

Investigating Ways of Making Reading Comprehension Lessons More Participative and Successful

Ngo Ngué Élodie Gaëlle

Lycée de Manguen II

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-2653-7056>

DOI: [10.23350/elcrj.226](https://doi.org/10.23350/elcrj.226)

Article History

Received: Feb 6, 2024

Accepted: Aug 15, 2025

Published: Nov 10, 2025

Keywords: Exploratory Action Research; Teaching Reading Comprehension; Rural Settings; Reflection

© The Author(s).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Abstract

This article explores EFL students' poor participation in Reading comprehension lessons under an Exploratory Action Research model. In Cameroon, English language is a required subject. I teach in a purely French-based rural area, thus making it very challenging both to teach and to learn English. Seventy-five 9th, 11th and 12th grades students, mixed-level students from my three classes, whose ages range from 10 to 21, were participants. The data were collected through a questionnaire and a reflective journal in order to answer three research questions. First, an exploratory practice was carried out to understand what caused students' lack of motivation and passivity. Following the findings of the exploratory practice, an Action Research was carried out with the same three classes in a four-weeks period. Research findings through questionnaires and sample lessons taught revealed that if we move into learners' area of interest with varied activities, teaching and learning will be more effective. The paper closes with self-reflection on what strategies were successful so as to instil the habit of reading and related activities beyond the classroom.

Introduction

Reading comprehension is an important skill that enables students to build language comprehension skill to increase their understanding of a text read. It also helps students to learn new information and to employ strategies to interact with the text. Understanding the complexity faced by language learners with reading comprehension, Kendeou, McMaster, and Christ (2016) shares that it "calls for concerted efforts to develop assessments that help identify sources of difficulties and to design instructional approaches to prevent or ameliorate these difficulties" (p.8). I decided to carry out research on making reading comprehension more accessible for language learners because, for a number of years I have been teaching, my students have demonstrated negative attitude towards reading comprehension and lack of willingness to collaborate in reading lesson. Classroom participation was a big issue in my classes – as Turner and Patrick (2004) say, participation in lessons facilitates learning. In their paper, they list various students' participation forms: classic ones include overt, inclusive, voluntary participation. Furthermore, students may also participate without these behavioral indicators of involvement by watching, listening and thinking.

The Context

Teaching Context

English language is taught as a compulsory subject at all levels of the education system of Cameroon from pre-nursery to tertiary levels. History records that since 1961, after the Reunification, Cameroon has implemented an exoglossic language policy based on the exclusive use of English and French as the languages of teaching and learning (Chiatoh, 2012; Chumbow, 1990). The law N°98/004 of 14th April 1998 on education in Cameroon, title 1, article 3, clearly says “The State shall enshrine bilingualism at all levels of education as a factor of national unity and integration”. French and English were the languages chosen for that purpose. Following the national curriculum, the academic subject of English, referred to as “*Anglais*” in the French educational sub-system is taught three hours per week in middle school classes (that is 6th – 9th grades, all four language-skills included); three hours for Science students and four hours for Art students per week in high school classes (10th-12th grades, all four language-skills included).

Lycée bilingue de Manguen II (Government Bilingual High School Manguen II) is the rural school in the Centre Region of Cameroon where I teach. This means that our school offers both English and French educational sub-systems. Out of the eighteen high schools found in the Matomb division, only three schools are bilingual. I teach French, English language and English literature to students under the Anglo-Saxon educational system on the one hand. And I also teach English language to French-speaking mixed-level students in the 9th, 11th and 12th grades on the other hand. These are examination preparation classes. That is the classes prepare students who will sit for national exams at the end of the school year thus granting them a certificate for entrance to the upper level in their studies. Moving from the 11th grade requires students to pass the national exam and passing the 12th grade national exam allows students to enter university or professional institutions. Indeed, if at the end of the process, results are not successful, the student will repeat the needed class. I am the head of the *Anglais* Department in my school and we have four “*Anglais*” teachers for the entire school.

Local Community Context

Found in the Center region of Cameroon, precisely in the Nyong-et-Kellé division and in the Matomb subdivision, Manguen II is the village which hosts the school. Therefore, our school population essentially comes from the latter village and from six neighbouring villages. The languages spoken in the community, all villages included are *Bassa'a* (i.e., local language) and French. Accessed through motor bikes principally and vehicles, the village suffers from lack of constant electricity shortages. Electricity could be present three days in a week. Yes! If you might ask yourself the question, classes go on in the school without light. Because there is no local market, people have to travel to Yaoundé, capital city, about 100 miles away, or go to the subdivision village to add to what their farms produce as food. People living in this community are mostly farmers producing palm oil making, which is the trade mark of the local area. Information and communication tools are limited in the areas as very few homes have televisions and very few students have smartphones.

Student Community Context

Students show little interest for English. Why? Because their immediate linguistic environment is essentially local: the *Bassa'a* community and formal (that is French): teachers, non-native friends (friends having a different mother tongue than *Bassa'a*) and various administrative structures. That said, the teaching of English language becomes so challenging and somehow frustrating as English is only spoken in the context of the classroom. Regarding the communicative language approach, Swan (1985) made it clear that mother tongue interference hampers L3 (English) acquisition. Yet, Atkinson (1993, 2) pointed out that “It is impossible to talk of a ‘right balance’ or a perfect model for using L1- it’s not that simple. L1 can be a valuable resource if it is used at appropriate times and in appropriate ways”. L1 (i.e., *Bassa'a* in my context) selective and limited use and strategies in the course of teaching L3 (i.e., English) have resulted in very little fruits in enhancing learning. Another factor that accounts for students’ demotivation regarding English is that students have very limited resources such as course books. Students also have any little to no assistance at home from their parents in their studies. English-speaking educational role-models are lacking in my students’ lives and surroundings (e.g. from the discussions I had with them). The few they can name are from informal activities (like selling food crops; selling palm oil; selling palm wine or alcohol in the surroundings). Indeed, English language in this locality is not valued for future economic success.

The Issue

Many of my students could neither read or decode English text (that is reading the text aloud for pronunciation purposes or engage in silently to extract meaning from written text), nor perform well on reading comprehension tasks. I have noticed that most of the students in my classes have problems in reading comprehension. They fail to predict the meaning of new words; to summarise the text, just to name a few issues. They also have problems answering comprehension questions during class. No matter the strategies I put in place to make learning effective in the reading lesson, I have noticed that they were not participative at all. Grammar translation, as an alternative approach, at some point in time from L3 (English language) to L1 (*Bassa'a* which is my native language too), did not help. Few students engaged enough to follow the lesson; others were busy discussing other topics in French with friends and not paying attention to the lesson. And last but not the least, the performances of students were quite poor in that any section of the reading comprehension content.

What is at stake goes beyond helping students to score good marks and grades in the reading section of the “*Anglais Paper*”, which is a two-hour (middle school) and a three-hour high school level exam paper and national exam with four sections of ten marks each: grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and composition. Students are to write essays on one of the three proposed topics (see Appendix 4). Believing that reflective practice is part of learning, meaning and relevancy is created thus initiating growth and change. Following John Dewey’s (1933) famous paraphrased quote “We do not learn from experience, we learn from reflection on experience”, I therefore decided to reflect on ways of making reading comprehension lessons more participative and successful.

Research Objectives

Generally, with the aim of:

- promoting the love of reading inside and outside the classroom
- multiplying strategies that will help students perform any reading task
- equipping students so as to perform well in their papers and more specifically
- getting my students motivated for reading comprehension lessons
- getting them fully engaged in reading comprehension lessons,

I decided to explore ways through which I could render reading comprehension a regular, fun and engaging classroom activity to them. This research project is so important because the truth is that, unconditionally (during class tests and national examinations) students will have to read and to write (talking about the *Anglais* paper which has reading comprehension as one of the four main sections) in order to score marks.

Exploratory Research Questions

To help me explore the problem, I came up with the following questions:

- Why do my students find reading comprehension lessons boring?
- What challenges do they face in performing reading comprehension activities?
- What helps my students to be more motivated and engaged during reading comprehension lessons?

Methodology

Working in a public school and under challenging situations, I employed exploratory action research as a research approach. I identified a classroom recurrent challenge (in all my classes), I sought ways to understand the causes for such a situation and I took some actions to improve on the prevailing situation. Exploratory Action Research conceived by Smith (2015) is a type of understanding action-oriented research initiated and carried out by teachers themselves on classroom issues of importance to them in order to gain a better understanding of the dynamic nature of classroom life and possibly to bring about change. It is a two-phase approach: an exploratory research phase (the teacher-researcher explores the problem he/she faces) and an action implementation phase (he/she plans for actions and implement them).

Respondents

I decided to carry out this research project in all three of my classes given the fact that I noticed the same issues and challenges towards reading comprehension lessons. Again, the overall number of participants being below 100, I chose to study and to interpret the results as one set.

Research Method and Data Collection Tools

I planned and carried out the entire research project in four weeks (mid-October till mid-November 2023). Through mixed-method design, I used several research tools observation and note making, a questionnaire, reflective journal (where I recorded details concerning the teaching and the learning process) to explore students' lack of motivation, poor participation and poor performances.

Table 1. Participants' Details

	Students per Class	Age range	Male students	Female students	Level of English at the start of the project	Number of students with the class coursebook
Grade 9	23	10 -18	13	10	High beginner	6
Grade 11	42	12 - 20	14	28	Mixed level (low to high intermediate)	5
Grade 12	10	17 - 21	3	7	Mixed level (low intermediate to low advanced)	2
Total	75	/	30	45	/	/

Weeks 1 and 2: Reading Lessons Observation

It seemed essential that I could no longer continue to teach like that after observing the attitude of my students during my classes and their performances during tests. I noticed that students did not participate in the class actively no matter the efforts put in.

Table 2. Notes of the Journal

Questions	9 th Graders	11 th Graders	12 th Graders
1. How many students could raise their hands to read the texts spontaneously?	Very few (<i>Less than 10% approx.</i>)	Very Few (<i>Less than 10% approx.</i>)	Few (<i>Roughly 10 - 25% approx.</i>)
2. How focused were the students during reading lessons?	One third of the class	Half of the class	Half of the class
3. How many of them were eager to perform reading tasks?	Half of the class	Half of the class	Three quarter of the class
4. What attitudes they showed during reading activities?	Shyness, inappropriate noise, and nonparticipation	Nonparticipation, inappropriate noise	Average participation

Week 3: Test Paper 2, Correction and Remediation

Marks from the second paper were generally not satisfactory especially in the reading comprehension section (see Table 3). I did correct the paper with the students and had a remediation¹ session with them on essential elements they did not understand: grammar points; reading comprehension questions 'dos and don'ts'; essays methodologies just to name a few.

¹ **Remediation:** After the correction sessions with students (after marking papers, correction takes place with the teacher explaining each question and the correct answers to the whole class). A remediation session is a lesson where the teacher gathers some key aspects which most students did not understand (in their papers) and which caused them to score poor grades. Generally, these are grammar and vocabulary points. The teacher reexplains misunderstood structures.

Table 3. Details of the Reading Comprehension Section of Anglais Paper 2

	Students per Class	Number of questions per text	Reading Comprehension section performances	
			Less than 5/10	More than 5/10
Grade 9	23	5	16	7
Grade 11	42	7	30	12
Grade 12	10	8	5	5
Total	75			

Week 4: Questionnaire

I chose to proceed with a paper-based questionnaire because it enabled me to receive considerable amounts of information from learners in a short period of time. The questionnaire included four different questions addressing the exploratory aspects and focusing on students' perceptions of what reading comprehension difficulties they face. There were three multiple-choice questions following Likert's agreement typology scale and one open-ended question.

- 1) How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about reading in English?
- 2) Personal views about Reading comprehension lessons.
- 3) How do you feel about reading comprehension tasks?
- 4) What strategies do you put in place in order to answer questions?

I asked the same questions to all my students (across three classes). This was done the following week after the correction and remediation session in my three classes. I took fifteen minutes in each class to administer the translated questionnaire (See Appendix 1). The questions were in French (see Appendix 1 for English translation of the questionnaire). I asked students to answer in French though it had to do with English language. Participants were informed that the result of the questionnaire was for effective teaching and learning. There were no "Name and Age Entry" on the questionnaire: a way to allow them write their answers stress free. For the Action Research phase, I wrote a reflective journal to record the actions that happened in the class during reading activities. I documented what was happening after every class session to make use of it in providing responses to some of the exploratory questions. During the implementation action, my mentor advised me to have a reflective journal which will help me assess the different classes I teach. In the course of doing that I used Jasper's (2013) Experience Reflection and Action model so as to note all teaching and learning changes from before the project (see Appendix 2).

Exploratory Research Results and Discussion

After collecting the data from the questionnaire, it was analysed through Excel. See results and charts in Appendix 1.

Question 1: Why do my students find Reading Comprehension lessons boring?

Section 1 of the questionnaire gave precious information. The first question was: "How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about reading in English?" 68% of the students mentioned that they only read in the classroom context and - besides - just their notes;

while 45% of them say that “reading is a waste of time”. This means that they do not practice the reading skill. And the students’ perceptions related to their personal views of reading comprehension lessons, showed the following. 77% of the students “feel bored” during lessons because some texts (of certain categories) proved to be less appealing to the students than others. Students show big signs of anxiety as 60% of them shy away from reading aloud because they fear to being mocked by their peers. Again, the low participatory level of students during reading comprehension classes lies in the fact that they do not understand the meaning of words in the text and related tasks. No matter the reading approach used (bottom-up or top-down bottom), 57% of the students find the texts we study in class “too long and difficult to understand”. Their lack of reading practice accounts for the reason why they are not active during reading lessons.

Question 2: What challenges do they face in performing reading comprehension activities?

Concerning the type of activity, some students pointed doing more practical, funnier group activities in classes (31%). Learners (in classes and in examination contexts) switch to French in providing answers or in performing tasks because they have an intern vocabulary (students’ L2) as they lack the necessary vocabulary to answer reading comprehension questions (23%) in English. Because learners do not practice reading as a skill, they may find it easier to go back to their L2 (French) to figure out meaning of the target language (22%). Apart from relying on their peers to understand the text and reading activities, others issues are raised in section 2. Results showed that students stopped reading when they met new words (14%). By this, they find it difficult to connect ideas in the text and so, lack concentration while reading. Group work activities will make them gain confidence in themselves; make them feel more responsible because of the need for contributing to teamwork and learn mutually. These affect the intended purpose, for learners never get to acquire nor use the target language effectively. 10% of the students pointed out their difficulty in summarizing the text.

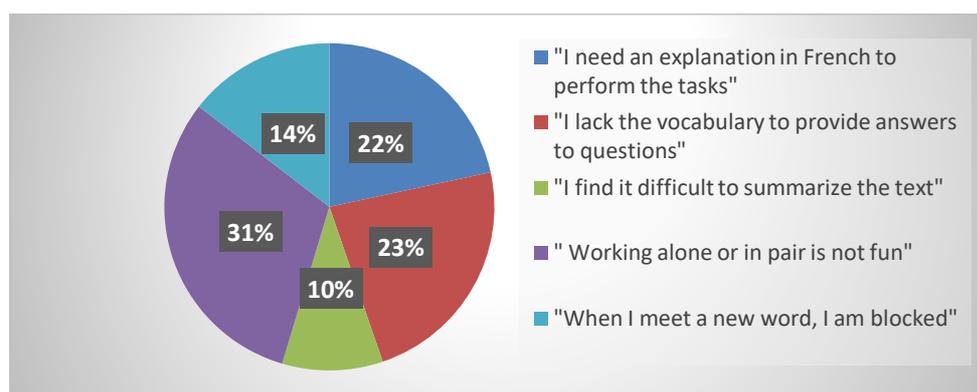


Figure 1. Students’ opinions on reading comprehension tasks

Question 3: What helps my students to be more motivated and engaged during reading comprehension lessons?

Of all the responses I received in this section, the following are the top suggestions given by the 75 students. Students suggested “to increase the reading of short and interesting texts” (80%). They do not have the skills to work independently as required by most of reading strategies. As such, 78% of them want group work activities. “Because I don’t understand most

words, I wish to work with ... (Names of classmates deleted) to perform reading task and to learn". 58% of the students want more oral practice. This is the reason why they recourse to showing their concern in practicing the language accurately and fluently. 50% of the students need more guided practice and wanted me to vary instructions methods ("*show and tell*", "*teach strategies*" ...).

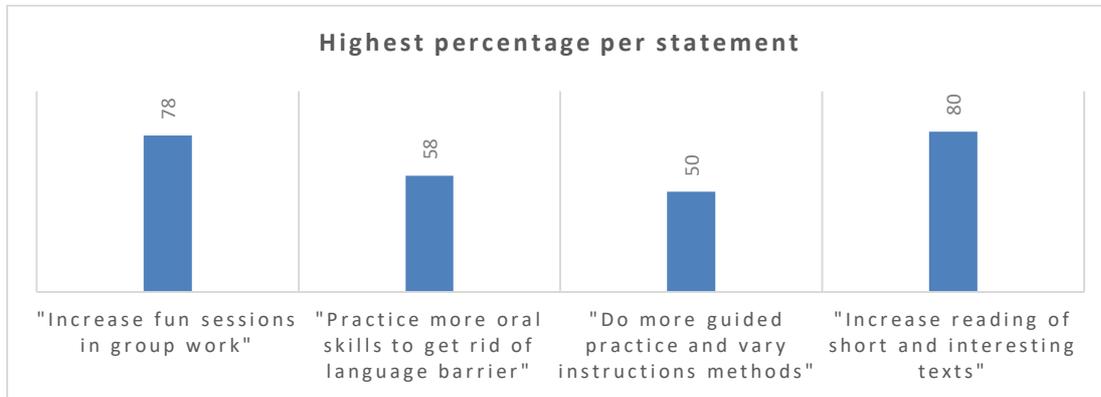


Figure 2. Students' suggestions on how to solve the problem

From Inquiry to Action

Planning to change

Following what Nunan (1998, 102) says about teaching: "Students learn numerous things simultaneously and imperfectly", I drafted the content of my action research based on three major findings from the exploratory phase (see Table 4). Low proficiency level of my students which doesn't help them process texts from the coursebooks. Lack of reading practice and anxiety they show during these particular lessons. Because students suggested I should bring in appealing content, I produced three special texts as May, Bingham, and Pendergast (2014, 212) refer to texts selection that are "culturally competent". These were the biography of a musician, an illustrated article and gender-based text). See Appendix 5 for further details about the steps in my action research.

Action and Observation

The following actions were implemented in the lessons (four to be precise) taught in a month's timeline (from mid-February to mid-March 2024). To monitor the effect of the action plan, I kept a reflective journal accounting for what students did and how they performed the tasks throughout the stages of the latter reading comprehension lessons. Were the new strategies used in the course of teaching reading comprehension successful? What accounted for such a change? Koshy (2010) talking about action research states that "in Action Research, findings emerge as action develops and takes place; however, they are not conclusive or absolute, but ongoing" (pp. 1-2). I was also able to observe and to focus on the attitude, the behaviour and feelings of learners. Tables 5 and 6 identify the changes observed from the exploratory phase (*before*) and the action phase (*after*).

Table 4. Action Plan

	Description	Tools/Materials	Lesson stages
Action 1	Provide interesting illustrative texts	Pictures, share copies of reading texts. Individual and group reading competitions with small prizes.	Presentation stage
Action 2	Adapt group work activities according to different learning styles and let students complete the tasks in two forms (oral and written).	Using reading, prior knowledge activation; developing questions, graphic organizers, summarizing and predicting in a group of four students.	Presentation and practice stage
Action 3	Teach new vocabulary; simplify the instructions and praise students verbally and emotionally for every little improvement they made.	Presenting and modeling the new vocabulary before reading the text and asking them to highlight or to underline difficult words. This would increase understanding and avoid them stopping at new words. Asking one or two students to retell the instruction.	All lesson stages

Table 5. Reading Material

Before	After
The long texts used from the course books caused students to be sleepy and inactive	Producing shorter and most appealing texts brought back students' enthusiasm for the lesson.

Based on the observation from the teaching process (week1), I observed several changes. It was found that students participated in an active way. Students gladly did the activities and I could observe many hands up to participate in the lesson for both reading aloud and to perform reading tasks). Pictures attached to the text grasped their attention and increased students' reading participation though there were still spelling errors while reading. I mean there were more hands raised during pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities as compared to the past. Students preferred having (each) a copy of the illustrated biography (see appendix 3). Crump (1995, 10) quoting Hyman (1974) says "regardless of age, most college students enjoy the pleasure of playing, the active participation, and the suspense about the outcome of games". Also, reading the questions before reading the text and discussing them before doing the answering task helped students a lot. They began to use skimming and scanning skills to answer the comprehension questions. By practicing skimming, they understood what the text was about. Generally speaking, students seemed interested in the material read and they were consistently interested in new things. They were able to guess meaning from the context of the material (adjacent words and pictures). They were able to complete the vocabulary activities and so they felt more confident in reading.

Table 6. Classroom Management

Before	After
Asking students to perform tasks individually in their books did not help. Some students chose not to work and waited for others to do "the whole job" before copying notes.	Group work happened to be highly effective: students worked together with confidence in performing reading tasks.

As my planning did not originally include activities in pairs or in group, I had to create a new set of activities for my class that involved collaborative work. This experience helped me to take into account my students’ opinion in relation to how they could work in a fun and comfortable environment. Though there was code switching (French and English) plus some spelling and grammar mistakes, I could see how they happily work together. Mindful of the fact that they are in an examination class, the efforts they put in performing the tasks were so encouraging. Fast learners assisted slow ones as they performed tasks.

During data analysis, students mentioned “they need explanations in French to perform tasks” which made me to realise that the instructions I give should be clear and simplified. World Learning (2023), mentioning Thornbury’s blog pointed out a similar thing when he said about how repeating a communicative situation or task enable learners to gain confidence, improve fluency. After applying this strategy (Table 7), I observed that students stopped asking for the translation of the instruction in French. The multiple compliments (“*Good boy!*” - “*Awesome!*” - “*Clap for her/him*” - “*There you are!*” - “*Excellent! Have this...*”) and helpful feedback I (the teacher) and peers gave boosted their morale. I came to realise (at the end of this action phase) that the activities they liked the most were underlining the correct word, filling in the gaps and presentation of summaries. They still found it difficult to order the information and to answer the last question because it is always an open question. Clarification request (from both the teacher and learners) with repetition were the two techniques which made error corrections not frustrating.

Table 7. Giving instructions

Before	After
Most students could not perform reading tasks because they did not understand instructions given.	Modelling and instruction repetition from peers were helpful.

Reflection

After teaching for eight years in a rural area with very low resources and students’ demotivation towards the English language, I got to understand that self-reflection and reflective practices are the keys for teaching and learning effectivity. Though I didn’t compare my learners’ external reading activities in other languages (French, Spanish to name a few), I could see how they improved their reading skills. Indeed, learners’ motivation and interaction depend on the quality of the lesson plan and the activities therein. The various teaching strategies I used enhanced teaching and learning. More students, spontaneously, read passages aloud as before. Conducting Exploratory Action Research was so beneficial to my students and to my humble self. By implementing some new activities and having seen the changes that occurred in my classes, I got relieved. The burden of carrying the teaching and the learning weight on my shoulders lightened. In my reflective journal, I noted that providing suitable texts for students improved vocabulary acquisition and usage. My students were able to use the vocabulary they learned from reading for comprehension in conversations. I also learned to be mindful that, at some point during the school year, students should be allowed to choose the close reading strategies for specific text through self-monitoring as Cummins (2013) says. The relationship I have with my students got to another level. They cooperated more; got involved in classroom activities more thanks to the compliments and encouragements I showed. Students found it interesting working and learning in groups.

Conclusion

I experienced some challenges related to reading comprehension lessons in teaching my learners. Students' indifferent attitude towards these particular lessons and in doing related tasks motivated me to conduct my research to alter this tendency. The findings of my exploratory and action level research demonstrate the immense benefits of reading games, predicting, questioning, monitoring comprehension, pre-teaching new words, small presentations to name a few. Group-work based activities are preferable and advisable. I realized that learners can take responsibility for what they learn and how they want to learn.

I was lucky to attend workshops and to get acquainted with teacher research and research projects. I attended several webinars on teacher research and professional development. Thanks to Dr Eric Ekembe (my mentor), I became informed on exploratory action research process and its benefits both to teachers and to students. What I learnt, throughout the whole process is tremendous. I learnt how to identify a classroom challenge and work on it. The opportunity is conducive for teachers to develop themselves in terms of creativity through implementing new ideas or using various adapted techniques in their lessons. The environment in which you find yourself in, students' demotivation and lack of coursebooks should not lure one. But, self-reflection, creativity, lesson planning, follow-up, guidance and advice from mentor or colleagues (not necessarily from your school) will help you find answers to the identified problem. No matter the difficulties you face in your classroom, get your students to talk things out and try doing things differently. You will be surprised by the kind of feedback they give and the positive changes they will produce.

References

- Atkinson, D. (1993). *Teaching monolingual classes*. Longman.
- Bochner, A. & Ellis, C. (1996). Talking over ethnography. In C. Ellis & A. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing* (pp. 13-45). Alta Mira Press.
- Cameroon. (1998). *Loi no 98/004 du 14 avril 1998 d'orientation de l'éducation au Cameroun* [Law of April 14 1998 on the orientation of education in Cameroon]. Available (in French) from <https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/cameroun-loi-1998.htm>
- Chiatoh, B.A. (2012). Official bilingualism and the construction of a Cameroonian national identity In G. Echu & A. A. Ebongué (Eds.), *Fifty years of official language bilingualism in Cameroon (1961-2011): Situation, stakes and perspectives* (pp. 65-85). L'Harmattan.
- Chumbow B.S. (1990). Language and language policy in Cameroon. In N. Kofele-Kale (Ed.), *An African experiment in nation building: The bilingual Cameroon Republic since reunification* (pp. 281-311). Westview Press.
- Crump, C. A. (1995). *Motivating students: A teacher's challenge*. Paper presented at the Annual Sooner Communication Conference, Norman, OK, April. ERIC Document ED387840. <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED387840.pdf>
- Cummins, S. (2013). What students can do when the reading gets rough. *Educational Leadership*, 71(3). <https://ascd.org/el/articles/what-students-can-do-when-the-reading-gets-rough>
- Hyman, R. T. (1974). *Ways of teaching*. J. B. Lippincott Company.

- Kendeou, P., McMaster, K. L., & Christ, T. J. (2016). Reading comprehension: Core components and processes. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 3(1), 62-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/2372732215624707>
- Koshy, V. (2010). *Action Research for improving educational practice. A step-by-step guide*. Sage.
- Jasper, M. (2013). *Beginning Reflective Practice*. Cengage Learning.
- May, L. A., Bingham, G. E., & Pendergast, M. L. (2014). Culturally and linguistically relevant readalouds. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 16 (4), 210-218.
<https://doi.10.1080/15210960.2014.952299>
- Nunan, D. (1998) Teaching grammar in context. *ELT Journal*, 52(2), 101-109.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/52.2.101>
- Smith, R. (2015). Exploratory Action Research as workplan: Why, what and where from. In K. Dikilitas, R. Smith, & W. Trotman (Eds.), *Teacher-researchers in action* (pp. 37-45). IATEFL. <https://resig.weebly.com/teacher-researchers-in-action.html>
- Swan, M. (1985). A critical look at the communicative approach (2). *English Language Teaching Journal*, 39(2), 76-87. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/39.2.76>
- Tuner, J.C., & Patrick, H. (2004). Motivational influences on student participation in classroom learning activities. *Journal of Teacher College Record*, 106(9), 1759-1785.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9620.2004.00404.x>
- World Learning. (2023) Module 2 Overview – Ways of mediating grammar encounters in the classroom. OPEN Online Professional English Network. US Department of State and SIT Graduate Institute, World Learning.
<https://www.studocu.com/row/document/addis-ababa-institute-of-technology/reliability-engineering/module-2-packet-tgc-mooc-spring-2023/59034317>
- Thornbury, S. (n.d.). An A-Z of ELT. <https://scottthornbury.wordpress.com/>

About the Author

Ngo Ngué Elodie Gaëlle is an EFL teacher in Cameroon with over 12 years of experience in a rural government bilingual high school. She leads the English department of her school for ten years and is a teacher-researcher for four years. After successfully carrying on her EAR project, last year she was placed as a mentor by her supervisor and Outreach Coordinator of the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group (ReSIG). Apart from her administrative functions and her commitment to making teaching and learning effective in her classes, she is actively involved into teacher-research activities with peers, namely mentoring ELT teachers round the country and overseas. Email Address: nnegselodie@yahoo.fr

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Eric E. Ekembe, my mentor, for his invaluable guidance and support throughout this project. I am also grateful to Ana Garcia Stone, MenTRnet official and mentor for her technical expertise and field assistance. This project would not have been possible without the encouragement of my peers (Cameroon co-teacher researchers). Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the participants (my students) who generously shared their insights.

Declaration of Possible Conflict of Interest

I write on my honour to declare that there is no conflict of interest with this paper.

APPENDICES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE

(English translation from the original French version)

The following questionnaire aims at getting learners' problems and difficulties in order to improve on the Reading comprehension category of actions. Be assured that the information given in here will remain confidential.

DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER.

(Please answer each question by ticking on each row)

Section 1: Personal views and general attitudes towards in reading comprehension lessons.

1. How much do you agree or disagree with these statements about reading in English?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
« I read only if I have to »				
« Reading is one my hobbies »				
« I am a good reader »				
« To me reading is a waste of time” »				

2. Personal views about Reading comprehension lessons.

	Yes	No
« You feel bored »		
« You are tired and you want to sleep »		
« You are very excited »		
« You raise your hand to read and to participate »		
« You don't raise your hand because you don't know how to read »		
« You don't want to read because your classmates will mock you »		
« You ask questions to your classmates in order to better understand the text and the activity »		
« You work along with your classmates to perform reading tasks »		
« You perform the reading tasks and call for the teacher to check out your answers »		

Section 2: Challenges and practical difficulties learners face in performing reading comprehension tasks

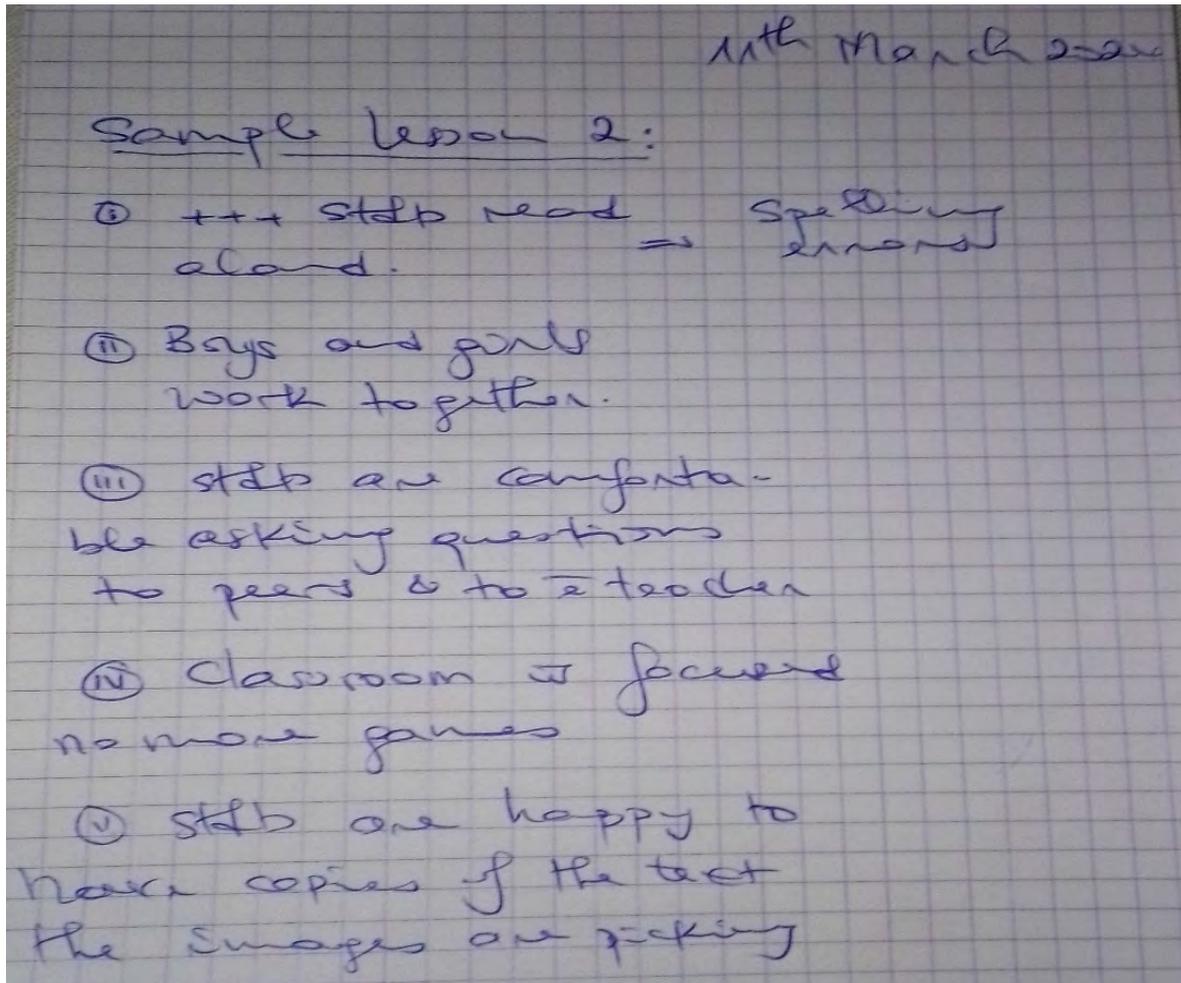
3. How do you feel about reading comprehension tasks?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
« Most of the texts are long and difficult to understand »				
« I need the explanation in French to perform the tasks »				
« I can't answer questions because I do not understand the question »				
« I understand the question but I lack the necessary vocabulary to provide the answer »				
« I understand the question but I write the answer in French because I lack the necessary vocabulary to provide the answer »				

4. What strategies do you put in place in order to answer questions?

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

2. MY REFLECTIVE JOURNAL

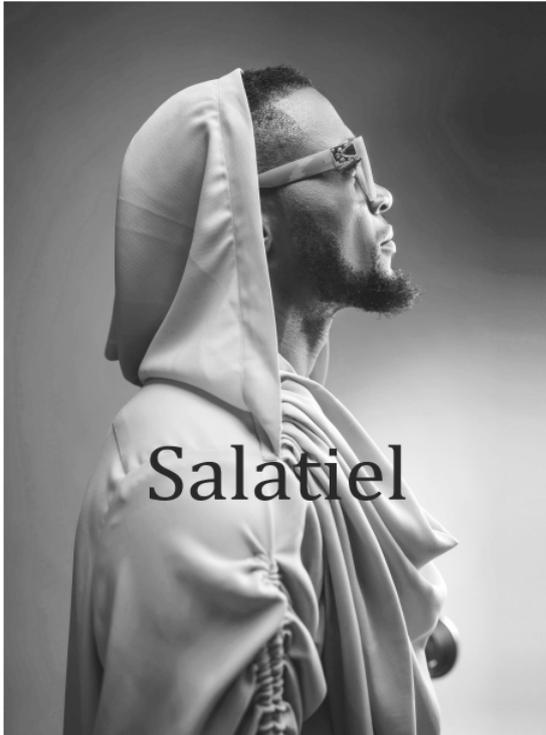


11th March, 2024.

Sample Lesson 2 :

- Many students read the text aloud spontaneously (still some pronunciation errors)
- Boys and girls work together
- Students are comfortable asking questions to peers and to the teacher
- The whole class is focused, no more games.

3. SAMPLE TEXT: A BIOGRAPHY OF A FAMOUS CAMEROONIAN ARTIST



BIOGRAPHY

Pianist, drummer, singer, songwriter and producer, Salatiel has been passionate about music from an early age on, stemming from both personal desire and vital necessity. He produced songs with internationally renowned artists such as the late Manu Dibango, Youssou N'Dour. Salatiel is probably today one of the greatest African artists and producers of his generation. The child hailing from Tiko, a small town in the Cameroonian South-West Region where he was born on **December 26, 1987**, was chosen by Beyoncé to represent Francophone Africa on the album "The Lion King: The Gift". As a pastor's son, Salatiel thrives on gospel but also feeds on a wide variety of influences, ranging from Afrobeat to classical music, reggae, makossa, bikutsi, coupé-décalé.

ARTISTIC BACKGROUND

The musician he is today owes a lot to the young boy who used to hang out in the streets of his native region of the South-West to soak in very diverse sounds and rhythms. Brought up by a very religious mother with a natural gift for singing, Salatiel drew part of his inspiration from the source of gospel, especially from artists of the American label "Integrity Music", famous for its worship music. Initiated into playing the piano by one of his older brothers, he pursued on his own, memorising songs that he then played on a virtual piano drawn with a pen on his highschool bench table. When he was 17, Salatiel's parents banned him from playing the family piano as a punishment for not taking his studies seriously. Heartbroken and unspeakably suffering, he had known deep down by then already that music was his way. In 2007, while performing a lot in churches of the region, Salatiel enrolled at Buea University in his native South-West. A few months later, he gave in to his musical calling to become a studio musician and quickly gained recognition as a songwriter and producer. Salatiel developed an exceptional ability for fusing sounds and rhythms. Moreover, he conceived, composed and wrote many songs for Cameroonian movies, such as "One by One" for the TV Series "Bad Angel".

AWARDS AND NOMINATIONS

In 2010, Salatiel won the Cameroonian competition "Nescafé African Revelations" with his group "Da Thrill" he brought together and produced. For the pan-African finals which took place in Senegal, "Da Thrill" placed second, right behind Nigeria. In 2018, Salatiel won the "Best Male Artist of the Year" award at the Urban Jamz Awards, a special ceremony in the Cameroonian music industry to honour artists. The thoroughly passionate musician and outstanding producer was trained to produce music alongside Emile Ngumbah, founder of M-One Music Studio, one of the best-known record labels in Cameroon.

Culled from the internet

4. ANGLAIS OFFICIAL EXMANINATION PAPER

(Anglais is one of the subjects 11th Grade students sit for at the end of the school year. This is only the reading section.)

SECTION C: READING COMPREHENSION (10 MARKS)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow. Use your own words as far as possible.

People the world over engage in volunteerism for a variety of reasons: to eliminate poverty and to improve basic health and education, to tackle environmental issues, to reduce the risk of disasters or to

combat social exclusion and violent conflicts. In all of those fields, volunteerism makes a specific contribution by generating well-being for people and their communities.

Volunteers are motivated by values like those equality, justice and freedom as expressed in the United Nations Charter. A society which supports and encourages different forms of volunteerism is likely to be a society which promotes the well-being of its citizens.

More than one billion people volunteer globally, the majority of them serving in their own countries. Many are in the forefront of efforts to improve the way their fellow citizens are governed and engaged. Moreover, volunteers are playing a vital role in making governments worldwide more accountable and responsive to their citizens. They are working with governments and civil society to hold those in power to account and to represent the voices of those who are often left out of development decisions such as women, youth and marginalized groups. The end result is more inclusive and ultimately more effective development.

Volunteerism is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people's need to participate in their societies and to feel that they matter to others. The ethos of volunteerism is infused with values such as solidarity, reciprocity, mutual trust, belonging and empowerment, all of which contribute significantly to quality of life.

A healthy society is one in which importance is given to formal and informal relationships that facilitate interaction and engagement and engender a sense of belonging. It is also one in which there is broad participation by all sections of the population. Communities with these characteristics do better in moving forward to meet common aspirations.

Volunteers are more likely to develop civic skills to attach more importance to serving the public interest as a personal life goal and to be more politically active. Thus, going about their volunteer-outlook that contributes to a social environment that nurtures the well-being of all.

(Source: www.unv.org)

Questions:

1. Give two (2) reasons why people choose to become volunteers. (2 marks)

2. How do volunteers influence governments of various countries? (2 marks)

3. Name two (2) groups of people whose interest volunteers set out to protect. (2 marks)

4. State two (2) values that volunteerism uphold to improve people's quality of life. (2 marks)

5. Do you think volunteers can influence governance in your country? Justify your answer (2 marks)

5. ACTION

Lessons (9th Grade)	Weeks	Procedure (Students will <i>do</i> a, b, c etc.)	Necessary resources/aid	Outcomes 1. what was the nature of the class? 2. What did the students do/did not do? 3. How did they do it?	Reflections 1. What did you notice from their engagement in the implementation of your findings/results 2. Why was it successful and why was it not?
1 (55 minutes)	Week 1	a. (Pre-reading Activity): Students observe then discuss picture b. While reading: Reading in turns c. After reading: Students work in group, read the questions and answer in their books.	1. Copies of a biography 2. Pictures of Cameroonian celebrities 3. Students' background knowledge	1. A reading comprehension lesson. 2. Students observed pictures. Students read the biography in turns (row per row). They did not ask me to read the entire text before they start reading. 3. After the lead-in (pictures observation), many students were eager to read the texts – the classroom was focused – some students corrected their classmates whenever there were spelling errors.	1. Students were motivated to read out. There was no insult nor joke that could frustrate them or stop them from speaking out. 2. As they observed the pictures, many described them not in a full sentence (S-V-O) but the key items came out spontaneously in English. Because of lack of practice at home a few students showed difficulties in answering the questions (they didn't understand the questions actually). Group work: at this particular step of the lesson, I made them to reflect together before producing answers for the questions.
2 (55 minutes)		a. Students read out the definitions b. They go back in the texts to find out the correct words	1. Class/Students 2. Coursebook 3. Blackboard	1. A vocabulary lesson on Music industry 2. Students read the definitions given in the exercise. They discuss to get their meaning. They work out together the matches and.	1. Some students had in mind the key words of the text. They quickly find out some clues. It means they read at home. 2. Group work: some students finished the cloze text and matching activities. They were so happy to have finished first. I had to call their attention on reading back so as to be sure there is no mistake.
<i>HW: Copy down these words: "network – prize -single" go back to text and find out their corresponding synonyms.</i>					