

**UNIVERSITY OF PEDAGOGICAL SCIENCES  
“JOSÉ DE LA LUZ Y CABALLERO”**

**FACULTY OF LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

# ***Diploma Paper***

**Texts and Learning Tasks to Favor the English Reading  
Comprehension Process of the Twelfth Grade Students at the  
Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin**

**Author: Isnalvis Morales Rosales**

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**Holguin**

**2014**

## **Dedication**

- ✚ This work is dedicated to my family and friends for their support and hope during the development of this scientific research.
- ✚ To my dear students (group 4, company 2) who have been my inspiration and motivation to carry out this work and who helped me willingly during the application of the empirical methods.

## **Acknowledgements**

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- ✚ I would like to thank especially my tutor and teacher, Isel Hijuelos Cruz, who has been guiding me during the development of this investigation and has taught me to be a patient and better researcher and student.
- ✚ Also to my friends and coworkers who have been there for me and have given me hope and the means to ensure the final development of this work.
- ✚ To all the people involved in the process of investigation during the development of this work that contributed in one way or another to the gathering, analysis and processing of the information.

## **Abstract**

The point of departure for the development of this research were some insufficiencies detected through the analysis of the results obtained in tests applied to the twelfth grade students which affect the efficiency of the teaching - learning process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin. In this school reading comprehension is considered to be a central ability in this grade and English is taught following the communicative approach in direct relation with ESP in order to help the students to consult materials related to fields of military study and their specific terminological vocabulary.

The aforesaid insufficiencies were corroborated through pertinent inquiry by means of research methods. Then, with the purpose to contribute a solution the scientific problem, this paper proposes texts and learning tasks related to the military context so as to improve reading comprehension and increase the level of motivation in these students. For the accomplishment of this goal the proposal is based on the theoretical study made on the elements involved in an efficient reading comprehension process, namely: phases, reading strategies and abilities, the role of motivation, the requirements for text selection and for planning learning tasks.

A validation of the proposal was developed through a pre – experiment. The analysis of the results shows that the implementation of this work favored the development of reading comprehension in the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

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## Introduction

Nowadays, language plays an important role in the study and transmission of all the knowledge accumulated by men. It is considered to be a very important phenomenon that allows people's interaction and communication. It is also the way of expressing the system of symbols and codes that represents a specific cultural background, either through the spoken or the written word. Moreover, it is a key element in the formation of a global fraternity among countries: thus facilitating the cultural, economical, technical and scientific cooperation among them.

The English language, considered as a "*world language*" and "*the lingua franca of the modern era*", is the communication tool par excellence. It is the official language in 53 countries and has official status in the United Nations Organization, the European Union, the Commonwealth of Nations, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Also, it is, by international treaty, the official language for aerial and maritime communications, which concerns the work developed by the Revolutionary Armed Forces in its every day action for protecting the Cuban people.

Besides, it is currently the language most often taught as a target language around the world. Many books, magazines, and newspapers written in English are available in many countries around the world. English is also the language most commonly used in sciences.

The English subject contributes to the formation of a scientific and materialistic conception of the world, as it takes into account language as a social phenomenon and the relationship among thought, language and culture. It is also an essential tool for the students to get in touch with current data on their fields of studies, consult materials of their particular interest and approach knowledge. As a foreign language, it leads to a better insertion in the work place for the professionals and is of a great importance as a means to get first hand information in any field.

Many specialists on education have emphasized the necessity that any professional of today should have a command of at least one foreign language, as a need to satisfy the requirements of modern development. The author of this work agrees with Rosa A. when she expresses: "(...) *mastering English as an international language is very important for our*

*State, because it saves us the time we use during the process of translating scientific and technological information, in which they may lose its authenticity<sup>1</sup>”.*

Constant and frequent changes are appearing in the system of education of Cuba as the need arises to keep abreast with the huge scientific-technical and educational changes that take place in the country and abroad. The Cuban State prioritizes the teaching of foreign languages, especially English, as a way to simplify the problem posed by the lack, or inaccessibility, of certain types of sources due to the globalized use of English as an instrument of cultural power.

Right now in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the system of education of Cuba aims at the formation of a well-prepared professional, bearer of a wide cultural background, a person who will be able to assume the difficult task of facing the challenges of modern society. Clearly, the teaching of English plays an essential role in this effort.

Although in the Cuban pre-university school the English teaching-learning process lacks an official syllabus to go by, it is currently focused on the teaching of oral and written communication. This way, setting aside reading comprehension as a skill that is necessary for the students in their future and postgraduate lives. However, in the school practice reading comprehension continues to be taught and evaluated.

Inserted in this educational system, but assuming a different methodological conception altogether, the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools play an important role in the formation of future officers and cadres for the Revolution. The Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces states their social goal as:

*Formar, a partir de jóvenes con determinadas cualidades e inclinación por la pertenencia a las FAR, bachilleres en ciencias y letras con elevados valores políticos, morales y disciplinarios, adecuadas capacidades físicas y mentales y la convicción de formarse como profesionales militares o civiles en cualquiera de los*

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<sup>1</sup> Metodología de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Editorial Pueblo y Educación, 1986.



*perfiles, niveles y especialidades que se estudian en las instituciones docentes de nivel superior de las FAR o CES<sup>2</sup>*

Inside this educational process, the teaching of English as a foreign language integrates the four abilities (oral expression, listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and written expression), but reading comprehension plays a central role since 2011 with the introduction of a new tailor-made coursebook for twelfth grade, **Go Ahead!**, and the design of two others for tenth and eleventh grades, still pending completion.

These reading comprehension skills the students learn allow them, as officers-(and civilian professionals)-to-be, to understand texts of middle complexity and learn specific military technical terms in order to know the enemy better and be ready to consult materials related to specific military fields and weaponry. As a final result, the students are better prepared for life; because no matter the field of work they study and graduate in, they indeed have to read up primary bibliographic sources in English.

For many years this kind of schools has been using the Spectrum series. These coursebooks favor the students' communicative competence, but go very far from the reality that they face and present a different ideology from the one in which the teaching - learning process develops.

During some interviews to the students the author found that they do not feel any interest towards the contents that this book presents on account of being far from their daily context. For many years they have claimed for the introduction of materials related to their military life and have shown lack of interest towards these books. On the contrary, they are more interested in the military terms and weaponry used by the United States Army. However, to guide themselves through these topics they need reading abilities which are not formed yet.

For instance, the first book of the Spectrum series (Spectrum 1), which is taught in 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, does not favor the development of reading comprehension as an ability that they will use in their future lives. Of course that is understandable in a basic level book whose aim

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<sup>2</sup> Manual para la dirección del PDE en las EMCC, 2012. p. 5.

is oral communication, mainly for civil purposes. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the Spectrum does not allow for the satisfaction of the students' comprehension and the social needs of the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools –which have been reflected in the poor results obtained in the written midterm tests and stated in the surveys applied.

In 2010, investigators Cutiño Ramos and Ochoa Gonzalez found that there are still problems in reading comprehension in the teaching of English with the Spectrum coursebook in the school of Holguin. They revealed that there is a lack of texts and learning tasks related to the history of Cuba and to the military life in order to develop reading comprehension abilities and the typology of the learning tasks does not favor reading comprehension skills. There are also insufficiencies of a curricular nature in the conception of the Spectrum and there is scarcity of didactical and methodological guidelines that interferes with the development of the process of reading comprehension. Also, the potentialities to develop logical thinking through reading comprehension are not prioritized.

The introduction of the new coursebook **Go Ahead!** is an attempt to solve these problems, as it deals with reading comprehension as the center of the teaching-learning process in these schools. This coursebook marks a shift from the listening comprehension lesson to the reading comprehension lesson, given the necessity to comprehend texts and express criteria both in oral and written form. Additionally, it is focused on the needs and interests of the students and the social goal of the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools. Consequently, allows the teaching of English from a contextual and ideological perspective according to the lives of the students.

Notwithstanding, **Go Ahead!** still faces a series of didactic and methodological shortcomings that call for further revision and a search of practical solutions. These will be discussed later in the corpus of this research.

So far, the author of this research has considered the fact that reading comprehension plays a role of paramount importance in the teaching of English in the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools. That is the reason why reading comprehension is the central to this term paper. But what is reading comprehension? What do the specialists state about it?

Reading comprehension is a critical element in the cultural development of mankind. It is an intellectual activity because by means of it we can get information about the surrounding world. Traditions, beliefs, ideas, patriotism and love are things reading can forge through the pages of an interesting book. Indeed, it favors the formation of particular skills in the language and adds to the cultural background of the students.

In the last decades, special attention has been given to this ability, since the need to “comprehend”, is more important every day. Many authors and specialists have studied this topic. For example, William S. Gray (1973), Kenneth Goodman (1982), Allende and Condemarin (1982), Beugrande (1984) have referred to several reading theories and the comprehension through levels and meanings, reading cycles, methods and strategies used by the reader in the reading process. Nationwide: Espinosa Martínez (1999), Velázquez Delgado (2001), Ramos Negrín (2007); locally, Anido Vidal (1998), Osorio Salermo (1998), Ayala Ruíz (2000), Leyva Hernández (2002), among others, have also studied this theme.

Francoise Grellet (1981) defines it as: “*Extracting the required information from a written text as efficiently as possible*”. From this perspective she only makes reference to the information that the text provides.

In another light, Marva A. Barnet (1989) and Benito A. Luaiza (1996) agree in important terms like: process of interaction, author’s perspectives, points of view, allusions and cultural experiences. All of them necessary for an updated analysis of the current object of investigation. In the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools, reading comprehension is a must in the teaching of English. The formative objective of the **Go Ahead!** syllabus demands from the students of twelfth grade:

*Comprender textos, adaptados y auténticos, de mediana complejidad en idioma inglés, con una terminología militar general, utilizando para ello los conocimientos léxico-gramaticales y las habilidades de comprensión auditiva, expresión oral, expresión escrita y comprensión lectora adquiridos en los grados décimo y decimoprimer, con una concepción científica del mundo desarrollada a partir de la comprensión lectora como núcleo cognitivo, evidenciando un vínculo formativo de fuertes nexos entre la educación en valores y la orientación profesional recibidas en un contexto temático-situacional desarrollador de contenido militar, reflejado en*

*sus propias emociones, motivaciones, vivencias e intereses profesionales, hasta lograr un nivel de comprensión global*<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, among the most important goals to attain in these schools are: to comprehend texts related to military life, process information of middle complexity texts, summarize information obtained from written texts, and carry out independent works and projects that favor the use of the English language and allow its interaction with other subjects.

The author of this term paper, taking into consideration the shortcomings found in her approach to the theme, identifies as **research problem**: The need to improve the English reading comprehension process in the teaching-learning process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

Thus, the **research object** is: The reading comprehension process of the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

As **research objective** the author proposes: The elaboration of a set of texts and learning tasks to improve the English reading comprehension process in twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

Accordingly, the **scope of action** is: English for specific purposes through the reading comprehension process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

With the goal to arrive at a solution to this problem in order to fulfill the objective of this research, the following scientific questions are deemed necessary:

1. What is the current state of the twelfth grade students' English reading comprehension process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin?
2. What are the theoretical elements involved in the English reading comprehension process?

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<sup>3</sup> Programa de estudio para duodécimo grado. MINFAR. La Habana, 2013. p. 14.

3. How to elaborate texts and learning tasks that can improve reading comprehension in the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin?
4. What is the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks proposed to improve reading comprehension in the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin?

Then, in order to accomplish the aforesaid research questions, these scientific tasks will be carried out:

1. To diagnose the current state of the twelfth grade students' English reading comprehension process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.
2. To determine the theoretical elements involved in the English reading comprehension process.
3. To elaborate a set of texts and learning tasks to improve reading comprehension in twelfth grade students at Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.
4. To determine the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks proposed to improve reading comprehension in the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

Several methods of research were used to accomplish this investigation. Among the ***theoretical methods***:

- Historical – logical: to study the theoretical information by focusing on the characteristics of the reading comprehension process from a logical perspective.
- Abstract – concrete: to process scientific data and make conceptual interpretations about the theoretical foundations.
- Analytic – synthetic: to study the detached characteristics of the observable facts and get at pertinent conclusions.
- Inductive – deductive: to arrive at conclusions on the topic of investigation from a particular to a general perspective and vice versa.

- Modeling: to design texts and learning tasks in order to improve the effectiveness of the students' own reading comprehension skills in English.

Among the **empirical** ones there are:

- Analysis of written documents: in order to obtain critical information on the organization and planning of reading comprehension within the teaching-learning process of English in twelfth grade.
- Surveys to students: to collect information about the effectiveness of the teaching - learning process of English in twelfth grade students and their interests, needs and likes, with particular emphasis on reading comprehension.
- Interviews: to obtain information from teachers and students about the topic.
- Lesson observation: to analyze how teachers and students interact in context with the reading comprehension process and how they give arguments on this topic.
- Pre-experiment: to arrive at critical conclusions and corroborate the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks proposed.
- Mathematical method: to process the results of the instruments applied.

In order to carry out this research, the whole **population** of twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin was selected (198 students). From this population, Group 4 of Company 2 with 24 students was chosen as **sample** (11 females and 13 males). The **novelty** of this investigation lies in the texts and learning tasks designed for the particular military context of the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

## **Chapter 1: The Teaching-Learning Process of English as a Foreign Language in the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools.**

This chapter is devoted to the senso-perceptual analysis of the state of the teaching-learning process of English reading comprehension in this school. Also, it features an analysis of the coursebook and syllabus used to teach reading comprehension to the twelfth grade students, **Go Ahead!**, as well as some theoretical foundations on reading comprehension and the role of motivation in the development of this ability. Additionally, the sections cover the results of the research methods applied.

### **1.1 Go Ahead! A turning point in the teaching of English in the Camilo Cienfuegos Military Schools.**

What is **Go Ahead!**? What contents does it include? How is it organized? What are its most outstanding features? What are its shortcomings? These and other unstated questions will be answered in this section. (Cf. **Appendix 1**)

**Go Ahead!** is the direct result of experimental research carried out about reading comprehension at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguín. It includes authentic and semi-authentic or adapted texts related to the military context of the students. It starts from a retrospective of the Soldier Basic Training, takes the students on an intellectual tour about the three most prioritized command careers of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and culminates with an inquisitive look into the process of choosing a career.

The texts proposed by this coursebook go about the students' own experiences, historical data, updated military information, curiosities and military lexicon (general and specific) that serve to support the formation of a military professional culture. They are also characterized by giving visual support through semantic and thematic pictures in order to promote anticipation and previewing.

They also offer a varied and pleasant typology of learning tasks which are graded through the stages of reading comprehension, follow-up and integration tasks for the students to go beyond the text and make use of the knowledge at a partially productive level. All these efforts are aimed at the attainment of a formative spectrum that integrates career guidance, values education and military ethics within reading comprehension.

The coursebook has five units of study. Each unit has a main text, a list of vocabulary, learning tasks and sections Follow Up! and Keep Abreast! The latter is accompanied by a question (Question to Ponder) which is aimed at encouraging investigation and stimulating a valuational and ethical reflection towards specific educative values. Also, three appendices have been incorporated: updated military terms used in real combat situations by English-speaking military personnel (to incentivize learning), some linking phrases and connectors (to help the students achieve coherence in their writings) and a minimal chronology of outstanding dates for the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools in particular (in order to foster a sense of belonging to the institution and to carry out ideological and political work in classes).

Additionally to the Student's Coursebook, the Teacher's Coursebook comprises notes, footnotes and more information about the historical and military data of specific topics and weapons so as to help teachers to widen their military background. In the Teacher's, the keys to the answers of most difficult questions are highlighted. Moreover, there is complementary comprehensive information gathered from Wikipedia and other sources about the topics treated in the coursebook. Among the most outstanding features of **Go Ahead!** can be mentioned:

- Ø The coursebook adheres to the communicative approach from a developmental perspective based on the historical-cultural approach proposed by Vigotski. Also, it allows the integration of the four central abilities of the teaching of a foreign language, namely: oral expression, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and written expression.
- Ø It constitutes a turning point from the listening comprehension lesson to the reading comprehension lesson. This last ability is justified on the necessity to comprehend texts and give criteria in written form that are indispensable in the work of any university graduate in his postgraduate research and work.
- Ø It is contextualized to the necessities and interests of the students, as well as the social goal of the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools. That is why it sets the teaching of English to a contextual and ideological perspective according with the students' lives.
- Ø It favors intercurricular links with the Military Training Department in intimate relationship with the Director Guidelines (Program) of that subject through the



development of a military metalanguage in the students; while also contributes to intercurricular links with History and Geography.

Ø It is conceived as a system of texts and learning tasks in which the units of study make explicit the axiological and career guidance potentialities of the book through learning tasks with a high content of values education and career guidance.

Ø The coursebook caters to the attention to the individual needs of learning and career guidance, stimulating the extensive reading of military topics and themes.

Ø Through this coursebook English becomes a tool of career guidance par excellence in this grade since it favors the motivation of the students towards the prioritized military careers, as well as the rest of the specialties. It provides help in the reflection about the future profession and gives auxiliary elements for the process of career choice.

As every human work it also has some drawbacks to which practical solutions can be accomplished through further research and years of teaching practice with this new coursebook. The possibility of writing an accompanying workbook which will certainly complement the coursebook and tackle these problems is a solution that looms ahead. Meanwhile, the current investigation attempts to provide solutions for the near future. The deficiencies are identified below.

First, the syllabus focuses only on three command careers and although some learning tasks allow the inclusion of other careers it is not yet possible to satisfy the career interests of the students towards other kinds of careers. Hence its inclusive possibilities are limited.

Second, the grammatical elements such as parts of the sentence and tenses are treated incidentally, when the students show doubts about them, because the syllabus presupposes that grammatical work is to be based on what has already been learned in previous grades. If one takes into consideration that grammar is the backbone of language it is a fact that grammar must not be left alone on the supposition that the students' have taken it in and mastered it sufficiently as to remove it from the teaching practice.

Such as it is, the students miss the opportunity to recycle old contents and learn new grammatical structures such as the use of modal verbs for instance. Anyhow, grammatical categories and verb tenses are to be evaluated in the written test; so further practice would do no harm indeed.

Third, the lexical system receives special attention through vocabulary lists from which 45% of the words get specific status as evaluation targets. Nevertheless, the use of vocabulary

lists, as good as it may be to solve the problem of the scarcity of dictionaries, both facilitates and hinders the use of learning strategies by the students to understand and commit the vocabulary to memory. Besides, the level of the vocabulary used in the coursebook is very technical, terminological and high for some students. On these grounds, recycling and vocabulary practice demand more time and learning tasks.

Fourth and last, the ability of written expression is carried out through communicative tasks, but the teaching and learning of the process of writing texts is disregarded completely. Once again, this decision is taken on the grounds that the students should already know from previous grades.

In summary, no matter the problems encountered so far, motivation will be attained matter-of-factly in the students of twelfth grade because their interests are taken into account and necessary elements such as career guidance and values education are included. Also, because there will be more practical activities, discussion, oral expression and writing in the lessons. So, there will be more preparation for life and the future.

The teaching of English from the perspective of reading comprehension as main skill to be used in integration with the other basic skills; the continuation of teaching under the communicative approach –this time following a modernized conception of learning and development based on the historical-cultural approach of Vigotski, as well as the contributions of Cuban researchers to this end, is the perspective that looms ahead in the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools.

## **1.2 Current Situation of the English Reading Comprehension Process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.**

Throughout the development of the teaching-learning process of twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School, the author of this investigation realized that her students presented some problems to use reading abilities so as to comprehend the texts brought to class. With the purpose to corroborate the existence of this problem different methods were applied. Among the empirical ones: lesson observation, interviews, surveys, analyses of written materials and tests. Also theoretical methods like analytic-synthetic, inductive-deductive, abstract-concrete were used.

This section focuses its attention on the analysis of the results obtained through the application of these methods.

### 1.2.1 Lesson Observation.

Five lessons were observed during the academic course 2013-2014. The analysis of the indicators designed to guide the implementation of this method (Cf. **Appendix 2**) shows that:

1. Motivation did have noticeable results through activities like: brainstorming, predicting information, games and questions.
2. Some teachers did not give the necessary orientations towards the objectives of the learning - tasks. As a result some students lost track during the development of the lesson. A positive action, notwithstanding, was that they promoted pair work.
3. The methodology used by most teachers was acceptable. Nevertheless, there are some problems in the correct placement of learning tasks within the different phases of the lesson.
4. The texts used are (adapted and semi-authentic) related to the military training received by the students. They serve for military career guidance.
5. The learning tasks, though standardized, had an appropriate variety and typology. In some cases the time devoted for the analysis of each learning task was not enough.
6. The student's interaction, as well as their behavior to develop the learning tasks assigned, was good. They felt interested about the topics presented and in particular they demonstrated their intention to look up for more information.
7. The students comprehended the texts presented in class globally. They were able to express with their own words the topics of the material from a global perspective, without interiorizing any detail.

As a summary, the results obtained let the author arrive at the conclusion that the reading comprehension process is not developing as efficiently as possible –although some discrete improvements have been made with the use of **Go Ahead!** Also, teachers must continue working on motivation, since the students need to be correctly incentivated and guided through the reading comprehension process.

### 1.2.2 Interview to Teachers.

An interview was applied to the teachers of the grade (three women and one man) with the purpose to compare the results of the class observations and the teachers' methodological conceptions about reading comprehension in general (Cf. **Appendix 3**). Also, as to have an idea of the elements that they take into consideration when planning reading comprehension

lessons. These teachers have a wide experience in the teaching of English. Three have a master's degree and the other is a bachelor in education. They all have worked for several years in the school.

**1-** They answered that reading comprehension plays an important role in the teaching of English. Also that it contributes to the formation and development of the students.

**2-** They all expressed that this ability has great importance as part of the process of communication carried out in the classroom and the society in general. Also that it is a necessity that students master it as a way to approach knowledge in the future and to develop reading strategies for further studies in their different fields of study.

In questions **3** and **4** they stated that the texts used by them in the reading comprehension lessons are the ones present in **Go Ahead!** which are closely related to the students' military life. For this purpose they adapt texts to facilitate the students' comprehension. Also that some of the requirements they use for text selection are the students' age, interests, needs and the formative needs of the school.

**5-** They replied that the learning tasks are primarily used to teach and assess the students' comprehension of each text. Also they grade them according to the different phases of the reading comprehension process.

**6-** They expressed that learning tasks should be assigned with a clear purpose and before the students face the reading. Also, They expressed disappointment towards some students' reactions, since they show a tendency to answer "*without previous analyses of the text*" and express boredom.

**7-** They expressed that even though students feel motivated towards the topics they fail to comprehend some facts. Also, students want to receive other texts about the selection of careers and military topics.

**8-** Teachers are not still completely satisfied with the texts they have at hand. First because they do not cover all the military topics students are interested in and because the learning tasks are not enough to satisfy students' lack of reading strategies.

Summing up, the texts presented by **Go Ahead!** provide for the students attention and interests. So far, they have partially favored the development of reading comprehension abilities but they also need support from other materials. That is why teachers expressed the need for more texts and learning tasks to continue practicing reading abilities. In general, all teachers interviewed demonstrated to have a general idea of the importance of reading and

felt positive towards solving the problems they face. Also, demonstrated that the teachers need more varied learning tasks to enhance students' motivation.

### **1.2.3 Survey to Students.**

A survey was applied to students in order to obtain updated information about their state of opinion on the reading comprehension lessons and the texts presented to them. From the whole population of twelfth grade, Group 4 of Company 2 with 24 students was chosen as sample (11 females and 13 males). (Cf. **Appendix 4**).

In response to question 1, 17 students (70, 8%) answered that they considered the mastery of English reading comprehension as very necessary. 7 students (29, 2) said that it is moderately necessary. The majority supported the opinion that this ability allowed them to learn about military topics and increase their general knowledge, which can be very useful in their current and future lives.

In question 2, 14 students (58, 3%) agreed that the topics presented were always interesting. On the other hand 10 students expressed that the topics were interesting only sometimes (41, 6%). They ensured that the topics motivated them during the first lessons of the unit but then they got bored speaking, reading, listening and writing about the same topics. So they would like to include other topics within the units.

As to question 3, 18 students (75, 0%) answered that the topics presented always motivated them to learn more about the military life. On the contrary the rest (6 -25.0%) stated that the topics of the texts presented only motivated them to learn more sometimes. They opined that most of the texts present updated information about weaponry, careers to study, the history of different specialties like Infantry and Tanks, so they motivated them to learn more about their future studies.

Question 4 showed that 11 students (45.83%) found the learning tasks always interesting, while 10 (42 %) expressed they were motivating only sometimes. The rest (12%) expressed that they were never motivating. They based their assertions on the fact that learning tasks were always of the same typology.

Finally, question 5 provided general topics about military life they would like to read about: military colleges, careers, military personalities and weaponry.

The results obtained in this survey show that students would like to continue reading more military texts that promote career guidance and that they are motivated towards English. Besides, that they are inexperienced and have not internalized the importance of reading comprehension as a formative skill that they will need later and that learning tasks are not always accomplishing the instructive function they must meet in the lesson.

#### **1.2.4 Analysis of the Pre – test.**

At the beginning of the school year 2013-2014 a pre - test was applied in order to corroborate the existence of the problem of reading comprehension that had been revealed some years ago by previous researchers (Cf. **Appendix 5**). Group 4 from company 2 was taken as experimental group. They were presented a text from “Textos militares para 12mo grado” and some learning tasks to check their comprehension.

In response to task 1, 18 students (75 %) selected correctly a topic related to the main idea of the text; while 6 students deviated from the main idea of the text (25%).

In the second task, 15 students (62, 5%) determined correctly whether the ideas were present or not in the text. On the contrary, 9 of them (37, 5%) could not infer implicit information from the text.

In task 3, 15 students (62, 5%) answered correctly some questions about the text. The rest (37, 5%) had problems in inferring information and expressing their opinion. Also they committed many grammatical mistakes.

As a result, from this sample only 10 (41, 6 %) students passed the test successfully. The rest, 14 (58, 3 %) students, got results under 60 points which is a very low outcome. This represents a promotion of 41, 6 % and a quality of 16, 6% because only four students got results over 80 points. The qualitative analysis of the results obtained shows that:

- A minority of students were able to understand the text and the demands of the learning tasks.

- Students presented problems to determine the general idea of the text.
- They were unable to make their own inferences from the reading material at a satisfactory level, which shows poor levels of comprehension.
- They lacked reading abilities and strategies, which need to be practiced through the exposure to other materials.
- They expressed themselves in writing with some difficulties.

### **Partial Conclusions of the Research Techniques Applied:**

In general terms the results obtained through the methods applied in this research allowed this author to deduce the following partial conclusions: students present some difficulties to comprehend reading materials without the help or supervision of the teacher even though they want to continue reading military texts related to their own life. The results obtained are far from satisfactory and way off the expectations of the Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces; because the students do not meet the required promotion and quality standards (promotion: 80 % / quality: 60%). Also, they show that the consolidation and teaching of reading abilities must continue in the lessons.

No doubt, teachers possess the methodological preparation they need to guide this process satisfactorily. What they only need is to put it into practice extensively. Needless to say, the texts and learning tasks presented in the twelfth grade syllabus give answers to the students' interests and necessities. However, they need to be enlarged in number through the incorporation of new topics and situations that facilitate the students' practice with motivating learning - tasks.

### **1.3 Reading Comprehension: Theoretical Foundations.**

This section centers its attention on the analyses of the theoretical elements concerning the object of investigation. Also, it presents some conceptions about the reading comprehension process which are relevant to solve the problem in question. Besides it analyses some characteristics of English for Specific Purposes within the teaching – learning process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

### 1.3.1 Theoretical Approach to Reading Comprehension.

Reading has always been an essential tool for the development of human beings. It also plays an important role in the transmission of knowledge among men. This skill develops a critical spirit, the capacity of thinking and favors the intellectual growth of the reader. It also helps him to develop his imagination and interpret his environs.

Moreover, it is an outstanding and powerful way for studying and learning a foreign language. With this regard it helps to interact with authentic cultural experiences of native speakers of the language studied. In non-specialized courses, reading is not an end in itself, but a means to learn the language communicatively.

Reading in a foreign language also develops oral expression, which is the main ability to be attained. This assertion is supported by the communicative approach, which promotes the teaching of a language through the integration of the four abilities (reading comprehension, oral expression, listening comprehension and written expression) as a system that makes up language.

Many authors have declared the importance of communicative competence, among them Romeu Escobar, Angelina and Medina Betancourt, Alberto Román. This last author in his Glossary 2012 defines it thus:

*It has generally been accepted as the speaker ability to put language for a range of communicative uses. However it is the author's own conception according to recent research results that (...) it is a configuration of linguistic and paralinguistic capacities, knowledge and skills that are manifested during the realization of a communicative act in the foreign language through the appropriate use of it in order to satisfy individual and communicative needs. This should be done taking into consideration linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse and strategic requirements and making evident both in content and form of the message, the universal and moral values.*

The communicative approach is the result of new didactical and linguistic conceptions that focus their attention in the text (either oral or written), in the comprehension process and in the different communicative contexts. This approach takes into consideration thought and



learning as an instrument of development to approach knowledge and its contextualized character in communication. It materializes in the classroom where the student is actively involved in the learning process.

This approach assumes reading comprehension as an interactive process where the reader's experiences play an important role in the interpretation of the text. This process can modify the activity of the student and influence in his way of thinking, since it takes into consideration the zone of proximal development defined by Vigotski.

Correct guidance throughout the teaching-learning process and consolidation of the communicative functions in simulated situations mediated by the teacher is essential for the learner of a foreign language to put into practice the contents taught by his teacher in real communicative situations. It implies giving him abilities and strategies to learn and learn how to learn. Also to comprehend not only texts, but events of life from an active perspective that allows him to arrive at his own interpretations and conclusions about the phenomena analyzed –or the contents taught.

Several authors have studied reading comprehension and have stated their reflections through the following definitions: *“Reading is going from the graphic signs to the meaning of thoughts meant by these signs”*. (Carbonell, María<sup>4</sup>). This author focuses on the translation of graphic signs into meanings. However, she does not mention the active position of the reader.

From another perspective (Goodman, Keneth<sup>5</sup>) assumes that *“Every reading is an interpretation of what the reader is able to comprehend and learn through reading”*. Also, (Dubris, Mary Eugenia<sup>6</sup>, 1988) establishes that *“Reading is a process of interaction between thought and language, and comprehension is the reader's construction of textual significance”*. Both of these authors recognise the reader's position as essential in the

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<sup>4</sup> Carbonell, Maria. ¿Qué es leer? Y otras precisiones para maestros, P.29. En Literatura y vida.

<sup>5</sup> Goodman, Keneth S. Los Procesos de Lectura. P. 18 En Revista Nuevas Perspectivas Sobre Los Procesos de Lectura, 1988, P. 18.

<sup>6</sup> Dubris, Mary Eugenia. Interrogante sobre comprensión literaria. \_En RIDECA\_, Lima, 1988.

process of attribution of meanings to the written symbols, taking into account the reader's perspective and points of view.

Patricia A. Richard Amato talks about the term interactive as it has been used many times for describing the reading process; she cites Carrel Divine and Eskey (1998), in saying that *"it is the interaction of the whole reading from the beginning to the end within the individual reader"*<sup>7</sup>.

Another researcher, Ayala, Maria Elena agrees with them in saying that reading is *"an interactive transitional process."* Also, she refers to the importance of the experiences and expectations the reader brings to the material. And she stresses that at pre-university level, reading comprehension supposes a dramatic change in the possibilities of communication and personal growth of the student.

From all of these definitions we can establish that this process makes possible an image or ideal representation of the text inside the reader's mind. Also, that the construction of meaning is the result of a complex, dynamic interaction between reader and text.

According to García Sanchez, Celina C. reading should be taught from three different perspectives: *"Learn how to read, read to learn and learn how to learn with reading"*<sup>8</sup>. This perspective presented by this author is very assertive for this process should take place consciously in the students mind, so that they can do it later on their own. Also because it implies comprehension of the text as a meaningful unit that expresses ideas and that implies a message for the reader.

The analysis and comprehension of a given text constitutes a mental process that involves the students' previous knowledge, understanding and thinking processes with the purpose of evaluating the source critically. It has a personalized character since each reader (receptor) understands the meaning of a material in a different way. That is because each of them has

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<sup>7</sup> Richard-Amato, Patricia A. (1988): Making it Happen. Interaction in Second Language Classroom. From Theory to Practice. Longman Inc. New York. U.S.A.

<sup>8</sup> García Sanchez, Celina C.: "Una alternativa metacognitiva para el desarrollo de la comprensión lectora en alumnos de noveno grado". LA Habana, 1999.

accumulated different experiences and information related to the topic. They also differ in their interests and needs.

Reading comprehension constitutes an active process too. Barnett, Marva states its importance in her book *More than Meets the Eye* as “*an interactive process between reader and writer (...)*”. Here she evidences the reader’s role in decoding letters into sounds and the attribution of meaning by context, making use of his knowledge and putting his imagination to work. Also, she extrapolates the ideas stated by the author to his own experiences.

Finally, from a more communicative view and taking into consideration some previous investigations on the topic, Medina Alberto defines reading comprehension as:

The process through which the student-reader, in interaction with the written text and in an active position, decodes its meaning from understanding to the level of making a critical analysis based on his own cosmovision. As a skill in formation it passes through different stages which can turn into strategies that he acquires and that might be useful for the development of different types of reading. The effectiveness of this process demands an integration of reading with the rest of the verbal skills in the foreign language and a strong entailment between affective – motivational and cognitive elements<sup>9</sup>.

This definition given by Medina is the one that will be assumed in this investigation, taking into consideration its completeness and pertinence, the inclusion of the levels and stages present in this process, the use of reading strategies and the integration of verbal skills. Also, on account of the author’s view of reading comprehension as a communicative process in which affective, motivational and cognitive elements are involved.

For a better comprehensive analysis it is necessary to establish the differences between reading and reading comprehension. On the one hand, reading is the process of decoding written symbols into corresponding sounds or units that have a meaning in each language.

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<sup>9</sup> Medina Betancourt, Alberto: *Modelo de competencia metodológica del profesor de Inglés para el perfeccionamiento de la dirección del proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del nivel medio*. Universidad de Ciencias Pedagógicas Holguín, 2004, p. 71.

Every literate person is able to read and it does not imply the understanding of the text that has been read. This process takes place up to a reproductive level.

On the other hand, reading comprehension does imply a decoding process, but it goes farther since it includes the attribution of meaning to words, making up the meaning of the text. It also implies a series of mental processes and relations between the elements of this communicative process.

In the author' conception reading comprehension goes beyond the act of merely decoding and translating written symbols into corresponding sounds. It is a reconstructive and interactive mental process of meaningful units. It implies to understand, comprehend, interpret, arriving at the contents that the text deals with, from a perspective of critical analysis, making use of the reader's knowledge, cultural background and experiences related to the topic.

Hence reading comprehension constitutes a powerful instrument to influence over the student's personality and education. The reading comprehension lesson is an important moment where the teacher indirectly influences over the student in interaction with the text. This process is called to influence on the formation of a better and more prepared professional who uses reading as a way of acquiring cultural growth.

The following elements to be analysed are relevant for the effective development of the reading comprehension process and clearly to this work. According to the reading purpose reading can be:

- For general information: this is the revision of total or partially unknown materials with the purpose to get the general idea without going to specific details.
- For studying: this is a slow and detailed reading with the purpose to study and learn by heart the contents presented. The material is rich in information and the process requires a total comprehension.
- For scanning specific information: the content of this type of reading is known by the reader in a general sense but he is trying to widen his knowledge through the acquisition of more detailed information. It requires texts rich in updated information about the topic (dates, figures, years, etc.).

- As an entertainment: this reading depends on the interests, needs and likes of the reader (anecdotes, stories, tales, and poems).

According to the prevailing mental process, reading can be classified as:

- Synthetic (to get global comprehension)
- Analytic (explaining new elements to reinforce comprehension).

Following Antich, R (1986), it can be said, that the teaching of reading has three main objectives: (1) The comprehension and the interpretation of any reading material, (2) the improvement of vocabulary acquisition and (3) the speed of the reading.

Summarizing, reading comprehension can be defined as a necessity for the students to learn how to learn. Also, it is a tool for studying and getting a general culture of the world and an opportunity to get in contact with language and practice it. Besides, it is a means to get in contact with new words and to increase vocabulary.

Among the cognitive skills reading comprehension includes most of the following abilities:

To anticipate the form and the content.	To recognize and recall specific details
To identify the main idea.	To recognize the author's purpose and attitude.
To infer from the text (to read between the lines recognizing implied meanings).	To recognize the relations between the main idea and their expansion (sequence, time, cause-effect, etc.).
To follow the sequence of events.	To arrive at conclusions from a critical perspective.

It is accepted that the more words you know from a language the better you will understand. But the importance of vocabulary in the reading process is relative even in the mother tongue of the reader, since many times you do not know the meaning of all the words of our language and that fact does not hamper communication. No reader has to know in advance all the words of the text because meaning can be inferred by context.

To stop reading when unfamiliar words arouse is a common practice of students. When they look up the meaning on the dictionary they forget the context in which they found it and sometimes the dictionary does not present the meaning that suits that context and students

feel frustrated. It is the teachers' task to teach them that if they understand the general idea of the text they do not have to worry about the meaning of isolated words.

Also during the pre-teaching process teachers can make use of different procedures to teach the most difficult vocabulary that might interfere with the general meaning of the material. Besides, texts must not present very difficult grammatical structures that hinder understanding. In case of doubt by the students the required clarifications must be made.

According to many of the authors consulted in this work there are different means to achieve a good reading comprehension. The most important are the following:

1. Skimming: The eyes run quickly over the text to discover main ideas and the gist.
2. Scanning: The reader is on the lookout for particular information.
3. Intensive reading: It is a close study of the text to extract specific information.
4. Extensive reading: It is a fluent activity involving mainly global comprehension: It is often associated with the readings outside the classroom, mainly for pleasure.

### **1.3.2 The Reading Comprehension Lesson: Phases.**

So far, the reading comprehension process implies three different purposes: obtaining information, formation of reading abilities and formation of values and conceptions in the students to help them interact in life. This process goes through three different stages: pre-reading, while-reading and post-reading, which are closely interrelated. Each of them brings multiple opportunities for the development of speaking through the reading passage.

Pre-reading phase: affective-motivational phase where students activate schemata, knowledge and experiences they have learned about the topic in an interactive atmosphere. They must feel the need to read, to find what the text offers and anticipate what it might be about by making guesses. They may write down the ideas as are predicted and refer back to them after the reading to see which ones come closest to what actually happens. When new words are crucial for understanding, some preliminary vocabulary teaching should be done, so that they do not get discouraged.

While-reading phase: this phase favors the development of reading abilities. Students get in contact with the text and its linguistic elements. They build up the meaning expressed through the use of reading strategies. Learning tasks reinforce students' confidence in decoding

intended messages. A challenging time deadline can be provided for reading tasks. Teachers encourage students to infer the meaning of words and group of words by content. Teachers should be active, available to students who need help individually or to the whole group if a general difficulty arises.

Post-reading phase: students share their opinions from a critical point of view, demonstrating the level of comprehension attained during the lesson. They should get to the critical analysis stage. This is a period of contents' summarization, which facilitates the integration of abilities and the use of the linguistic elements presented in the text.

### **1.3.3 Reading Strategies.**

The comprehension of the text by the reader requires the use of reading strategies which can be used according to his/her needs. Also, they support and reinforce the different phases of reading comprehension. Therefore, they must be systematized by the students with appropriate guidance from the teacher (controlled to semi-controlled). In time, they give students an active participation and self-regulation for using them independently.

Through the use of strategies reading becomes a smart process. In agreement with the specialists' criteria, strategies turn to be "tools to interpret and analyze texts", there is a long list that can be used according to the characteristics of the text and of the learning tasks. All of the following reading strategies are involved in an efficient comprehension:

To read the title	To use illustrations
To keep meaning in mind	To continue if unsuccessful
To skip unnecessary words	To recognize cognates
To evaluate guesses	To use contextual clues
To identify the grammatical category of words and their meaning.	To monitor the reading to make sure it still makes sense
To analyze the structure of the text	To use glossaries as last resource
To make use of the content in preceding and succeeding paragraphs.	To propose solutions and summarize what has been read.

As a conclusion we can deduce that students can develop stronger and more lasting reading comprehension skills on their own if teachers give them explicit orientations and tools to analyze texts.

#### **1.3.4 The Role of Motivation in Reading Comprehension. Types of Motivation.**

Since reading is an active ability and involves a mental process which constantly demands guessing and prediction, it implies that before facing the text students should be intrinsically motivated towards the topic. Other way, key elements necessary for interpretation will be skip. Motivation plays an essential role in the teaching of a foreign language and especially in reading. That is why teachers should create the conditions for the presentation and offer interesting topics related to their life and interests. Also, they should include practical activities to increase their participation.

Motivation constitutes one of the principal psychological factors that intervene in the effective development of a reading comprehension lesson and in the teaching-learning process. It requires special attention from the teachers since sometimes they fail to think that only by presenting a new topic the students will feel interested towards it. They have to improve their methods of presentation as well as the learning tasks which should test the students with a communicative situation, for example problem solving learning - tasks.

There are two kinds of motivation: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivations. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation that comes from within the individual with no intervention of external elements, while extrinsic motivation deals with the motivation aroused by external factors in the individual. The student who is intrinsically motivated will satisfy his needs from the execution of the learning activity and will feel more likely to engage in the tasks presented to him. The ones motivated extrinsically do it for a reward that not always satisfies their cognitive needs.

#### **1.3.5 The Teaching - Learning Process Based on English for Specific Purposes at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.**

In this type of school, where students share interests, background and academic pursuits that show a common tendency to choose a military career and graduate as future military officers it is understandable to relate the teaching - learning process to the students' context. **Go**



**Ahead!** is based on reading comprehension and follows the basics of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). This type of teaching has some peculiarities and advantages that suit the educational aims of this school.

But what is ESP? What does it imply? ESP constitutes a learning communicative process based on a real analysis of students' needs, expectations and in the context where the process takes place. One of the advantages of ESP is that it introduces the students into what being a professional in their own field of study means, in this case English serves as an instrument of military career guidance.

Many English courses around the world have applied for ESP since the need to learn English varies as the motivation that each person has to learn does. For example the term "stethoscope" is common to a doctor as "blackboard" is to a teacher and "weapon" is to a military officer. In this way ESP courses respond to the reasons a group of learners have in common to learn a language. And this is the case in question.

Many authors have studied ESP. The author adheres to the definition given by Medina (Glossary 2012): *"It is an approach to language teaching that is directed by specific reasons of learning. This approach aims to meet the needs of particular learners. Such as the cases of English for Science and Technology, English for Business and Economics, English for Social Sciences, (...)"*

Clearly, the aim of this research fills in the criteria offered by Medina about the particularity of reasons and the necessity to meet specific needs: here, in English for Military Purposes. Upon this decision weighed the facts that as future officers to be these students need military lexicon as well as communicative competence to investigate and keep themselves updated on topics like: weaponry, military craft, politics, investigations, etc. The analysis of the bibliography about ESP shows that the following principles are relevant for the development of this work:

ESP courses require a strong preparation by teachers on the subject matter they are going to teach. Also, lessons should be learning-centred, involving all the elements included in the teaching - learning process. Any ESP course should be based in the needs of the educational environment which the students are exposed to. So in these military institutions the

communicative functions the students need to express in English are to be integrated to the updated military contents they will need in the future.

In the design of the materials used for this kind of teaching there should be a balance among the contents needs of the students and their language needs. The presentation of the contents should be meaningful and communicative, so students are given opportunities of language use. This means that they should recognize their environment and find a logical reason in the activity. That way they practice possible solutions they can offer in real life situations, using the language for specific purposes and in spontaneous speech.

### **Chapter Conclusions**

In this chapter the author reveals the difficulties that affect the object of investigation of this research through the application of different methods of investigation. It favored an approach to the theoretical elements involved in reading comprehension and its development. Besides it proved that categories like reading strategies, abilities and processes are of paramount necessity for the students. Teachers are called to systematize their teaching from an ESP viewpoint

## **Chapter 2: Use of Texts and Learning Tasks Focused on Military Life in the Teaching of English in the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.**

This chapter reveals the requirements used for text selection and the planning of learning tasks graded according to the different phases of reading comprehension, in the elaboration of the proposal. Finally it presents a proposal of texts and learning tasks about the military life in order to improve the twelfth grade students' English reading comprehension process.

### **2.1 Selection of Texts: Classification and Requirements.**

Every text carries at least three meanings: literal or explicit, intentional or implicit, and cultural; which condition the existence of three levels in the reading process: translation, interpretation and extrapolation.

Text selection is one of the most important steps teachers must carry out for the development of a reading comprehension lesson. It is very difficult for no text matches all the requirements, contents and values needed to teach the students. This reality demands a teacher who is prepared to adapt and make his own texts when needed.

The bibliography consulted covers many criteria for text selection. Following, there are some of them: type of school, vocational aim, level of the students, characteristics of the students: age, interests. Also, the following aspects should be taken into consideration: potentiality, coherence, complexity, typology, authenticity, message, be endorsed by the specialists and the communicative message offered to the students.

Aside from the requirements mentioned above and taking into consideration the formative aims of this school, the author of this work also took into account the following particularized criteria: the texts should be contextualized to military life and the students' own experiences, favor career guidance, values education and promote love towards the Revolution.

Authentic texts are quite useful, they are written by native speakers of the language and express a certain desired meaning. They include contents in communicative situations, real or simulated and portray cultural aspects of the language and prepare the student to read in real situations out of the classroom. On the other hand, adapted texts are also important. They show the contents in contextualized situations, too, and are closer to the reader's life and experiences –which facilitates their comprehension. Also, they can meet the classroom

requirements and come in handy as needed. Adapted texts also make easier the control of the contents, vocabulary and grammar presented to the students.

Texts are easier to understand when they present a clear structure with an accessible content. So it is necessary to have a balance of authentic and adapted texts in order to satisfy the students' learning. Another way to come out of this crossroads is to "easify" the authentic texts to make them understandable enough. With respect to this balance, Penny Ur expresses: *"With less proficient learners, we usually simplify texts in order to make them appropriate to the level of our students (...) the use of authentic texts with less proficient learners is often frustrating and counter-productive. As they become proficient it will be better to start introducing near-authentic texts"*<sup>10</sup>.

## **2.2 Requirements for Planning Learning Tasks.**

The correct use of learning tasks can effectively weigh in the level of comprehension to be attained. They are the instruments students use to interact with the contents of a given subject, in this case English, under the teacher's guidance. Also, they guide the instructive and educational process satisfactorily through the different levels of assimilation, for they have a clear purpose whose outcome is learning benefits for students.

The following requirements have been taken into consideration for the elaboration of the learning tasks proposed. They should go from global comprehension to details and be carried out in integration with other skills. Also, they should favor guesswork and activate the imagination of the students developing inferential abilities and introducing questions that allow them to anticipate information by the title, visual support, etc.

Besides, they should be graded according to the different phases of the comprehension process, be meaningful to the students, contextualized, close to their experiences and related as much as possible to the type of school and its formative intentions. They should favor critical reading so as to promote the development of active readers. Finally, they should be presented to the students with a clearly defined purpose and promote variety.

Comprehension questions are extensively used by teachers to check comprehension. For a better result they should be placed before the reading so that the student wants to read and find the answer in the text. There are five types of questions: literal: the answer appears

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<sup>10</sup> Ur, Penny: "A Course in Language Teaching", 2002, p.150.

clearly stated in the text; reorganization: the students have to take literal information that appears in different parts of the text to analyze it as a whole and reinterpret it; inference: which requires the students to read between the lines to get the information that is implicit or implied but not explicit stated; personal: students respond their reactions and view points to the content of the text and general: which requires the students' total comprehension. It involves view points applied to other contexts.

Learning tasks must be planned according to the potentialities present in the text and the abilities to be formed. Also, they should be used according to the moment of the lesson where they will be more profitable for the students.

### **Pre-reading Learning Tasks:**

- Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).
- Decide whether these pairs of words have similar or different meanings.
- Sentence scramble. Make a sentence out of each group of words.
- Sentence-building games. Repeat the sentence and add items that make sense.
- Fill in the blanks in the sentence using the correct link-words.
- Anticipate the content. Predict based on headings.
- Tell what the passage is about.
- What do you think that character is going to do next?
- Decide whether the following words have similar or different meanings.
- Draw a picture according to the information you think the text might be about.

### **While-reading Learning Tasks:**

- Scramble outline. Organize the following outline taken from the text.
- Give the Spanish equivalents.
- Be ready to distinguish the main idea from the supporting ones.
- Match the paragraphs and the ideas.
- Read the following text without using your dictionary.
- Word practice. Find words or phrases in the text connected with...
- Find in the text a synonym of ....

**Post-reading Learning Tasks:**

- Questions about the text to recognize the author's intention, attitude, etc.
- Distinguish fact from opinion.
- Match each word with its definition.
- Write a summary of the text or an oral report.
- Write a paragraph expressing your point of view about the text. What would you do on that situation?
- Comment with your partners about a similar situation you know.

## **2.3 Proposal of Texts and Learning Tasks for the Teaching of English in the Twelfth Grade in the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.**

**Text 1:** “A skillful military man and a poet”.

Juan Almeida Bosque was born in Havana on February 27<sup>th</sup>, 1929. He was an intelligent and honest boy, a lover of nature. He graduated of Civil Construction in the Arts and Offices School of Havana. Very young, he joined in the Revolution where he outstood as an important leader of noteworthy convictions who demonstrated to have many revolutionary ideas against the injustices that most people suffered.

He had a significant participation in the Moncada Garrison attack, the Granma Yacht expedition and in the Uvero combat where he fought bravely and was seriously injured. Almeida was a very disciplined and respectful military man, never afraid of the enemy and a weaponry expert. Later, in 1958, Captain Almeida was promoted to Commander of the forces of the Third Front of the Rebel Army in Santiago de Cuba, as a reward for his brave participation in the fight and loyalty to Fidel and the revolutionary process.

After the glorious victory of the Cuban Revolution in January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1959, he continued to be one of our most important leaders as a member of the Cuban Armed Forces and the Cuban Communist Party. Also, he had a decisive participation in all the victories achieved by the Revolution such as the Bay of Pigs (Girón) victory. Later he was appointed as Vice-President of the Council of State and president of the Combatants' Association of Cuba.

Almeida left us a wide collection of literary and musical pieces. He wrote several books like: “Contra el agua y el viento”, “La Sierra”, “La aurora de los héroes” and others where he put to our consideration interesting events of Cuban History from his perspectives and experiences as a rebel. Also, he gave us popular songs like ‘Lupita’ and others that live in the hearts of the Cuban people. Almeida knew the key to mix strength, character and discipline with sweetness.

For his fidelity, contributions and efficient services for more than 40 years to the revolutionary process, he was awarded with the titles of Hero of the Cuban Republic, the Máximo Gómez Order and with the love and respect of the Cuban people too. The Cuban people will always

remember Almeida because he left behind his death a treasured legacy of culture and love for military life.

**Pre- reading phase:**

1- What do you know about Almeida? Write three aspects about his life you do not know and you would like to find about in the text.

**While – reading phase:**

2- Read the text and check if you found out the information you expected.

3- Read the text once more and say if the following ideas are true (T) or false (F). Give reasons about the false statements.

\_\_\_ Almeida did not like life in campaign.

\_\_\_ He was a very brave and well-educated man.

\_\_\_ He joined in the fight after 1954.

\_\_\_ He liked to write.

\_\_\_ Almeida did not have many friends.

4- Read the text and find:

\_\_\_ Three words that qualify Almeida's participation in the revolutionary process.

\_\_\_ The English equivalent to the Spanish phrases: "convicciones dignas de resaltar" and "un experto en armamento".

\_\_\_ The English equivalent of the Spanish word "*premio*".

\_\_\_ The name of a book.

**Post –reading phase:**

5- Read the text once more and answer the following questions:

a) What did Almeida study?



- b) What reasons do you consider led Almeida to join the revolutionary process?
  - c) Was Almeida a multifaceted man? Explain.
  - d) Why do you think we can say that Almeida was “A skillful military man and a poet”?
- 6-** Write in a short paragraph a summary of the main ideas of the text.

**Text 2:** “A letter for you”.

Thursday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

Dear Camilito Student,

How are you? Great I hope! My name is Yanelis de la Cruz Basulto and I am studying at the Granma Naval Academy. As you requested I write giving you some information about my school and career. This military college was founded on October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1916. It is located in the areas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces Academy "General Máximo Gómez", in Alamar, Havana. Since 1959 it has the responsibility of preparing officers for the Cuban Revolutionary Navy and other institutions of the Central Governmental Administration.

About my stay here during these four years I can tell you that I have accumulated a broad experience about the military life and I can assure you that I have enjoyed it. The discipline has been very strict and demanding, as well as the teachers and the subjects. Some subjects are: Ship Building, Oceanography, Mathematics, Naval Tactics, Naval Geography, Reconnaissance, History of the Naval Art, Physics, English and Computer Science.

Some other activities I have practiced here are shooting with the AKM assault rifle, reconnaissance and live practices in a ship. They are interesting because you can spend some days living in a ship, learning and sharing experiences with your friends. Also, some specialties of the school carry out the Final Practices sailing around Cuba, which is the most amazing trip you can ever have.

After I graduate as a first degree officer I will carry out command functions and management of the personnel subordinated to me in the command chain, accomplishing important

missions to defend the Revolution's victories and our people. I hope you are satisfied with all the details I give you. To choose a career is a very difficult task, but I am sure that you will succeed. What careers do you have in mind? Write me soon and tell me about your decision. Sincerely, your new friend,

Yane.

**Pre – reading phase:**

**1-** Answer the following questions:

- What specialty do you want to study in the future?
- Why do you make such a decision?
- What do you know about this career and what would you like to know?
- Would you like to study in the Granma Naval Academy?

**While - reading phase:**

**2-** Read the text and match the correct assertion for each item.

**A-** The text is about:

\_\_\_ A cadet who writes a letter describing her last practices in the sea to her sister who is a “camilito” student.

\_\_\_ A future naval officer giving a general information about her college and specialty to a student who is about to choose a career.

**B-** The Granma Academy was founded:

\_\_\_ After the triumph of the Revolution.

\_\_\_ During the first 20 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**C-** The subjects the students receive:

\_\_\_ Are only those related to the technical field of the specialty.

\_\_\_ Are all the theoretical and practical subjects that let them to have a comprehensive preparation on their field of study.

**3-** Read the text and translate the following phrases:

a) As you requested me...

b) ...my stay here...

c) ...command chain.

d) Physics

e) ...a first degree officer

**Post – reading phase:**

**4-** Work in pairs. Elaborate four questions about the text for your partner to answer them.

**5-** Write a letter in answer to the request that Yanelis makes in the last paragraph.

**6-** Establish a brief conversation with your partner about the career s/he would like to study in the near future?

**Text 3:** “VILMA: New Technologies in the Revolutionary Armed Forces.”

In recent years the engineers and other technical personnel of the revolutionary Armed Forces (RAF) have worked in the reengineering of military technologies from the ex-Soviet Union and in the production of brand new innovations to meet the new challenges of the military due to the utilization of optic devices for night vision and laser red dot sights by the enemy for night attacks. One of such devices is the VILMA sight for the soldier's individual weapons. Vilma stands for Light Sight to Kill the Enemy which in Spanish means Visor Lumínico para Matar Agresores. VILMA, VILMA-1 and VILMA-2 are some of these sights. A VILMA incorporates higher combat capabilities to the weapons where it is fitted.

This sight works passively as a mechanical sight and actively as a laser sight. The VILMA-1, the smallest and lighter of the series, uses an AA battery and an electronic potentiometer of

high quality to regulate the twelve levels of light intensity needed for the laser red dot reticule. The VILMA sight can be used for night warfare. Aiming takes three times quicker. The precision of fire is duplicated which contributes to saving ammunition and inspiring more self-confidence while the soldier can aim at the target with both eyes open. Also, the training procedures are faster and simpler. Finally, it does not interfere with aiming through the mechanical sight of each weapon and you can even disarm the mechanical sight and carry out shooting drills with a VILMA.

**Pre- reading phase:**

**1-** Answer the following questions:

- What new technologies related to weaponry do you know the Revolutionary Armed Forces is using?
- Do you know what a VILMA sight is? Can you draw it?
- Do you think it would be interesting to use this military technology?

**2-** What information do you expect to find in the text about the VILMA sight?

**While – reading phase:**

**3-** Read the text and look out for the information you expected to find. Was it there? What else did you learn about it?

**4-** Read the text and correct the sentences that are wrong:

\_\_\_\_\_ The VILMA sight is an old device.

\_\_\_\_\_ It was designed by the ex-Soviet Union.

\_\_\_\_\_ It is an optic device for day vision.

\_\_\_\_\_ It saves ammunition.

\_\_\_\_\_ This new technology does not bring any benefit to the soldier.

**5-** Scramble outline. Organize the following ideas according to the order they have in the text.

\_\_\_\_\_ VILMA makes the training procedures faster and simpler.

\_\_\_\_\_ The technical personnel of the revolutionary Armed Forces work in the production of brand new innovations.

\_\_\_\_\_ Aiming is quicker.

\_\_\_\_\_ It adds higher combat capabilities to other weapons.

**Post – reading phase:**

**6-** Read the text and answer the following questions:

- a)** What are the technical personnel of the Revolutionary Armed Forces doing with old weapons?
- b)** What kind of device is VILMA?
- c)** What are its advantages for the soldier?
- d)** What is the importance of this weapon for the Revolutionary Armed Forces?
- e)** What is your opinion about the text? Do you like it or not? Give your answer in no less than three sentences.

**7-** Write in a short paragraph about the content of the text.

**Text 4: “Antonio Maceo Interarms College”**

The Antonio Maceo Interarms College is one of the principal teaching centers of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces. Located in the municipality of Caimito, Artemisa, it was founded on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Many important officers have graduated there in different specialties of the terrestrial troops. It was awarded with the “Antonio Maceo Order” in 1983.

There you can study different types of careers like: Terrestrial Artillery, Logistics, Protection against Mass Destruction Weapons, Tanks, Military Intelligence and infantry. The regular

course lasts four years and the mid – level, two years. Students feel very proud of their school because they receive an excellent preparation.

Teachers and officers are very demanding and strict, as well as the schedule. During the day students practice different types of activities. In the mornings they practice exercises and receive lessons from the different specialties. In the afternoons they study and practice sports. In some occasions they have shooting practices on the terrain, where they practice the different positions for dragging on the terrain and military drills. Cadets enjoy this kind of activities because they are closely related to their specialties. To study in this interarms college is an excellent choice you can make.

Adapted from: “Textos militares para el 12mo grado”

### **Pre – reading phase:**

1- Sentence building game. Repeat the following sentence adding as much information as you can:

“The Antonio Maceo Interarms College is....”

### **While – reading phase:**

2- Read the text and say right (R), wrong (W), or it doesn't say (IDS). Give reasons about the wrong assertions:

A \_\_\_\_ This school has a short experience in the formation of military officers.

B \_\_\_\_ It prepares officers of the terrestrial troops only.

C \_\_\_\_ Infantry is the most important specialty of the school.

D \_\_\_\_ The students from this school are glad to belong there.

E \_\_\_\_ Cadets do not get an integral military preparation.

**3-** Read the text and find:

- a) The English equivalent to the Spanish phrase: *estudios de nivel medio*.
- b) The name of a place: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) The antonym of: *low* \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Three military activities \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- e) A synonym of hard: \_\_\_\_\_

**3.1** Translate the following phrases:

- a) Command studies
- b) The Cuban State awarded the college...

**4-** Answer the following questions according to the information that the text provides:

- a) Is this school located on the eastern part of Cuba?
- b) Does this school provide the students with a good preparation?
- c) Is the Antonio Maceo Interarms College a necessary institution for our Revolution?
- d) What career of the ones mentioned above do you like? Explain.
- e) Do you know any cadet who is studying in this college? What does he tell you about his experiences there?
- f) What do you think was the author's intention when writing this text?

**Post – reading phase:**

**5-** Complete the following chart according to the information of the text:

Name of the school	Location	Careers	Some activities	Other information

**6-** Write in a short composition your personal opinion about this school. Say whether you would like to study in this military college or not. Give reasons in both cases.

**Text 5:** “\_\_\_\_\_.”

Javier Perez Almaguer is a second year student at the Higher Military School Commander Arides Estéves, located in Havana. He is training in the higher level within the career of Bachelor in Law, in the specialty of Counter-intelligence in a regular course of five years.

During his life as a cadet he has received History of the State and Law, as well as some theoretical subjects as Constitutional Basis, Penal Law, Civil Law, Law and Management, Public, Private and International Law which prepare him as an outstanding law officer-to-be. Some other general subjects that get him ready as an integral officer are: Social Sciences, Criminology, Philosophy and English.

As a youngster, Javier likes to go to parties and to the beach, listen to music, tell jokes and hang out with his friends. But he has always made sure to get good grades in any test and to participate in any scientific investigation. In short, we can say that he is making use of all the chances he has at hand to prepare as an excellent officer.

Javier is looking forward to graduating as a prosecutor, receive the military degree of lieutenant and put into practice all the knowledge he has accumulated during his studies in a military court of law. He wants to be one of the most integral officers of his military unit. What about you?

**Pre – reading phase:**

**1-**The following words are included within the text: cadet, law, subjects, Arides Estéves, officer, military unit. Discuss what the text might be about.

**While – reading phase:**

**2-** Read the text and provide a title.

**3-** Read the text again and find:



- a) The antonym of *lower* \_\_\_\_\_.
- b) Three nouns that name Javier's field of study: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
- c) The spelling of an ordinal number: \_\_\_\_\_.
- d) The English equivalent of the Spanish phrase: *tribunal militar*.
- e) A military rank: \_\_\_\_\_.
- f) The English equivalent of the Spanish verb: *utilizar*.

**4-** Read the text and answer the following questions:

- a) Is Javier an Infantry student?
- b) Does Javier get a good training as a Counter-intelligence student?
- c) Does Javier like his specialty? Why do you think so?
- d) Would you like to study Counter-intelligence as Javier does?
- e) Does Javier want to put into practice his training?
- f) What is your opinion about the last idea of the text? Do you want to be a good officer as Javier does?
- g) What do you think about the officers that are not well-prepared in their specialties? What would you do to eradicate this situation if you were in their place?

**Post – reading phase:**

**5-** Game: Work in a team to elaborate wrong assertions about the text for the other team to find elements to refute your assertion. For instance:

Team A: Javier does not have a general training as a future officer.

Team B: That is not true because he receives several subjects that endow him as a well-prepared officer.

**6-** Comment with your partners about a cadet you know who studies in this school, too.

## **Chapter Conclusions**

This chapter summarizes important elements that were taken into consideration for the elaboration of the proposal, such as the requirements for text selection and the requisites for planning learning tasks. Also, it offers texts and learning tasks designed in agreement with the different phases of the reading comprehension process advanced by this author in order to improve the learning process of this subject. The aforementioned texts and learning tasks are viewed from a perspective of English for specific purposes so as to improve the twelfth grade students' reading comprehension abilities at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.

### **Chapter 3. Validation of the Effectiveness of the Texts and Learning Tasks Proposed to Favor the English Reading Comprehension Process in Twelfth Grade Students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin.**

This chapter discusses the results obtained during the validation of the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks proposed towards the improvement of the reading comprehension process at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin. The implementation of this work took place during the period of September 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 to February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, with previous coordinated analysis with the staff of teachers and approval by the head of the department.

#### **3.1 The Pre – experiment.**

In order to validate the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks proposed to favor the English Reading Comprehension Process in twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin, the author used a pre-experimental design (Campbell and Stanley, 1973) with one group, using a pre-test and a post-test as validation instruments. Following the methodology used in this type of schools to measure the effectiveness of a given grade, two indicators were taken into consideration to assess validity: promotion and quality results. Promotion stands for the total amount of students who passed the tests; quality, the total amount of students with marks over 80 points on a scale of 100 points.

As the researcher did not have the opportunity to choose the students of her experimental group randomly, an intact group was selected: group 4 from company 2. This group has 24 students (11 females and 13 males). All of them had received English in the previous years with the book Spectrum 1; which in the course of this investigation the author found that does not favor the reading comprehension process as needed in this military school.

For the implementation two teachers (both with master's degrees, experience and knowledge about the reading comprehension process) were selected by the researcher. They were involved with the main purpose of the work and inserted it within the program of study in combination with the contents of the coursebook **Go Ahead!**

In addition, classroom conditions were created (one classroom for each teacher, one coursebook for each student, full access to the webpage of the grade and the language

laboratory). The cooperation among the investigator, the teachers and the students was also established successfully. This classroom environment favored an efficient teaching-learning process.

At the beginning of the academic course the teachers' opinions about the students' current situation in the subject were discouraging. They said that the students expressed themselves using few communicative functions but were not ready to face the new dynamics posed by the coursebook **Go Ahead!**, centered on reading comprehension. Also, students had obtained poor results in the written midterm tests in previous years and the first assessments showed a repeat tendency.

To assess the situation a pre-test with diagnostic purposes was applied (Cf. **Appendix 5**). The students were given a text from "Textos militares para 12mo grado", which featured vocabulary studied in previous years in combination with few new lexical elements. To test their comprehension three learning tasks were elaborated so as to check their global comprehension. They went from a general to particular perspective demanding the students' active thinking.

In summary, only 10 students passed the test, which showed students' difficulties to comprehend reading materials. Also it demonstrated their lack of reading abilities and strategies. Some students showed poor understanding of the text and the learning – tasks. They also demonstrated lack of reading strategies and abilities to determine general and secondary ideas. Additionally, they evidenced serious difficulties to express themselves in writing about the content of the text.

### **Post - test**

By the end of the school year a post-test was applied with the purpose of assessing the level of comprehension attained by the students immediately after the application of the proposal of texts and learning tasks. A text with reading comprehension learning tasks was applied in the sample group (Cf. **Appendix 6**).

In task 1, 20 students (83, 3%) extracted from the text synonyms, names of specialties and types of weapons. On the contrary, 4 (16, 6%) failed to answer correctly.

In task 2, 22 students (91, 6%) answered correctly some questions about the text and 2 (8,3%) had problems to infer information from the text.

In task 3, all 24 students wrote their opinion in a short paragraph about the text.

As a point of comparison with the pre-test, from the 24 students who took the post test, only 1 (4, 1%) did not pass, 2 (8, 3%) got low results and the rest obtained marks over 80 points (87, 5%), which shows a significant leap in both indicators.

A qualitative analysis shows that:

- The majority of students were able to understand the text in details, as well as the demands of the learning tasks.
- They were able to work with the vocabulary of the text.
- They felt identified with the content of the text.
- They were able to infer from the text and arrive at conclusions critically.
- They were able to express themselves in writing about the content of the text.
- They demonstrated a high level of comprehension.

### **Partial Conclusions of the Pre - experiment Applied.**

The analysis and comparison of the results (Cf. **Appendix 8**) obtained in the pre and post tests indicate that:

- There was a positive transformation in the development of reading comprehension in the students.
- The application of the proposal did improve the formation and development of reading abilities and strategies in the students.
- Students showed their mastery of the military vocabulary of the proposal. However, some of them presented some difficulties to put into practice the lexicon and the contents of the texts in other situations.

- A significant improvement is shown in the results of the post-test as compared to those of the pre-test, with an increase in promotion of 54,2 % and another increase in quality of 70,9 %; therefore demonstrating the effectiveness of the proposal applied.
- The results obtained are further supported by the general results of twelfth grade in both indicators: a promotion of 99,4 % and a quality of 91.1 %.

### **3.2 Users' Criteria: Teachers' Opinions about the Proposal**

Throughout the implementation of the proposal the teachers who put it into practice (2 teachers, each with 12 students) were given a survey (Cf. **Appendix 7**) to obtain information about the reading comprehension process, as well as the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks applied. It rendered the following results per indicators:

#### **Indicators:**

**Motivation in the students.** One teacher marked **high** and the other **medium**.

**Development of reading abilities through the (TLT).** Both marked **high**.

**Contextualization.** Both marked **high**.

**Career guidance.** Both marked **medium**.

**Communication.** One marked **high** and the other selected **medium**.

**Participation.** Both marked **high**.

#### **Partial Conclusions of the Survey Applied to the Teachers:**

The results obtained through the teachers' comments on the application of the user's criteria evidence that:

- the teachers felt comfortable during the implementation of the proposal.
- the proposal favors the development of reading abilities communicatively.
- it motivates the students, favoring the development of military habits altogether.

- it is highly contextualized to the students' interests, age and the formative needs of the school.
- it has a high teaching potential which makes it useful to be extensively implemented.
- there could be other texts that cover more of the students' interests and needs, for example: about special troops and other military careers.
- and it added more vocabulary to be learned by the students, which is good for their future studies, although might add up some lexical stress.

### Chapter Conclusions

The methods applied served as a means to value the effectiveness of the proposal. They revealed significant changes in the object of study, manifested in the results obtained by the students in the post-test. The results obtained in the pre-experiment are in correspondence with those of the twelfth grade in the academic year 2013 – 2014 (Cf. **Appendix 9**). Also, the survey applied to the teachers who put into effect the proposal reflected their satisfaction towards the improvements achieved. Their contact with the proposal motivated them to deepen their knowledge on reading comprehension and its potentialities.

In summary, this analysis has permitted the author to arrive at the conclusion that the texts and learning tasks proposed have enough potentialities so as to be implemented extensively in the twelfth grade at this school.

## **Conclusions**

The accomplishment of the scientific tasks of this research led the author to arrive at the following conclusions:

During the development of the teaching - learning process in this school, and through the application of different methods, the author could determine that the students did not reach an effective mastery of most of the levels of reading comprehension. Also, the author detected a lack of interest towards the reading abilities in the students. Additionally, there was scarcity of texts and learning tasks to motivate the students. These reasons constituted the leitmotiv for the implementation of this research work. Consequently, the analysis of the theoretical conceptions of several investigators on the object of study helped the author to characterize this ability –which is fundamental for the students of this school who learn the language with clearly defined purposes.

In the second part of the research a proposal of texts and learning tasks about military life was elaborated sustained in the need to increase students' motivation towards reading comprehension and in the necessity of the students to learn specific terms on English. For this it was necessary to study some requirements for the elaboration of texts and learning tasks. The work thus developed turns out to be novel because of the introduction of more texts about the military context of the students and learning tasks to systematize reading comprehension.

The application of the proposal in the twelfth grade students at the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin evidences its potentialities to favor the development of reading comprehension as shown in the results obtained through the implementation of a pre - experiment, which demonstrates an increase in the levels of comprehension of the students.



## **Recommendations**

- Ø To continue further research about reading comprehension in the Camilo Cienfuegos Military School of Holguin in order to attain the social goal of English within the curriculum.
- Ø To design more texts and learning tasks that fill the gaps identified in this investigation, namely:
  - listening,
  - lexical training,
  - grammar categories and tenses, and
  - new topics on the military and civil careers granted to the students.
- Ø To apply the texts and learning tasks for the attention of individual needs of the students through independent works. Also, for the training of the students who participate in interschool, army and national contests.
- Ø To share the present research and its final products (texts and learning tasks) with the rest of the Camilo Cienfuegos military schools in order to fill the voids found in the coursebook and improve their respective learning processes.

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## **Appendixes**

### **Appendix 1: Analysis of the Syllabus: Go Ahead!**

**Objective:** To analyze how the elements that are included in this process are treated in this book.

**Indicators:**

- Attention paid to reading comprehension within the English lesson
- Attention paid to the Communicative Approach.
- Outstanding features.
- Texts presented.
- Organization of the contents presented.
- Type of learning tasks.

### **Appendix 2: Lesson Observation Guide**

**Objective:** To observe the development of the reading comprehension skill in the English lessons within the teaching-learning process so as to determine the effectiveness of the texts and learning tasks used by the teacher in order to develop the reading comprehension skills in their lesson.

**Indicators:**

1. Motivation provided by the teacher to the students.
2. Orientation towards the objectives of the learning tasks.
3. Methodological steps.
4. Texts used.
5. Variety of learning tasks.
6. Students' participation.
7. Level of comprehension attained by the students.



**Objective:** To compare the results of the class observations and the teachers' methodological conceptions about reading comprehension in general.

Name of the teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Master degree: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experiences teaching English: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of experiences teaching in this type of school: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you consider about reading comprehension from a methodological view point?
2. What importance do you attribute to this communicative ability?
3. What texts do you use for teaching this type of lessons?
4. What requirements do you use for text selection?
5. What requirements do you take into consideration to design the learning tasks that you present to your students?
6. How do you orient the learning tasks in the classroom?
7. How do your students react to the topics debated in class?
8. Do you consider that the texts you have at hand are effective to develop reading comprehension abilities? How so?

**Appendix 4:** Survey Applied to Students.

**Objective:** to obtain updated information about the state of opinion present in the students about the reading comprehension lessons and the texts presented to them.

Estimado estudiante:

Estamos realizando una encuesta acerca de las clases de comprensión lectora sobre temas militares impartidas en 12mo grado con el nuevo libro de texto **Go Ahead!** para perfeccionar el programa de estudio. Te agradecemos de antemano por tu colaboración con nuestro trabajo y por tus respuestas sinceras.

Marque con una (X) el inciso que mejor represente su respuesta. Justifiquen cada caso.

1. ¿Cómo valoras el conocimiento de la habilidad de comprensión lectora en inglés para tu aprendizaje en la asignatura y la vida en general?

☐ Muy necesaria    ☐ Medianamente necesaria    ☐ Innecesaria

2. ¿Te resultaron de interés los temas de contenido militar abordados en clases?

☐ Siempre    ☐ A veces    ☐ Nunca

3. ¿Dichos temas te motivaron a aprender más sobre las especialidades de las FAR y la vida militar en general?

☐ Siempre    ☐ A veces    ☐ Nunca

4. ¿Fueron interesantes y variados los ejercicios realizados en clases?

☐ Siempre    ☐ A veces    ☐ Nunca

5. ¿Qué temas de contenido militar te gustaría incluir en las clases de la asignatura?

**Appendix 5: Pre-test.**

**Objective:** To test the current state of the twelfth grade students' level of development in reading- comprehension.

**Text:** “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

It's the first day of the academic year at “Camilo Cienfuegos” Military School. A group of the tenth grade students are waiting in front of the storehouse to get their uniforms. Sergeant Sosa is talking to them about the different kinds of uniforms established according to the military outfits.

The military uniforms used by the military students are classified as daily and campaign uniforms. The first one is used in everyday activities, in classrooms, laboratories, and workshops, while the second one is used in doing duty and military training.

The items included in the daily uniforms are a cap, two epaulets designed according to the grade or rank, short-sleeved shirts, trousers, military belt, socks and daily shoes. The campaign uniform is composed of a cap, two epaulets designed similar as the first one, long-sleeved shirts, campaign trousers, military belt, socks and boots.

All the uniforms should be used following the established regulations, depending on the situation.

Source: Textos militares para 12 grado (digital format).

Read the text and answer the following questions:

- 1) Elaborate a title for the text.
- 2) Read the text once more and say if the following ideas are present (P) or not present (NP) in the text:

\_\_\_ Students are nervous about entering this school.

\_\_\_ Sergeant Sosa is giving students some information about the uniforms.

\_\_\_ The classification of the uniforms and their main uses.

\_\_\_ This is the first year of these students.

\_\_\_ The regulations students must take into consideration to wear uniforms.

3) Read the text again and answer the following questions:

a) What month of the year do the events present in the text take place?

b) Is Sergeant Sosa a polite man? Explain your answer.

c) Why do you consider sergeant Sosa is talking to the students about the types of uniforms?

d) Were uniforms one of the reasons that motivated you to enter this school? If not, mention some of them.

## Appendix 6: Post-test.

**Objective:** To determine the level of development in reading comprehension by the twelfth grade students, after the application of the texts and learning tasks.

**Text:** “The green family”

My name is Alfred Acosta. I'm in twelfth grade. I live with my parents in a military community. Everybody calls us “The green family”. I am a camilito. My mother is an infantry officer, and my father is an artilleryman. My mother loves “The Queen of War” very much. She says that infantry is the biggest numerical weapon and it makes huge movements in the battlefield. Colonel Acosta is my father, he feels proud of “The Goddess of war” because this specialty has powerful guns. Artillery supports infantry and tanks with its fire. My father has the ability to operate a howitzer with the different types of projectiles.

I really admire my strict family, that's why I'm going to fulfill all the military drills at the Soldier Basic Training successfully. I can practice the procedures with the AKM assault rifle, close combat, camouflage and survival techniques, but I'd like to obtain more information related to “The Steel Fist of the Cuban Army”. I want to study at General José Maceo Interarms College where my parents graduated from their command careers. I think Infantry, Artillery and Tanks go ahead together, the same as my family does.

1- Read the text and copy:

- a) The name of the specialty everybody calls The Queen of war: \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Another way to say arm: \_\_\_\_\_
- c) The synonym of battleground: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) The definition “It is considered an intensive period” refers to: \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Three activities carried out during the Soldier Basic Training: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

2- Read the text once more and answer the following questions:

- a) Are infantry, artillery and tanks technical careers?
- b) What is the principal mission of artillery?
- c) How is artillery called?

d) Did Alfred's parents study in Santiago de Cuba?

e) Is Alfred's mother's specialty important? Why?

3- Write in a short paragraph your opinion about the text and say if you are interested in any of the specialties mentioned above.

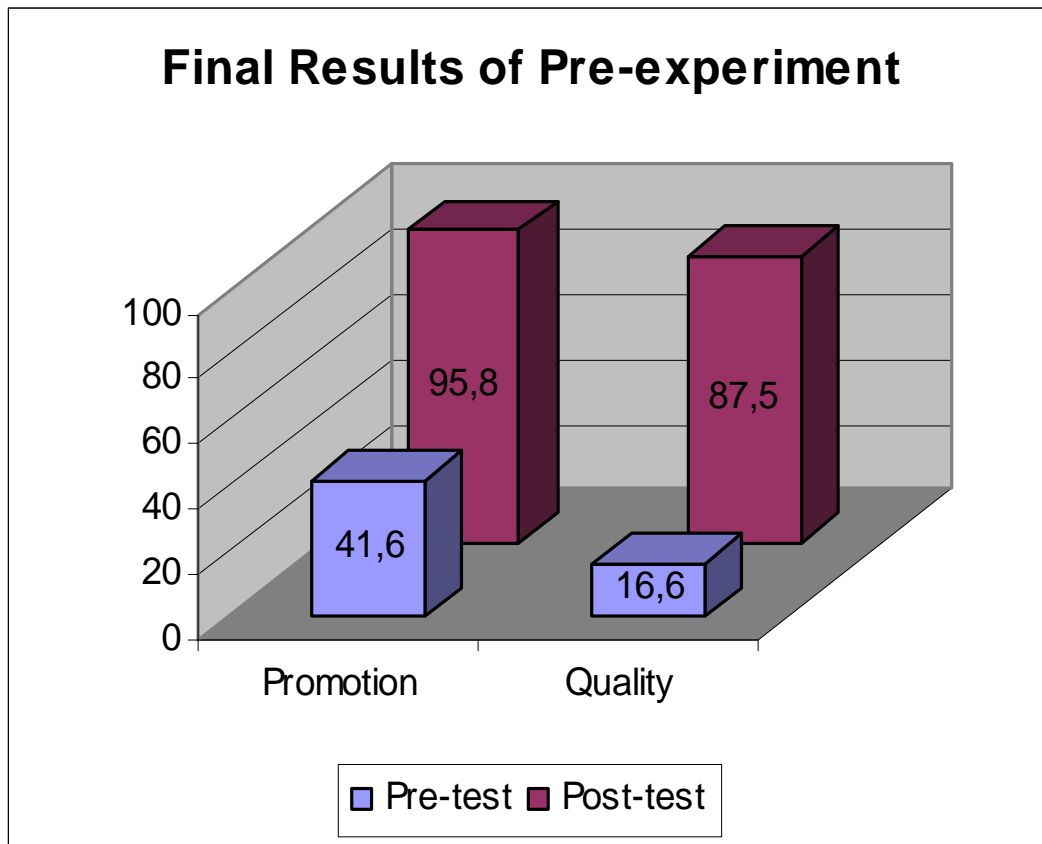
**Objective:** To obtain updated information about how the proposal develops within the teaching - learning process.

Bachelor in Education: \_\_\_\_ Master's degree: \_\_\_\_

- | Indicators                    | Texts | Learning tasks |
|-------------------------------|-------|----------------|
| Motivation in the students.   |       |                |
| Contextualization.            |       |                |
| Vocational formation.         |       |                |
| Development of communication. |       |                |
| Participation.                |       |                |

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**Appendix 8:** The Pre - experiment. Comparison between the Results of the Pre-test and the Post-test.





**Appendix 9:** Comparison between the Results of the Pre-experiment and the Final Results of the Grade.

