

### **The factors of children's reading in an online course**

AUTHORS: Katheryn Aracely Quilumba Galeano<sup>1</sup>

Mauro Hernán Ocaña Garzón<sup>2</sup>

Graciela del Rocío Flores Cisneros<sup>3</sup>

ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: [kaquilumbal@espe.edu.ec](mailto:kaquilumbal@espe.edu.ec)

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### **ABSTRACT**

Nowadays today's era, children generally prefer to technological tools rather than reading a book, and parents rarely decide how their children use technology to support reading development. However, you can choose to use technological means to encourage the development of the reading habits. Therefore, the general objective is to create an online platform to encourage reading children's stories since reading is a fundamental skill to achieve academic success. A quantitative method of main component analysis was applied, using the platform weblogs, questionnaires, and data collection according to the proposed activities' interactions with navigation records of 515 children between the age of five and nine years. The results show that short stories can reinforce reading comprehension and students' interest in reading. Also, the use of platforms can be a good option, if it has good content, age-appropriate aesthetics, and activities that attract users' attention.

**KEYWORDS:** Media; technology; reading; books; platforms.

### **Los factores de la lectura infantil en un curso online**

### **RESUMEN**

En la era actual, los niños generalmente prefieren usar herramientas tecnológicas en lugar de leer un libro, y los padres rara vez deciden cómo sus hijos usan la tecnología para apoyar el desarrollo de la lectura. Sin embargo, puede optar por utilizar medios tecnológicos para fomentar el desarrollo de los hábitos de lectura. Por tanto, el objetivo general es crear una plataforma online para incentivar la lectura de cuentos infantiles ya que la lectura es una habilidad fundamental para lograr el éxito académico. Se aplicó un método cuantitativo de análisis de componentes principales, utilizando la

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<sup>1</sup> Student in Initial Education Degree. and University of the Armed Forces ESPE, Department of Human and Social Sciences, Ecuador. E-mail: [kaquilumbal@espe.edu.ec](mailto:kaquilumbal@espe.edu.ec)

<sup>2</sup> Teacher in the University of Queensland, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. Brisbane, Australia and University of the Armed Forces ESPE, Department of Human and Social Sciences, Ecuador. E-mail: [mhocana@espe.edu.ec](mailto:mhocana@espe.edu.ec)

<sup>3</sup> Teacher in the Central University of Ecuador, Faculty of Economic Sciences, Ecuador. E-mail: [dgflores9@gmail.com](mailto:dgflores9@gmail.com)

plataforma weblogs, cuestionarios y recolección de datos de acuerdo con las interacciones de las actividades propuestas con los registros de navegación de 515 niños de entre cinco y nueve años. Los resultados muestran que los cuentos pueden reforzar la comprensión lectora y el interés de los estudiantes por la lectura. Además, el uso de plataformas puede ser una buena opción, siempre que cuente con buen contenido, estética adecuada a la edad y actividades que atraigan la atención de los usuarios.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Medios; tecnología; lectura; libros; plataformas.

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is considered as one of the fundamental skills that all children must acquire to achieve academic excellence in all disciplines. Children currently prefer technological media, although these are used exclusively for video games, social networks, and others, leaving aside reading children's books.

That is why, his study's researchers chose to create an online reading course for children's literature, considering the elements that attract the attention of new generations of children between six and nine years old. For this purpose, the children's stories were in terms of design, aesthetics, and literature selection, giving satisfactory results, such as reading preferences, which activities were the most convenient, influencing reading, and comprehension questions such as a feasible option.

The story is a short text but very complete. It has characters with defined characteristics, a problem or issue that must be resolved, tension situations, and the problem's resolution. That is why it can be introduced into the school, as it prepares for life and contributes to learning development. (Soto, 2017, p.54)

Therefore, it is considered a vital tool in developing the creative, imaginative, and critical part of children.

Next, a compilation of studies that provide the basis for the research is presented. The methodology used, the results obtained through interactive activities, the research discussion, and finally, the conclusions reached are mentioned.

## DEVELOPMENT

Today's children worldwide are believed to prefer spending time using technological tools than reading a book. This may be because reading does not attract enough attention of the new generations of children, who practically grew up with technological media and who prefer 87% of video games, social networks, and entertainment pages (Dahan Golan et al. al., 2018).

Also, the study by Dahan Golan et al. mentions that "61% of the participants reported that they prefer to read on a computer (compared to paper) while 39% prefer to read on printed paper... Current findings support our hypothesis that children prefer to read from a computer screen "(Golan et al. 2018, p. 13).

Even children already interact with technology regularly. The first generations that have grown up with this new technology. They have spent their entire lives surrounded and using computers. The new technologies available to children and young people from birth offer new possibilities of access to information and communication and new paradigms of relationship with the social context through modifying and generating new social skills. -affective. It is important to know how the forms of socialization have been transformed using technology. Children are very interested in learning to use mobile devices such as tablets and cell phones, or in their case, personal computers. (Espinoza and Rodríguez 2017, p. 6)

But despite the use of technology for entertainment purposes, there are also cases in which 82% of younger students prefer to use tools technologies for educational purposes and another study since the use of the new generations is not complicated, nor do they have handling difficulties. Also, through the platforms, it is possible to reduce time and better visualize progress.

There is no standardized way of monitoring progress over and above what can be assessed through teacher expertise. Possibly how it affects traditional reading and writing measures; therefore, research should focus on assessing student progress that adds additional measures to teacher observations and developing special education teachers and developing special education teachers and developing special education teachers' pedagogical knowledge of using apps in special education. This study primarily focused on students' possibilities to access text and communicate text with apps. There seem to be plenty of learning situations where reading and writing apps can compensate for the difficulties associated with reading difficulties. (Nordström et al., 2019, p.12)

Technology is widely accepted by children (Branco, 2017) partly because technological resources are common in and out of the current educational environment. This opens the possibilities of technology as a feasible means of instruction to teach text readers. That is why reading is one of the most promising options in using technology in recent times (Danby et al., 2018). When oral communication and language development are difficult, technology can come in handy.

Digital technologies are used in everyday home and school, community contexts, and various activities, from playing games to searching the web and talking to family members at a distance. With an international audience, the book aims to promote understanding of various practices as children make connections with digital technologies in their everyday experiences. (Danby et al., 2018, p.14)

The influence of technology on teachers has been decisive. Teachers agree that technological means can be used as motivators to encourage reading. "It makes it easy for teachers to prepare lessons and provides students with a wide range of interactive teaching methods, supported by the internet. This can meet the individual needs of each student and support shared learning and correct inequalities" (Hueso, 2020, p.13). In addition, positive responses have been obtained regarding the use of

technology in terms of vocabulary development and optimization of time in early literacy at kindergarten levels (Castillo & Wagner, 2019).

Similarly, since the computer age appeared in the educational context, it is quite common for students to use several of these tools when conducting their academic tasks. Undoubtedly these resources have made their work easier. The time they use now is less than they used previously. (Molinero & Chávez 2019, p.4)

In other words, for teachers, technology can become their best ally, if they know how to use it properly. It must be considered that “sometimes students handle applications better than a teacher, especially if the teacher is older since those were born at a time closer to the prevailing technological development” (Molinero María & Chávez Ubaldo 2019, p.31). This has its positive side since teaching can be on both sides, that is, the teacher teaches his student, and the student can help his teacher.

Generally, teacher must bear in mind that students are very involved with technological tools since, although new applications continue to appear, they will be willing to use them. Teachers also must get involved with these tools and applications since new developments make classes fun and dynamic. It is important to emphasize that technological tools are not only supporting them. (Molinero & Chávez 2019, p.27)

In the case of parents, the influence of technology is no different. However, it is important to consider the fact that your children are full of everyday visual stimuli, so reading is not something that causes them to do it daily and has even become something in which they are not interested. “Something very evident is the importance that motivation has in educational success. Without being aware of it, many children become demotivated due to lack of sufficient stimulation. In many cases, their interests are not considered” (Hospital Fortes, 2017, p.49).

So, it is necessary to know how to capture the attention of children, which is difficult if you do not have knowledge of both literature and technology. This does not mean that they are unaware of technology since in several studies such as Carrasco Rivas et al., where they mention in their research that “the most generic form of interaction between children and their parents is television, the computer, and the cell phone, besides that they can spend hours on these devices” (Carrasco Rivas et al., 2017).

They don't know how to use them profitably and benefit their children, with activities that contribute to their development, such as reading.

That is why for parents to agree and know does not mean knowing how to use technological means. In addition, the fact that they are not readers implies that they do not motivate them to read. Although they use technology daily, it does not mean that they are encouraging their children to read. Parents often pretend that their children develop reading habits, but they do not have them (Eutsler & Antonenko, 2018)

In particular, we find that TIC (Technology of the information and communication) as “resources that parents can use to promote their children's school achievement,

improve aspects related to parenting, communication with the school, and support learning the school curriculum” (Urías Militza & Valdés Ángel 2017, p.12).

So, if parents and teachers agree to use technology, a good option is to use platforms since it is one of the most used technological means in education due to its easy and didactic handling. In the case of Moodle, the platform used in this study can offer virtual courses and allow students to participate in large numbers since its processing is simple and has multiple tools.

The Moodle platform is configured around social constructionist pedagogy. It combines aspects of constructivism where knowledge is generated through mediation and interaction with the environment and constructionism learning by doing, which allows collaborative learning. The use of Moodle is recommended because it offers sophisticated didactic functionalities and rich in options (Arancibia et al., 2020:91).

That is why considering the use of platforms is a good option when teaching (Ahn et al., 2019) as children can progress at their own pace based on the activities that are expected to be of interest to them. The platforms can allow teachers and parents to monitor daily reading time and add quizzes to check reading comprehension.

When considering creating a platform for children, the problem that can arise is that it must have an aesthetic and design that will hold attention, forming a reading habit, leaving aside the desertion. For what is the use of showing them reading if they are going to give it up? It is necessary to consider that children lose their interest in reading since they find themselves in a world full of fun visual stimuli.

Another factor to consider is that introducing the habit of reading is undoubtedly something that has been wanting to influence since it is known that there are some libraries and reading spaces for children. Still, they are not very visited, perhaps because people do not know them or because reading is not a priority in parents' lives. Another problem is the global restrictions due to the current pandemic that keep children away from these public spaces.

Given this scenario, it is necessary to take into account these issues, such as considering the aesthetics and design so that the platform captures the attention and allows children to have a reading habit, taking into account that the platforms can be a way that you can enjoy from the comfort of home, plus the fact that like libraries it is possible to upload children's content such as stories and disseminate them quickly and to more people.

Therefore, the following objectives were set: a) to increase children's interest in reading without leaving home, b) to use an online platform to help increase children's attention for reading and, c) to present selected literary material to detect what factors keep children hooked on reading. With these objectives, we created an online course that allows children from six to nine years old in the province of Pichincha to increase their interest in reading using a virtual learning environment.

As for the research questions, we intend to determine which stories are well received by children since stories can be considered a great tool to attract children's attention.

Are comprehension quizzes a good tool in online platforms, and whether can they help children pay more attention to stories? Set mental challenges and check if these mental challenges can increase children's attention level, and finally, find out what factors influence children's reading?

### *Methodology*

The article is research because, through a series of data collected and obtained from a population studied, it was possible to answer the questions posed. Descriptive research was carried out with a quantitative approach. The data is collected according to each student's number of interactions and a satisfaction survey of the reading course. It is also a descriptive study because "it seeks to specify important properties and characteristics of any phenomenon that is analyzed. Describe trends in a group or population" (Hernández Sampieri et al. 2018, p.714).

Furthermore, it is non-experimental research since "they are studies that are carried out without the deliberate manipulation of variables and in which the phenomena are only observed in their natural environment to analyze them" (Hernández Sampieri et al. 2018, p.714). The design is analytical, cross-sectional because no manipulation of the variable was carried out, and the collection of information was established in a single moment.

The study was carried out in the following way. First, the proposal was made to create an interactive course with children's stories to encourage reading. Thus, at the beginning of June, the platform's structuring and the digital bibliography compilation began.

As a second, a selection of children's stories was made to place them in three levels of complexity, from the simplest to the most complex. Third, various pedagogical activities were developed that were called mental challenges. "Since intense fun refers to a type of fun associated with challenge and strategy on the part of players who like challenges" (Ahn et al., 2019, p. 6).

As for tools like quizzes, puzzle games, matching cards, and painting charts, they were structured in such a way as to challenge the mind of the user. "The questionnaires are currently designed to have two levels of difficulty: normal and difficult, depending mainly on the age of the player" (Ahn et al., 2019, p. 6). As a fourth, a pilot test was carried out with a group of ten children, after which some changes in the design and activities were considered.

In fifth place, the course was publicized through social networks so that boys and girls between the ages of six and nine could enroll in the virtual platform for free. After assigning users and passwords, the children could access the platform and start activities from August 21.

The pilot test found that the students did not continue the course if they did not receive a reading accompaniment. Thus, a group of teachers was appointed to carry out accompanying workshops based on the stories proposed on the platform, of which two meetings were held at three different times in the afternoon. To check the course's

enjoyment level, a final survey of nine questions was conducted, including personal data and key questions for the investigation.

The children with the best reading scores are the ones who understood reading the best (Connor et al., 2020), demonstrating that technological tools allow students to read and are complemented with comprehension tests through questions and activities. The frequency of logging in was also considered since the children who entered the platform the most times are the ones who show the greatest interest in reading.

Also, the daily reading time is based on their interaction because those who spend more time have considerably improved their reading. Similarly, (Connor et al., 2020) mentions that they improve students' metacognition, use strategies, learn new words, and even persist in reading.

For the fourth research question, we used a multivariate analysis of all activities tagged as stories that you might like, stories that you might like, in Spanish. A population of 515 participants, of which 183 are in the process of completion and 332 have already completed more than level two, mentioning three levels.

The population has an average age of six to nine years, of which 242 are boys and 273 girls, who reside in the province of Pichincha, thus showing a non-probabilistic study for convenience. According to the proposed activities' interactions and the browsing logs, some data was obtained through the online platform.

To verify the reader's understanding, 36 interactive questionnaires offered by the Moodle platform were established. In addition, a literature course satisfaction survey was applied to users who answered nine questions, including personal data such as name and age. The use of the platform guaranteed high precision data and the collection of quantitative information obtained from the proposed variables, such as the frequency of user login and reading time.

Likewise, a questionnaire with closed and multiple-choice questions was established to verify the user's understanding. It should be mentioned that the platform is designed based on the constructivist approach since all digital tools are provided to the user so that they can read, understand and obtain their own answers; that is, they can build their own knowledge.

### *Results and discussion*

Next, the platform's data are shown through a rigorous selection according to the following questions.

*1. Has the use of questionnaires been a good option to verify their understanding?*

Were prepared 36 questionnaires with six questions each, but selected those with a high complexity level and sought only the stories, i.e., those who contribute to their understanding, so that the most relevant questionnaires are questionnaire 1.1, questionnaire 5.1, questionnaire 6.1, questionnaire 10.1, questionnaire 13.1 and questionnaire 15.1, it is worth mentioning that the other questionnaires also related to stories but with a simpler level of complexity, but as In those mentioned, most of the students obtained grades between five and six.

Questionnaires can be an excellent option to verify reading comprehension, as long as they are appropriate for the students' age. Thirty-six questionnaires were carried out, of which the maximum score was six points, and the minimum score was one with six multiple-choice questions. In questionnaire 1.1, with six questions referring to the story of Little Red Riding Hood (Figure 1), affirmative and satisfactory answers were obtained as expected.

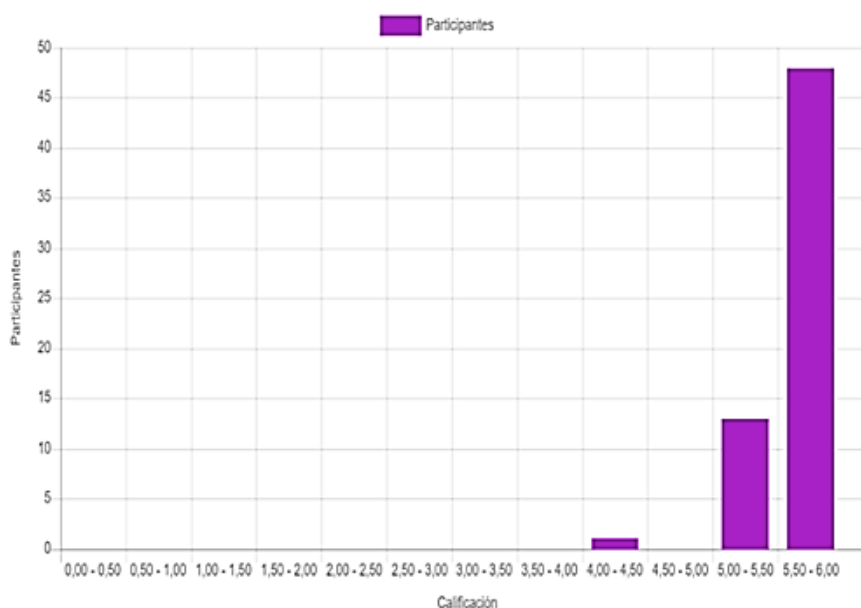


Figure 1. Mental challenge 1

Similarly, in questionnaire 13.1, referring to the story of the three little pigs, the same one that used images and video, satisfactory results of six were obtained (Figure 2), the same one that is the maximum mark and no minimum mark.



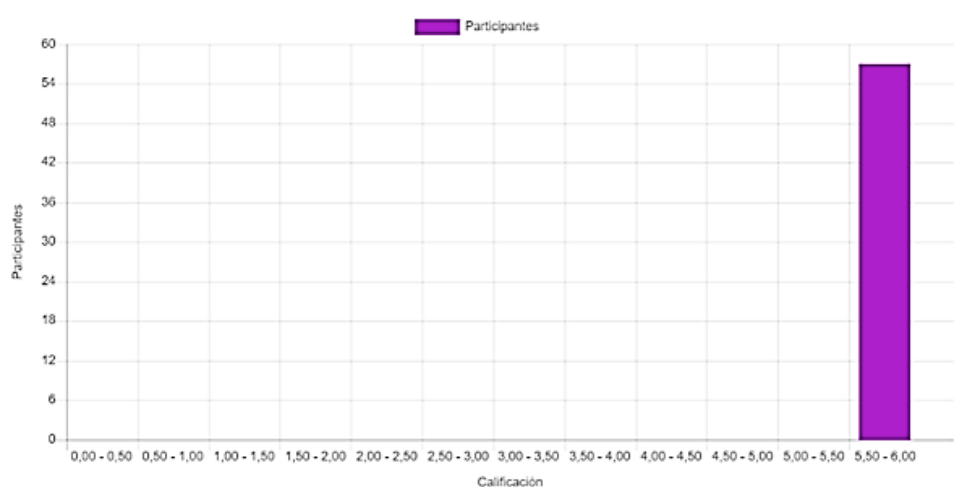


Figure 2. Mental challenge 13

Of the 269 users who carried out the activities (Table 1), 67.29% obtained grades between five and six. On the other hand, 24.16% obtained grades between four and five. 7.43% obtained between three and four marks, and the 1.12% obtained between one and two, no student obtained one or less.

Table 1. Best average

Ratings	Average
1.00-0	0,00%
1.00-2.00	1,12%
3.00-4.00	7,43%
4.00-5.00	24,16%
5.00-6.00	67,29%
TOTAL	100,00%

In (Figure 4), a bar graph is shown, where the results of the questionnaires are located, where the maximum dots of five and six are located at the top.

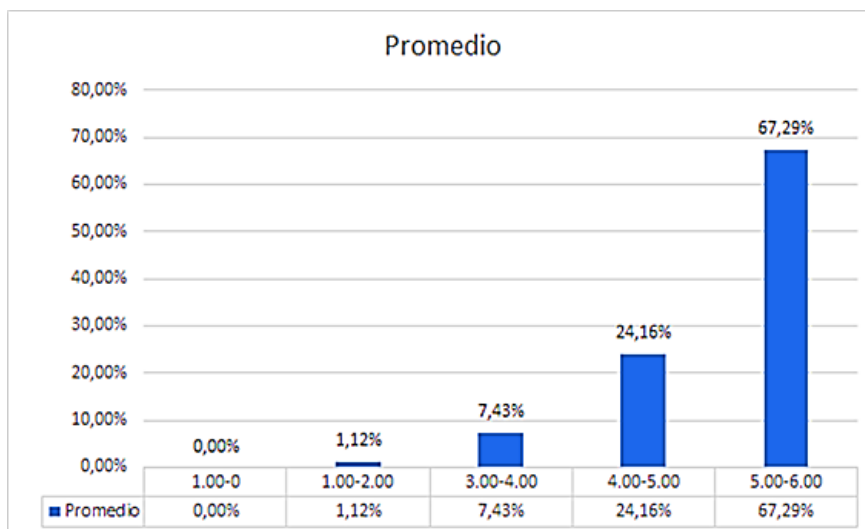


Figure 4. Bar chart of Average results

Questionnaires can be considered a feasible option when verifying children's understanding since favorable percentages were obtained with more than 50% approval. In contrast with the research (Auphan et al., 2019), they suggest using questionnaires to check comprehension gives positive results since it allows children to pay attention to the readings and not read simply to finish.

Deducing that questionnaires are a powerful and flexible tool that allows designing consistent questions according to topics that are intended to be verified and faster since the results are generated automatically, optimizing time.

## 2. Which stories are most welcomed by children?

Among the stories with the greatest reception, it was confirmed by the interaction of times on the platform, (Table 2) the story of Little Red Riding Hood is the most viewed with 28%, followed by Duckling Faith or with 21%, Puss in Boots with 17%, fourth with 11% is Peter Pan, the legend of the box pond with 9%. As for Aladdin and Thumbelina, with 7%.

Table 2. Most viewed stories

STORIES	N OF TIMES	PERCENTAGE
Red Riding Hood	75	27,88%
The Ugly Duckling	55	20,45%
The pussycat in boots	46	17,10%
Peter Pan	30	11,15%
The legend of the Cajas lagoon	25	9,29%
Aladdin	20	7,43%
Thumbelina	18	6,69%
TOTAL	269	100,00%

Similarly, when asking in the Forms survey at the end of the readings, users selected Little Red Riding Hood with 25% (Figure 5) coinciding with the platform's interactions, as it was the most chosen story. Figure 6 is a graph representation of the classic stories that were selected by the users.

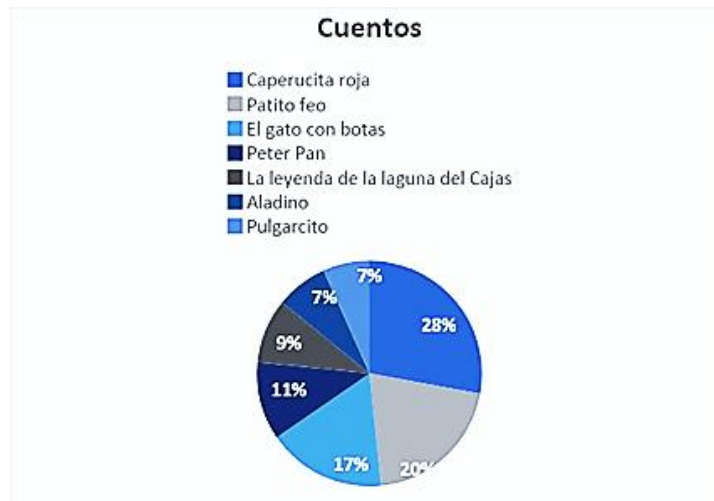


Figure 5. Stories with better reception

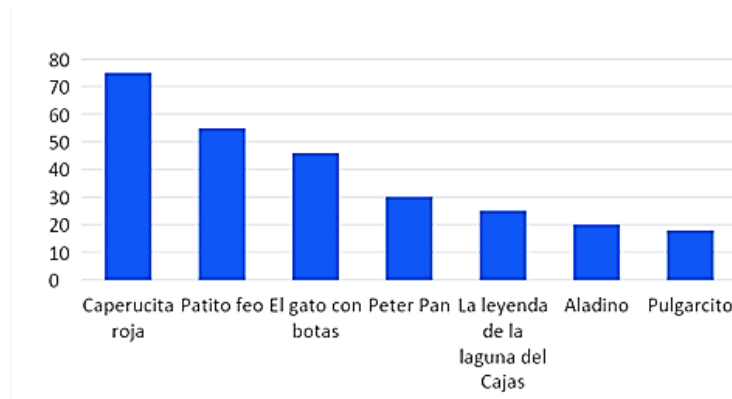


Figure 6: Little Red Riding Hood the most watched story

Stories are a good option when teaching children. That is why the research of Rondón (2018) which mentions that:

With the reading of short texts, the capacity of perception and understanding of children is expanded, perception is increased using imagination while the story is being narrated and comprehension to understand what the story is itself story content. (Rondón 2018, p.2)

That is why the stories were chosen as the appropriate strategy since they refer to different feelings and emotions understandable to the infant, offer examples of temporary or permanent solutions to their conflicts, enriching their lives, stimulating their imagination, developing their intellect, classifying their emotions also consider your concerns and aspirations. (Calderón 2017, p.12)

The research found that the most selected stories are the classics, placing Little Red Riding Hood in the first places, Puss in Boots in second, and the ugly duckling in third place. These three stories tell stories that mainly favor the practice of values and have a language according to the age of children from seven to nine years old.

Taking this into account, it was possible to conclude that because they are known stories, and with multiple versions, they are the most accepted by children, but it must be considered that children's reading preferences will vary and depend on the stories who have heard the most because in all contexts they are not taught the same, another important factor is also the age of the children.

*3.If putting mental challenges has increased your reading interest and which one, did you like the most?*

According to a satisfaction survey of the literature course where two options of Yes and No were put, great satisfaction was indicated to the mental challenges with 100% answering. Yes, in the same way when asking them what they would like to have (Figure 7). The literature course mentioned in 66.91% that they have more interactive activities and mental challenges, and the other 33.09% asked for videos such as audiobooks, games, and others. The mental challenge with the most interaction on the platform was the puzzles with 117 times users entered, placing first.



Figure 7. Technological tools to implement

Through the survey at the end of the course, they were asked which tool they liked, and which complemented the reading, which gave as a result (Figure 8) the puzzles as the most chosen option, following the questionnaires.

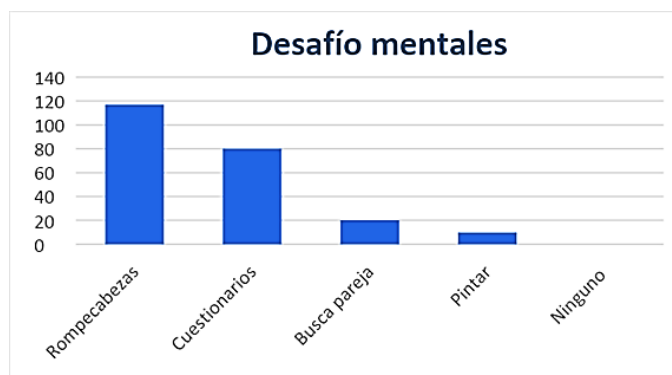


Figure 8. Widely accepted tools in the course

It is worth mentioning that the data obtained in terms of interactions was more than ten thousand, so only those that contribute to the research were rigorously counted, discarding repetitive values or those that do not contribute to the research without affecting anything. Furthermore, all users were anonymized to preserve their security.

It is essential to consider the reader's interest since it will depend on each person. What is not interesting is not read, they mention (Auphan et al., 2019).

That is why it was considered to pose mental challenges that children like, which were randomly selected located in the three levels, obtaining a greater acceptance of the puzzles since it may be because it is an activity very carried out in Educational Institutions, in addition to having large, striking images and a not so high level of complexity, such as second to the questionnaires, in contrast to the study by (Connor et al., 2020) where they suggest that technological tools should allow students to read and be complemented with comprehension tests through questions and activities that support the interest of children.

The authors presented a study that helped improve students' metacognition, use of strategies, word learning, and even persistence in reading.

#### *4. Which underlying factors were displayed by students in the course?*

In the Principal Components Analysis (Table 3) of the children's literature course, the following particularities were found: That the first component (in green) highlights the one-page mini-stories, in addition, that these stories are mostly stories about animals, they tend to be unrealistic and fantasy. They consist of a single image because they are one-page stories. They are read.

The particularities found in the component analysis, it was detected that the activities (colored orange) are audio stories and have a maximum duration of 16 minutes. These stories talk about everyday situations, stories about quarantine, or more attached to reality. These stories are highly visual because they are videos.

Table 3. Principal Components Analysis (PCA)

	Matriz de componentes rotados <sup>a</sup>	
	Componente	
	1	2
Archivo: 13. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,919	
Archivo: 12. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,915	
Archivo: 7. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,908	
Archivo: 9. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,908	
Archivo: 10. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,900	
Archivo: 11. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,872	,429
Archivo: 8. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,859	,461
Archivo: 14. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,856	,423
Archivo: 6. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,855	
Archivo: 16. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,744	,441
Archivo: 5. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,728	,569
URL: 15. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,652	,606
Página: 1. Cuentos que te pueden gustar		,888
Página: 2. Cuentos que te pueden gustar		,883
Página: 3. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,467	,811
Archivo: 4. Cuentos que te pueden gustar	,586	,665

Technological tools such as platforms can be of great contribution and to encourage children's reading, this was proven due to the great reception by children, since in the planned time of three days 525 users were obtained. The use of the Moodle platform as a digital educational environment seems to favor reading in children.

Well thought out and well-designed technology can provide students with meaningful and challenging learning opportunities, especially when combined with classroom teaching. That is why Zhou and Wei (2018), in their study, set out to use technological means for teaching, reaching the conclusion that technology, augmented reality, and voice recognition have managed to improve results in the areas of vocabulary, writing, reading. (Zhou & Wei, 2018, p. 25)

In our research, the multivariate analysis of principal components showed that the factors that influence children's reading tend to be that because they do not have the habit of reading, children prefer short stories, and this may be because they have poor attention span towards reading in general. It was also found that they prefer fantasy stories to reality ones, considering that the imagination is constantly flowing, so they feel more empathy for fictional characters.

In general, it can be said that if many aspects and factors already mentioned are taken into consideration. There may be radical changes, this has been proven in several investigations that use technology to learn. An example is an investigation of Rendón (2020) where they state that:

Given that the use of technology is increasingly integrated into daily life, the use of technology to promote reading and writing cannot be postponed. With technologies, the notion of time and space is diluted, they are facilitated and expand communications, so the use of devices and applications is essential to generate exchange networks. (Rendón & Fernández 2020, p.16)

## CONCLUSIONS

The idea that platforms can be of great contribution to stimulate interest in reading is emphasized and even more so when children are at ages of discover and learning since it was shown that children from six to nine years of age finished satisfactorily and requesting more readings, in addition to that they can be used on electronic devices without having to leave their home.

It was indicated that if a platform is well designed, with an aesthetic according to a child audience and using fun tools, it will attract more attention and encourage them to continue reading.

The tools that can help increase interest are the stories with pictures and the classics, keeping in mind that reading is fun by increasing the different mental challenges, such as puzzles or memory games. Put aside the academically structured quizzes and make them a fun challenge to learn. The factors to consider when reading is fantasy and preferably mini stories.

Put aside the academically structured questionnaires to check if they read and understood and turn them into a fun challenge to learn, consider multiple choice or even open questions that give another meaning to reading.

When reading, the factors to consider are that if you intend to design a story platform, start with fantasy since children are in a stage of creativity. These stories are the ones that will allow you to enter that fantastic world that they seek and consider preferably mini stories since as mentioned if they do not have the habit of reading, reading very long stories can contribute to the desertion of reading.

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