

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT**



**Universidad de El Salvador**

*Hacia la libertad por la cultura*

**GRADUATION PROJECT**

“TO WHAT EXTENT THE USE OF READING STRATEGIES INFLUENCES READING COMPREHENSION IN STUDENTS FROM THE READING AND CONVERSATION II COURSE OF THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH, EMPHASIS IN TEACHING, SEMESTER I 2013, OF THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR”

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TO OBTAIN THE DEGREE OF

BACHELOR OF ARTS IN ENGLISH, EMPHASIS IN TEACHING

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## **INTRODUCTION**

When a non-native English speaker is trying to learn the language, a major component in doing so is reading. Throughout the entire duration of their studies, students from the Foreign Languages Department experience the great necessity not only to read texts in different subjects, but also to comprehend the different types of readings presented. For that reason, it is necessary to explore the different strategies that students need in order to enhance their reading comprehension and reading skills. Therefore, this research was focused on useful reading strategies that students implement to improve their reading comprehension skills. The purpose of the research was to know if reading strategies play an important role to get better comprehension in the different types of readings that students from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador encounter during the whole process of learning English. Furthermore, another purpose for this research was to analyze the difficulties that English language students encounter while reading various subjects during the period of their studies.

## **I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

### **A. RESEARCH TOPIC**

The use of reading strategies and reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching, semester I 2013, of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

### **B. GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

To find out the influence of reading strategies in reading comprehension on students in Reading and Conversation II course of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching, semester I 2013 of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

### **C. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- To determine reading strategies that students implement to improve their reading comprehension.
- To discover how the use of reading strategies increases the reading comprehension in different texts.
- To discover the limitations that students face in the process of reading comprehension.

#### **D. RESEARCH QUESTION**

“To what extent does the use of reading strategies influence reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching, semester I 2013, of the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?”

#### **E. SUBSIDIARIES QUESTIONS**

1. What are the reading strategies that students from reading and conversation I apply in reading texts?
2. How does the use of reading strategies increase reading comprehension skills in different texts?
3. What are the main difficulties that students face when comprehending reading texts?

## **F. RATIONALE**

Since the beginning of the curriculum, students begin to realize that reading is an important skill to master when dealing with learning a foreign language. This is understood when they begin to explore several types of texts, from simple readings like short stories, different theories, grammar explanation, books, and other types related to their major. Taking this into account, this research was carried out with the main purpose of finding out if reading strategies improve reading comprehension skills. This research was put forth in order to analyze if students make use of different reading strategies throughout their major since it is known that reading is a prevalent daily undertaking when studying all subjects. The last reason was to find out the difficulties that students face while undertaking the reading process. By reading, students increase their vocabulary and improve their comprehension about several different topics related to the English language, but it should be noted that time also plays an important role in reading. Due to this observation, it is considered that this study may help students identify “plans or methods” which make them deal with different readings in a way that they can save time and get a better comprehension.

## **G. DELIMITATION OF THE PROBLEM**

This study was addressed to students who were taking Reading and Conversation II course; it was carried out during the semester I 2013, from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.

**Time and place:** This research was focused on the use of reading strategies and their influences on reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course, semester II 2013 from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. It was carried out from March 2013 to September 2013.

**Population:**

This study addressed students from Reading and Conversation II course, semester I 2013, in the Foreign Languages Department at the University of El Salvador. The data was gathered from the students, and it was taken through a checklist, a survey and a reading test in order to get the information. From the university, only 40% of the student body was taken.

## **II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Since our educational system does not prepare students to deal with reading materials in order to reach higher levels of comprehension, the present work rationale is based on the different reading strategies that students may use to get a better comprehension of English texts. Due to the fact that students sometimes do not have the habit of using strategies that help them during their reading process, they find themselves having difficulties with reading materials since they do not comprehend what they read. It is important to make students aware on how to apply different reading strategies. Strategies can be defined as “Deliberate actions that learners select and control to achieve desired goals or objectives” (Winograd and Hare, 1988,p.123). This definition underscores the active role that readers take in strategic reading. Students need to learn how to orchestrate the use of reading strategies to achieve the desired result. Garner, Macready, and Wagoner (1984) points out that “a strategy is a sequence of activities, not a single event and learners may have acquired some of the sequence, but not all”.

According to Aaron (1990), when we look for something to watch on television or listen to on the radio, we often tune into one station after another, pausing just long enough each time to catch the program or music being broadcasted before settling on one choice. Much of the reading we do is similar such as perusing a newspaper or magazine, for instance, we skim the pages, noting headings and scanning paragraphs to get the gist of the content. On the one hand, to get the most out of reading, we must invest something of ourselves in the process, applying our own ideas and emotions and attending not just to the substance but to the writer’s interpretation of it.

On the other hand, according to Herrell and Jordan(2006), it is generally recognized that comprehension entails an interaction between the reader and the text. Also, developing active reading is essential in order to better comprehend the text. For example, Aaron (1990) states that one of the best aids to active reading is to make notes on separate sheets of paper or preferably (if you own the book), on the pages themselves. As you practice making notes, you will probably develop a personal code meaningful only to you.

Furthermore, Johnson (1981) states, “reading comprehension is viewed as the process of using one’s own prior knowledge and the writer’s cues to infer the author’s intended meaning”. The use of certain reading strategies does not always lead to successful reading comprehension, while the use of other strategies do not always result in unsuccessful reading comprehension (Yang, 2006, p. 315).

Being able to understand readings does not only come from having reading strategies but rather many important factors should be taken into account in order to understand a lecture. Moreover, Yang (2006) indicated “strategies may not be inherently good or bad for a given reader. Rather, they may or may not promote successful comprehension of a text, depending on the particular reader, the particular text, the context in which the reading is going on, and the choice of other strategies in conjunction with the chosen one.”

Therefore, to be strategic readers, students not only need to “know what strategies to use, but also when, why, and how to use these strategies appropriately and effectively” (Yang, 2006, p.315). Just because students have knowledge of reading strategies does not mean that they are able put them into practice in the right way.

Through the meta-cognitive awareness, the reader reaches the ability to use different reading strategies at different times. Meta-cognition of reading strategies, or comprehension monitoring strategies (Yang, 2006). It is important to try to make distinctions between cognitive and meta-cognitive strategies. (Jitendra, Burges & Gajria, 2011, p. 136) define Cognitive strategy as "a heuristic or guide that serves to support or facilitate the learner as she or he develops the internal procedures that enable them to perform the higher level operations such as reading comprehension". Besides that, Nabila (2006) indicates that cognitive strategies involve manipulating the language to be learned.

While meta-cognitive strategies encourage learners to reflect on thought processes, planning, monitoring, and evaluating aspects of their learning are procedures for monitoring cognitive strategies (Nabila, 2006, p. 2). It is necessary to make emphasis on those terms since the goal of meta-cognitive learning strategies is to strengthen students' awareness of what makes their learning successful, it is especially important to understand how to use such strategies and apply them into a reading and comprehension materials.

Anderson 1999, has broken down the reading strategies into three different groups: cognitive reading strategies, (thinking), meta-cognitive reading strategies (thinking about your thinking /planning), and compensating reading strategies.

### **Cognitive reading strategies**

1. Predicting the content of an upcoming or section of the text.
2. Concentrating on grammar to help you understand unfamiliar constructions.
3. Understanding the main idea to help you comprehend the entire reading.
4. Expanding your vocabulary and grammar to help you increase your reading.



5. Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words or phrases to let you use what you already know about English.
6. Analyzing theme, style, and connections to improve your comprehension.
7. Distinguishing between opinions and facts in your reading.
8. Breaking down larger phrases into smaller parts to help you understand difficult passages.
9. Linking what you know in your first language with words in English.
10. Creating a map or drawing of related ideas to enable you to understand the relationship between words and ideas.
11. Writing a short summary of what you read to help you understand the main ideas.

### **Metacognitive reading strategies**

1. Setting goals for yourself to help you improve areas that are important to you.
2. Making lists of relevant vocabulary to prepare for new reading.
3. Working with classmates to help you develop your reading skills.
4. Taking opportunities to practice what you already know to keep your process steady.
5. Evaluating what you have learned and how well you have done to help you focus on your reading.

### **Compensating reading strategies**

1. Relying on what you already know to improve your reading comprehension.
2. Taking notes to recall important details.
3. Trying to remember what you understand from a reading to help you develop better comprehension skills.

4. Reviewing the purpose and tone of reading passages so you can remember more effectively.
5. Picturing scenes in your mind to help you remember and understand your reading.
6. Review key ideas and detail to help you remember.
7. Using physical action to help you remember information you have read.
8. Classifying words into meaningful groups to help you remember more clearly.

### **Strategies for reading comprehension skills**

Comprehension requires the reader to be in active construction of meanings. Reading research has demonstrated that readers do not simply “perceive” the meaning that is in a text. In fact, expert readers co-construct meaning with a text. A reading is a “transaction” in which the reader brings purposes and life experiences to bear to converse with the text. This meeting of the reader and the text results in the meaning that is comprehension. Comprehension always attends to what is coded or written in the text, but it also depends upon the reader’s background experiences, purposes, feelings, and needs of the moment. That is why strategies are required to be an active constructor of meaning as a reader.

### **Scanning**

Scanning is done when you read in a very high-speed when you are looking for a specific piece of information. When you scan, you have a question in mind. You do not read every word, only key words that will answer your question. Practicing scanning will improve reading at a faster pace because you are able to skip over unimportant words. (Mikulechy and Jeffries,2004, p. 25)

## **Skimming**

Skimming is very fast-paced reading. Effective skimming requires the reader to be able to process a text rapidly at many levels in order to get an overall picture of it. About 800 words per minute are considered a good skimming rate.

Skimming is more comprehensive: effective skimming requires knowledge of textual organization, awareness of lexical clues to point of view, the ability to infer main ideas, and many other advanced skills. (Mikulecki,1990,p. 138)

## **Previewing for better comprehension**

Previewing is a high-speed reading skill. It is a powerful skill because by previewing, the reading gains enough information from the text to begin hypothesizing about it and to begin the cognitive process of matching new information with what is already known. (Mikulechi,1990,p. 33)

Previewing before you read can make a big difference in how well you understand what you read. The aim of previewing is to find out what you are going to be reading before you actually read. You preview to get an idea of what you will find in the text. Then, your brain begins making connections, and your comprehension becomes faster and better. (Mikulechy and Jeffries,2004, p. 17)

## **Guessing unknown vocabulary**

What do you usually do when you come to a word you do not know in your reading? Do you:

- a. Look it up in the dictionary?
- b. Ask your teacher?

- c. Ask another student or a friend?
- d. First try to guess what it means?

The best strategy is *d, first try to guess what the word means.*

Guessing is the best strategy. Guessing:

- It is fast because you don't have to interrupt your reading.
- It helps your comprehension because you stay focused on the general sense of what you are reading.
- It helps build vocabulary because you are more likely to remember the words.
- It allows you to enjoy your reading more because you don't have to stop often.

(Mikulechy and Jeffries, 2004, p. 53)

### **Making Inference**

*Inferring missing information.*

Good readers constantly make inferences as they read. That means they think like a detective and look for clues in the text. Then, they use the clues to guess about the text and the writer's ideas. This is especially important when some ideas are not directly stated.

Making inferences also helps a reader get around difficult vocabulary or sentence structure.

### **Learning to look for the topic**

A topic is a word or phrase (a few words), which informs the reader over what they will be reading. For example, someone may ask, "What is this about?" the reader does not want to know everything about the book, he or she just wants to know the topic. (Mikulechy and Jeffries, 1998, p. 70)

In order to understand what you are reading, you need to connect it to something you already know. To make this connection, you need to be sure you know what it is that you are reading about, that is, you need to know the *topic*. (Mikulechy and Jeffries,2004, p. 79)

### **Identifying patterns of organization**

Scientists say that it is human nature to look for patterns in what you see. Your brain is always trying to make sense of the world around you. Your brain tries to fit everything into some kind of recognizable shape or pattern that has meaning for you. A pattern makes it easier for you to understand and remember information.

Finding the patterns helps you find the main idea and remember the important details. Thus, looking for patterns can be utilized to improve comprehension while reading.

There are five patterns of organization in English:

1. *List of related ideas or examples*. In this pattern, the writer states the main idea in the form of a generalization and gives a list of details to support that general statement.
2. *Sequence*. In this pattern, the writer explains the main idea with a series of events or steps that follow one after the other in a chronological order.
3. *Comparison/contrast*. In this pattern, the writer's main idea is a general statement about two things that are similar and/or different. Specific details about similarities and/ or differences are given.
4. *Cause/effect*. In this pattern, the writer's main idea is that one event or action caused another event or action.
5. *Problem/solution*. In this pattern, the writer's main idea is a statement of a problem and how it was solved.

## **Summarizing**

Summarizing is the process of retelling the important parts of a passage in a much shorter form; for that reason, it is an important reading skill. When you are able to summarize a passage, you can be confident that you have understood it. A good summary includes the main ideas and the major supporting points of what you have read; it does not include minor details or repeated details. Also it does not include your own ideas and opinions because it is shorter than the original. (Mikulechy and Jeffries, 2004, p. 151)

Summarizing will move you towards understanding the author's meaning. However, it won't take you as far as you are capable of going, as far as you will need to go in school or work or just to live well in our information demanding society. Tools are needed in order to discover the meaning and intentions of an essay, case of study, business letter or political message. (Ruth Spack, 1996, p.19). That is why being able to get the most important information in a text is crucial in order to be able to apply the valid information in your own work and life.

## **Finding the main ideas**

The main idea of a paragraph is a statement of the author's idea about the topic. A main idea statement is always a complete sentence that includes both the topic and the ideas that the author wants to express about the topic. Sometimes, the main idea is expressed in another sentence or in several sentences in the paragraph. (Mikulechy and Jeffries, 2004, p. 96)

## **Graphic organizer**

Graphic organizers are visual or pictures created to represent ideas, text or connections between texts. There are a number of graphic organizers that can be used to support students in reading and comprehension text. (Bromley, Irwing-De Vitis, & Modlo, 1995). Venn diagrams are used to compare different texts or the reader's experiences with text in the form of overlapping circles. Flow charts are used to visually represent the sequence of events in text. Graphic organizers serve to aid comprehension by enabling the reader to label aspects of the text using language from the book and visually illustrating the connections among the events and characters.

According to Kennedy, Kennedy, and Aaron (2003), there are some reading strategies to help develop effective approaches to reading. These strategies are:

### **Generating Background knowledge.**

You may be able to achieve a deeper understanding of what you read if you have some background knowledge before you begin reading a selection. For generating background knowledge you have to:

- a) Read the *title* of the reading selection.
- b) Read the *background information* that precedes each reading.
- c) Look at the *length* of the reading.
- d) Look at *headings* and *subheadings*, if they are provided.
- e) Look for *words in boldface* (darker print) or in *italics*.
- f) Look at *charts* and *illustrations*, if they are provided.

## **A First Reading**

The first time you read, you do not need to understand every word or detail. Try to grasp the essence of the selection. When you make a first reading you have to:

- a) Preview the reading to help predict its content and purpose, adapting the preceding guidelines for generating background knowledge.
- b) Read through the selection once, without stopping to use a dictionary.

## **Defining Unfamiliar Words**

As you reread, underline or in some way make notes of unfamiliar words that seem to hold a key to achieving a general understanding of the passages in which they occur. One way to approach unfamiliar vocabulary is to guess at the general meanings of words, using contextual clues. Context will not always give you precise meaning, but it may give you enough clues to understand a passage.

## **Annotating**

Annotating involves recording your reactions to what you read. You can make notes in the margins of the text, within the text itself, or on a separate sheet of paper.

This process may help you interact with the reading and also clarify your understanding. Some possibilities for recording your reactions and clarifying your understanding include:

- a) Express any emotion you feel in response to what you have just read, for example pleasure, surprise, anger, or confusion.
- b) Recall personal associations with actions or conversations that take place in the reading selection.



c) Make connections with something else you have read, heard, or seen.

d) Create headings to identify different sections.

### **Making Double-Entry Notes**

Another way to make notations is to write brief *double-entry notes* to reveal a double perspective on the reading: (1) summary and (2) reaction. In other words, separate what you perceive the author is saying (summary) from what you think (reaction).

To write double-entry notes, you can write (1) in the left and right margins of the reading selection, (2) on the left and right sides of a sheet of paper folded in two lengthwise, or (3) on two separate sheets of paper.

In conclusion, there are several reading strategies that students can use to get a better comprehension and develop their reading skills. These strategies have different purposes, they help the reader get certain information, get main ideas, relate ideas, predict in advance what they are going to read and get the meaning of unknown vocabulary according to the context. These reading strategies are different from one another and yet they are related in some manner.

At the end, the main goal of all of these strategies is to make reading comprehension easier for students, especially since reading in a foreign language will be prominent in their careers. These strategies help with their understanding of the text when reading in English.

### **III. TYPE OF RESEARCH**

- Correlational research.

This research describes the relationship between the two variables which are reading strategies and reading comprehension.

### **IV. STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS**

The use of reading strategies helps to reach a high level of reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course I of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching semester I 2013, from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador.

### **V. RESEARCH DESIGN**

- Non- experimental design

To gather the information required for this study, the instruments required were a checklist, a survey and a test. The checklist contained 25 statements on how reading strategies influence reading comprehension and a survey with 20 questions with different options or yes/no answers. The questions asked dealt with the difficulties that students face when trying to comprehend a reading text. During the test, students proved if they knew or did not know reading strategies, this was done so because the test included different types of readings in which students had to apply reading strategies. The test was scored according to each strategy used. The results of those instruments were analyzed through statistical analysis.

## VI. SAMPLE

The participants for this study were four groups of students, who were taking Reading and conversation II course, semester I 2013, of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching at the University of El Salvador. In order to gather the data, just the 40% were taken out of 123 students (the total of population).

### 1. Calculation of the sample

Variables	Data
N = (total of population)	123
Sampling error	0.1
Level of confidence	90%
Size of sample with sampling error	<b>58</b>

$$N= 123 \quad n / N= 58/123 = \mathbf{0.47154 \text{ (constant)}}$$

$$n= 58$$

### 2. Stratified Sampling

# of group	# of students * constant	Sample from each group
1	35* 0.47154	17
2	34* 0.47154	16
3	33* 0.47154	15
4	21* 0.47154	10
	<b>Total of the sample</b>	<b>58</b>



## VIII. DATA GATHERING

### ELABORATION OF THE INSTRUMENTS

The instruments were a checklist with 25 statements related to the reading strategies which were: skimming, scanning, previewing and predicting, making inference, summarizing, guessing meaning from context, reading faster and paraphrasing. Each strategy was taken to create statements, those statements made references on how these strategies influenced reading comprehension research, each of them with three choices which were: “always”, “sometimes”, and “never”. The students answered the statements based on their personal experiences. Moreover, a test was administered in which students had to apply reading strategies in order to find out if the strategies positively influenced their reading comprehension skills. Again, reading tests included different types of readings. Finally, the third instrument was a survey. This was carried out to discover the difficulties that students face in the process of reading comprehension.

### TIME TABLE TO GATHER DATA (First semester 2013)

ACTIVITIES	TIME	PLACE	DATE	RESPONSIBLE
Pass the checklist, test and survey.	1:00 – 3:00 p.m	FLD of the UES	19/06/13	Azucena Jovel Evelyn Aquino Edith Baires
Pass the checklist, test and survey.	1:00 – 3:00 p.m	FLD of the UES	20/06/13	Evelyn Aquino Edith Baires
Pass the checklist, test and survey.	1:00 – 3:00 p.m	FLD of the UES	24/06/13	Azucena Jovel Evelyn Aquino Edith Baires
Pass the checklist, test and survey.	5:00 – 7:00 p.m	FLD of the UES	27/06/13	Azucena Jovel Evelyn Aquino

## **DATA CODIFICATION**

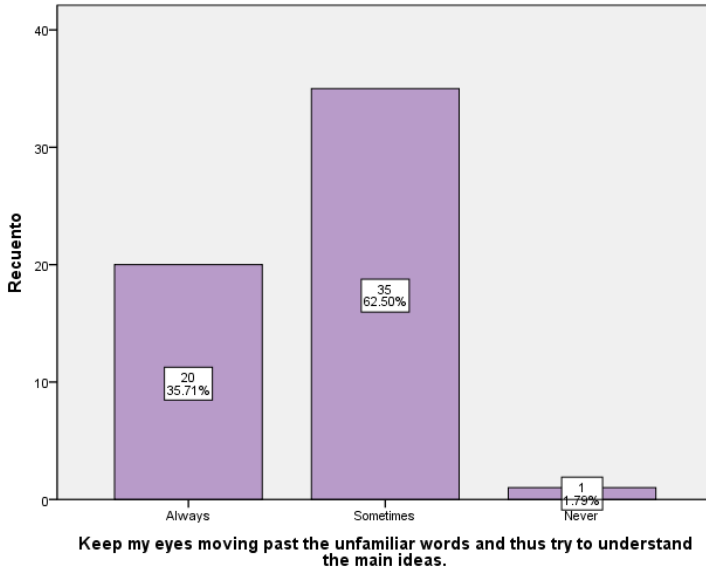
After having gathered the data, the next step in the process of the research was coding it which included taking into account the explanation above. One of the instruments was a checklist, which provided information about the independent variable, “reading strategies.” The purpose of this checklist was to discover if students had any knowledge on reading strategies. The other instrument was a test, which gathered information about the dependent variable, “reading comprehension.” The test contained different types of readings where students had to put into practice the reading strategies such as skimming, scanning previewing and predicting, making inference, summarizing, guessing meaning from context, reading faster and paraphrasing. This test explained how students applied the reading strategies mentioned above. Lastly, a survey was administered in which students had to choose different options of the statements related to the difficulties they faced during the process of the reading comprehension.

## **IX. DATA ANALYSIS**

In this phase of the research project, data is analyzed. The data has been divided in three parts: univariate analysis, bivariate analysis, the answers to the questions asked and validation of the hypothesis. First of all, the univariate analysis contains the graphs and the analysis of each of them, those are from the checklist, reading test and the survey administered to the sample, followed by the bivariate analysis. This analysis helped answer the research question.

## A. UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS

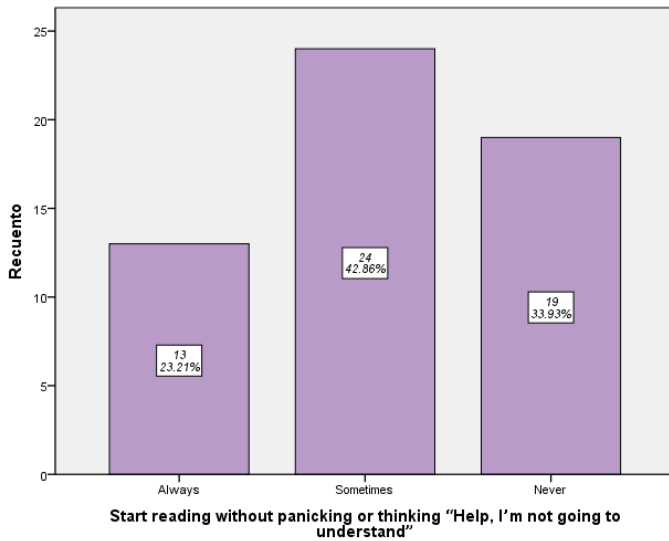
**GRAPH 1**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph, from the whole population, 35.71% state that when they read, they always keep their eyes moving past the unfamiliar words and thus try to understand the main ideas; while 62.50 % state that this only happens sometimes. Only 1.79% states that they never keep their eyes moving past the unfamiliar words. Therefore, most of the students sometimes apply this technique.

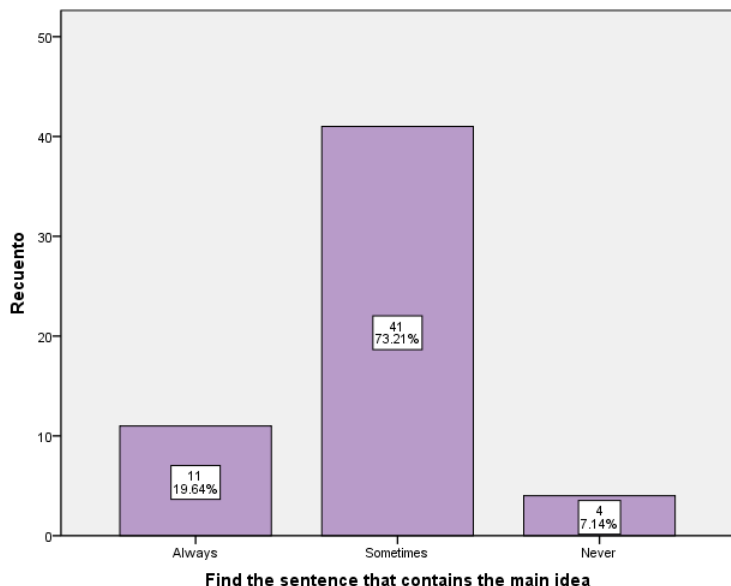
**GRAPH 2**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph, when students read, 42.86% sometimes “start reading without panicking or thinking that they are not going to understand” the material. On the other hand, 23.21% always do it, and 33.93% never do it. It can be observed that there is a great amount of students who sometimes read without having this problem.

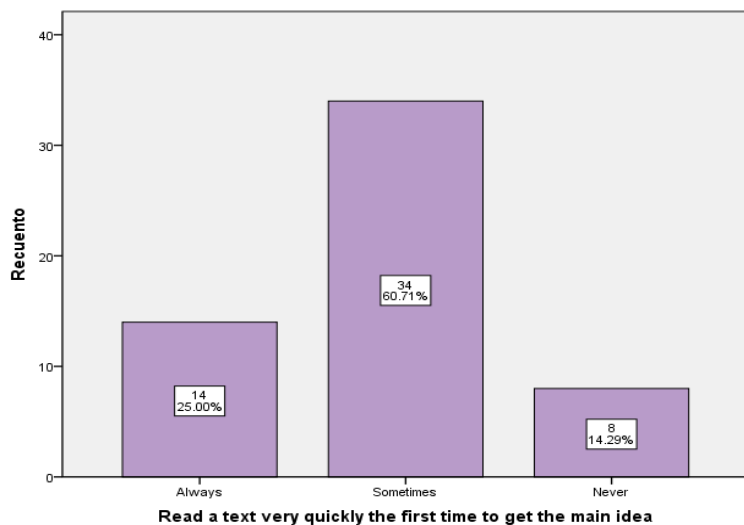
**GRAPH 3**



According to this graph, 19.64% of students, when they read, they always find the sentence that contains the main idea; while 73.21% sometimes do it, and only a 7.14% never apply it. It is obvious that there is a considerable amount of students who apply this technique when reading.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

**GRAPH 4**

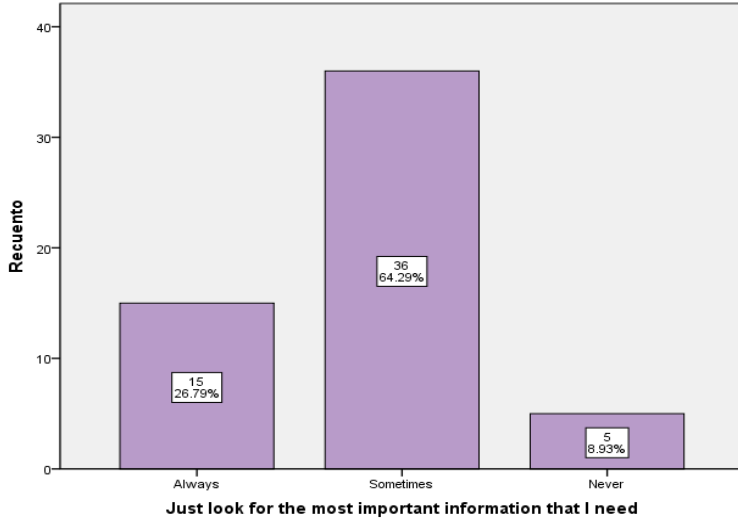


According to this graph, when students read, 25% of them always “read a text very quickly the first time to get the main idea”. On the other hand, a 60.71% sometimes do it, and only a 14.29% never apply this technique. It is clear, that there are more students who get the main idea by reading quickly.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013



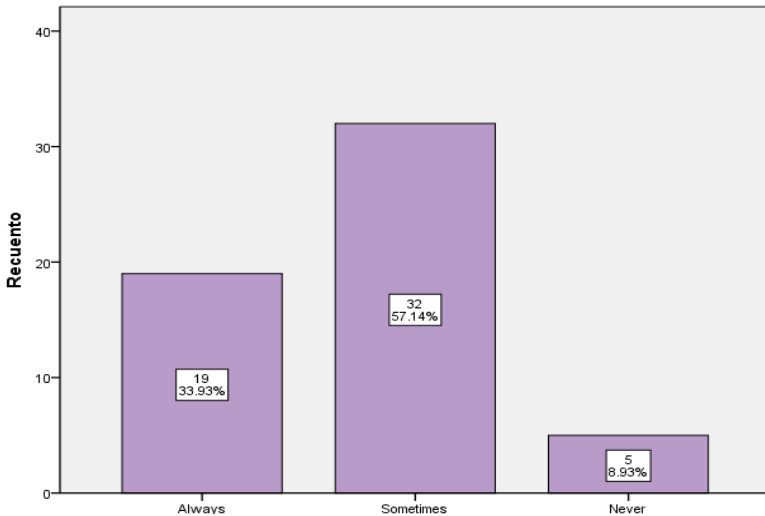
**GRAPH 5**



According to this graph, when students read, only 26.79% state that they always “just look for the most important information that I need”. However, 64.29% state that they sometimes do it, and finally, 8.93% never do it. It can be observed that this technique is highly used by students.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

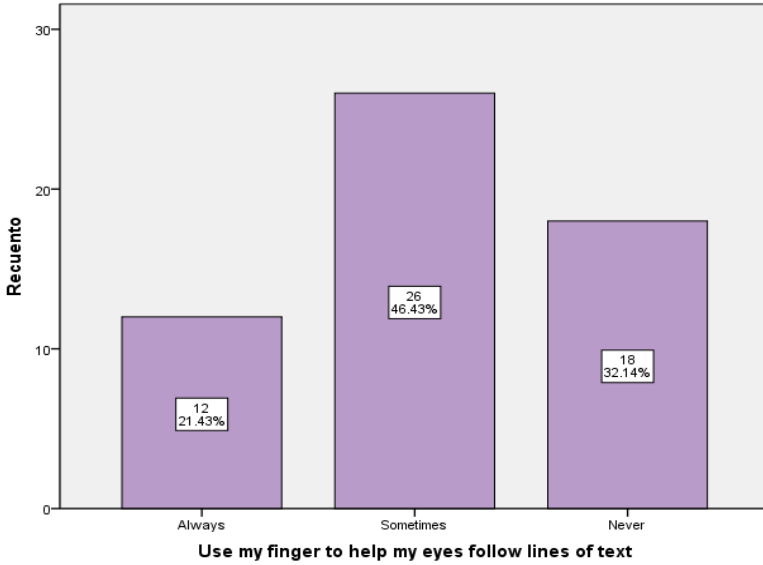
**GRAPH 6**



According to this graph, when students read, 33.93% state that they always “remember the most important details when they finish reading it”. Nevertheless, 57.14% state that they sometimes do it and an 8.93% never do it. The amount of students who sometimes apply this technique is greater.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

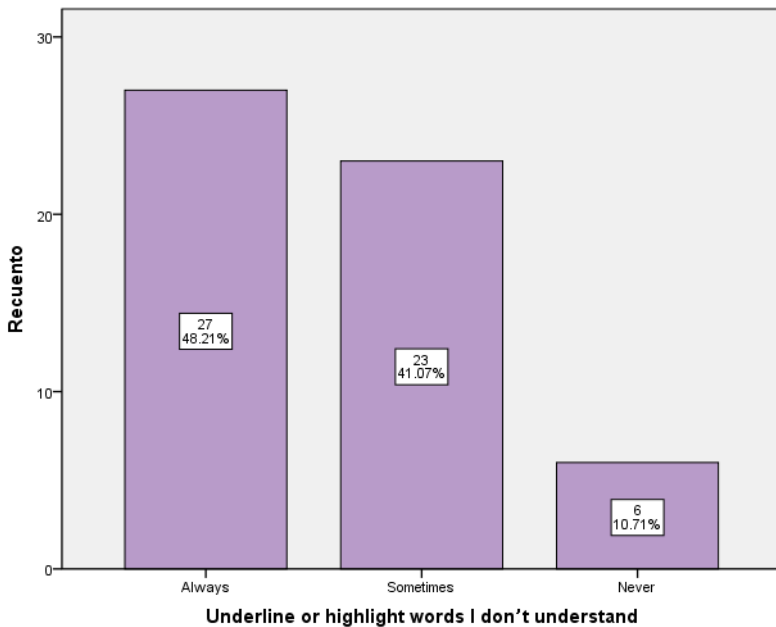
**GRAPH 7**



According to this graph, when students read, 21.43% always “use their fingers to help their eyes follow the lines of a text”. Nevertheless, 46.43% state that they sometimes do it and 32.14% never do it. It is clear that there are more students who sometimes apply this reading technique.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

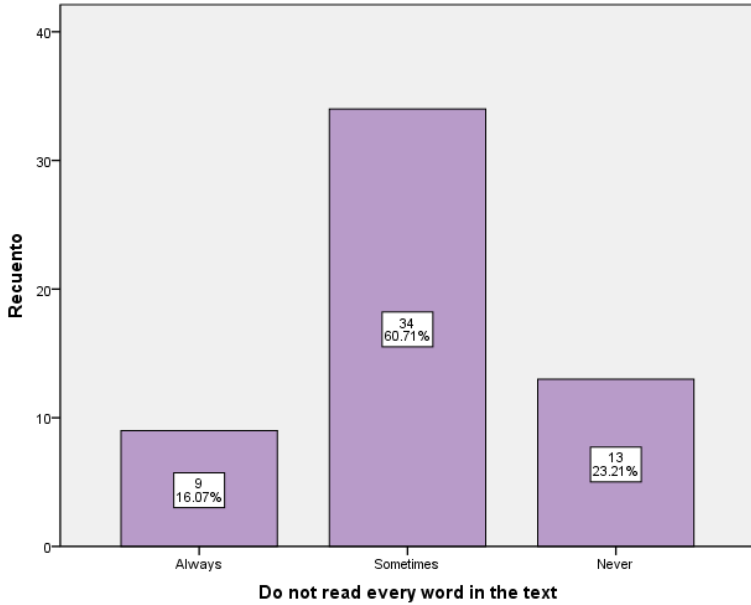
**GRAPH 8**



According to this graph, when students read, 48.21% answered that they always “underline or highlight words they do not understand”. While 41.07% answered that sometimes have this habit, and finally only 10.71% of students never do it. It is observed that there is a high amount of students who apply this technique.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

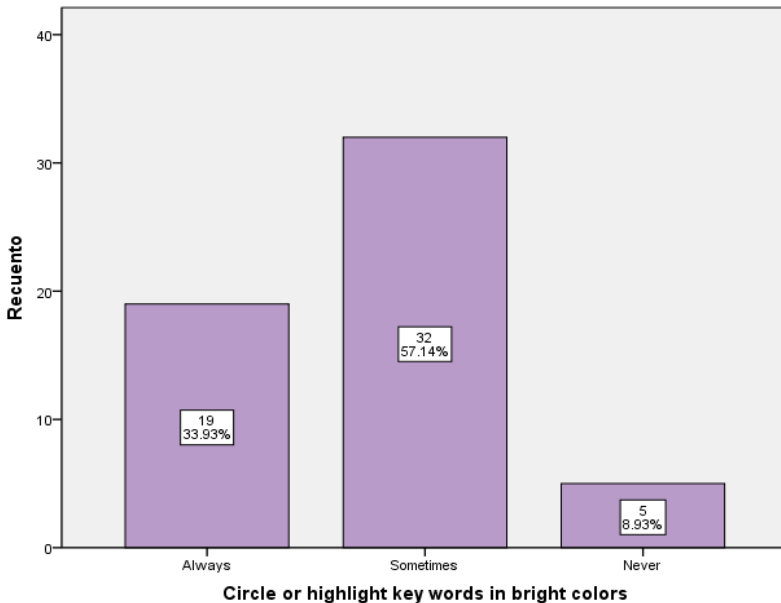
**GRAPH 9**



According to the answers of this option, the graph shows that 16.07% of students do not always “read every word on the texts”. On the other hand, a percentage of 60.71% state that they sometimes do it and 23.21% never do it.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

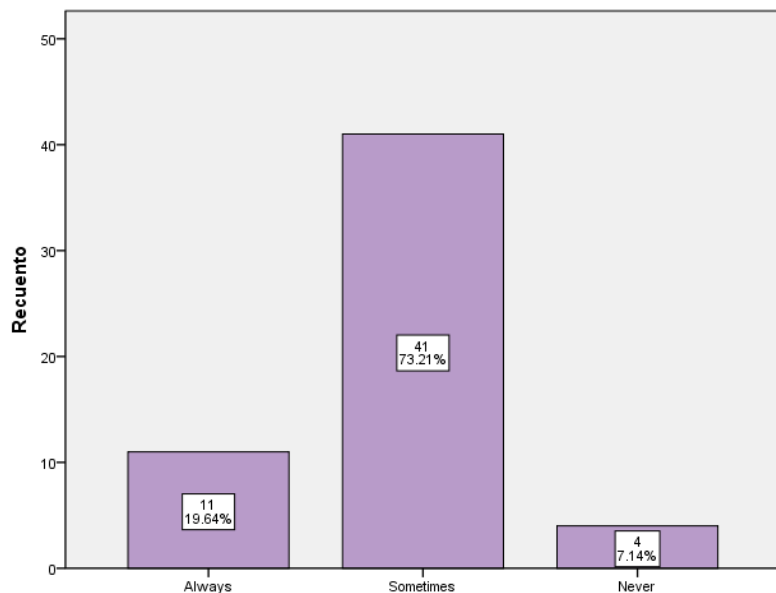
**GRAPH 10**



In this graph, it is observed that, according to students’ answers, when they read, 57.14% say that they sometimes “circle or highlight key words in bright colors”. But 33.93% state that they always do it, and 8.93% never do it. This reading habit is applied by most of them.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

**GRAPH 11**

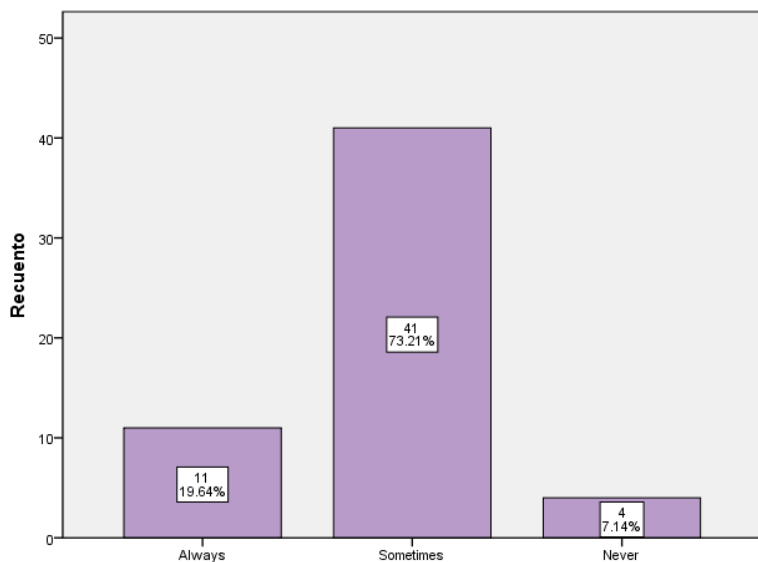


**I give the text a quick glance to be able to guess what is the text about**

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph, when students read, 19.64% always “give the text a quick glance to be able to guess what the text is about”. On the other hand, 73.21% sometimes do it and 7.14% never do it. It is clear that there is a great amount of students who sometimes have this reading habit.

**GRAPH 12**

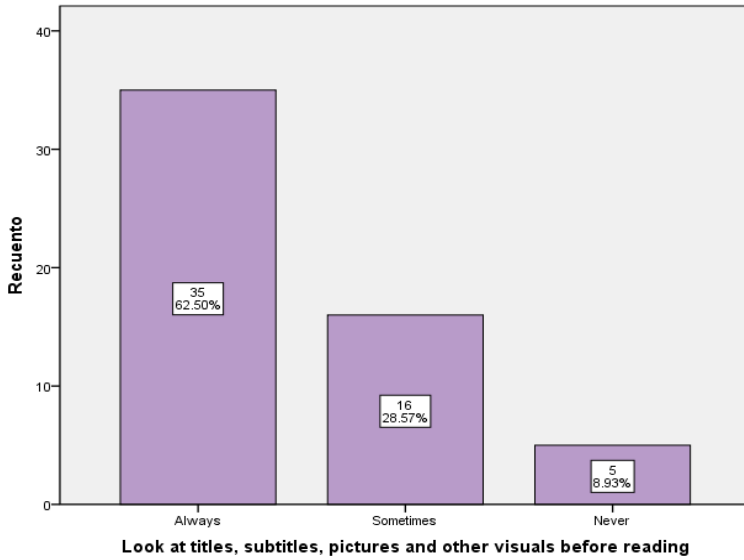


**Begin reading a text, I predict what is going to happen in the rest of the reading**

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph, when students begin reading a text, 19.64% predict what is going to happen in the rest of the reading. While 73.21% sometimes do it and only 7.14% never do it. According to these results, there are more students who sometimes practice this reading technique.

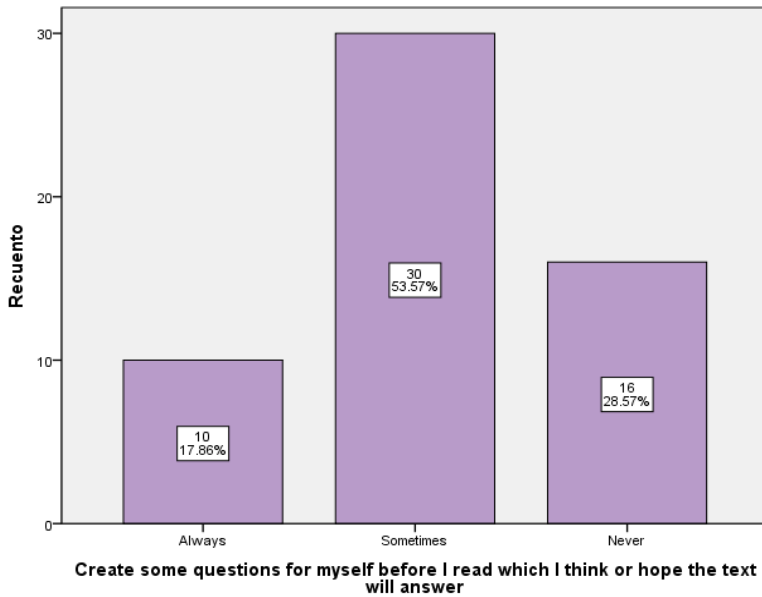
**GRAPH 13**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

In this graph, the frequency of how often students “look at titles, subtitles, pictures, and other visuals before reading” it can be observed with 62.50% that they always do it, whereas the 28.57% sometimes do it, and 8.93% never do it. It is clear that that most of students practice this reading technique.

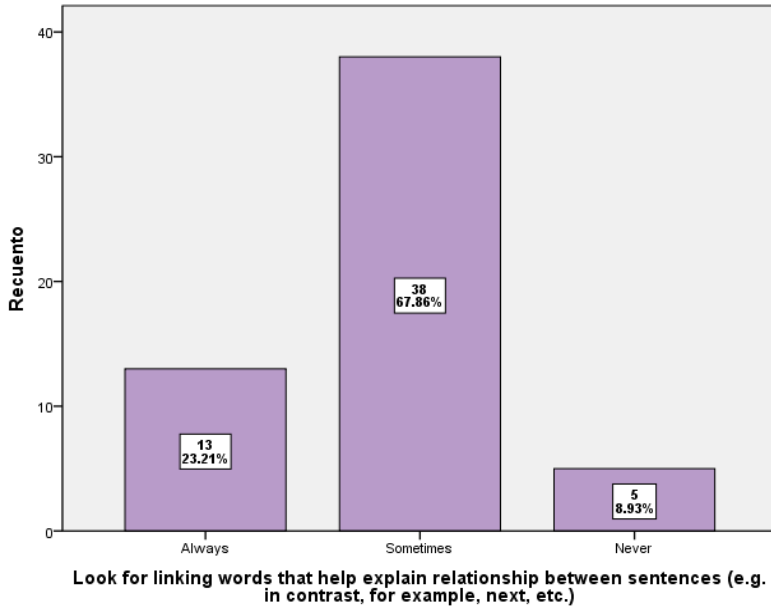
**GRAPH 14**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the frequency of how often students create some questions for themselves before they read. The results show that 17.86% always do it. So, 53.57% sometimes do it, and 28.57% never do it.

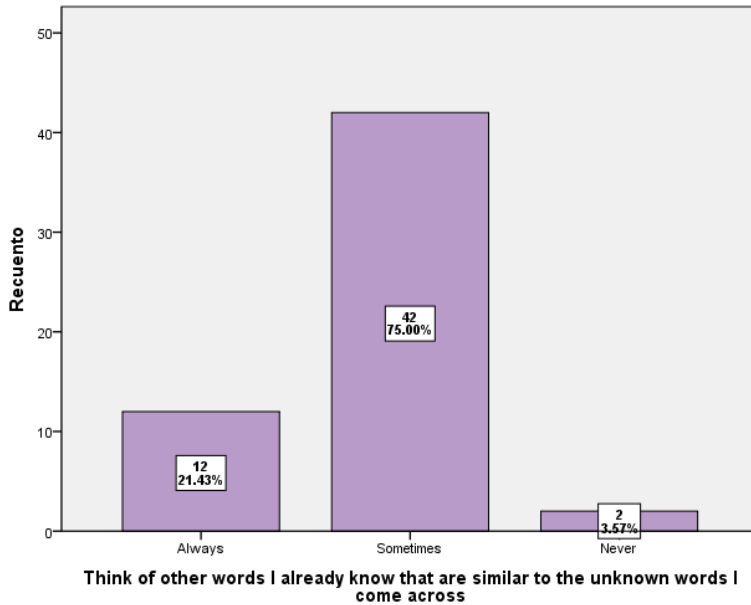
**GRAPH 15**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the frequency of how often students look for linking words that help explain relationship between sentences when they read. According to the results, 23.21% always do it, 67.86% sometimes do it, whereas 8.93% never do it. There are more students who sometimes practice this technique.

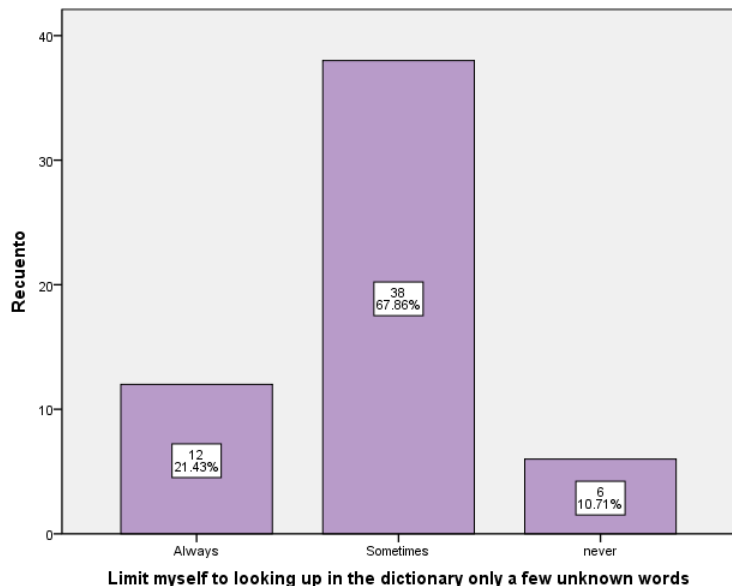
**GRAPH 16**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

When the students were asked “if they know that are similar to the unknown words they come across the results were 3.57% say they never do it, 21.43% say they always do it, and the majority with 75 % say they sometimes do it.

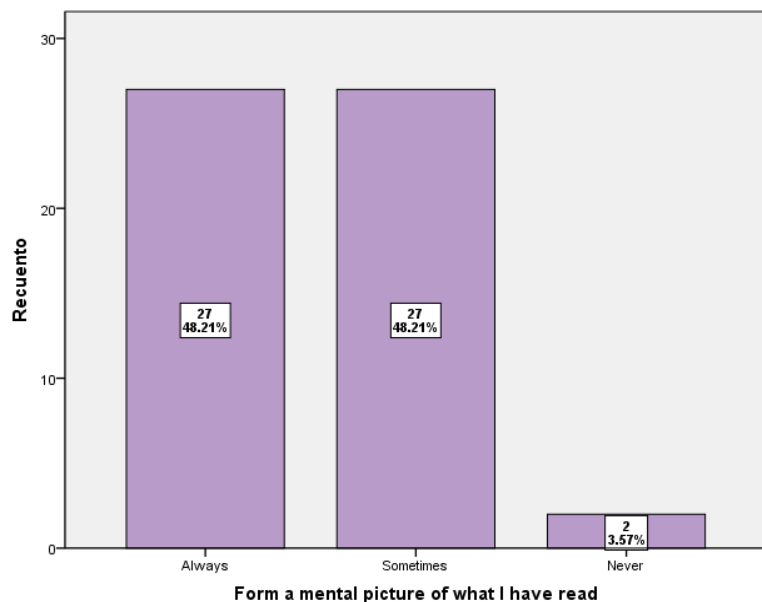
**GRAPH 17**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

In this graph it is evident that the majority of students with 67.86% say they limit themselves to looking up in the dictionary only a few unknown words, on the other hand 10.71% of them say they never do it, while 21.43% say they always do it.

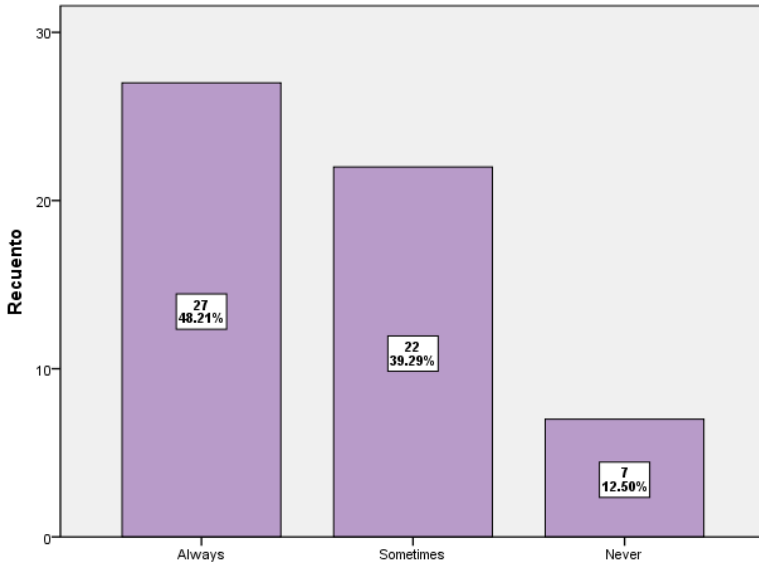
**GRAPH 18**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this statement “form mental pictures of what I have read” the graph shows with 48.21% percentage, they always do it with similar results students say they sometimes do it while the only 3.57% say they never do it.

**GRAPH 19**

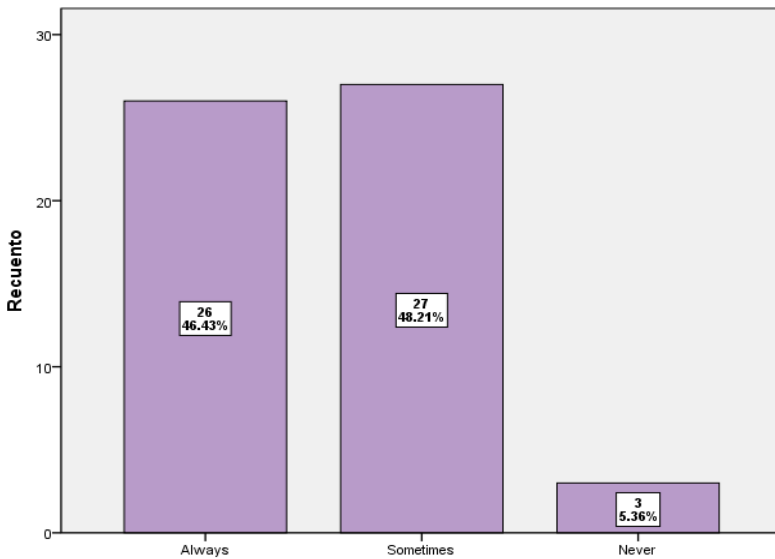


**Try to understand the relationship between the main ideas and supporting details**

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows that 48.21% of the students “try to understand the relationship between the main ideas and supporting details” while 39.29% say they sometimes do it, 12.50% say they never do it.

**GRAPH 20**



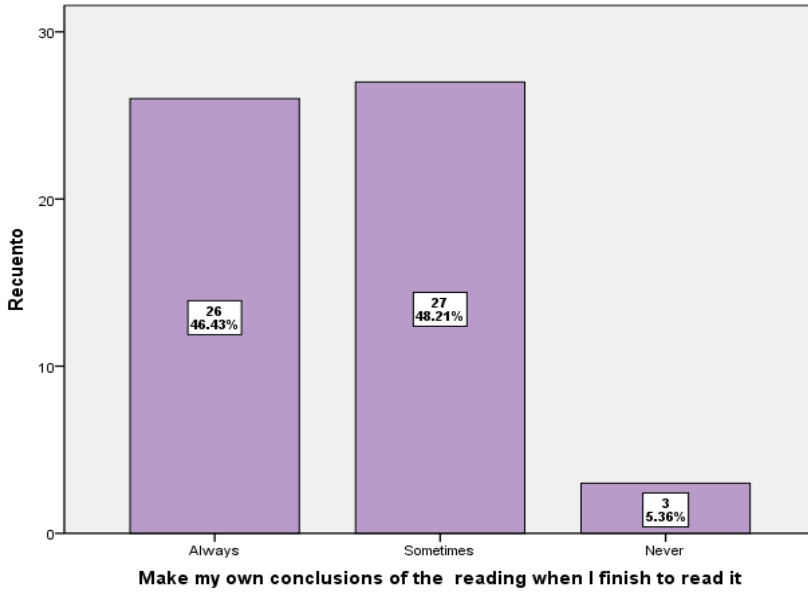
**Make my own conclusions of the reading when I finish to read it**

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph the majority of students with 48.21% sometimes make their own conclusion of the reading when they finish reading it; a similar percentage also was obtained to the option always with a 46.43% on the contrary the only 5.36% answer they never do it.



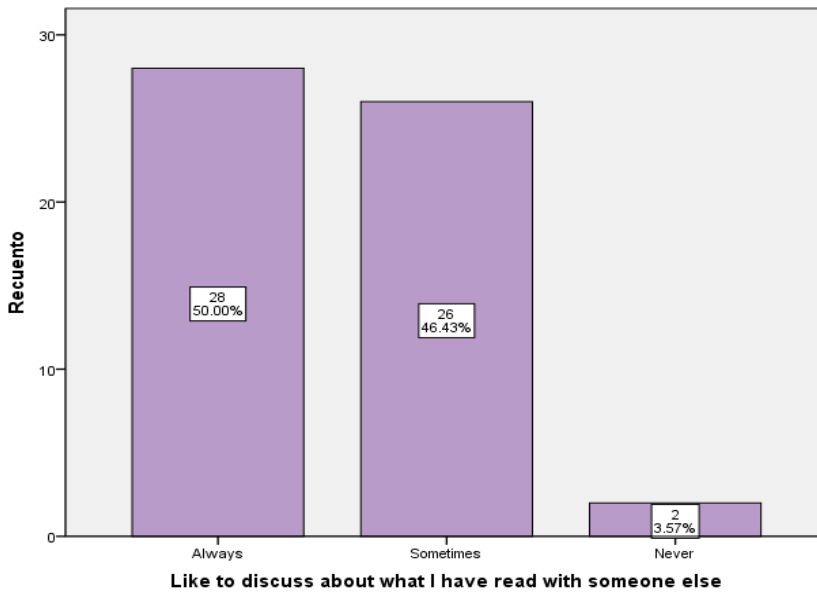
**GRAPH 21**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

To the statement “make my own conclusions of the reading when I finish reading it, this graph shows similar results obtained on the options always 46.43% and sometimes 48.21 and the 5.36% say they never do it.

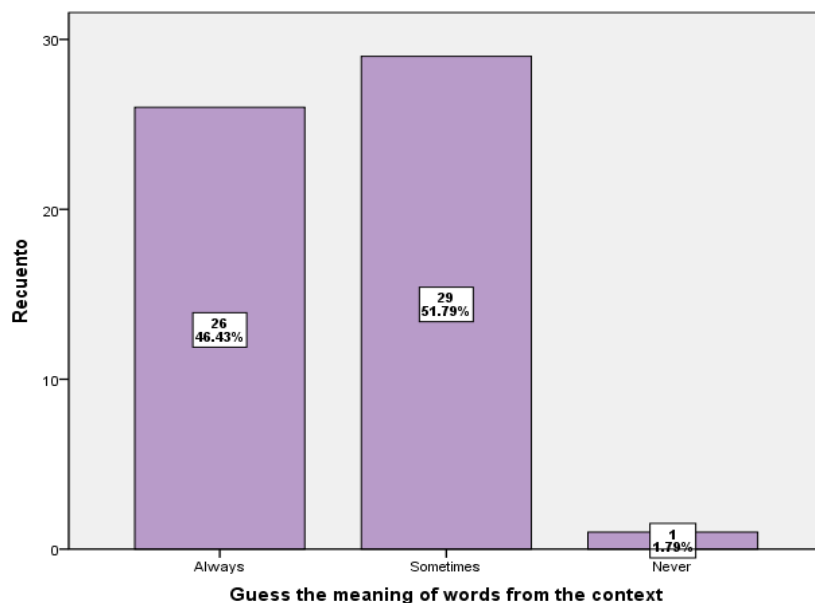
**GRAPH 22**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

It is notable in this graph that students “like to discuss what they have read with someone else”. 50% of them answered they always do it, 46.43% answered they sometimes do it, while the only 3.57% said they never do it.

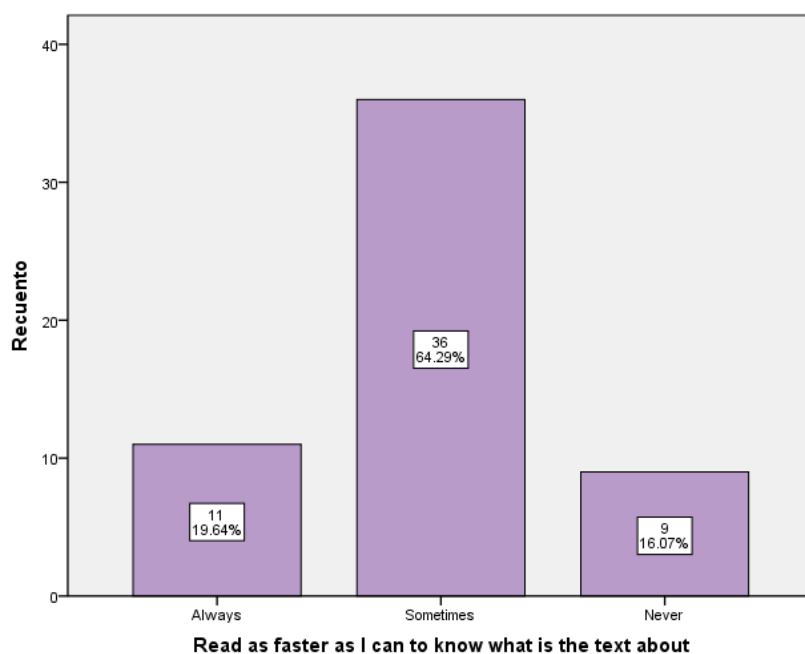
**GRAPH 23**



The results of this graph shows with 51.79% students sometimes guess the meaning of the words from the context, and 46.43% of the students do it always, while only 1.79% never do it.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

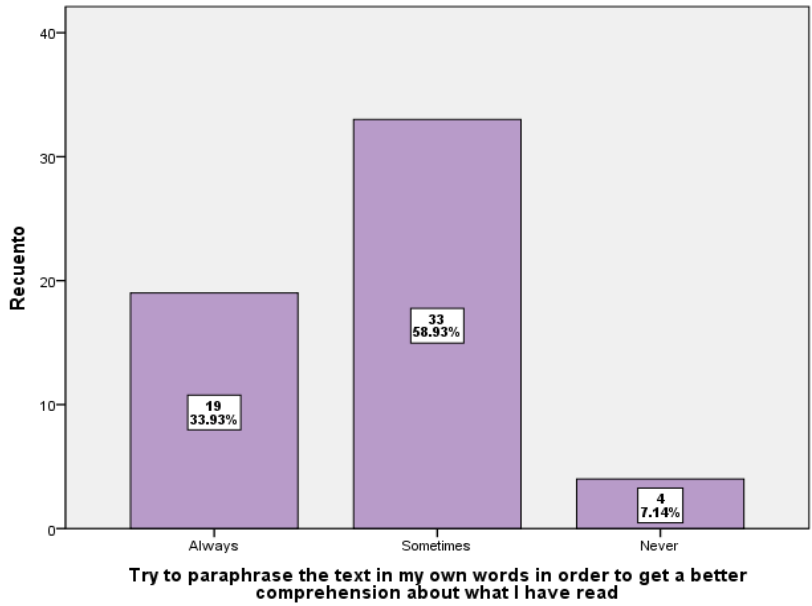
**GRAPH 24**



According to the results obtained from the students when they were asked about the statement “read as fast as I can to know what text is about”. Students with 64.29% answered they sometimes do it; while 19.64% of them said they always do it, the less percentage with 16.07% said they never do it.

Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

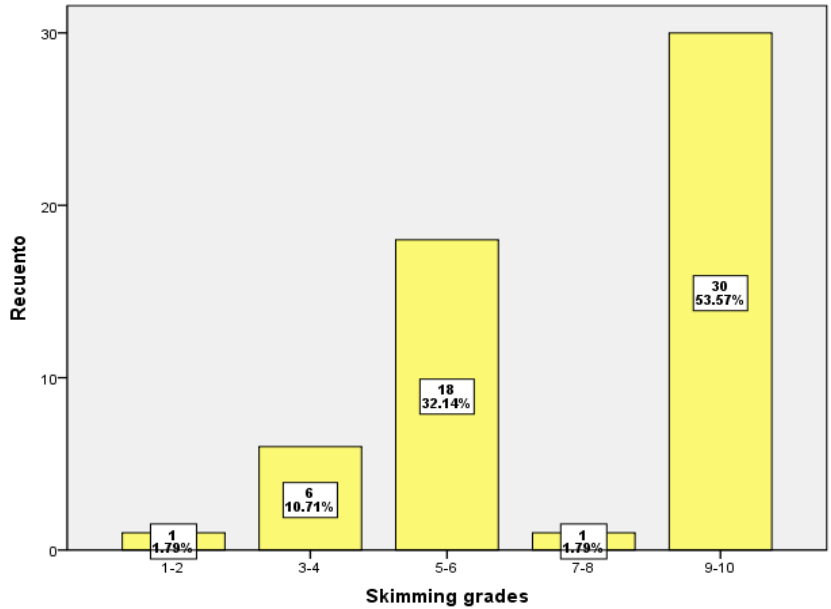
**GRAPH 25**



Source: checklist administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the results obtained from the statement “try to paraphrase the text in my own words in order to get a better comprehension what I have read”, the higher percentage 58.93% said they sometimes do it, to the option always students 33.93% the minor percentage is never with 7.14%.

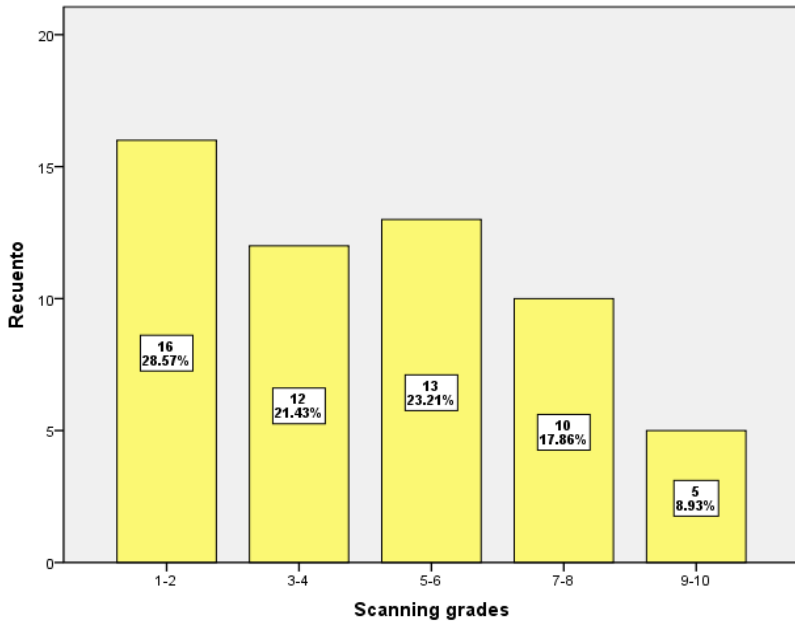
**GRAPH 26**



Source: Grades from the reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

These results are about the skimming strategy, it is observable that the majority with 53.57% got from 9 to 10 grades and the middle of the grades were from 32.14% while 1.79% got grades between 1 and 2.

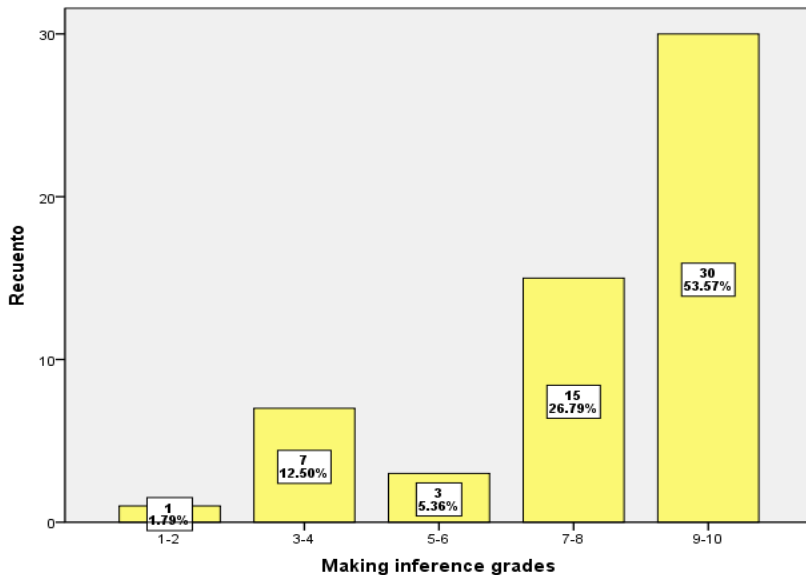
**GRAPH 27**



This graph shows the results about grades of scanning strategy, it is notable that the majority of them got bad grades student's percentage 28%. Then 57% of the students got from 1 to 2 grades. And the lower percentage got good grades from 9 to 10.

Source: Grades from the reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

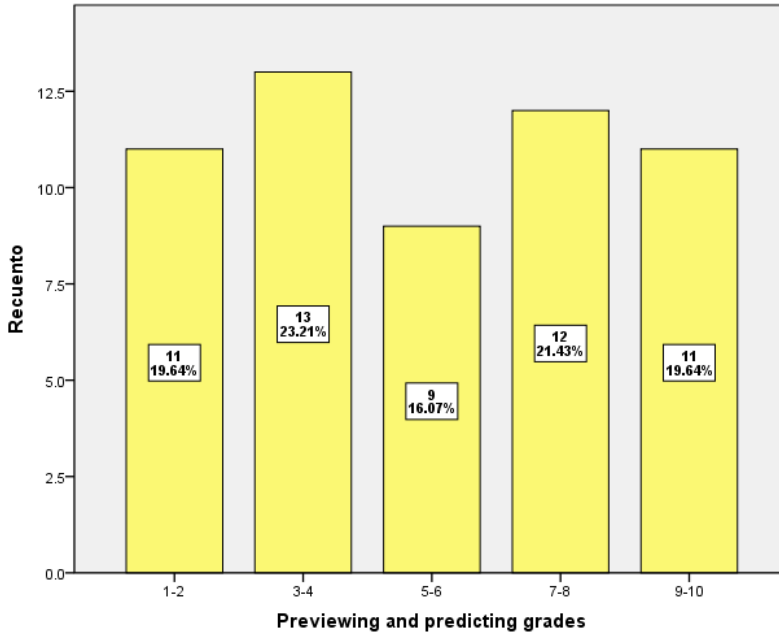
**GRAPH 28**



On the making inference strategy, this graph displays that 63.57% got excellent grades from 9 to 10, 26.79% got grades between 7 and 8 grades, the minor percentage with 1.79% got bad grades between 1 and 2 .

Source: Grades from the reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

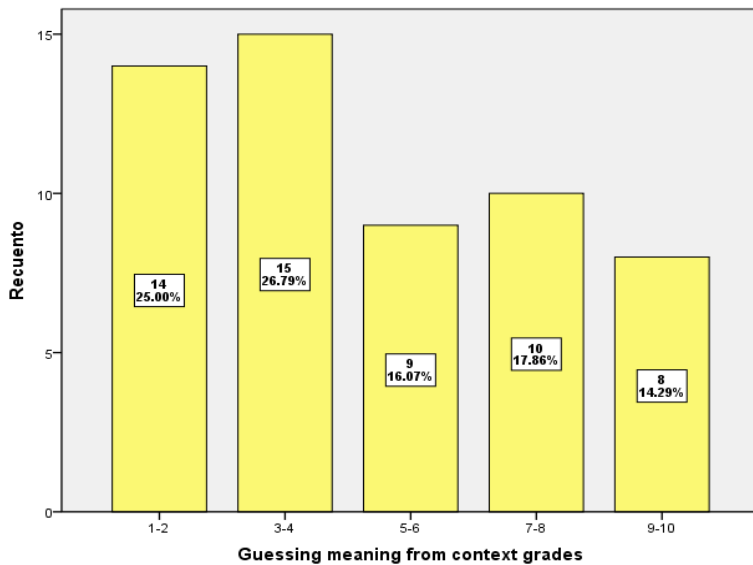
**GRAPH 29**



Source: Grades from the reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

The results in this graph “previewing and predicting strategy” were almost similar between them, the higher percentage is between 23.21% from 3 to 4 grades, the lower percentage is represented for 16.07% that reflects grades from 5 to 6 grades, from 1 to 2 grades are represented by 19.64% , from 9 to 10 grades are represented for equal percentage 19.64%. So it is noticeable that the half of the students knows about reading strategies but they do not how to apply them.

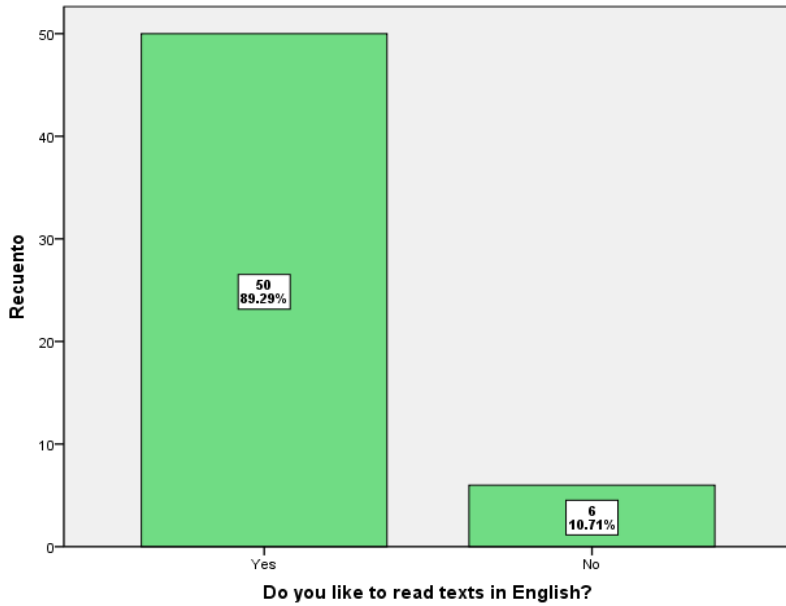
**GRAPH 30**



Source: Grades from the reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

It is noticeable that there were many students who got grades from 3 to 4 and this was represented by 26.79% the graph also shows that the minor percentage of it got excellent grades from 9 to 10, it means that most of students do not know too much about this strategy or they do not know how to use it.

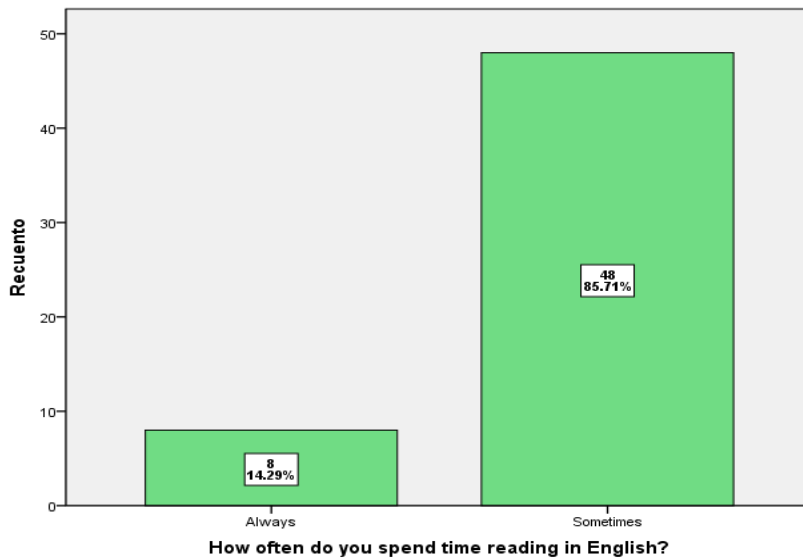
**GRAPH 31**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

The graph shows that the majority of the sample answered the option “Yes” it represents 89.29% of the population studied in this question about if they like to read texts in English. It means that the most of the students read text in English. And the rest of the population represented with 10.71% answered “No” in that way is presented 100% of the sample.

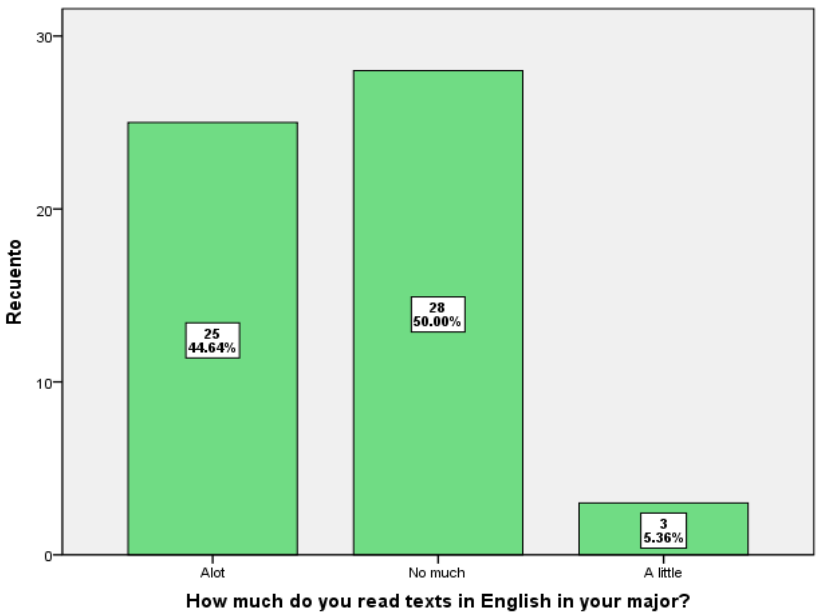
**GRAPH 32**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph represents the question “How often do you spend time reading in English?” It has three options, the first one, showed the option “always” as result, it got 14.29% followed the option “sometimes” with 85.71% after that, the option “never” that got 0.0% for that reason that option didn’t appear in the graph.

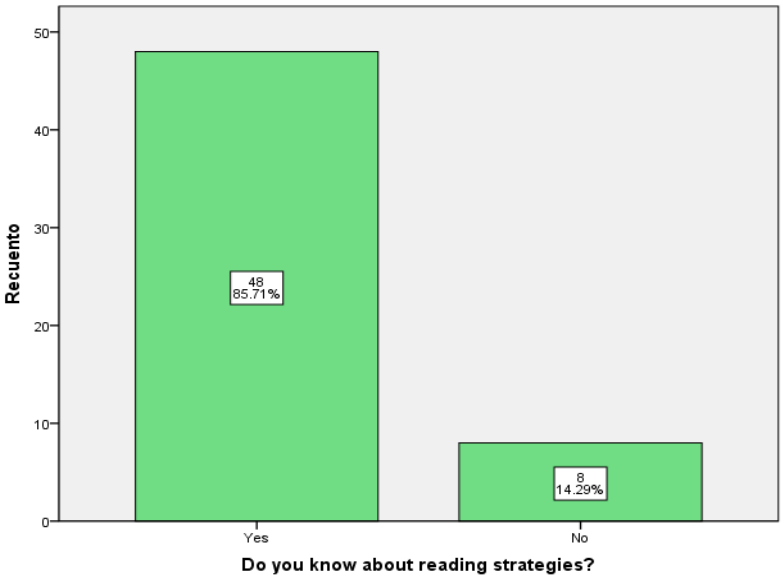
**GRAPH 33**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this graph 44.64% of the participant answered the option “A lot” while 50.00% said “No much” and the last option represented as “A little” got 5.36% it got the question “How much do you read texts in English in your major?” that means the majority of the students said they don’t read so much during the studying of the carrier.

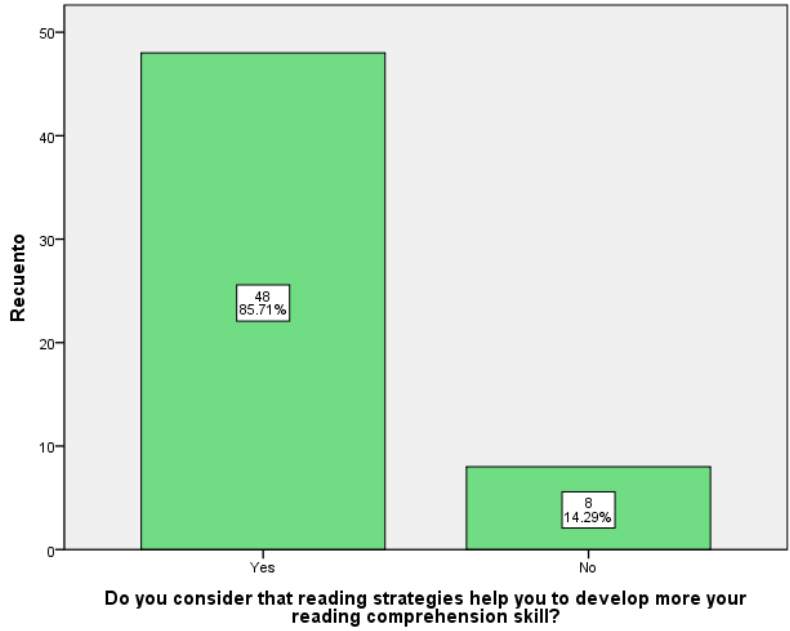
**GRAPH 34**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph represents the question “Do you know about reading strategies?” it has two choices the first one is “Yes” the second is “No”. So the first one got the most of the percentage with 85.71% that means that the majority of the participants know about reading strategies and just 14.29% said “No”.

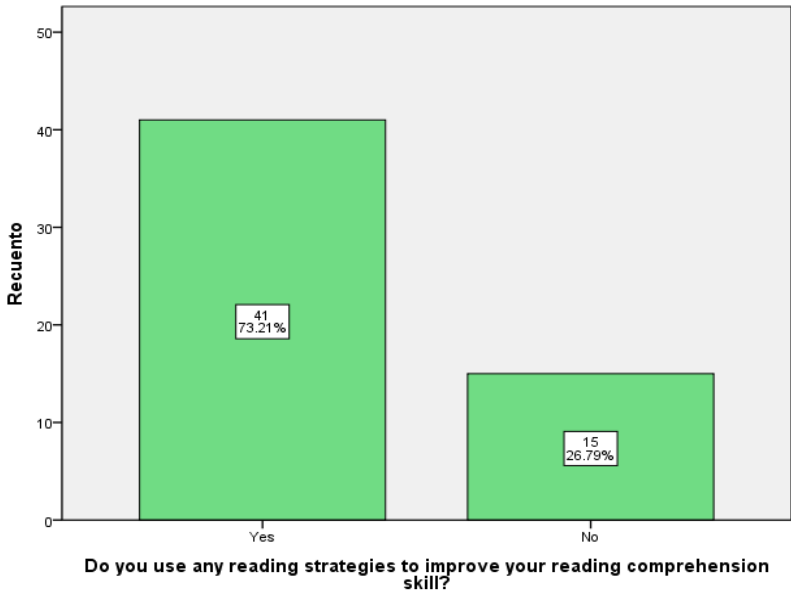
**GRAPH 35**



When the participants were asked if they considered that reading strategies helped them to develop more their reading skill, the majority, 85.71% answered “Yes” they do. And 14.29% the lower percentage answered “No”.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

**GRAPH 36**

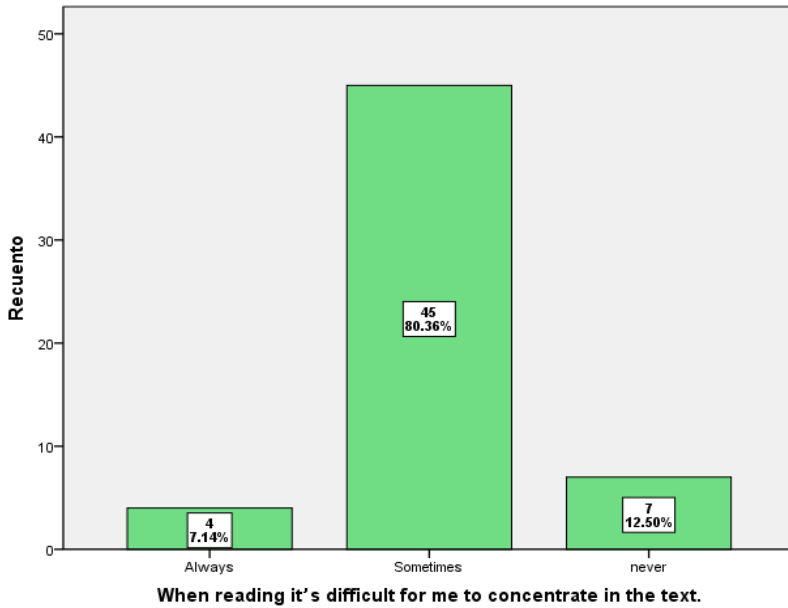


The result obtained in this question shows that the majority of the sample with 73.21% answered “Yes” to the question if they use reading strategies to improve their reading comprehension skill. And the less percentage with 26.79% said “No” that they do not use reading strategies when they read a text.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013



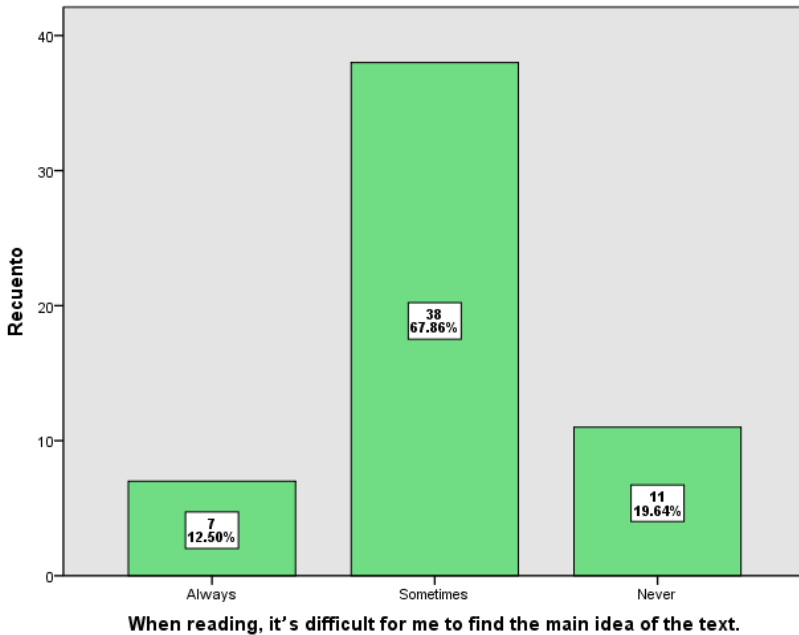
**GRAPH 37**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

It is notable that the majority of the students answered the option “Sometimes” it has 80.36% in this statement “When reading it’s difficult for me to concentrate in the text” then the option never got 12.50% and the option that got less percent is represented with “Always” it shows 7.14% said that is difficult for them to concentrate in the text while they read.

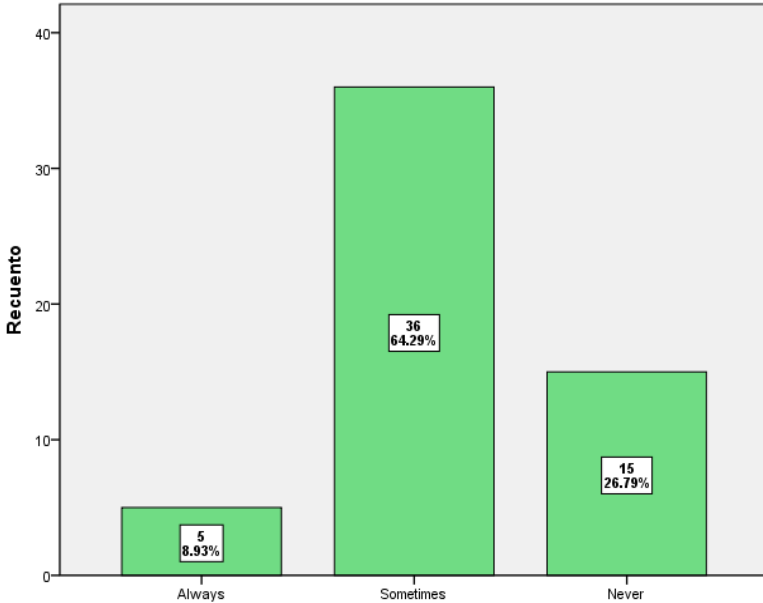
**GRAPH 38**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to the result of this statement, the option that got the most of the percentage was “Sometimes” representing 67.86% then it is followed by the option “Never” with 19.64% and then the option that got less percent is “Always” with 12.50% it means that the most of the participants said that sometimes is difficult for them to find the main idea in a text.

**GRAPH 39**

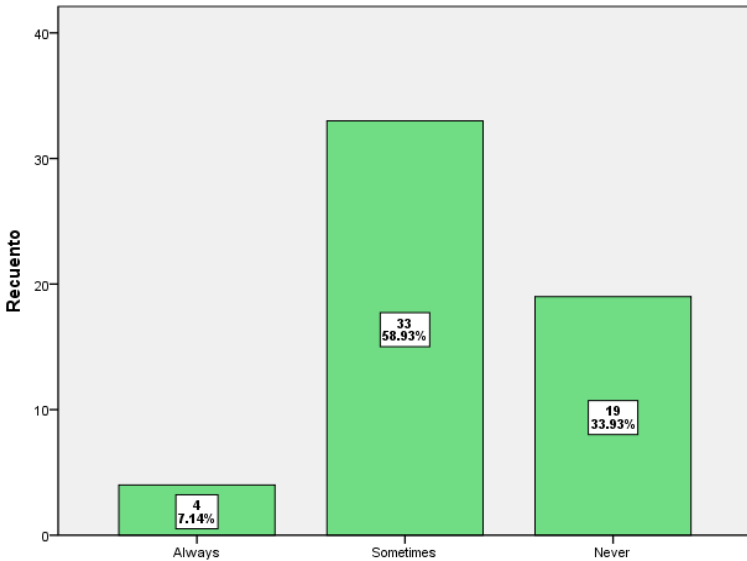


**When reading, I have to read over and over to understand the text.**

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

It is visible that this statement shows the result of “When reading, I have to read over and over to understand the text” the option that got less percent is “always with 8.93% then is the option “Never” with 26.79% and finally the option that got the most of the result is “Sometimes” with 64.29%. So the majority of the participants sometimes have to read over and over a text to understand it.

**GRAPH 40**

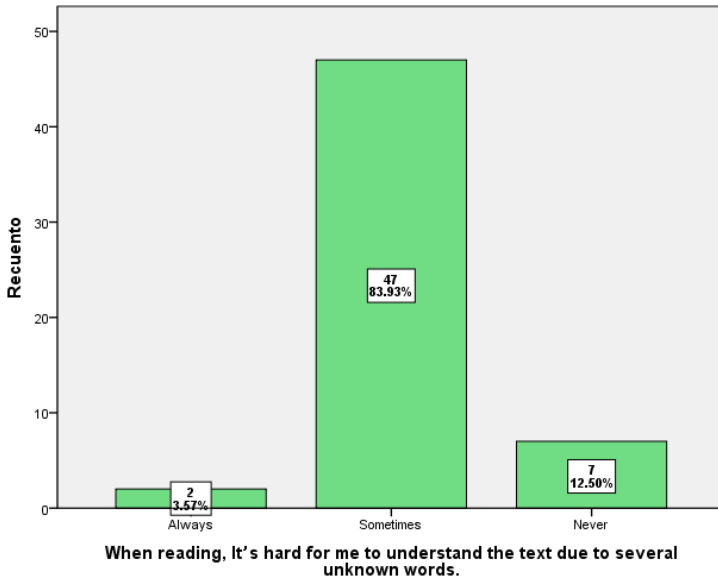


**When reading, it's hard for me to connect the ideas in a long passage.**

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph represents the statement “When reading, it is hard for me to connect the ideas in a long passage”. It has three options the first option is “Always” it got 7.14% then the second option “Sometimes” got the majority of the percentage with 58.93%. And the third option with 33.93% is presented by “Never”.

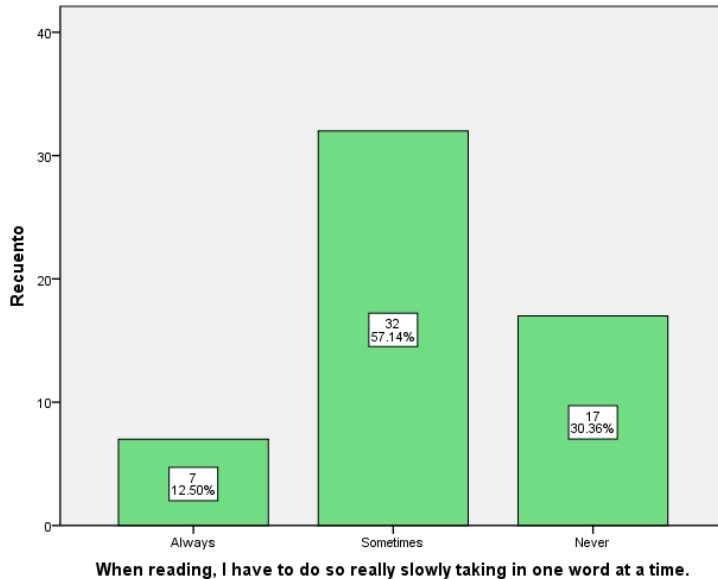
**GRAPH 41**



According to this graph, almost all the sample chose the option “Sometimes”, it represents 83.93% to the statement “When reading, it is hard for me to understand the text due to several unknown words”. Then the option “Never” represents 12.50% and the option that represents less percent is “Always” with 3.67%.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

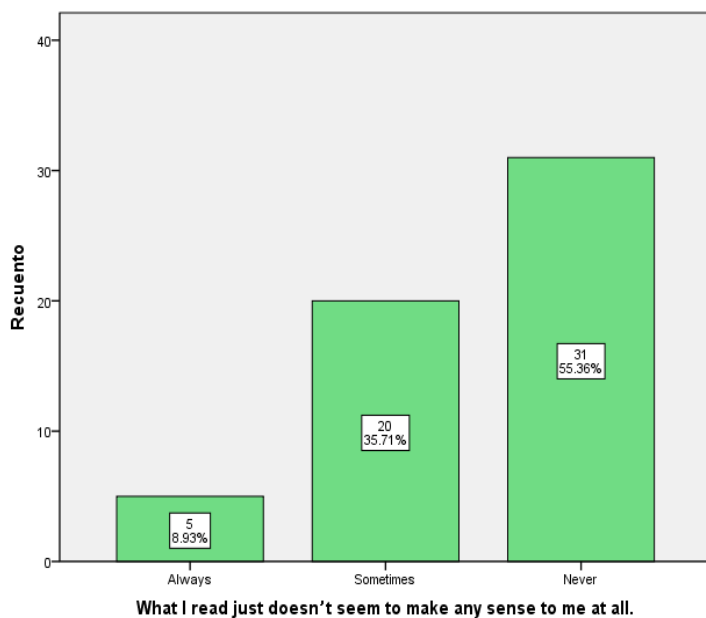
**GRAPH 42**



The result obtained with this statement shows that, the majority of the sample with 57.14% sometimes have to read slowly taking in one word at a time when they read text in English, and 30.36% represent the option “Never” of that statement and 12.50% the less percentage, it represents the option “Always” completing 100% of the population studied.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

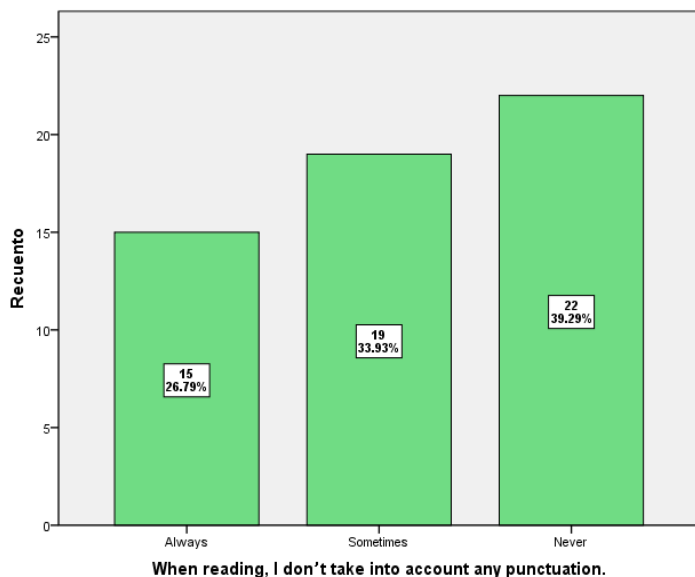
**GRAPH 43**



According to this statement “When I read just doesn’t seem to make any sense to me at all”. The results of this options are presented in this way the first one “Always” with 8.93%, second one “sometimes” with 35.71% and the last one with the most of the result “Never” got 55.36%. That is the way to know the results of this statement.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

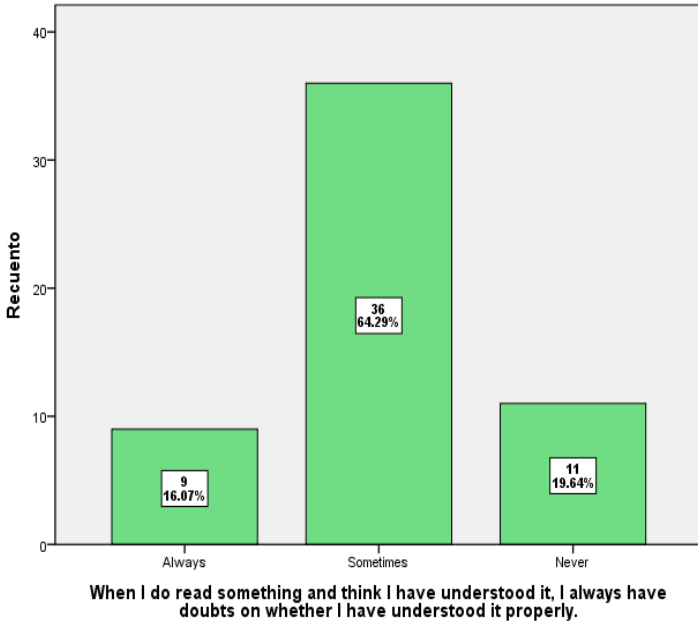
**GRAPH 44**



This graph represents the statement “When reading, I do not take into account any punctuation.” It has three options the first one is “Always” it has 26.79%, of the sample, followed the option “Sometimes” with the 33.93% and the last option is “Never” with the highest result with 39.29% that means that most of the population do not care about punctuation when they read.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

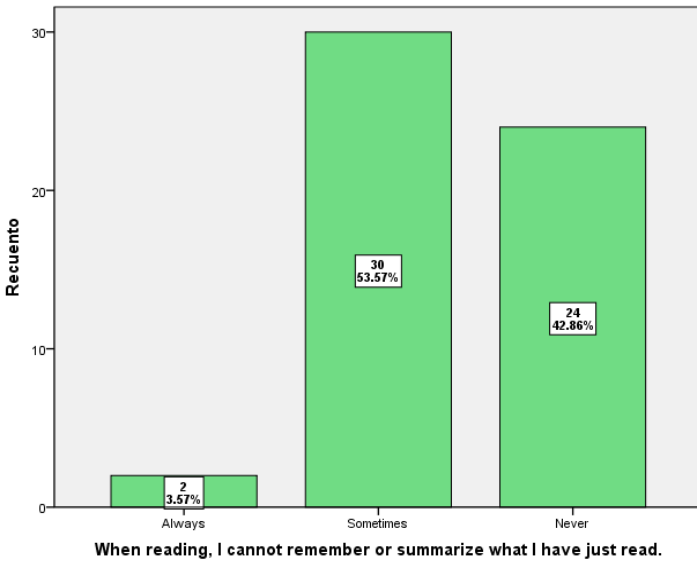
**GRAPH 45**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

According to this statement it is evident that the majority of the participants said that they “Sometimes” when they read something they think if they have understood it, and they have doubts on whether they have understood it properly. That option is represented with 64.29%, and then the option “Never” has 19.64% and the less percentage belong to the option “Always”.

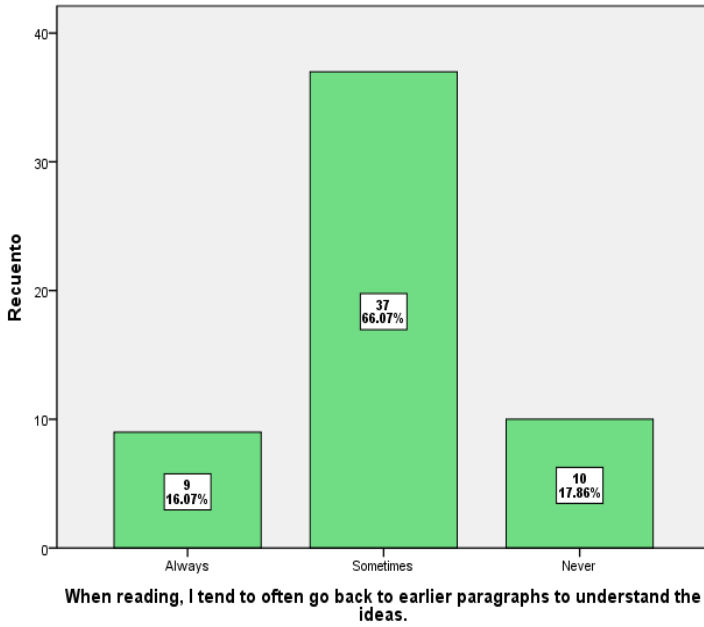
**GRAPH 46**



Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph represents the statement “When reading, I cannot remember or summarize what I have just read” the majority of the population chose the option “Sometimes” representing 53.57%, the second option with high percentage is “Never” with 42.86% of the sample, the less percentage is the option “Always” with 3.57% of the participants.

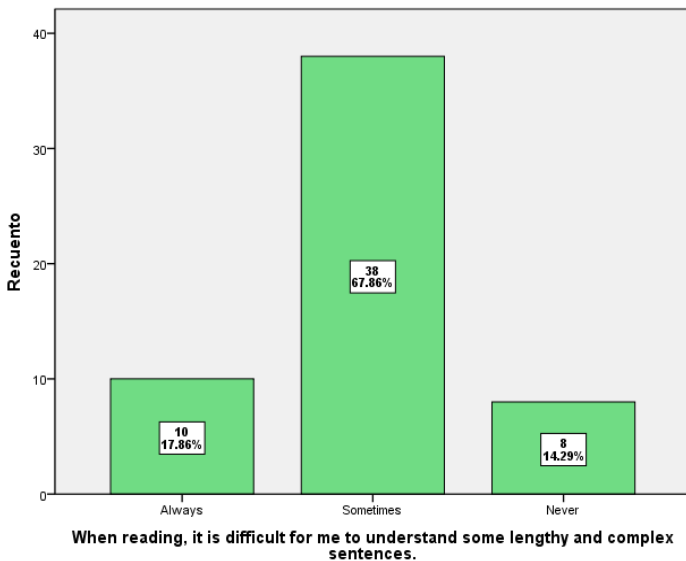
**GRAPH 47**



This graph shows the results about the statement “When reading, I tend to often go back to earlier paragraphs to understand the ideas”. The highest percentage represents the option “Sometimes” with 66.07% that means that the majority of them need to see back the reading to understand the main ideas. And the other two options are similar in percentages the option “Never” has 17.86% and the option “Always” has 16.07%.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

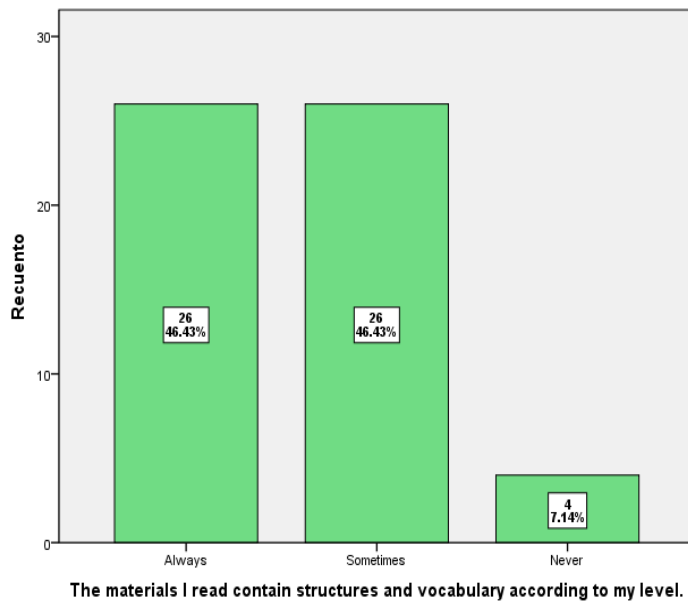
**GRAPH 48**



It is evident that this graph represents the majority of the sample with 67.86% who answered that when they read, “sometimes” was difficult for them to understand some lengthy and complex sentences. On the other hand, the options “Always” and “Never” obtained similar results in percentages. One of them with 17.86% represents “Always” and the option “Never” with 14.29%.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

**GRAPH 49**

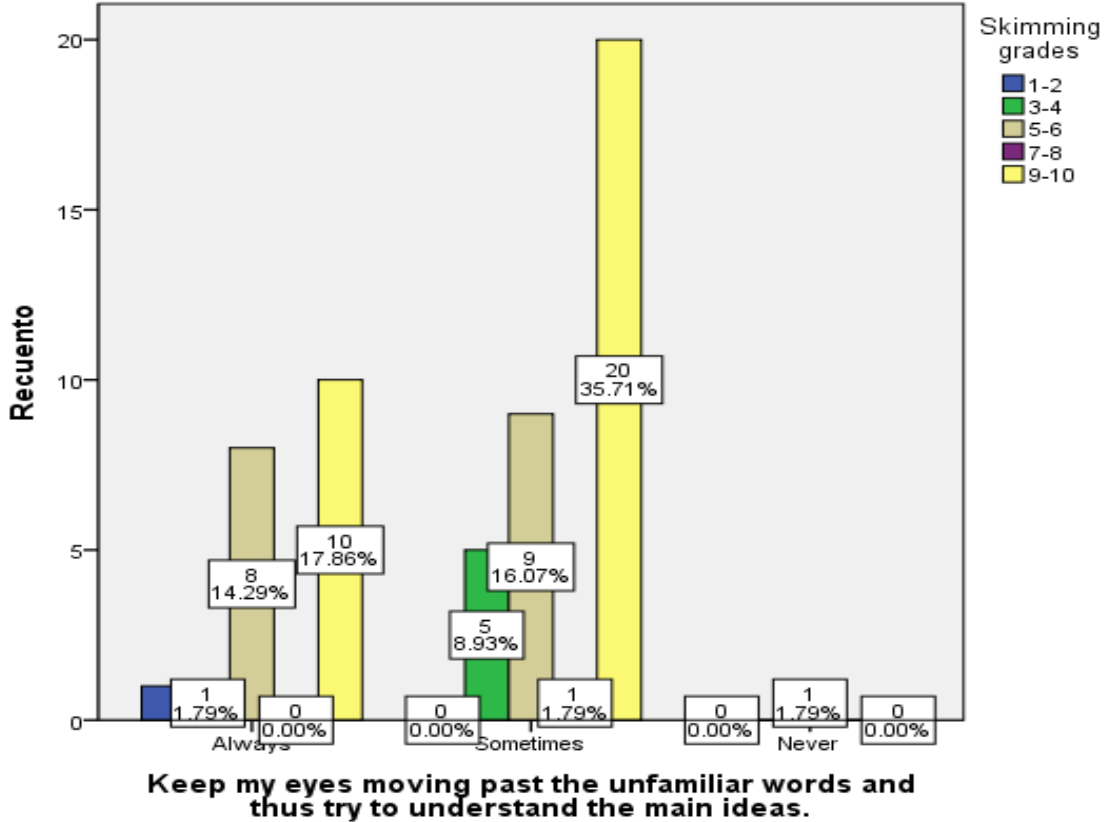


It is noticeable that this graph shows two equal results the options “Always” and “Sometimes” got the same percentages that are 46.43% the statement says: “The materials read contain structures and vocabulary according to my level. And the last option that is “Never” just has 7.14% of the population.

Source: Survey administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

**A. BIVARIATE ANALYSIS**

**GRAPH 50**

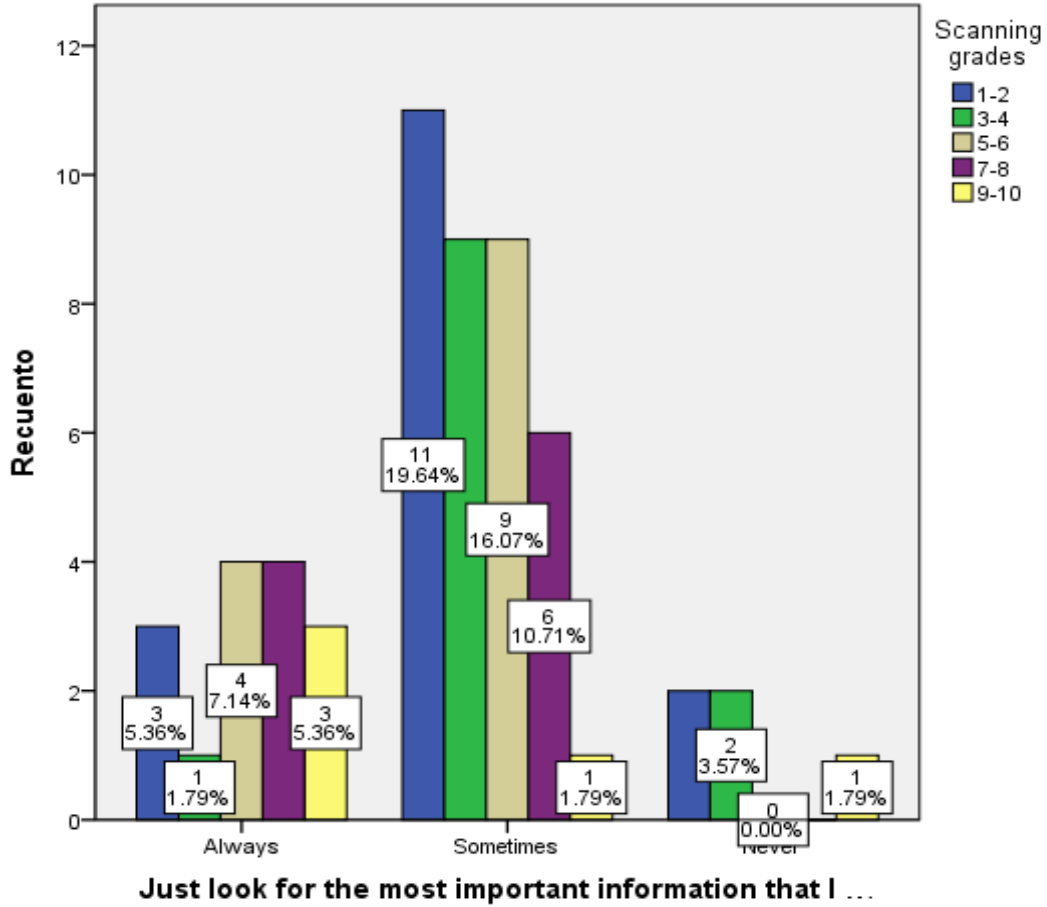


Source: Checklist and reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

In this graph, it is analyzed the comparison made between the grades that students obtained in one test about reading strategies, in this case: “skimming” strategy, with one of the statements asked to students showing the frequency of how often they use one of the techniques of the “skimming strategy”. According to the results, the students who responded that “when they read, they sometimes kept their eyes moving past the unfamiliar words and thus try to understand the main ideas”, there was a high percentage who stated “sometimes” and “always”, and that percentage got high grades. Therefore, this means that, effectively, students are applying the skimming strategy when they read, because if they answered that when reading they always and sometimes continued reading without paying attention to unfamiliar word, the prove is the good grades they obtained in that part of the test.



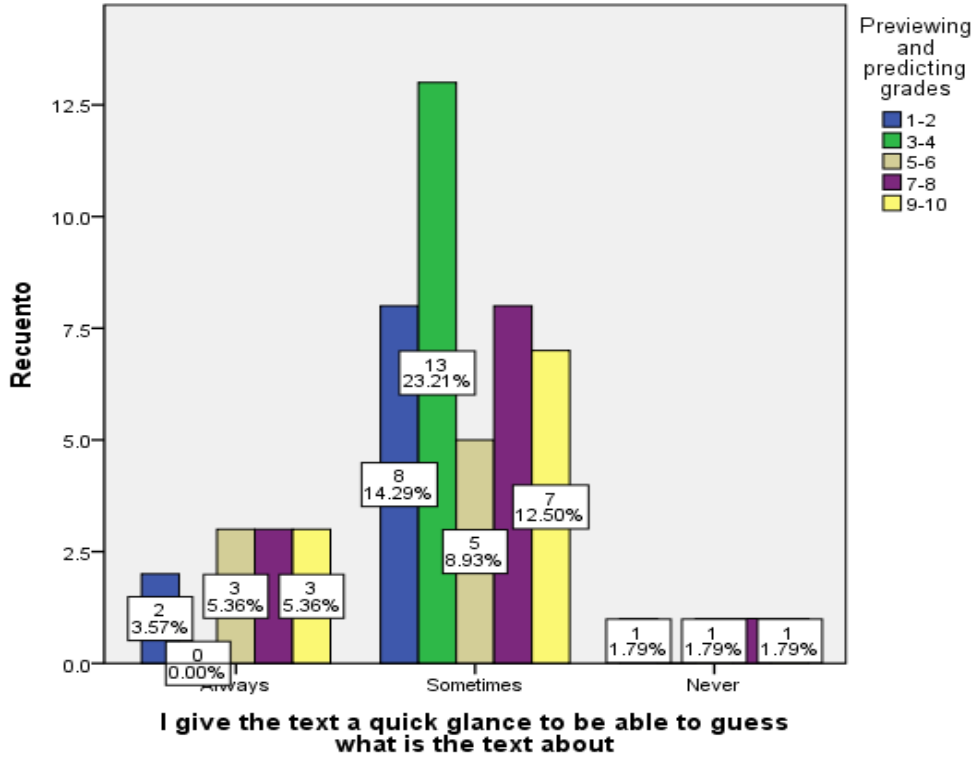
**GRAPH 51**



Source: Checklist and reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the results compared between the grades that students obtained in one test about reading strategies, and the frequency of how often they use one of the techniques of this strategy. In this case, the strategy analyzed was “scanning”. It is observed that, several students stated that when reading they “sometimes” and “always “ *just looked for the most information they need*”. However, by analyzing the grades, it can be perceived that it is not true because they did not obtain good grades in this part of the test. Therefore, this analysis show that students do not really apply the “scanning” strategy when reading despite they state that sometimes or always do it.

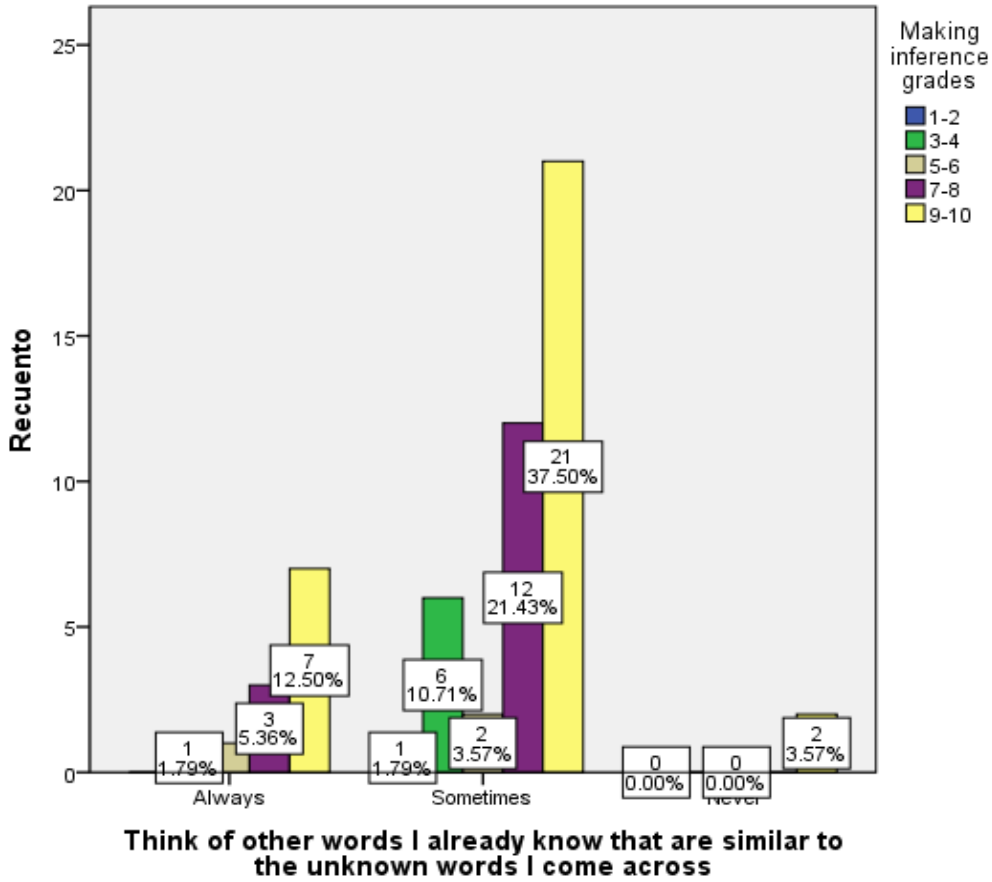
**GRAPH 52**



Source: Checklist and reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the results comparing the grades obtained in the test about reading strategies; in this case “ previewing and predicting”, and the frequency about how often they applied one of the techniques of this strategy. Students were asked how often when they read “they gave the text a quick glance to be able to guess what the text was about”. According to the information obtained, there were a high percentage of students who stated that sometimes they applied the technique, and a small percentage stated that “always” and “never”. On the other hand, the results of the exam were not good because more than the half of students who stated that “sometimes” applied this technique, obtained bad grades, and only a slight percentage obtained above 6. This means that, students are not using too much the “previewing and predicting technique” when they read.

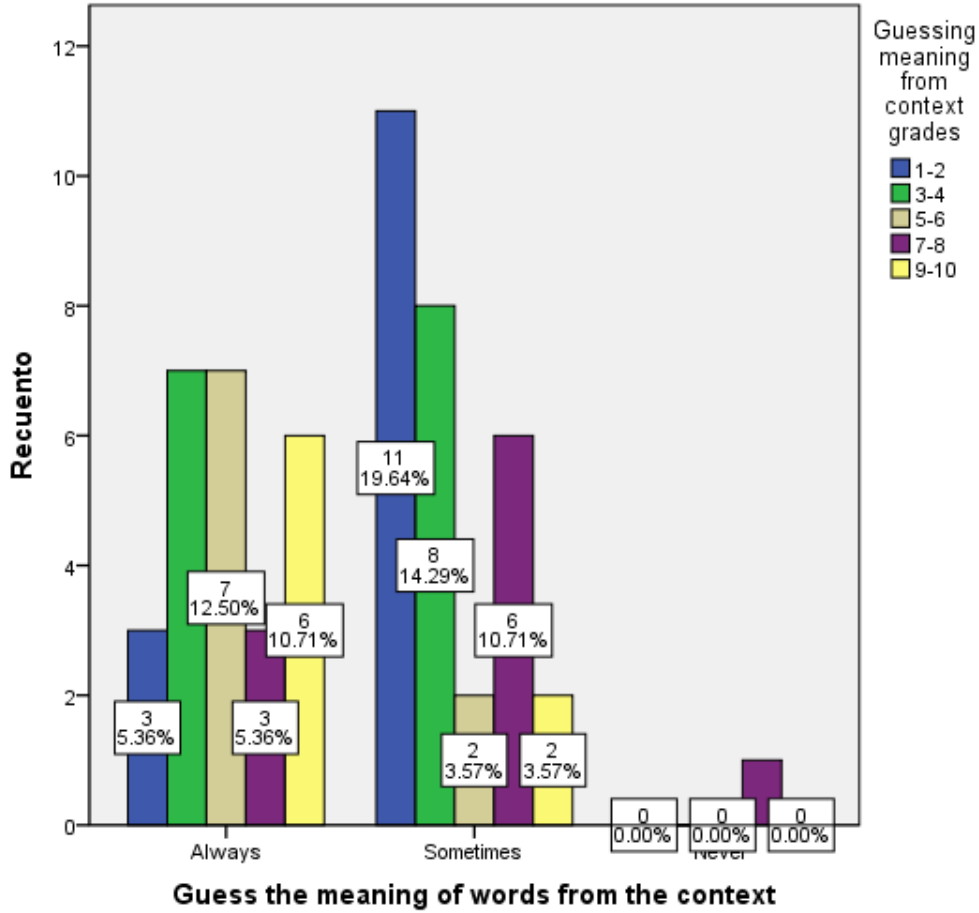
**GRAPH 53**



Source: Checklist and reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the results comparing the grades obtained in the test about one of the reading strategies which is “making inference” with the frequency of how often they applied one technique related to this strategy. According to the results, a high percent of students stated that “when they read, they *sometimes* use to think of other words they already know that are similar to the unknown words they come across”; while only a small percentage stated that “always” and “never”. The results show that, effectively, when students read, they apply this technique since it can be observed that they got higher grades in this part of the evaluation.

**GRAPH 54**



Source: Checklist and reading test administered to students from the Reading and Conversation II at the University of El Salvador, Semester I, 2013

This graph shows the results comparing the grades obtained in the test about reading strategies, in this case “guessing meaning from context”, with the frequency of how often they guessed the meaning of words from the context when they read. According to the results, a great percentage of students state that “sometimes” do it. However, this percentage of students did not do it very well in the test since the majority of them got low grades. This means that, students only apply this strategy in certain occasions, not all the time. This has been demonstrated in this graph.

## **B. MAIN FINDINGS**

After the administration of the instruments, the data collection, and the results analyzed, it is important to mention the main findings of the research:

According to the results gathered from the reading techniques test, in the skimming strategy, it was found that a great amount of students got high grades in the text administered to them. Furthermore, through the checklist it was observed that, effectively, students apply this strategy frequently, but the majority of them state that they “*sometimes*” apply this strategy.

The mainstream results obtained from the text in scanning strategy that shows the grades have been certainly low, even though students have answered that they practice this strategy frequently. There were few people who really got good grades, which means that students cannot apply this strategy, or they do not know how to use the strategy.

A big percentage of results from the strategy “making inference” gathered from the respective text shows that students got excellent grades from 9 to 10. This reveals that according to what students answered in the checklist about this strategy, it has been well applied.

According to the results obtained of the grades in the test about reading strategies, in “previewing and predicting strategy”, more than half of the population got really low grades, and only 25 percent of the whole sample got high grades. This reveals that students are not applying this strategy when reading, which means that they have not developed the skill of previewing and predicting strategy.

The results of the grades in the part of the test evaluating the following strategy “guessing meaning from context”, more than half of the population obtained low grades, or less than 5. And only 18% had grades from 7 to 10. This represents that most of students when they read they do not guess the meaning of unknown words according to the context, which makes it more difficult to comprehend the reading activity.

The survey was an instrument designed to identify the main difficulties that students face when comprehending reading texts, mentioning some of the most important statements to reach the purpose, some of them are the following: The first one, “When reading, it is difficult for me to find the main idea of the text” the option that most of the participants chose was “**Sometimes**”. That means that not “always” but “sometimes” is difficult for them to find the main idea of the text. The second one says “When I am reading, it is hard for me to connect the ideas in a long passage”. In the first one and the second statement the participants answered with the option “**Sometimes**”. It shows that only in some cases they face this kind of difficulties but not all the time.

Describing the most important statements; one of them was “When reading, I cannot remember or summarize what I just read.” And the other one was “when reading, I tend to often go back to earlier paragraphs to understand the ideas.” Both made reference to good or bad comprehension after reading, and also the answers were similar. Most of the participants answered “**Sometimes**” in both statements. This reflects that difficulties to comprehend a reading are “sometimes” presented in some readings.

## **C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS' ANSWERS AND VALIDATION OF THE HYPOTHESIS**

### **1. RESEARCH QUESTION**

**“To what extent does the use of reading strategies influence reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching, semester I 2013, from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador?”**

The correct use of reading strategies has a positive influence to get excellent reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course of the Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching, semester I 2013, from the Foreign Languages Department of the University of El Salvador. According to the results of the test administered to the students, there were differences in the results of each strategy since in some strategies students got good grades, and in other ones they got low grades. This means that not all the students have the skill to implement all the reading strategies, they can be good in using some reading strategies but they may have difficulties applying other. Therefore, it can be stated that reading strategies have a great influence in the reading comprehension skill since that was proved through some of the good results obtained in certain parts of the test. On the other hand, students have the responsibility to get the habit of using them because only having the knowledge of the strategies is not enough. They have to know how and when to apply them. In this manner, they are going to get a better comprehension of what they read.

## **2. SUBSIDIARIES QUESTIONS**

### **A. Which are the reading strategies that students from reading and conversation I apply in reading texts?**

Students apply different kinds of reading strategies when they read. This was observed in the results of the checklist administered to them about what kind of strategies they used when reading, and the frequency of how often they use them.

In the results, it was evident that the reading strategies that students apply in their major were the following: skimming, scanning, previewing and predicting, making inference, summarizing, guessing meaning from context, reading faster and paraphrasing. On the other hand, the frequency of how often they applied these strategies was “**sometimes**” since a great percentage of the population had this answer. It is therefore stated that students have knowledge of these strategies, and that they have the habit of in applying them.

### **B. How does the use of reading strategies increase the reading comprehension skill in different texts?**

The use of reading strategies based on the results of the reading test, it increases the reading comprehension skill in different texts. These texts can be newspapers, advertisements, magazines, books articles, short stories, books, dialogues, literature, and even conversations. Nevertheless, it depends on what the purpose of the reading is because for example, if students want specific or detailed information from a newspaper or advertisement, they can use scanning strategy, but if they want to know



what the whole text is about, they can apply skimming, or finding the main idea, any of these strategies.

On the other hand, if they want to analyze the whole text, they can use the “summarizing” strategy. Thus, everything depends on what they want to obtain from the text.

### **C. Which are the main difficulties that students face when comprehending reading texts?**

In this research, it was found that there are several difficulties that students face when reading. According to the results obtained in a survey administered, it was found out that students find difficulty in concentrating on what they are reading due to a *lack of concentration*. They also have trouble knowing what the text is about because there is a *lack of understanding of the text*. Consequently, they tend to read over and over. This lack of understanding causes them not to find connections to link the ideas of what they are reading. On the other hand, another main difficulty is the *lack of vocabulary* because when they come across unknown words, they tend to get stuck because of those words. They read slowly and at the end, the text they read does not seem to make any sense to them. Furthermore, when students finish reading a text, they cannot summarize what they have just read. This is caused by *lack of comprehension*, and most of the time, by *lack of grammar knowledge*. It is for this reason that they sometimes do not understand lengthy and complex sentences. The lack of comprehension happens because they sometimes read texts that are not appropriate for their English level.

### **3. HYPOTHESIS**

#### **Research hypothesis**

**The use of reading strategies help to reach a high level of reading comprehension in students from the Reading and Conversation II course I of , Bachelor of Arts in English, Emphasis in Teaching semester I 2013, from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador.**

This hypothesis has been proven according to the results of the instruments administrated. It is evident that the use of the strategies helps obtain a better outcome in the reading text when they applied them in an appropriate manner. In the other hands, students who do not know how to use them had bad results when testing, since they did not know how to make the process of applying the reading strategy in the stipulated time and in adequate way.

## **IX. CONCLUSIONS**

- This study shows that the different reading strategies represent an essential tool that students need to practice in order to reach a high and better level of comprehension. Through these strategies students may overcome the barriers faced in different texts, and get the messages conveyed by the author.
- Through the results gathered it was demonstrated that the low level of reading and comprehension is due to different factors such as: lack of concentration, understanding, comprehension and grammar knowledge. Furthermore, the absence of comprehension responds to poor reading practice of students, and the lack of ability to identify the essential ideas of what they read.
- According to the sample studied in this project which was students from the reading and conversation II. It is recognized the influence and the usefulness of reading strategies. However they do not apply them; even though they know how to use them. On the other hands, it was noticeable that some students do not feel motivated to implement them as tools.

## **IX. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STUDENTS:**

- To get the habit of reading different types of texts in order to have the opportunity to apply different reading strategies.
- To be aware of the importance of the reading strategies to save time while reading and getting the best advantage of what you read.
- To investigate the different types of reading strategies for applying in different kind of readings in order to get a better reading comprehension.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHERS**

- To teach reading strategies since Intensive Basic English I levels so that they can get knowledge since the beginning of the major.
- To organize reading groups for practicing reading strategies and monitor comprehension level among students.
- To encourage students to practice reading strategies not only for academic purposes but also for real life.

## **X. LIMITATIONS**

- First of all, In the process of gathering data some of the teachers in charge of subject “Reading and Conversation II” denied the permission to pass the instruments in their class.
- Another obstacle faced during the research was the lack availability from students to collaborate in data collection.
- Besides, it was difficult to manage the software to elaborate data analysis therefore; it took us too much time to create the graphs.
- The coordination of time among the colleagues to attend meetings to elaborate the project was a little bit complicated because of colleagues ‘work schedules.

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# **XII. ANNEXES**

**UNIVERSITY OF EL SALVADOR  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT**

**Objective:** To gather information from students of Readings and Conversation II of Bachelor of Art in English, Emphasis in Teaching about the reading strategies they use when they read English texts.

**Research question:** “To what extent does the use of reading strategies influence reading comprehension in students from Readings and Conversation I course, semester II 2013, from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?”

**Directions:** provide an accurate answer to each of the following statements, based on your own information.

**Group #** \_\_\_\_\_

When I read texts in English, I		always	sometimes	never
1	Keep my eyes moving past the unfamiliar words and thus try to understand the main ideas.			
2	Start reading without panicking or thinking “Help, I’m not going to understand”			
3	Find the sentence that contains the main idea			
4	Read a text very quickly the first time to get the main idea			
5	Can remember the most important details when I finish to read it			
6	Just look for the most important information that I need			
7	Use my finger to help my eyes follow lines of text			
8	Underline or highlight words I don’t understand			
9	Circle or highlight key words in bright colors			
10	Do not read every word in the text			
11	I give the text a quick glance to be able to guess what is the text about			
12	Begin reading a text, I predict what is going to happen in the rest of the reading			
13	Look at titles, subtitles, pictures and other visuals before reading			
14	Create some questions for myself before I read which I think or hope the text will answer			
15	Look for linking words that help explain			



	relationship between sentences (e.g. in contrast, for example, next, etc.)			
16	Think of other words I already know that are similar to the unknown words I come across			
17	Limit myself to looking up in the dictionary only a few unknown words			
18	Form a mental picture of what I have read			
19	Try to understand the relationship between the main ideas and supporting details			
20	Make my own conclusions of the reading when I finish to read it			
21	Analyze the text that I have read			
22	Like to discuss about what I have read with someone else			
23	Guess the meaning of words from the context			
24	Read faster than I can to know what is the text about			
25	Try to paraphrase the text in my own words in order to get a better comprehension about what I have read			

**University of El Salvador**  
**School of Arts and Humanities**  
**Foreign Language Department**



Reading text administered to students from the Readings and Conversation II course, semester I 2013 at the University of El Salvador.

**Objective:** To gather information from students of Readings and Conversation II of Bachelor of Art in English, Emphasis in Teaching in order to discover how the use of reading strategies increase the reading comprehension in different texts.

**Research Question:**

“To what extent does the use of reading strategies influence reading comprehension in students from reading and conversation II course, of Bachelor of Art in English, Emphasis in Teaching semester I 2013, from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?”

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** please read each instruction, and answer sincerely each question about your reading learning. Mark the best answer that best defines your reading learning.

**Scanning**

Scanning is a skill that you often use in daily life. For example, you might see the list of names in a telephone directory in order to find a phone number.

**Scanning Advertisements**

**EXERCISE 1**

*Read each question and underline the key words. Then see the following car advertisement to find the correct answers. Work quickly! ( one minute)*

1. What is the cheapest car in this ad?
2. Which cars have power Windows?
3. How many super cabs are available?
4. Does the Escape Wagón have power steering?
5. Can college graduates get a rebate for all the cars in this ad?
6. For which cars can you get a "Daniel Discount" ?
7. Which car has "cash back"?
8. Which car has an original list price of \$22,790?
9. How many cars have cassette players?
10. . In what town is Daniel Ford located?

<p><b>2004 TAURUS</b> SEDANS &amp; WAGONS SAVE \$3,000 OFF ORIGINAL LIST PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatic Transmission</li> <li>V6 Engine</li> <li>6 Passengers</li> <li>Power Windows</li> <li>Power Door Locks</li> <li>CD Player</li> <li>A/C</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Original List</td> <td>\$19,260</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-2,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rebate</td> <td>-1,000</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$16,260</b> 50 AVAILABLE AT THIS DISCOUNT</p>	Original List	\$19,260	Discount	-2,000	Rebate	-1,000	<p><b>2004 FOCUS</b> SAVE \$2,700 OFF ORIGINAL LIST PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A/C</li> <li>Tilt Wheel</li> <li>Floor Mats</li> <li>Power Door Locks</li> <li>AM/FM &amp; CD</li> <li>Clearcoat Paint</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Original List</td> <td>\$14,450</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rebate</td> <td>-700</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-2,000</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$11,750</b> 100 AVAILABLE AT THIS DISCOUNT</p>	Original List	\$14,450	Rebate	-700	Discount	-2,000		
Original List	\$19,260														
Discount	-2,000														
Rebate	-1,000														
Original List	\$14,450														
Rebate	-700														
Discount	-2,000														
<p><b>2004 EXPLORER 4 x 4</b> (4 DR.) XLTs &amp; EDDIE BAUER SAVE \$5,000 OFF ORIGINAL LIST PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cloth Captain's Chairs</li> <li>Power Windows</li> <li>Power Door Locks</li> <li>Cruise Control</li> <li>A/C</li> <li>Auto Transmission</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Original List</td> <td>\$34,399</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recent College Grad Rebate</td> <td>-4,000</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$29,399</b> 50 AVAILABLE AT THIS DISCOUNT</p>	Original List	\$34,399	Discount	-1,000	Recent College Grad Rebate	-4,000	<p><b>2004 F150 SUPER CABS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Automatic Transmission</li> <li>Rear Bench Seat</li> <li>XL Trim</li> <li>Step &amp; Tow Bumpers</li> <li>Cassette Stereo</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Sale Price</td> <td>\$21,570</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rebate</td> <td>-1,800</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-4,300</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$15,470</b> 10 AVAILABLE AT THIS DISCOUNT</p>	Sale Price	\$21,570	Rebate	-1,800	Discount	-4,300		
Original List	\$34,399														
Discount	-1,000														
Recent College Grad Rebate	-4,000														
Sale Price	\$21,570														
Rebate	-1,800														
Discount	-4,300														
<p><b>2004 ESCAPE WAGONS</b> SAVE \$2,500 OFF ORIGINAL LIST PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A/C</li> <li>Power Steering</li> <li>Luggage Rack</li> <li>Electronic Mirrors</li> <li>Convenience Group</li> <li>Automatic Transmission</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Original List</td> <td>\$22,790</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-2,100</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recent College Grad Rebate</td> <td>-400</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$20,290</b> OVER 50 ESCAPE WAGONS AVAILABLE</p>	Original List	\$22,790	Discount	-2,100	Recent College Grad Rebate	-400	<p><b>2004 RANGER XLT SUPER CABS</b> SAVE \$4,000 OFF ORIGINAL LIST PRICE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AM/FM Cassette CD</li> <li>Custom Aluminum Wheels</li> <li>Sliding Rear Window</li> <li>Cargo Cover</li> <li>XLT Trim</li> </ul> <table> <tr> <td>Original List</td> <td>\$19,270</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cash Back</td> <td>-650</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Recent College Grad Rebate</td> <td>-1,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discount</td> <td>-2,350</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>YOU PAY \$15,270</b> 20 AVAILABLE AT THIS DISCOUNT</p>	Original List	\$19,270	Cash Back	-650	Recent College Grad Rebate	-1,000	Discount	-2,350
Original List	\$22,790														
Discount	-2,100														
Recent College Grad Rebate	-400														
Original List	\$19,270														
Cash Back	-650														
Recent College Grad Rebate	-1,000														
Discount	-2,350														
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<p><b>DANIEL FORD</b> 540 Southern Ave. Medford 800-555-0100</p>															

## EXERCISE 2

Here is a review of a book titled *Go Ask Alice*. Read these questions and then skim the review for the answers. Work as quickly as you can—no more than one minute for the skimming.

1. Is this book serious or funny?
2. Is it a good book to give to a fourteen-year-old girl? Why or why not?
3. 3. Would you like to read this book? Why or why not?

**GO ASK ALICE:**

**A REAL DIARY**

*Author Anonymous—185 pp. New York: Simón & Schuster Inc.*

In this diary, the reader enters a girl's world at about the time of her fifteenth birthday. It seems a very ordinary life in many ways. She argues with her parents and doesn't enjoy schoolwork. She worries about what others think of her, and at times she feels she is ugly, fat, and unappreciated. But on the other hand, she loves her family and they care a great deal about her. She is bright and can do well in school when she wants to, and she has friends whom she enjoys being with. And then her father's job changes, the family moves to another part of the country, and her life falls apart.

How her life falls apart and how she struggles to put it back together again is the story we follow in this anonymous diary. We never learn the name of the author ("Alice" refers to Alice in Wonderland), but after just a few pages we feel we know her well. Indeed, we probably all do know someone like her: an unhappy, insecure teenager who suffers tremendously for the real or imagined slights of her parents and her peers. For this girl and for all too many like her, this adolescent lack of self-esteem is accompanied by

a desperate need for approval and gratification. When she changes schools, she is faced with the ordeal of being the friendless new student in school. The humiliation she suffers at the hands of her uncaring and sometimes cruel fellow students further destroys her self-image.

Then, over the summer, new friends play a trick on her, adding LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) to her Coke. After that experience, she tries LSD again, and begins to experiment with other kinds of drugs. Before long, she is an addict and drugs have taken over her life, alienating her from family, friends, and school. Eventually, she runs away from home, lives for a time as a prostitute, and ends up on the streets, filthy, hungry, and ill. There are moments of hope when she manages, with the help of her family, to break out of the drug habit. Several times she attempts a new start, only to be betrayed by her own insecurity or by the terrible pressure of her drug-taking friends.

Through all this, she writes faithfully in her diary, and so we follow every twist and turn of events, every high and low of her emotions. Though the language is that of a teenager, it is so alive and vivid that we are drawn in to her life, participating in her anguish, her alternating lucidity and recklessness, her love for her family and their desperate love for her. As a diary, it does not offer any solutions or any general truths about the teenage drug problem, but it does help us understand one person's problems and the consequences for her.

### EXERCISE 3

Preview the following story. Read only the underlined parts. Then answer the questions.  
Time limit: Sixty seconds to preview.

#### Carmelita's Amazing Rescue by Alissa Norman



At the Santos family's apartment in Sao Paulo, Brazil, the doorbell is constantly ringing. All the friends and neighbors are there to hear what happened to two-year-old Carmelita. Her mother has tears in her eyes, but they are tears of relief, of thankfulness. Her Carmelita is smiling shyly, safe in her father's lap. The story could easily have ended very differently, not so happily. It all started this morning just before noon. Mrs. Santos was returning from the supermarket with her daughter and a friend, their neighbor. They stopped on the stairway of their building at their fifth-floor apartment. The neighbor opened her door first and little Carmelita ran past her. She knew the apartment well, since she had visited it many times. The friend put down her keys and shopping bags, and turned back a moment to Mrs. Santos. At that moment, there was a sudden gust of wind and the door to the apartment slammed shut.

Carmelita was inside, alone. Then the friend remembered that she had left her kitchen window open. She and Mrs. Santos rushed to the Santos' apartment and telephoned the police. But there was no time to get help in opening the neighboring apartment. They could see that Carmelita was already leaning out of the kitchen window. She had climbed onto a chair, and soon she was climbing out onto the window sill. Mrs. Santos called to Carmelita to go back inside. But the little girl did not understand the danger and did not want to go back. She only waved to her mother. Then she lost her balance and her feet slipped off the window sill. She managed to hold on for a while with her hands, but she began to be afraid. Her mother screamed for help. And now Carmelita was crying desperately. And then she could hold on no longer. Several people had run out into the street on hearing all the screaming. They saw the child hanging onto the window sill and got ready to catch her. Down she fell. Five long stories—and landed safe and sound in the arms of three strong men. They were Luis, Augusto, and Alfonso Nunes, father and sons. When they heard the screams, they ran from their auto repair shop across the street. "I never thought we'd do it," said Alfonso afterwards. "But I kept thinking, if we don't catch her, she'll die and it'll be on my conscience all my life." All the neighbors want to shake hands with the three heroes. Carmelita's parents cannot believe how close they came to losing their daughter. And how lucky they are to have her still.

Now turn the page and answer the questions.

Answer the questions. Remember, do not look back

1. Where do you think this passage originally appeared?
2. Where does this take place?
3. Who is Carmelita?
4. What happen to her?
5. Who is Alfonso and what did he do?

**EXERCISE 4**

Guess *the meaning of each word from the context of the sentences below.*

1. What does *deserve* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Those women work very hard and deserve to be paid more. Since Peter won the spelling contest, he deserves a special reward.

2. What does *stain* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Polly was very angry when she saw the ugly stain on her new rug.  
When you spill fruit juice on a tablecloth, it can make a stain that does not wash away.

3. What does *strict* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Ellen's parents were very strict with her and did not allow her to go out in the evening.  
Mrs. Tilley was not popular with the children in her class. She was very strict and she punished anyone she thought had broken a rule.

4. What does *grab* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

A witness saw a young man grab Mrs. Knox's purse and run away with it.  
As we were crossing the street, I heard a car coming, so I grabbed Selena's hand and pulled her back just in time.

5. What does *plug in* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

There was only one place in the classroom to plug in the television monitor, and that was on the back wall of the room.  
No wonder the printer isn't working! It is not plugged in.



6. What does *bald* mean? \_\_\_\_\_

Although he was only forty years old, Dr. Jerash was already almost entirely bald. Some bald men will try almost anything to make their hair grow back.

### EXERCISE 5

*Read the conversation. Infer to answers the questions below.*

A: Excuse me. Would you mind turning down the music, please?

B: What's that?

A: I said, could you please turn the music down! My whole apartment is rattling!

B: Oh. Is that better?

A: A little better. It *is* after midnight.

B: Oh, come on, man. It's still early. It's my birthday, you know, so I asked a few friends over. You want to come in?

A: No, I am not the party type and I have to get up early tomorrow. B: But it's Sunday tomorrow. What do you have to get up for so early?

A: That's none of your business. The rules say no noise after 11:00 P.M. So if you're going to continuo, I have to call the police.

B: Oh, all right. Don't get so angry about it.

1. Where are these people?
2. Who are they?
3. What is the problem?
4. Are they men or women? How can you tell?

## **EXERCISE 6**

Read this text.

### **Jackie Chan**

Jackie Chan, possibly the biggest movie star in the world, is famous for his action movies. In fact, Chan's movies are more than simple action movies—they are action-comedies. He started using comedy early in his career when he was preparing to be the next Bruce Lee. He realized that his friendly face would stop him from being as tough as Lee, so he started to use comedy. But Chan quickly found that using humor was not so simple. His movie "Rush Hour" was a much bigger success in America and Europe than in Asia. Chan says this was because in different countries, people have a different sense of humor. The humor in "Rush Hour" just didn't work with Asian audiences. "From that time, I knew that I would have to make two movies a year; one for Asian market and one for American market everyone likes humor, but the humor everyone likes is different!

### **What is the main idea of the text?**

- a. Some of Jackie Chan's best action movies are also comedies
- b. Jackie Chan's movies are always very successful in Asia, Europe, and the U.S.A.
- c. Jackie Chan understands that people around the world find different things funny.
- d. People in different countries never find the same things funny.

Thanks you so much!!!! ☺



**University of El Salvador  
School of Arts and Humanities  
Foreign Language Department**



Questionnaire administered to students from Readings and Conversation II course, semester I 2013 at the University of El Salvador.

**Objective:** To gather information from students of Readings and Conversation II of Bachelor of Art in English, Emphasis in Teaching in order to discover the difficulties that students face in the process of reading comprehension.

**Research Question:**

“To what extent does the use of reading strategies influence reading comprehension in students from reading and conversation II of Bachelor of Art in English, Emphasis in Teaching course semester I 2013, from the Foreign Language Department of the University of El Salvador?”

Group # \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** please read each question, and answer it sincerely about your reading learning. Do not answer how you think you should be learning, or what other people are learning. Mark the best answer that best defines your reading learning.

**PART I (Choose only one option)**

1. Do you like to read texts in English?  
 yes                       no
  
2. How often do you spend time reading in English?  
  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
  
3. How much do you read texts in English in your major?  
a) a lot    b) no much    c) little
  
4. Do you know about reading strategies?  
 yes                       no

5. Do you consider that reading strategies help you to develop more your reading comprehension skill?

- yes                       no

6. Do you use any reading strategies to improve your reading comprehension skill?

- yes                       no

**PART 2 (Choose only one option)**

1. When reading it's difficult for me to concentrate in the text.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
2. When reading, it's difficult for me to find the main idea of the text.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
3. When reading, I have to read over and over to understand the text.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
4. When reading, it's hard for me to connect the ideas in a long passage.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
5. When reading, It's hard for me to understand the text due to several unknown words.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
6. When reading, I have to do so really slowly taking in one word at a time.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
7. what I read just doesn't seem to make any sense to me at all.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
8. When reading, I don't take into account any punctuation.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
9. When I do read something and think I have understood it, I always have doubts on whether I have understood it properly.  
a) always    b) sometimes    c) never
10. When reading, I cannot remember or summarize what I have just read.

a) always   b) sometimes   c) never

11. When reading, I tend to often go back to earlier paragraphs to understand the ideas.

a) always   b) sometimes   c) never

12. When reading, it is difficult for me to understand some lengthy and complex sentences.

a) always   b) sometimes   c) never

13. The materials I read contain structures and vocabulary according to my level.

a) always   b) sometimes   c) never