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Designing an EFL Reading Program to Promote Literacy Skills, Critical Thinking, and Creativity

This article details the design and implementation of a reading program in a university EFL setting as a strategy to encourage creativity, critical thinking, collaborative learning, and reading for enjoyment (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001; Richards & Renandya, 2002). This student-centered project challenged ELLs to address issues such as bullying, racism, relationships, culture, and human rights through reading texts and activities, spanning a range of language levels from beginners to high-intermediate. The program includes a combination of intensive and extensive reading, lower- and higher-order thinking skills, and creative language production in the form of reading group discussions, poster sessions, and character role-plays. Included are sample lesson plans, reading materials, and activities, which can easily be modified for other language-learning contexts.

Introduction

The role that reading plays in allowing individuals to access knowledge, expand their views of the world, and develop their critical-thinking skills is unquestionable. When a person reads, his or her linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies can benefit directly from this intellectual activity. Although the importance of reading today is clearly acknowledged, many students, particularly second language learners, struggle with not only enjoying reading but also with excelling at basic literacy. Because of this need, national, regional, and local educational systems throughout the world struggle to implement reading programs that will both develop students' literacy skills and engage students in complex critical thought. This is true in (a) monolingual contexts where students are

reading in their native languages; (b) ESL contexts where newcomers are reading in the language of their new home country; (c) EFL contexts where foreign students are reading in the language of the country where they are studying; and, of course, (d) EFL contexts where students in a foreign country are reading in English. This article details a reading program in that fourth context, a program for students in Colombia who are learning to read in English. We believe that this account of our program will be instructive for second language reading programs in all contexts where teachers are striving to improve student engagement, critical thinking, and creativity.

Clearly, a lack of development in effective reading skills negatively affects students' educational performance in all areas; for this reason, our institution found a way to strengthen reading-skills strategies by encouraging students' creativity. Regardless of student population or context, presenting reading to struggling students through creative activities can motivate them to engage with the texts and explore deeper meaning (Tsai, 2013). In addition, studies have shown that student engagement in reading is highest when teachers implement extensive reading (Sheu, 2004; Yu, 1999), the use of novels (Murphy, 2010), and collaborative reading projects between parents and students (Omasta & Wolf, 1991).

Literature Review

Creativity is a key aspect to this reading plan given that our student population does not have a preference for reading. Creativity, which, according to Lucas (cited in Saebø, McCammon, & O'Farrell, 2007, p. 207) "is a state of mind in which all of our intelligences are working together," conveys observing, thinking, and innovating and can be found in the creative arts as well as in any situation. In the process of creating, students generate, plan, and produce, for example, when they "put elements together to form a novel, coherent whole or make an original product" (Krathwohl, 2002, p. 214). Creative-thinking skills as well as critical-thinking skills

come together under the heading of higher-order thinking skills that are grounded in lower level thinking. ... Students have to know the basic facts, understand the concepts, and apply what they know so that they can pick the topic apart through analysis, make a judgment call, or create something new based on the idea. (Conklin, 2012, pp. 16-17)

Therefore, by encouraging students to represent their knowledge and understanding of the world through creative means, not only can they

feel motivated to engage in activities proposed but they can also move from simpler mental processes to more complex ones. That is to say, readers will need to memorize, recall, identify, contrast, combine, synthesize, analyze, and evaluate. They initially remember and understand information, which serves as input to have them demonstrate understanding through applying, evaluating, and creating, which has been placed by Anderson and Krathwohl (2001) at the top of mental processes.

When designing a creative reading plan, one can consider two popular perspectives to teach reading in the EFL classroom, intensive and extensive reading. While intensive reading entails that “each text is read carefully and thoroughly for maximum comprehension” (Aebersold & Field, 1997, as cited in Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009, p. 161), extensive reading “is intended to develop good reading habits, to build up knowledge of vocabulary and structure, and to encourage a liking for reading” (Richards, Platt, & Platt, 1992, p. 133). These two approaches can be combined for the purpose of teaching reading in the EFL/ESL classroom; instead of opposing each other, these two approaches should be seen as complementing each other (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

Because creativity can also be triggered by collaborative work, a reading plan can incorporate learning through the development of shared work with peers. This type of collaboration differs from traditional group work in the sense that members of a collaborative group work together and have a common goal to achieve and, in achieving such goal, each member of the group has a responsibility to fulfill. In aiming to achieve the same goal, students can appreciate language as a social tool (Frances & Martin, 2000) and the learning, as the collective construction of knowledge or understanding, as a social phenomenon. By working together toward the same objective, students can develop a sense of community in which weaker students may be supported by the more advanced ones. They can adopt different roles in the pursuit of their goal, free from the tension that individual work may motivate, and they can also have the opportunity to discuss, disagree, come to agreements, negotiate, and draw conclusions together (Barkley, Cross, & Major, 2014). In general terms, collaborative learning can strengthen students’ self-esteem, enhance their satisfaction with the learning experience, and overall encourage a more positive attitude toward the content or subject matter.

Description of the Reading Plan

To encourage the development of students’ reading skills, our undergraduate English faculty designed the reading plan. First, level

coordinators created a reading practice combining characteristics of intensive and extensive reading at three different levels of the program: A2 (beginning), B1 (intermediate), and B2 (high-intermediate) on CEFR, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). Second, teachers chose four books per level. Third, students selected one of these books to read based on their personal interests. Fourth, students participated in small-group peer discussions in class. Finally, teachers assessed students' reading comprehension through individual speaking tasks.

Choice of Texts

Teachers provide students with a variety of genres such as romance, comedy, drama, mystery, adventure, and bildungsroman, with four book options per level in order to foster student autonomy, interest, and creativity. By giving students the freedom to choose based on their personal interests, they are naturally more engaged in reproducing their understanding of the literature through creative means. Themes within these works focus on racism, sexism, bullying, human rights, theocracies, being a child of immigrants, bilingualism, stereotypes, friendship, familial relationships (parent/child and sibling), social class, and religion. Students can read as many of the books as they want for pleasure; however, they will be assessed on only one book each semester. Teachers give B2 students two collections of short stories and two graphic novels to choose from while B1 and A2 students use graded readers.

Design of In-Class Activities

Students complete in-class activities varying from English language comprehension to literary concepts to develop their language as well as thinking skills, including analysis and interpretation. Teachers assign students to read sections of their books each week over a period of four weeks; then, students who read the same book are grouped into in-class reading discussion groups to encourage collaborative work. This creates a supportive environment whereby stronger students explain aspects of the text to weaker students. A2 and B1 students' graded readers include in-text activities focusing on character development, grammar within the book, vocabulary, and overall comprehension and critical-thinking questions. As B2 students read authentic materials, they answer comprehension questions and refer to vocabulary lists for historical and cultural terms that are not easily found via the Internet or bilingual dictionaries. For example, in *This Is How You Lose Her*, the term *Aunt Jemima* is explained as not only being a pancake mix named after an African American woman but also

as a racist symbol as she is considered a servant to white people. While students might be able to search online to find out about the pancake mix, they would likely not understand that this brand is considered racist by many (see Appendix A).

Teachers give B1 and B2 students specific roles in the form of a jigsaw activity. Each week, students rotate throughout different roles within their groups in order to understand the reading more deeply by looking at it through different lenses:

- Discussion generator, who creates questions for the group to answer and keeps track of group members' speaking time so that all can participate;
- Character analyst, who reflects on each main character's personality and their relationship to others;
- Conflict identifier, who focuses on large conflicts within the text and their importance in moving along the plot of the story;
- Language analyst, who chooses unknown vocabulary, writes down a definition, the sentence from the book, and his or her own example sentence;
- Investigator and connector, who seeks connections between the text and students' own lives (see Appendix B).

In completing this jigsaw activity, students are encouraged to be more actively engaged in analyzing the text for basic meaning as well as contextualizing how the text relates to themselves and the world around them. Students are required to use their imaginations and their understanding of the text to accomplish this collaborative task. By conducting this analysis together, students delve deeper into social issues such as gender roles, religious norms, and human rights within the texts as well as within their own lives.

Aside from completing graded-reader activities or teacher-generated activities, students are encouraged to creatively engage with their texts. For example, some teachers ask students to design and illustrate posters that highlight main themes and characters in their books so that students can transition from simply reading for basic comprehension to using their knowledge about their book to create a work of art. Students then present their posters to the class, explaining the important elements. As a number of students are graphic arts majors, they combine their artistic abilities with reading in English to create unique interpretations of what they read.

Another activity includes character role-plays, wherein students create new scenes, such as new endings, prequels, or sequels for their

books and act them out for the class. Students are also asked to improvise according to the way a character would react in a given situation or, conversely, to do the opposite of what the character would typically do. There is ample creative room for comedy, enjoyment, and linguistic exploration with these role-plays, leading students to engage more deeply with the texts, think critically about what they read, and collectively create alternative representations of the literature.

Additionally, A2 students play a board game designed specifically for this reading project (see Appendix C). The board game consists of squares that require students to discuss particular aspects of the book, such as the main characters, climax, and setting, if their pawn lands there. Teachers group students with others who read different books so that each student is an expert on his or her book; the student then has to clearly explain the book to others who are not familiar with it. Students enjoy summarizing their books in the form of a board game, empowering them to have further extended discussions. Students move from a simple recount of a text to playfully and creatively engaging with it, oftentimes forgetting that they are using a second language to communicate with their peers.

Assessment of Speaking-Reading Connection

The reading plan culminates with a speaking assessment based on students' chosen books. While the combination of extensive and intensive reading may at first seem at odds, our students tend to be primarily motivated by their course grades. Therefore, to ensure the effectiveness of the reading plan, one of the six assessments of the course is linked to it. For all levels, the speaking assessments are consistent with previous classroom speaking activities so that students feel prepared and confident during their performance. As students progress throughout the levels, teacher intervention and/or controlled activities lessen, resulting in an increase of student autonomy to match their heightening language proficiency.

Teachers meet individually with B2 students and present a set of selected sections from each book, either a paragraph or two from a short story, or a few frames from a graphic novel. Teachers carefully choose these selections for their importance to the overall moral of the book so that students who have read and participated in the class activities can easily discuss the importance of that selection. Students are also given practice-speaking activities beforehand to better understand what their speaking assessment will entail (see Appendix D). Returning to *This Is How You Lose Her*, students prepare for their speaking assessment by analyzing an excerpt from this short-

story collection. This particular excerpt showcases the cultural and linguistic challenges that immigrants face in their new country (see Appendix E).

The speaking assessments challenge students to establish a connection between the world presented within the text and their own. Furthermore, teacher-initiated questions are designed to trigger their imaginations. Teachers meet with each B1 student to listen to a story that he or she creates, inspired by the book that he or she read. Students creatively combine details they gleaned from the book with storytelling techniques they learned as part of a module in their textbook. Teachers can ask students clarification questions about their stories, if need be (see Appendix F). For example, one student read *King Solomon's Mines*, which addresses the adventurous searches of different characters in southern Africa. For his speaking assessment, this student built another adventure into the book about these characters' stumbling upon a drug deal, which clearly resembled a latent issue within his own society. We can see here that the student successfully combined confrontational elements of the book with his own reality.

Teachers again meet one-on-one with A2 students to discuss the book by illustrating what they learned about the characters, setting, time period, sequence of events, conflict, and connection to their own lives. Students fill out graphic organizers to identify specific information within the text. Next, they collectively reflect on how the book relates to their own life experiences. They finally use this information to summarize the book when talking with their teacher. To ensure consistency throughout each level and in the entire program, all teachers use a standardized rubric, created for each level, when grading students' speaking performances. Teachers share these rubrics with their students beforehand so that students clearly understand what is expected from them.

Pilot and Modifications

For this program, each level underwent a piloting process before massive implementation occurred across all sections of each level. For this reason, one or two teachers per level, along with the level coordinator, helped choose the books and created the activities and assessments. Based on feedback that we received from teachers and students, we made the following changes:

1. For all levels, class time for the reading plan was extended to give more space for creative acts such as role-plays and artwork.

2. For A2 students, instead of modified classics, we selected more modern graded-reader options as students find them more appealing and relatable.
3. For B2 students, we increased speaking assessment time from five to eight minutes since students spoke longer about their books than originally expected.
4. For B1 students, we changed the in-class activity from the same jigsaw that B2 students complete because B1 students were not as motivated to do their homework. Now, B1 students collectively complete in-class worksheets, which address textual elements such as characters, plot summary, and student opinion of the text. Students move past simply understanding the text to creatively connecting the story to their own lives and the world around them (see Appendix G).

After each level underwent the piloting and feedback process, designers applied massive implementation across all classes within each level. Piloting teachers created documents, such as a “Student Guide to Reading Plan,” to aid in clarity and consistency. The A2 version details the reasoning behind the reading plan, the steps that students need to take for success, and their four book options with a brief introduction (see Appendix H). In addition, teachers have extension time throughout the semester during which they have time in class to creatively engage students with the course material. During the reading plan part of the semester, teachers continually share ideas with each other for how to further interest students in the books that they are reading. Collaborative work extends to teachers, not only students, within this reading plan in an effort to optimize student creativity and engagement.

Student, Teacher, and Administrative Feedback

After we implemented the plan on a wide scale, we continued to make modifications based on student, teacher, and administrator suggestions:

1. We selected new B1 graded readers because two of the original ones had been made into movies, which some students had watched in Spanish.
2. We extended the reading plan over a longer time in all levels to help students balance their course work.
3. We narrowed the number of book options to reduce teacher workload as they need to have a firm grasp of all the books

their students read. Teachers are also given access to the books at the beginning of the semester to have plenty of time to prepare.

Throughout successive semesters and as the plan continues to be modified to better meet the students' and teachers' needs, tangible benefits have been observed. Students' confidence and comfort levels have increased when participating in group analysis that requires their oral participation, and because they are speaking about texts they chose. Their speaking skills also increased from having the opportunity to make sense out of discussion topics when ample space to read is provided. Because students have more class time to discuss the book with their group members, students are more talkative during the speaking assessment than in previous semesters, when the assessment was based on the textbook material.

Furthermore, using interesting texts and engaging in creative activities with these texts, such as playing a board game, designing posters, or creating role-plays, encourages students to enjoy reading for pleasure and to collaborate with their peers in analyzing the texts. Some students do not have a history of reading literature for pleasure, even within their native language, so this reading plan gives them the opportunity to develop this interest. The ability to think critically about what they read and, moreover, to be able to articulate their analysis is evident during their speaking assessments. The B2 texts selected were done so with the purpose of including challenging, yet common, examples of discrimination, such as racism, sexism, and classism. Due to their language level, students are able to tackle such difficult issues.

What has been more surprising, albeit equally rewarding, is to witness A2 students discuss the exact same issues. While our students have a linguistic advantage as many of these terms are Spanish and English cognates, the ease with which they relate these textual themes to their personal lives and surroundings is impressive. For instance, one A2 book, *A Faraway World*, addresses racism that a Nigerian British boy encounters from bullies in his school. As Colombia, particularly on the Caribbean coast, is racially diverse, students have responded to this book by mentioning stories of discrimination they experienced or witnessed themselves. Students not only make connections between racism in Colombia but also discrimination based on class, political party membership, and religious affiliation. Clearly the ability to recognize prejudice in a variety of forms is an invaluable tool that we would like our students to have, aside from simply teaching them the English language. Oftentimes as educators, we have the responsibility to guide our students in identifying bias and in helping

them in making informed conclusions. Within many academic contexts, issues such as discrimination and abuse of power occur. Opening safe spaces for discussion on how to address them are pertinent for students' overall education.

Conclusion

This article described the design and implementation of a creative reading plan in an undergraduate EFL program in Colombia. By illustrating the steps that we took to develop our students' literacy skills, as well as their creative, critical-thinking, and collaboration skills, all of which enhanced their motivation to persist in reading, we have demonstrated a successful model for other programs to follow. Through the implementation of this reading plan, we have learned that collaborative work with teachers, constant revision via feedback from teachers and students alike, and innovative student-led activities are essential elements for success.

For those interested in implementing a reading plan to foster reading skills, critical thinking, and creativity among students, we recommend combining different approaches, such as merging elements of extensive and intensive reading. This is positive for students because it opens up space for individual and collaborative exploration of reading. Furthermore, scaffolding critical-thinking activities results in a richer understanding of the text. After students work collaboratively to analyze texts, in individual assessments they are able to more confidently articulate a deeper grasp of the text's main themes. Overall, incorporating creativity throughout each stage of the reading plan, as well as offering multiple texts for students to choose from based on their own interests, allows for the enjoyable exploration of literature, stronger development of students' reading, thinking, and productive skills, and reflection on their own lives and struggles. For our students, creatively representing their understanding of the literature and its themes through drawing posters, playing board games, or acting out scenes is the most compelling aspect of the reading plan. We hope that others seriously consider incorporating these types of activities into any reading program.

Our reading plan continues to work well for all involved because we are open to constantly tweaking the texts and activities based on student and teacher feedback every semester. For example, passionate teachers are invited to assist the level coordinator in creating new materials when innovative ideas arise. As teachers know their own students best, all of our teachers are encouraged to create and share ideas to better reach student interests and needs. This results in placing ownership of the reading plan in the hands of the teachers them-

selves and in keeping the reading plan fresh as it constantly evolves. It is our hope that other educators, administrators, and curriculum designers can find useful information from our experience to adapt to their own academic contexts.

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Appendix A
B2: Vocabulary and Reading Questions

This Is How You Lose Her

#1: Invierno (pp. 119-145)

Pop Culture	Explanation	Page #
Main strip	main road	121
JFK	airport in New York City	121
Sesame Street	children's educational TV show	123
Vietnam	Southeast Asian country that was at war 1955-1975 with the US because of the US's fear of communism	123
Abbott & Costello	American comedians in the 1940s and '50s	131
Farting around	messing around, wasting time, playing	137
Hit the door	leave	141

Questions

1. What is different from their lives in the Dominican Republic and in New York? Give examples from the text to support your answer.
 2. How and why is Spanish used in the story? Why did the author choose to use some Spanish words instead of only English?
 3. What do we learn about race and beauty in this sentence:
“While Rafa’s hair was straight and glided through a comb like a Caribbean grandparent’s dream, my hair still had enough of the African to condemn me to endless combings and out-of-this-world haircuts” (p. 126)?
-

Pop Culture	Explanation	Page #
Fooling herself	lying to herself	93
Took the cake	to be the best or the worst in a situation	93
Fronted	to pretend to be something you're not in order to hide something about yourself	93
Jerz	someone from New Jersey	93
Throw down	to physically fight with someone	93
Slow his roll	slow down, calm down, take a rest	94
Polack	derogatory or insulting term for a Polish person	96
Mets	professional baseball team from Queens, New York	96
Fresh off the boat	new immigrants to a country who haven't yet assimilated into the host nation's culture, language, and behavior	100
Thick	stupid	100
Gujarati	an ethnic group in India	100
Iller	better, sweeter, cooler	103
Eyeing me	looking directly at me to show a message	104
Flip out	to be upset or worried	105
Nabe	neighborhood	114
Tripping	lying	116

Questions

1. How and why is Spanish used in the story? Why did the author choose to use some Spanish words instead of only English?
2. How are the characters Rafa and Yuniór (the author) different in this story as teenagers compared to "Invierno"? How are they similar to their younger selves?
3. What do we learn about class status in this short story? Why does their mother call Pura negative names associated with lower classes and with promiscuity?

Pop Culture	Explanation	Page #
Homegirl	someone you're friends with but don't want to date	3
Screw	to treat someone badly	5
Pan out	work out, be successful	7
Nigger	1. derogatory name for slaves who were brought mostly from West Africa, then called the "Nigerian Basin," which makes up part of Nigeria and Niger today 2. describes an ignorant, uneducated, foolish individual regardless of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, etc. 3. endearing term between two or more individuals to describe a friendship or bond	7/8
Flex	show off	8
Brugal	Dominican rum	9
Aunt Jemima	pancake mix named after an African American woman; many consider her image racist as she's seen as someone who was a servant to white people	14
Bwana	Swahili for "master"; Yunior's comparing this man to slaves who used to help white slave owners find or punish other slaves in order to have a better relationship with the slave owners	16

Questions

1. After Magda's father learns that Yunior cheated on his daughter, he refuses to speak Spanish with him. Why is language so important in relationships?
2. On page 15, Yunior is critical of older, non-Spanish-speaking white men who are with young, dark-skinned Dominican women. Why? Does this situation happen in Colombia as well?
3. Are you surprised that Yunior was unfaithful to Magda? Why or why not? Give details from all three short stories to support your answer.

Appendix B
B2: Jigsaw

Book: _____ **Selection:** _____

Complete your assigned section. Then, share that information with your group members in English. As your group members share their information, take notes on the analysis they've done over the reading.

1. Discussion Director

Create three questions to discuss with your group members. These discussion questions should not be factual; rather, they should be open-ended questions that can be discussed as a group.

- o NO (Factual): In what year did Heidi travel to Germany?
- o YES (Open-ended): How do you think Heidi's problem relates to problems we have as students?

Question #1: _____

Answer #1: _____

Question #2: _____

Answer #2: _____

Question #3: _____

Answer #3: _____

2. Character Analyst

Character	Relationship to Other Characters	Role of Character in Book	Adjectives to Describe Characters

3. Theme Analyst

Themes: Issues such as race, gender, sexuality, discrimination, self-acceptance, social class, politics, religion, relationships, ethics, morality, etc.	Explanation: What does the author want to show you about this issue? Why is it important? How does it relate to themes in other sections of the book? What is your interpretation?

4. Conflict Identifier

Conflict: Between characters, between characters and environment, society, or family, or within the characters themselves	Conflict explanation: Who or what does the conflict involve?	Why is the conflict important?

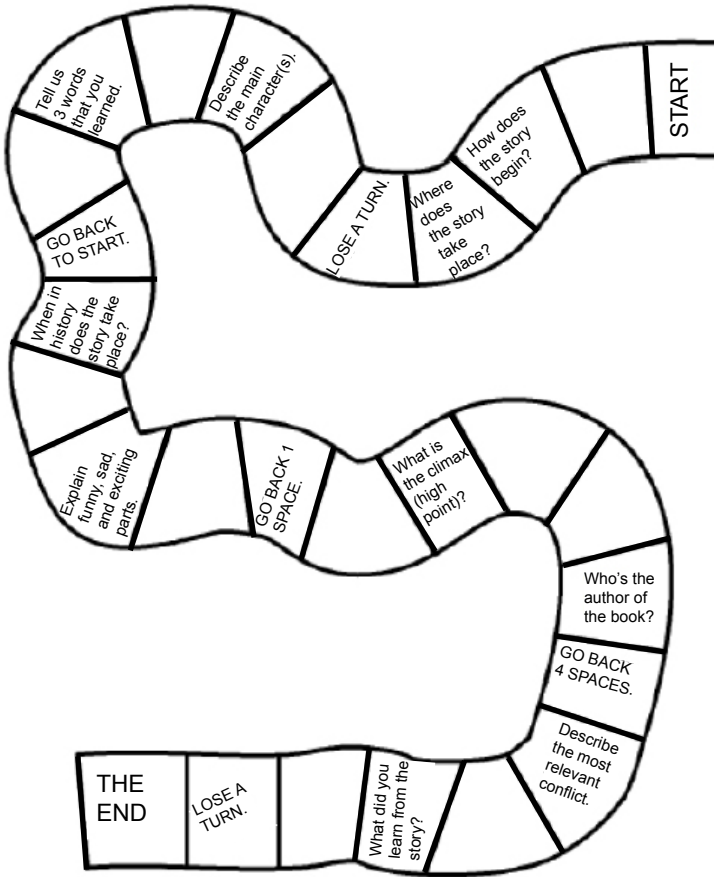
5. Language Analyst

Word or Phrase	Page #	Sentence Containing This Word	Definition	Your Example Sentence

6. Investigator and Connector

Connection: Between the book and your own world, culture, or society	Connection Explanation

Appendix C A2: Board Game



Appendix D

B2: Speaking Assessment—Presenting a Book Analysis

What am I going to do?

- This is going to be an individual, spontaneous speaking assessment. It will take approximately 8 minutes.
- Your teacher will participate minimally in the assessment in the form of asking you questions.
- Of course, all communication will be in English. You can't use Spanish.
- You will be given a selection from the book you chose to read. (Each student will have a different section to analyze.) If you read a graphic novel, the selection will contain images and text. If you read a short story collection, the selection will contain about half a page of related text.
- You will have 3 minutes to prepare before presenting an analysis of your book section. During this preparation time, you can take notes. You don't have to write complete sentences or completely fill in the chart.
- You will have 3-5 minutes to explain what is represented and how, your knowledge of the characters, how the section relates to the plot, overall theme, mood, and tone. For graphic novels, you can also discuss images, colors, and size. For a short story, you can also discuss language and writing style.
- This is your opportunity to impress your teacher. Show him/her what you can do. Speak, speak, and speak!
- When you are finished, you can leave. Please don't talk to your classmates about your book selection and your teacher's questions.

How do I prepare?

- Review all vocabulary, reading questions, and jigsaws for each reading section (parts 1, 2, and 3) of your book. Feel free to review the material with your fellow group members in order to help each other prepare.

How is my teacher going to assess me?

- He/she is going to use the following rubric. He/she will explain it to you and post this assignment sheet on Blackboard.

5	4	3	2	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent analysis of book selection. • Ability to talk confidently about book's characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone. • Good responses to professor's follow-up questions. • Excellent vocabulary, grammar and fluency. No interference with communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good analysis of book selection. • Ability to talk easily about book's characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone. • Good responses to professor's follow-up questions. • Good vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. No interference with communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate analysis of book selection. • Ability to talk about book's characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone. • Adequate responses to professor's follow-up questions. • Adequate vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. No interference with communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate analysis of book selection. • Limited ability to talk about book's characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone. • Limited and/or poor responses to professor's follow-up questions. • Adequate vocabulary, grammar, and fluency. Slight interference with communication. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate analysis of book selection. • Limited ability to talk about book's characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone. • Limited and/or poor responses to professor's follow-up questions. • Inadequate vocabulary and/or grammar and/or fluency. Interference with communication.

Lateness Deduction (-0.5): Students will receive a deduction if late to their speaking appointment.

Name: _____ Book Selection: _____

Presenting a Book Analysis

You have 3 minutes to prepare before presenting your book selection. If you would like, you can use the following chart to take notes. You don't have to write complete sentences or completely fill in the chart. You have 3-5 minutes to explain the following information.

	Notes
BOOK: Introduce your selection by giving a short summary of it and how it connects to the rest of the story.	
ANALYSIS: Explain how your selection represents characters, plot, theme, mood, and tone.	
IMPORTANCE: For a graphic novel, discuss images, colors, and size. For a short story, discuss language and writing style.	
CONCLUSION: Show how this reading influenced or affected you. What did it make you think about?	

Appendix E

B2: Practice Speaking Selection

Invierno: *This Is How You Lose Her* by Díaz

One day I saw the brother and sister from apartment four gearing up to go play, and instead of waving I pulled on my parka. ... The air outside was very cold and I nearly fell down our steps. No one in the neighborhood was the shoveling type. Throwing my scarf over my mouth, I stumbled across the uneven crust of snow. I caught up to the brother and sister at the side of our building. Wait up! I yelled. I want to play with you.

The brother watched me with a half grin, not understanding a word I'd said, his arms scrunched nervously at his sides. His hair was a frightening no-color. His sister had green eyes and her freckled face was cowed in a hood of pink fur. We had on the same brand of mittens, bought cheap from Two Guys. I stopped and we faced each other, our white breath nearly reaching across the distance between us. The world was ice and the ice burned with sunlight. This was my first real encounter with Americans and I felt loose and capable. I motioned with my mittens and smiled. The sister turned to her brother and laughed. He said something to her and then she ran to where the other children were, the peals of her laughter trailing over her shoulder like the spumes of her hot breath.

I've been meaning to come out, I said. But my father won't let us right now. He thinks we're too young, but look, I'm older than your sister, and my brother looks older than you.

The brother pointed at himself. Eric, he said. My name's Yuniór, I said.

His grin never faded. Turning, he walked over to the approaching group of children. ... The gringo children watched me from a distance and then walked away.

Appendix F

B1: Speaking Assessment—Telling a Story

What am I going to do?

- ***In your own words***, you will create and tell your own story based on an event from the book you have read for the Reading Plan. Make sure your story includes beginning, conflict, and end.
- This is going to be an individual activity with your teacher. You will have approximately 3-4 minutes to tell your story.
- Your teacher may ask you some questions at the end of your story to clarify any ideas, information, or events that were not clear.
- Make sure you think about how you will sequence your story in a coherent way.
- **Remember to use the storytelling techniques from Unit 6 in your textbook. You will not be giving a summary of the book or a scene in the book. You will create your own story inspired by an event from the book you read.**
- **Do not simply memorize a scene from your book.**
- Your teacher will call your name at random to present your story. This is not negotiable.
- All communication will be in English. You cannot use Spanish.
- This is your opportunity to impress your teacher. Show him/her what you can do. Speak, speak, and speak!
- When you are finished, you can leave.

What grammar, vocabulary, and expressions do I have to use?

- Use the English that you know to communicate your ideas.
- When possible, use grammar, vocabulary, techniques, and expressions that you practiced in class.

How is my teacher going to assess me?

- He/she is going to use a rubric. He/she will explain it to you and post it on Blackboard.
- The rubric includes the following criteria:
 - √ Sharing a story
 - √ Vocabulary
 - √ Accuracy
 - √ Fluency

Appendix G

B1: Reading Plan Activity #1

Part One: Discussion

Spend a few minutes discussing the following questions with your group to get everyone thinking about what you have just read. (3-5 minutes)

- How did you experience the book? Did it immediately catch your attention, or did it take you a while to get engaged with the story? Why?
- How do you feel about the story so far? Are you excited about continuing to read? Why or why not?
- What has been your favorite thing about the book so far? Is there a character you really like or an event that really surprised you or caught your attention?

Part Two: Characters

Think about the main characters in the story. With your group members fill out the following chart with information from the story and important characters. (12-15 minutes)

Character's name	Relationship to other characters in the story (sibling, friend, spouse, etc. ...)	Role of character in book (what does the character do?)	How would you describe the character?

Part Three: Summarizing

Now, as a group, create a short summary of the story so far. Think about the main events that have happened up to this point, and try to put them in your own words using the organizational graphic below. (20 minutes)

Event 1	Event 2
Event 3	Event 4

Did any of these events surprise you? Were there any events you didn't agree with or thought should have happened in a different way?

Check your vocabulary sheet with your classmates. Did you have any of the same words? Check your sentence examples. Did they use the vocabulary word correctly?

Appendix H

A2: Student Guide to Reading Plan

What am I going to do?

- You're going to read!

Why?

- To experience the joy of reading
- To improve your reading speed, vocabulary, and critical-thinking skills
- To learn about other people, cultures, and points of view
- To fulfill a universitywide reading movement

How?

- Choose one out of four reading options (next page).
- Our Reading Plan will cover three weeks of class, with two chapters to be read each week.
- You'll find the reading schedule posted on Blackboard as well.
- Bring your book to class. You must read before class as there isn't enough time to read during class.
- Participate in a reading discussion with your group members each week. Together, you will complete the prereading and after-reading activities about your book. You do not have to do the activities for homework; you only need to read for homework.

Does this affect my grade?

- Yes! Your Speaking Assessment, which is worth 20% of your total class grade, will be based off of your book. Clearly the more you prepare, the higher your Speaking Assessment grade will likely be. You can do so by reading, answering the comprehension questions, and actively engaging in your reading discussion each week. We'll discuss this assessment in more depth when we are nearer to the end of the semester.

1. *The Egyptian Souvenir* by Mary Flagan

“I’m going to solve this mystery! I’m tired, but before I turn out the light, I’m going to write down all the things I’ll need for my investigation.” Sally wants to be a detective and her hobby is solving mysteries. But this time the mystery is really difficult! Read about Sally’s adventures and enjoy!” <http://www.elionline.com/eng/book-details?2600/free#tabDescrizione-tab>



2. *A Faraway World* by Maria Luisa Banfi

“I am British, just like you!” Marquat, who was born in the United Kingdom to Nigerian parents, is an intelligent boy but also sometimes insecure and shy. He hopes to do well in life and works hard to achieve his dreams. One day, unfortunately, he comes across racial prejudices because of the colour of his skin. However, just as he begins to think he’s alone, he discovers the value of friendship which will help him overcome any problem.” <http://www.elionline.com/eng/book-details?3036/free>



3. *Val's Diary* by Mary Flagan

“School’s over at last! Summer holidays are here but who wants to spend them in the countryside? Not Val, of course! She hates the country, but eventually she’ll change her mind. Guess why! Read her diary and find out. She tells her diary all about herself, her moods, her emotions and her dreams. This country holiday is really boring and she can’t stand it, but don’t despair ... something very exciting will happen soon, thanks to Luke and the others!” <http://www.elionline.com/eng/book-details?2605/free>



4. *Expedition Brazil* by Anna Claudia Ramos

“Niara, Yoshi and Gunnar are the lucky winners of a trip to Brazil. While making a documentary about the country, they will visit the largest city in South America, São Paulo, the unbelievable capital, Brasília, lovely Rio de Janeiro, and two natural wonders of the world, the wetlands of Pantanal and the great Amazon rainforest. Nothing could ever prepare these three friends for the new experiences they are about to have.” <http://www.elionline.com/eng/book-details?2597/free>

