition and Autonomy. Each aspect will be explained and analyzed throughout a comparative chart.

Type of Test	Skill	Quantity of students who achieve an excellent performance
Pre Test	Reading Comprehension Skills at literal level	13 of 24
	Reading Comprehension Skills at inferential level	3 of 24
	Grammar	3 of 24
	Writing or Composition	3 of 24
	Autonomy	2 of 24
Post Test	Skill	Quantity of students who achieve an excellent performance
	Reading Comprehension Skills at literal level	20 of 24
	Reading Comprehension Skills at inferential level	10 of 24
	Grammar	7 of 24
	Writing or Composition	7 of 24
	Autonomy	17 of 24

In the previous comparative chart can noticed the results of the Pre Test and Post Test based on the the 24 students of fourth grade from Saint Michael School answers. Five skills were evaluated: Autonomy, Writing or Composition, Grammar, Reading Comprehension Skills at Inferential Level and Reading Comprehension Skills at Literal Level.

As shown on the chart, the autonomy results of the Pre Test shown that the effectiveness of an excellent performance was only on 2 students of a total of 24. Only two students asked for repetition of instructions but not for meaning, context or answers explicitly. They worked alone, guided by the researcher just in terms of instructions.

When comparing to the Post Test, 17 of 24 were able to complete the second asesment without look for explicit contexts or answers. They worked alone, guided by the researcher just in terms of instructions. It is important to higlight this since Balanced Literacy Approach intends to be an approach more student centered than teacher centered which can be translated as the student figuring out their own learning and constructing their own meaning through comprehension by writing the ideas on a paper. There is an improvement when refering to autonomy which is reflected on the test results, students were doing their greatest effort and they just asked for repetition of instructions or clarifications, and tried to do it on their own, at least 17 of them. The rest, were more insecure about their own results and asked not many times but asked.

In the case of writing or composition, the second skill, the results showed 3 students of a total of 24 showed an excellent performance on the Pre Test results, which showed and which means that thay showed understandable sentences and meaningful sentences related to the context.

In the second assesment, the Post Test, 10 students of 24, wrote understandable answers which were related to the short stories and also showed accurate and realistic answers when sharing their opinions. This is a positive result since one of the improvements on reading comprehension, and autonomy is by constructing positive analysis, which they did.

As a third skill, Grammar was evaluated as the students' ability to provide information that helps the reading comprehension, only 3 were evaluated as excellent performers, the rest were under that level, on the Pre Test. This and the previous skill are related, meaning that the last 3 students who had an excellent performance on Writing skill, had a great performance on grammatical skills as well, which means that they had the same performance or a strict relationship between what they wrote and how they performed grammatical skills.

Grammar is very important when applying Balanced Literacy Approach since its related implicitly (for purposes of the present investigation) to reading, writing and word work, all of this balanced and combined with classroom context (motivation, environment, gradual release of autonomy)

When referring to Reading Comprehension at an Inferential Level on the first assessment only 3 of 24 students had an excellent performance, in the other hand, in the second try 10 of 24 had an excellent performance during the test. Inference is essential and it is part to Reading Comprehension.

When students infere, they draw conclusions based on information that has been implied rather than directly stated and is an essential skill in reading comprehension, when an student exercises this, it is a straight line and it is just about time to see positive results when refereing to autonomy as well. We make inferences every day, both in oral and written communication, is for

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this reason that it is very important to analyze this improvement, since it is something that is outside and inside the classroom. Autonomy comes when analyzing feels right and students have the confident with the previous motivation to analyze on their own.

Finally, when is about reading Comprehension Skills at literal level, this is where most of the students in both tests had the best performance. In the pre test, 13 of 24, which is more than the 50% of students had an excellent performance. In comparison with the Post Test, the result showed an improvement of 7 more students in comparison to the last test which was developed 2-3 weeks before, 20 of 24 students result to have excellent performances when comprehending reading in an explicit way.

The results show how fourth graders feel more comfortable and confident when having the information right in front of them, when the instructor clearly outlines what the learning goals are for the student or as in this case, offers clear, unambiguous explanations skills or things “to do”, and information structures they are presenting.

#### 4.4 Second Observation: Post Balanced Literacy Approach

They were 24 students. There were 16 girls and 8 boys, who ranked between 9 to 10 years old. All of them were respectful and seemed to have a very good behavior. Something the researcher was able to notice while observing them, was that they participated more or it seemed that they participated more enthusiastic when answering questions their teacher asked. They talked a little bit from time to time, but they did not talk in English. The teacher had to call their attention from time to time because they interrupt her sometimes. Overall, they had a good behaviour and from time to time they lost their concentration which is normal, at least for the researcher. The teacher and the researcher agreed on the teacher planning a class different than the ones developed with the researcher, to compare the results. The class was about author's purpose for writing. The teacher introduced the topic with a PPT about literary elements, right after playing the monthly song and dancing a little with them. The Presentation contained all the needed information about the author purpose: the definition, the goals or objectives of the author purpose (to inform, to entertain...) the questions one should ask in case of having to figure out the author purpose etc. They were paying attention even though it was a good quantity of information because the teacher had a good energy all the time, and the presentation she created was very fun and colorful. Once she finished explaining, students read the story of their english books (Learning Destinations) "The Horned Toad Prince" pages 134-147. She asked different students to read. Once they read, they wrote on their english notebook a summary about the Authors Purpose using an Anchor Chart. At the end of each purpose they cut information from handout

and paste it. After that, they completed the pages 118, 120 and 158 from Learning Destinations Book.

By doing the whole class the researcher noticed that they asked a lot about more reading, after the class but also during and before the class ended. Many children had the opportunity to go to the library and pick up the book, and they seen it as a “reward” for finishing quickly the assessments. While the observer was there, some students asked her if there were going to be more classess one day, and told her the books they found on the library as well. The observer however, noticed that kids were more involved in readings they could pick, more than the readings they were assigned to read. They asked the teacher if they could work in the previous workstations (the ones the reseacher prepared) and told her they felt comfortable by working in that way. Some of them, preffered to read alone. The observer noticed they wanted to finish very quickly because they wanted to go and read what they were reading, nevertheless, the teacher asked them to slow down since they were doing things in a hurry and they were not used to do it like that. When all of them finished, they went to recess and some of them asked the teacher if they could go to the library as well (they have to ask for permission to go during the recess) and she agreed.

Analyzing these results will be helpful for the teacher and students at Saint Michael School because they can implement this learning method and its techniques to improve their passion for reading and their independance since they have lost their interest in other things different than videogames or social media (in words of the teacher and based on some observations from the researcher). The pandemics has become part of the problem as well, since all of them were much of the time behind a screen on 2021, and they got used to do what they had to do and not analyze and think what they were doing, it was all about completing tasks in a

period of time without wasting time, and without control in some cases. Teachers could not visualize what they were doing all the time behind the screen and sometimes could not assess in concrete if their analysis was theirs or someone else's because of the same reason.

Having students back the present year, might result as a big opportunity for them and teachers to reinforce their reading skills and their autonomy outside of a computer or someone else's analysis, something that they have lost even before the pandemics but got worst during that time.

By looking the results, it can be concluded that students might also have a lack of motivation and what they need could be activities that make them feel motivated and make them feel the power, the autonomy they have and what they can do by analyzing and taking action.

According to some of the recommendations proposed by Guay, Ratelle, and Chanal (2008), it is necessary to face that the lack of motivation, becomes a gradual drop in educational and social level, which significantly affects the student, and in the other hand, the effects of autonomy "support on autonomous motivation and the effects on the latter on positive outcomes in the class setting, such as persistence, achievement, and well-being".

It is necessary for teachers, readers and anyone interested in the present investigation to understand students' positions too. Normally, persons wish to act freely, meaning that, interfering with a student's liberty at certain point also interferes with the ways in which they want to be motivated, the kind of person they want to be and, hence, their autonomy. However, "a person who wishes to be restricted in various ways, whether by the discipline of the monastery, regimentation of the army, or even by coercion, is not, on that account alone, less autonomous". Further, it is about the condition of being a chooser that is linked to being an autonomous person.

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“Liberty, power and control over important aspects of one’s life are not the same as autonomy but are necessary conditions for individuals to develop their own aims and interests and to make their values effective in the living of their lives.”

It is not about let them do whatever they want to do, whenever they want to do, but to establish healthy limits and let them choose what they want to read, how they want to feel and act about that reading, identify that, and work based on that.

The observer could analyze a different behaviour on students when they feel they are not doing things because they have to, because is a duty, but having an idea that they cannot cross certain limits but they can reach a point of feeling they are not useless, that they can contribute by thinking, by analyzing on their own and then sharing the ideas with others, when they have the power to choose what they want to read and comprehend it, share it with pleasure, and at the same time, doing a task they have to do, without complaining or feeling anxious about it.

## **Chapter V**

### **Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1 Purpose of the conclusion**

It is not a secret that in order to wrap up an investigation report, some conclusions are obtained. According to the Sacred Heart University (2020), conclusions are the result of the main arguments stated on the theoretical framework of each research. This means that with the conclusions, the researcher will prove and demonstrate the effectiveness of, the instruments used, if they worked as planned, and if the target population could take advantage of those results. Further in this chapter, a detailed description of the conclusions of the whole research will be pointed out objective by objective, as well some recommendations in order to make sure that future researchers following the same methodology can be able to apply or carry out the investigation with no fails or setbacks.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

As stated before, a detailed description of what was gotten from the investigation will be detailed objective by objective. In that way, all results can be analyzed in a more organized and better way. With this being said, the following conclusions were determined after finishing the whole investigation process.

### **5.2.1 To design reading comprehension strategies based on Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.**

After observing and analyzing the students needs when referring to developing reading comprehension by building autonomy, it is concluded that design reading strategies to encourage fourth grade students' autonomy at Saint Michael School is completely necessary to identify many characteristics and contexts that allows other teachers and readers understand how to encourage students' autonomy to enhance reading comprehension and analysis outside and inside the classroom. Besides that, it can be concluded that the planning that was designed on the target population, was based on Balanced Literacy Approach techniques, specially those who allowed students to work independently, and also, they were based on other Balanced Literacy Approach experiences, planning activities and opinions based on proven data about the method application.

### **5.2.2 To apply reading comprehension strategies based on Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.**

From this objective, the conclusion that was reached was that certainly, when applying Balanced Literacy Approach it allow students to develop their reading comprehension skills and to grow on autonomy and consequently in other subskills, all of this, based on the results obtained. Students got more motivated and consequently analytic when reading and autonomous when developing and thinking. In addition, both the class observation phase and the correct techniques adapted to each student, allowed the researcher to reach them and to make sure they would fulfill all the objectives for each single class and, consequently, to improve their current English skills into a more fluent and clearer one. Within the techniques used, students enjoyed the most the Balanced Literacy Approach techniques as they were much more motivated, and this obviously helped them to interiorize better what they have learned.

During the process of discovering which of the techniques the Balanced Literacy Approach were better to use, the researcher tried to choose the techniques that allow the students to work always thinking of their own processes, but feeling the support of other classmates and the teacher. The techniques that were more useful were reading aloud, shared reading, guided and finally, independent reading. Nevertheless, the researcher used all of them four as a transition to show them all the stages and what they could achieve at the end. The goal was to push them to read independently without depending on other person or device to find meaning without trying to comprehend what they were reading at first.

### **5.2.3 To assess the outcomes of applying Balanced Literacy Approach for encouraging students' autonomy.**

Throughout the investigation of the theory that supported this research, it could be found that the by applying the Balanced Literacy Approach and by including in the curriculum more student-centered and motivational activities to the students, their academic performance can be improved during reading classes and their confidence as well.

It is important to take into consideration that the change from virtual classes to face-to-face classes again was a big adjustment for students at Saint Michael School. The context post pandemic has taken all the levels to have a lag when it comes to english level. The fourth graders at Saint Michael School lived two years in front of a screen, which means that they were second graders when the pandemics interrupt their learning process. That is why is important to highlight that they depend very much onto someone else, as an effect of letting someone (the teacher) for two years show them what to do, and the process of autonomy is in fact, slow and it has to be a constant motivation.

That is why, ever since Balanced Literacy Approach was being applied there was a huge

change in their performance outcome, students felt motivated which led to a natural competition of being the best, by analyzing and coming with conclusions on their own, instead of giving the responsibility to someone else, students came up with their own analysis, thoughts and ideas.

#### **5.4 Restatement of the Research Question**

For this research, the problem that the investigator decided to solve was how to encouraging readers' autonomy through balanced literacy approach in 4th graders at Saint Michael School during the first quarter of 2022. After the whole research was carried out and with the help of the instruments set for this project in order to improve classroom interaction, the researcher needed to take into consideration the background of the target audience to know how to implement methods that involved the students in their classes in a way in which they could improve their academic performance, as well. In this case, with this specific target audience, their improvement at the time of implementing Balanced Literacy to enhance reading comprehension and autonomous readers, was notable.

## 5.5 Unexpected Results

Throughout the experimental phase, many results were found when working with the target population, which in this case were children from 9 to 10 years old at Saint Michael School in Desamparados, Costa Rica. These results were satisfactory because it could be proven that the objectives of the research could help the target population and set a new beginning for the students, as well as the teachers. Therefore, some of the most meaningful unexpected results will be mentioned. First, within the unexpected results, it is necessary to remark that students reacted better than expected because at the beginning, when the observations were done, students were more reserved and felt insecure about how they expressed their ideas about learning contexts or personal analysis. Their communicative skills were very poor, even in advanced levels. However, by carefully choosing the activities and methodologies applied within the lesson plans, students were more committed to orally and written express their ideas and interact more among them and with the teacher, as well. In addition, they also learned how to implement the different rules and structures used in this marvelous language.

Moreover, students really appreciated the effort that the teacher did. This because they did not manage to interiorize all topics at first, but with patience and more techniques, they were able to really learn and apply all that knowledge. This led students into having a more open mind, and improving the acquisition of future knowledge regarding more complex topics. Last but not least, students at Saint Michael School showed even more commitment to learn as they improved their level of understanding after interacting with the new implemented techniques within the methodology. At the beginning, the students who did not participate at all, were the ones who

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ended up participating the most. This shows that with the correct approach, students who could seem a “basket case,” for some, were able to show their true potential, even when the topics were not interesting for them.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

First, it is very important to establish limits in the class, is about a good relationship from both parties, not just one. It is a teamwork improving their performance since the teacher brings ideas to make them feel better and develop their english skills but they need to show understanding and maturity as well during the whole process.

Then, recommendation for the teacher is to create accessible content and material. This means, reducing barriers of comprehension, ensuring that all content that is going to be shared is clear, accesible to all the students, including students with dissabilities or conditions.

Finally, in order to make students’ feel much more interactive perhaps from the beginning, is for future colleagues to bring them activities and create an environment full of realistic motivation.. As children, they need to learn in a way in which they like it, which they feel comfortable and important. This because of the situation we are living, to make them know and remember that they are important and what they do has the power to change their own lives and other lives too.

## **Annexes**

**Student: Nicole Amanda Fernández Zúñiga**

**This interview was created for Saint Michael School fourth graders 'teacher for the investigation ENCOURAGING READERS' AUTONOMY THROUGH BALANCED LITERACY APPROACH IN 4TH GRADERS AT SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL DURING THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2022**

**Objective: To encourage readers' autonomy through balanced literacy approach in 4th graders at saint michael school during the first quarter of 2022**

**The interview will be applied face to face in the school. The interviewer will ask the questions to the teacher and write her answer on the computer**

**Question #1: For how long have you been teaching at Saint Michael School?**

**Question #2: Have you ever heard about Balanced Literacy Approach or have any plan.**

**Question #3: The balanced literacy approach has several components, among which we could mention: guided reading, read aloud, modeled writing, independent writing, shared reading. Do you feel familiar with any of the components mentioned?**

**Question #4: Did you know that the components mentioned before were typical of Balanced Literacy Approach.**

**Question #5: Based on your experience, do you believe that autonomy can be related or developed through reading?**

**Question #6: Based on your perception, do you believe children feel enthusiastic about reading?**

**Question #7: Do you think the components mentioned before related to Balanced Literacy Approach can help to promote autonomy and at the same time, develop enthusiasm on fourth grade readers?**

**Question #8: When using the components, did you notice any positive or negative impacts on students?**

**Question #9: Would you use and recommend Balanced Literacy Approach?**

## Observations' checklist

Criteria	Observed	Not observed
<b>Lesson Structure</b>		
Lesson has good structure (clear beginning, logical procession and sense of ending)		
Presence of variety in the lesson (activities and instruments used)		
Presence of rhythm and flow		
Instructions were clear during the whole lesson		
Effective follow up of the lesson		
Presence of reading structure/method (models strategy, explains and gives example)		
Presence of book/reading introduction		
Presence of appropriate level of text/book		
Presence of visual aids (use of computer, posters, pictures or others)		
<b>Students' behaviour</b>		
Students were involved during the whole lesson		
Students had fair time to analyze reading		
Students gave their own ideas and analysis		
Students follow the instructions given without inconvenience		

Students seem prepared & organized for activity		
There is effective work as individuals, small or large groups		
Effective communication of their wants, needs and emotions towards reading lesson		
Easily distracted/short periods of concentration		
Lack of interest towards the lesson and/or reading		
Appear to struggle with reading assignments		
Stays on topic during the whole lesson		
<b>Teacher management</b>		
Teacher use simple language		
Teacher use difficult language		
Teacher uses target language		
Teacher is logical and clear when giving instructions		
Teacher provides good voice quality and eye-contact		
Presence of gestures and mimes		
Teacher do not state the obvious		
Teacher demonstrates more than explaining		
Teacher explains more than it demonstrates		
Teacher provides feedback when needed		
Teacher keeps students involved and entertained during learning time		

Teacher responded to students need in an accurate way		
Teacher allows students to give/share their own ideas and analysis		
Teacher encourages independence in students before, during and after the lesson		
Teacher provides enough time for students to have time for practice		
Teacher coaches students individually or in groups		
Teacher gives clues or examples of how reach some goal when struggling with terms		
Other observations:		

## Observations' checklist

Criteria	Observed	Not observed
<b>Lesson Structure</b>		
Lesson has good structure (clear beginning, logical procession and sense of ending)	X	
Presence of variety in the lesson (activities and instruments used)	X	
Presence of rhythm and flow	X	
Instructions were clear during the whole lesson	X	
Effective follow up of the lesson	X	
Presence of reading structure/method (models strategy, explains and gives example)	X	
Presence of book/reading introduction	X	
Presence of appropriate level of text/book	X	
Presence of visual aids (use of computer, posters, pictures or others)	X	
<b>Students' behaviour</b>		
Students were involved during the whole lesson	X	
Students had fair time to analyze reading	X	
Students gave their own ideas and analysis	X	
Students follow the instructions given without inconvenience	X	

Students seem prepared & organized for activity	x	
There is effective work as individuals, small or large groups	x	
Effective communication of their wants, needs and emotions towards reading lesson		x
Easily distracted/short periods of concentration	x	
Lack of interest towards the lesson and/or reading		x
Appear to struggle with reading assignments		x
Stays on topic during the whole lesson		
<b>Teacher managment</b>		
Teacher use simple language	x	
Teacher use difficult language	x	
Teacher uses target language	x	
Teacher is logical and clear when giving instructions	x	
Teacher provides good voice quality and eye-contact	x	
Presence of gestures and mimes	x	
Teacher do not state the obvious	x	
Teacher demonstrates more than explaining	x	
Teacher explains more than it demonstrates	x	
Teacher provides feedback when needed	x	
Teacher keeps students involved and entairtaned during learning time	x	

Teacher responded to students need in an accurate way	x	
Teacher allows students to give/share their own ideas and analysis	x	
Teacher encourages independence in students before, during and after the lesson	x	
Teacher provides enough time for students to have time for practice	x	
Teacher coaches students individually or in groups	x	
Teacher gives clues or examples of how reach some goal when struggling with terms	x	
Other observations:		

ENGLISH Expected Learning	ASSIGNMENTS
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>To identify the elements of a story (plot, theme, settings, characters, conflict, solution)</p> <p>To aid comprehension of a story</p>	<p><b>Warm up:</b> Students will visit the library and pick a book. They will go outside and read it, they can also make pairs but they have to read it independently.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> The teacher will show them the next online game. We will create a story together, they will choose the characters, setting, plot etc. for the story. <a href="https://pbskids.org/xavier/games/xavier-story-creator">https://pbskids.org/xavier/games/xavier-story-creator</a> (use of shared reading technique)</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Students will have 6 post-its, they will write and develop each element of a story according to the story we created together.</p> <p>Students will answer 5 questions about the story on their notebook.</p>
<p><b>Reading</b></p> <p>To develop reading comprehension skills</p>	<p><b>Warm up:</b> Students will watch the next video with a “Concentration Challenge”. Reinforce the importance of concentration and how it can help you when comprehending a reading.</p> <p><b>Activities:</b> Read the story “ELLEN OCHOA SPACE PIONER” on pages 70-73. Ss and teacher are going to read it together outside</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Complete handout Tic Tac Toe Reading Comprehension about about the story. This activity is done individual</p>

ENGLISH Expected Learning	ASSIGNMENTS
<p data-bbox="184 328 317 358"><b>Reading</b></p> <p data-bbox="121 423 386 509"><b>“On the Banks of Plum Creek”</b></p> <p data-bbox="79 651 390 737">To identify the literary elements of a story.</p> <p data-bbox="79 870 422 956">To use literary elements to aim comprehension.</p>	<p data-bbox="449 328 2022 414"><b>Warm Up:</b> Show to the students P.P “Name that story” They will read some clues and guess the name of the story. Introduce with P.P “Story Elements” about literary elements.</p> <p data-bbox="449 464 2022 607"><b>Activities:</b> Students will read the story “On the Banks of Plum Creek” pages 92-107. Choose different students to read and create workstations. When they finish reading encourage students to remember the name of characters, settings and ask some questions about the story.</p> <p data-bbox="449 657 1875 688">Complete handout #4 with practice about literary elements of the story “On the Banks of Plum Creek”</p> <p data-bbox="449 738 2022 824"><b>Assessment:</b> Students will create an “Anchor Chart” about Literary Elements as a Summary. They will use P.P “Anchor Chart Story Elements” as a guide but they will create it in their own.</p>
<p data-bbox="184 1075 317 1105"><b>Reading</b></p> <p data-bbox="79 1141 422 1227">To make and adjust comprehension.</p> <p data-bbox="79 1279 422 1365">To retell sequence from a Reading.</p>	<p data-bbox="449 1075 1077 1105"><b>Warm up:</b> Watch a video of retelling a story:</p> <p data-bbox="449 1130 1665 1161"><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w33-m8-geuM&amp;ab_channel=TeachingWithoutFrills">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w33-m8-geuM&amp;ab_channel=TeachingWithoutFrills</a></p> <p data-bbox="449 1211 2022 1299"><b>Activities:</b> Read the story “The Recyclers” page 14-25. Each student will read a part of the story. When they finish reading they will complete pages 26-27 and retell the story.</p> <p data-bbox="449 1349 2022 1380"><b>Assessment:</b> Each student will have a handout with “transition words” they can use to retell the beginning-</p>


	middle and end of a story.
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**Comparative Chart**

Type of Test	Skill	Quantity of students who achieve an excellent performance
Pre Test	Reading Comprehension Skills at literal level	13 of 24
	Reading Comprehension Skills at inferential level	3 of 24
	Grammar	3 of 24
	Writing or Composition	3 of 24
	Autonomy	2 of 24
Post Test	Skill	Quantity of students who achieve an excellent performance
	Reading Comprehension Skills at literal level	20 of 24
	Reading Comprehension Skills at inferential level	10 of 24
	Grammar	7 of 24

	Writing or Composition	7 of 24
	Autonomy	17 of 24

## Pre and Post Test




**SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL**

**English**

First Assessment

4th Level



Teacher: Nicole Fernández

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

1. Listen to each question carefully.
2. Ask the teacher if you have any doubt.

1 Part: Multiple Choice  
Circle the correct answer for each question.

**PASSION FOR SOCCER!**

Costa Rica is considered the rising star of the CONCACAF region. In the early years of the 20th century, semi-organized soccer clubs began to appear and organize games all around the country. After several attempts, seven Costa Rican clubs came together and organized a national soccer league and a soccer federation in 1921, under the presidency of José Albertazzi Avendaño. (Costa Rica Soccer Federation).

The Ticos took home the Central American and Caribbean Cup in 1941, 1946, 1948, 1953, 1955, 1960 and 1961, and they won the CONCACAF championship in 1963 and 1969. More recently, Costa Rica was crowned Central American champion in 1991, 1997. In the world Cup of 1990 celebrated in Italy, Hernán Medford scored a goal during the first half of the game to send Sweden back to their homeland, and Czechoslovakia sent Ticos' Selection back home in the second round.

Ticos' passion for soccer didn't die at that time. In 2002, Costa Rica had another chance. In the qualifying rounds, "La Sele" finished first in its zone above Mexico, USA, Honduras, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, when Costa Rica scored 23 points in 10 games. However, the team's great achievement was something that no one else in the area had ever done: they beat the Mexicans in the gigantic Estadio Azteca in Mexico.

Costa Rica got to the World Cup in Group C during the World Cup of 2002 in Korea and Japan. Their first game was against China on June 4th, then against Turkey. Their last game in the group was against the two-time champion Brazil, that beat them 5 - 2 in the first half.

The national team did not do much in the last World Cup in Germany 2006, but Ticos have not lost their faith in "La Sele".

Adapted from Reading Strategies

1. When was the first soccer league in Costa Rica?

- A. In 1901
- B. In 1912
- C. After the 1940s
- D. During the 1920s

2. Which selection beat the Mexican team in the Estadio Azteca?

- A. United States
- B. Costa Rica
- C. Jamaica
- D. Brazil

3. What was the achievement of Costa Rica in the Central America and Caribbean Cup?

- A. Organize the tournament eight times
- B. Take home a championship in 1990
- C. Win the Cup more than six times
- D. Beat the Swedish Team

4. What happened to the Tico Selection in the first round of the World Cup of 1990?

The Costa Rican team \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. sent Medford to Sweden
- B. beat Sweden with a goal of Medford
- C. scored a goal and sent Czechoslovakia home
- D. beat three teams and passed to the second round

#### PABLO CESAR WANCHOPE

Everybody knows Wanchope. He was born in Heredia in 1976. He is 1.93 m tall and weighs 78 kg. Today he is one of the most outstanding soccer players in the world. In December 2000, he rose to become the 22nd player in FIFA.

He left Heredia's Team in 1997 and signed on as a player for Derby County. In 1999, he left for West Ham United.

In March 2002, playing as a forward for Manchester, he suffered a knee injury. In July, still fighting to save his career, he underwent an operation for the same knee problem. In 2003, he was operated on again for a hip problem and suffered from a dislocated shoulder while training.

1. Wanchope's most important professional achievement was to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. play for Derby County in 1996
- B. become an unknown soccer player
- C. travel to England to Manchester City
- D. be in 22nd place in the FIFA World Players

2. Pablo had to fight to \_\_\_\_\_.

- A. have a surgery
- B. save his career
- C. visit Costa Rica
- D. be out for 1.93 m

3. In 2002, Wanchope played as a \_\_\_\_\_ for Manchester City Team.

- A. forward
- B. defense
- C. mid-fielder
- D. goal keeper

II Part: Short Answer

Based on the following story, answer the questions.

**Taking Time for What's Really Important**

Grandma Miriam carried the mound of dirty laundry through the narrow living room, carefully stepping around her granddaughter Noemi. Noemi had just turned three years old and was intensely curious about many things. The little girl held a book upside down in her hands. Carefully, Noemi turned the book over and examined the pictures.

"Read this?" she asked her grandmother, her dark brown eyes hopeful and questioning.

Grandma Miriam smiled but shook her head regretfully. "I'm sorry, sweetheart," she answered, "but I can't right now. I have to get this laundry started, and then we've got to go to the grocery store. Maybe we can read something a little later on." She walked to the utility room, set the laundry basket on the floor, and then moved into the kitchen of the small house to check on the teakettle, which wasn't boiling yet.

She looked back into the living room, where little Noemi had dropped the book to one side and was now staring at the television instead. Grandma Miriam was reminded of her own children, now grown up, back when Miriam was younger and even busier than she was now. There had never seemed to be enough time for anything but the endless cycle of cleaning, shopping, cooking, and getting the kids ready for school. The years had flown by in a blur of coats flying on and off, without a clear memory of the days that had disappeared into the past.

The kettle whistled, and Miriam turned to shut off the stove. She untied her apron, hung it on a hook on the kitchen door, and then walked back into the living room. She sat on the floor with a grunt and picked up Noemi's book. The girl grinned and leaned against Grandma Miriam so she could see and listen at the same time. "Let's read right now," Grandma Miriam said. "I can do the laundry later."

1. What is the setting and plot of the story?

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2. What details from the story give you the setting?

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3. What makes Grandma Miriam change her mind?

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4. What are really important things we should take time for?

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SAINT MICHAEL SCHOOL



**English**  
Second Assessment

4th Level



Teacher: Nicole Fernández

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions**

- 1. Listen to each question carefully.
- 2. Ask the teacher if you have any doubt.

I Part: Short Answer

Answer the next questions based on the story "Search for Freedom"

1-Who was the Head of the Church of England?

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2-What was considered as treason for them?

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3-Why did the Separatists left England?

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4-What was the problem of living in South Holland?

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Part: Production

Complete the chart based on the reading Taking Time for What's Really Important.

Taking Time for What's Really Important

Grandma Miriam carried the mound of dirty laundry through the narrow living room, carefully stepping around her granddaughter, Noemi. Noemi had just turned three years old and was intensely curious about many things. The little girl held a book upside down in her hands. Carefully, Noemi turned the book over and examined the pictures.

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Title: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Character:</u>	<u>Setting:</u>
<u>Problem:</u>	
<u>Solution:</u>	
<u>Main Event:</u>	



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