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Effects of a Reading Comprehension Intervention Program on Brazilian High School Students

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Abstract: The academic performance of Brazilian students in national assessments in recent years has proved to be very unsatisfactory in Portuguese. Based on this data, this study aimed to verify reading habits and the effects of an intervention program on reading comprehension (PPCL) in high school students (age: A = 15.1; SD = 0.5). The program contained activities of reading strategies that aimed to expand the student's lexical knowledge, exercises to promote the development of their reading skills and understanding of texts, circles and reading workshops. The PPCL was structured in 7 meetings of approximately 3 hours ea ch. To check the reading habits of the students, the questionnaire "Me and my reading habits" (QEHL) and the Cloze test were used to assess the effects of the program. For the total sample (N = 40), the QEHL and the Cloze Test were initially administered, then the students were divided into an Experimental Group (n = 19) submitted to PPCL and a Control Group (n = 21). The results showed that: a) the majority (80.5%) said they like to read; b) more than half (53.7%) read 2 to 4 books per year; c) more than half (56.1%) confirmed visiting the institution's library, however, only 37.1% voluntarily borrowed a book; d) there was a significant difference in the EG and in the CG in the mean of points in the Cloze test between the pre and the post-test; e) the means of correct answers in the Cloze test revealed an expressive result for the EG between the pre and post-test stages compared to the CG. From the results it is possible to observe that the effects of the intervention based on teacher mediation during the PPCL were positive in order to stimulate reading practices with the students who participated in the study.

Key words: reading comprehension; high school, intervention, cloze test

1. Background

The academic performance of Brazilian students in the last evaluations revealed unsatisfactory results. Brazilian Basic Education Assessment System (SAEB) — which assesses skills and competencies in Portuguese and Mathematics in 2017 reported that elementary school students (5th grade and 9th grade), despite having obtained

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better results compared to 2015 data, are still below the performance considered satisfactory (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2017). On a proficiency scale from 1 to 9 (with level 1 involving simpler skills and level 9 more sophisticated skills), the average level of learning for elementary school students in the country is on scale 4.

In high school, the main results showed that out of a total of 26 Brazilian states, 12 of them had scores below those obtained in 2015. According to the SAEB report, only about 5% of the students who participated in the assessment reached levels appropriate for their age — levels 7 and 8 on the proficiency s cale. (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2017).

In international assessments, including the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), in 2018 the assessment was carried out in 597 schools and 10,691 students were assessed, covering the entire national territory. In terms of the coverage rate of PISA it represents 65%, which reflects 5 percentage points below in relation to the last editions. The country performed poorly among Brazilian students, ranking among the 20 worst in the three areas analyzed (reading literacy, mathematical literacy and science/scientific literacy) (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2019). The difficulty observed in Brazilian education regarding to reading can also be seen from the results of students in national tests, both in elementary and high school.

Data from the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reveal that Brazil occupies the position that ranges from 55º to 59º in the PISA Reading evaluation ranking of 2018. The evaluation has been carried out for three and three years since 2000 and, in 2018, 79 countries participated, of which 37 were OECD members and 42 partner countries/economies. Brazil — in reading performance (413 points) — is only ahead of countries like Colombia, Argentina, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic and a few others (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2019). If it is possible to attribute reading difficulties as an important point to the other areas evaluated in PISA, the results of the country in other areas are cited as: a) Sciences obtained 404 points, reaching the range between the 64th and 67th place; b) Mathematics obtained 384 points reaching the range between 69th and 72nd place (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2019).

According to INEP report (BRASIL, 2019, p. 22) “reading literacy refers to understanding, using, reflecting on and engaging with texts, in order to achieve a goal, develop knowledge and potential and participate in society”.

In compliance with this definition, it is possible to highlight that such skills are also included as requirements expected by students in the schooling stages indicated in the National Curriculum Parameters (Brasil, Ministério da Educação, 2000) and that they are not restricted to the specificity of the Portuguese language.

In 2008, Law 11,892 instituted the Federal Network for Professional, Scientific and Technological Education and created the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (IFs) (BRASIL, 2008). The IFs started to “be designated as accrediting and certifying agencies for professional education at all levels of education, redefining the institutional arrangement of Technical Vocational Education at Middle and Higher Level” (Costa, 2016, p. 31). The Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Mato Grosso (IFMT) Barra do Garças campus, institution that housed this research, completed 7 years of activity in 2018. Currently offering technical courses integrated to High School, subsequent technical courses in Maintenance and Support of Informatics and Secretariat, Technologist course in Public Management, lato sensu postgraduate course in Agroecology and short Initial and Continuing Training courses (FICs).

In view of this situation, the student’s academic performance, with regard to reading comprehension, can be changed based on an intervention program aimed at this area. This work sought to verify the reading habits and

the effects of an intervention program on the reading comprehension of high school students in a technical school, the IFMT.

2. Theoretical Framework

From the perspective of human development in the field of cognition, Vygotsky (2000) emphasizes that culture is integrated with man through brain activity, stimulated by the interaction between social partnerships, mediated by language. Thus, language originates primarily as a means of communication between the child and the people around him and, only after such a process, after being converted into an internal language, it becomes an internal mental function that provides the fundamental means to thought of child (Vygotsky, Luria & Leontiev, 2012). Therefore, according to Luria (1986), the mastery of the language system guarantees the leap from sensory to rational knowledge, which is perhaps the most important event in the development of psychic life.

Another reference to be considered is that of Bakhtin (2011, p. 261), who not different from the authors above, states that "all the different fields of human activity are linked to the use of language", and that it is present in all relations between individuals, therefore [language] will always be the indicator of social changes.

Reading as an instrument that produces meaning involves the process of decoding and processing linguistic signs and the relationship of these signs with the reader's previous experiences, so that meaning is constructed and, therefore, knowledge. In this way, Koch and Elias (2014) understand that the meaning of the text is built from a dialogical and interactional "text-subject" relationship. Complementing, Orlandi (2012, p. 49) emphasizes that the production of meaning consists of looking at the text, not only observing it as a product, but trying to show the process of its production and, thus, of its meaning, that is, "the reader does not apprehend merely a meaning that is there; the reader attributes meanings to the text. In other words: it is considered that the reading is produced and one tries to determine the process and the conditions of its production".

In addition to the relations of meaning explained above, reading as a producer of meaning is also an activity guided by what Koch and Elias (2014) call "sociocognitive baggage", which involves knowledge of the language, but also of the things of the world (social places, beliefs, values, experiences). For this reason, reading is constituted differently depending on the reader and their beliefs and experiences.

The innumerable possibilities for interpreting the same text generate discussions among readers, since understanding is not a precise activity, but it is not a guessing activity as well, it requires the development of strategies. In the words of Cantalice (2004, p. 105), reading strategies are "techniques or methods that readers use to acquire information, or even procedures or activities chosen to facilitate the process of reading comprehension", practiced by different people depending on their interests or objectives related to the text.

Reading strategies can be classified, according to Kleiman (2016) as cognitive — which designate the principles that govern the automatic and unconscious behavior of the reader, which are effective and economical procedures and occur regardless of the reader's will or conscience; or as metacognitive — that guide the ability to set goals in reading and the use of strategies to de-automate it when the reader encounters, during reading, certain problem situations that prevent him from moving forward in the comprehension process. In this perspective Diesel, Martins and Rehfeldt (2017, p. 1669) affirm that the reading comprehension activity has a dynamic nature and "involves a cognitive process that constantly needs to be revised, increased and updated from the reading performed. These are procedures that need to be taught".

Given the complexity that permeates the act of reading, Solé (1998) suggests that this activity be mediated in

the classroom, and that such mediation prioritize the teaching of reading strategies even before the teaching of reading. The teaching of reading strategies is necessary considering the importance of training autonomous and independent readers, who are able to intelligently face texts from different sources, subjects, writing styles, etc., which can be difficult for several reasons: for being [the texts] very creative, because they are poorly written, because they have many possibilities for understanding, among others (Solé, 1998).

3. Methodology

The study was developed in an experimental approach with the participation of 40 students (age: A = 15.1; SD = 0.5) from the 1st year of high school at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Mato Grosso (IFMT) campus Barra do Garças. In addition, students also attended the following courses: Administration Technician, Food Technician, Environmental Control Technician and Computer Technician. This total sample was divided into Experimental Group (EG = 19 participants) and Control Group (CG = 21 participants).

For the development of the research, two evaluation instruments were used:

a) Questionnaire "Me and my reading habits" (QEHL), which was developed based on the observation of students' reading habits at school and the experience and contact with them in the classroom and in the school routine. The questionnaire was carried out in the Google Forms format and aimed to identify sociodemographic data and reading habits of students and family. Due to its informative format and the short time of the PPCL, the questionnaire was carried out only at the beginning of the research.

b) Cloze Test — Cloze is a technique created in 1953 by Wilson Taylor, which aims to identify how much the student understands of a given text. The use of this technique is recommended by the International Reading Association (Duke, Pearson, 2002), which considers it the best technique for measuring text comprehension. It consists of replacing words in the empty spaces underlined in the text. The student is responsible for filling them in according to the context, resulting in a correct answer if the word is the same as or synonymous with the one replaced by the gap. In Brazil, the technique is used and widely researched by Oliveira, Boruchovitch and Santos (2009); Santos (2002), among others, at the various levels and modalities of education. Two Cloze test models were applied in the pre-test (beginning of the research) and post-test (end of the research), both with forty-four words to be replaced.

The Cloze test (pre and post) was developed following the original criteria presented by Taylor (1994). It had the replacement of 44 words, in two different texts (one for the pre-test and the other for the post-test) containing between 300 and 350 words.

For these tests, the correction criterion adopted was the acceptance of the exact word to the suppressed one and also of synonymous words, analyzing the adequacy to the context. This is a variation of the test, called Cloze with support keys, in which, instead of presenting a single dash indicating the missing word (_____), the omission is done with small dashes that represent each omitted letter (__ __ __ __ __ __).

This instrument presents several forms of elaboration, and also proposes its own parameters for its correction, which allows the classification of reading comprehension levels called frustration level — hits up to 44% — when the reader does not understand what he has just read; instructional level - when the answers vary between 44.1% and 57% — the reader shows little abstraction from what was read, requiring the help of a third party (colleague, teacher, family member, etc.) for a more effective understanding; and the independent level — hits above 57%. At this level, a "critical, creative and autonomous understanding of the text" is assumed (Oliveira, Boruchovitch &

Santos, 2009, p. 58).

In turn, the Reading Comprehension Promotion Program (PPCL), developed for this research, was also administered. Activities were developed to stimulate reading comprehension based on Cognitive Psychology with a theoretical basis based on Luria (1986), Vygotsky (2000) and Vygotsky, Luria and Leontiev (2012). Thus, reading circle activities and reading and comprehension strategy workshops were built with the use of texts in different literary styles and genres, preparation of writing with previously selected themes and individual and collective reading comprehension activities that allowed the exhibition of personal impressions and discussion about the texts read among the group participants.

PPCL consisted of 7 meetings between April and May 2018, with an approximate duration of 3 hours each. The meetings duration prioritized the agenda, the objectives and the evaluation proposal elaborated specifically for the proposed program. The table and the didactic sequence of the PPCL can be checked in the Table 1.

Table 1 PPCL Didactic Sequence

PPCL 1º Meeting: Languages and Text Functions		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Identifying the language (verbal and non-verbal) and figures of speech present in the texts, as well as their different uses and purposes; identifying the function of the text according to its gender.	Excerpts from various texts (literary and non-literary), photographs of murals in graffiti, cartoons and comic strips, blackboards, markers, printed material.	Observation of participation during the activities of the meeting; anonymous answer to the question: "So far I have learned ..."
PPCL 2º Meeting: Reading Strategies		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Finding general and specific information in the text using and applying the reading techniques and strategies learned; encouraging the expression of students' understandings verbally (both written and orally).	Multimedia projector, printed material with text and exercises, posters with reading strategies.	Observation of students' participation during the meeting activities; anonymous answer to the question: "So far I have learned ..."
PPCL 3º Meeting: Reading Workshop		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Promoting moments of individual and silent reading and, later, collective reading in an oriented way so that the participants make oral summaries explaining their understanding of each text read. Learning to take notes of the readings and synthesize the main information of each text.	Literature books (short stories, chronicles) and printed texts; Cornell Notes form; summary sheets.	Observation of the involvement and discussion of the groups; anonymous answer to the question: "If I had to explain/summarize today's meeting to someone else, in my words, how would I say?", based on the Cornell Notes form.
PPCL 4º Meeting: Reading Circle		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Guiding and assisting reading comprehension as a collective practice. Encouraging oral and written review after reading.	Printed text: The Black Tex (Portuguese version) by Edgar Allan Poe; Cornell Notes (form).	Participation in the reading circle and in the discussion of the short story; production of the written summary of the read text.
PPCL 5º Meeting: Reading Circle and Taking Notes		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Deepening the development of text comprehension skills.	Printed texts (Conto de Escola - Machado de Assis; chronicles), intermediate Cloze test, Cornell Notes form.	Participation in discussions with the group; performance in the Cloze test administered; meeting evaluation/self-evaluation.
PPCL 6º Meeting: Understanding texts of several genres and vocabulary expansion		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Understand texts in different writing	Books of different genres (short stories,	Analysis of reading (out loud);

styles	chronicles, comics, poems, etc.).	Observation of the discussion about the texts read and comparison of genres and styles of writing.
PPCL 7º Meeting: Reading Circles		
Goal	**Materials**	**Evaluation**
Encouraging attention to the interpretations of colleagues to find the interpretation that completes the excerpt each received; improve the ability to predict and understand text.	Tales and chronicles divided into parts; evaluation and self-evaluation form for the Reading Comprehension Promotion Program (PPCL).	Anonymous program evaluation questionnaire completed by students; feedback received by them regarding the performance of the team and the activities proposed.

Source: Authors' data (2019)

Prior to administration of PPCL were applied collectively QEHL the Cloze Test and the total sample of students (n = 40), a computer lab IFMT, with an average of 30 minutes for the first and 40 minutes for the second. After this stage, called "pre-test", participants were randomly divided into experimental and control groups, EG/CG. In this case, the EG participated in the PPCL and was carried out in 7 sessions in the period from April to May 2018, with an average time of 3 hours each. It is important to note that during the development of the PPCL, both groups attended classes regularly. After completion the stage mentioned before, all participants were reunited and only the Cloze Test was applied again. This last step was called a post-test. The responses to the "Me and my reading habits" QEHL questionnaire were calculated in terms of frequency for all participants. For the Cloze test, the responses were compared intra-group in the pre and post-test by the Wilcoxon test and intergroup by the Mann-Whitnney test, the adopted significance value was p-value of < 0.05. The effect size was verified using Cohen's d, with the following interpretation parameters: small effect = 0.2, moderate effect = 0.5, large effect > 0.8.

4. Results

4.1 Reading Habits

In the Questionnaire instrument, which verified students' reading habits, more specifically in the question that investigated whether the student likes to read, 80.5% of the answers were obtained as affirmative and 19.5% as negative, that is, the majority of the respondent students said they like to read.

Regarding the number of books read per year, in the data obtained by the same reading habits questionnaire, it was observed that more than 20% of students read less than one book per year. This percentage is worrying, since these students, in a way, were mobilized in the "reading campaign", triggered by the realization of the research project.

Sobre os hábitos de leitura relacionados à biblioteca do campus onde estudavam, 56.1% dos discentes alegaram já tê-la visitado ou frequentá-la, enquanto 43.9% sequer visitou a biblioteca. However, although more than 50% of the responding students have already attended or frequented the library, it was found that 31.7% of the students made voluntary loans, on their own, and 24.4% did so at the request of the teachers or by need for any of the curriculum components.

4.2 Effects of the Intervention Program on Reading Comprehension

It was verified in the results of the Cloze test that both groups increased the average of correct answers in the test between the pre and the post-test, as can be seen in Table 2. Also, in this Table are the results of the intra-group (Wilcoxon test) and intergroup (Mann-Whitney test) comparisons.

Table 2 Results of the Experimental Group (EG) and Control Group (CG) in the Cloze Test in the EG and in the CG (N = 40)

Group	Pre-test			Post-test			Wilcoxon	Cohen's d
	Min	*Max*	*M(SD)*	*Min*	*Max*	*A(SD)*		
EG	5	31	22.8(7.2)	9	36	29.0(6.7)	≤ 0.001*	0.88
CG	8	31	19.9(5.9)	5	34	24.5(7.9)	≤ 0.001*	0.67
Mann-Whitney			0.05*			0.02*		
Cohen's d			0.45			0.60		

Key: EG = Experimental Group; CG = Control Group; Min = Minimum hit value; Max: Maximum hit value; A = Average; SD = Standard Deviation; * *p*-value of ≤ 0.05.
Source: Researchers' data (2018)

There was a significant difference between the pre and post-test steps in the EG and in the CG, however, the difference in the increase in means between the steps was greater in the EG, which can be confirmed by a greater magnitude of effect (0.88) in that group. In the intra-group comparison, a significant difference in means can be seen both in the pre-test and in the post-test. However, the magnitude of the effect increases in the post-test (from 0.45 to 0.60).

In Figures 1 and 2, below, it is possible to observe the students' performance in the Cloze test. They are separated into CG and EG.

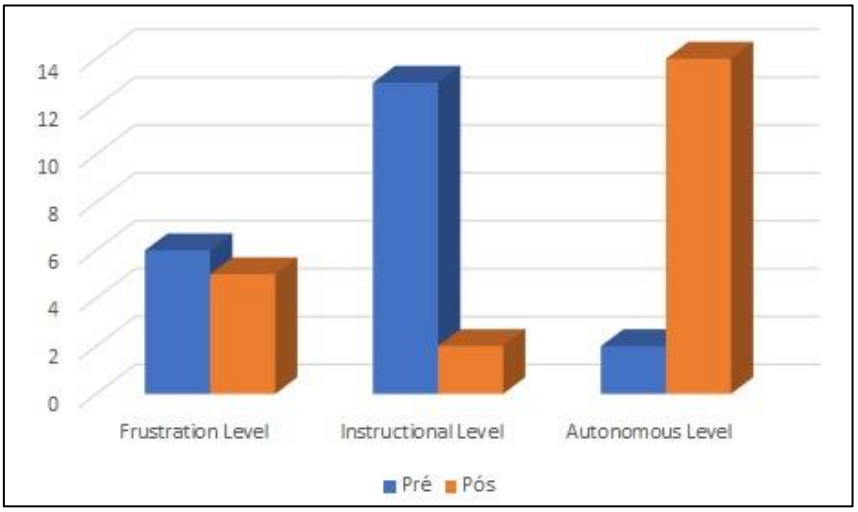

Figure 1 Classification of the Control Group in the Cloze Test in the Pre and Post-test (N = 21)

According to Figure 1, the Control Group had higher scores in the pre-test stage only at the instructional level. In the post-test, there was an increase in the score at the autonomous level (CG=14), even less when compared to the Experimental Group (GE=16), Figure 2.

It is important to mention that the EG achieved higher averages than the CG since the beginning of the tests. However, when it comes to the performance in the Cloze test, the EG gathered the lowest scores in the pre-test, compared to the CG, mainly in terms of frustration and instruction. Such discrepancies pointed out by the Standard Deviation in Table 3 show a heterogeneous group, with very independent students and students who demand a lot of attention.

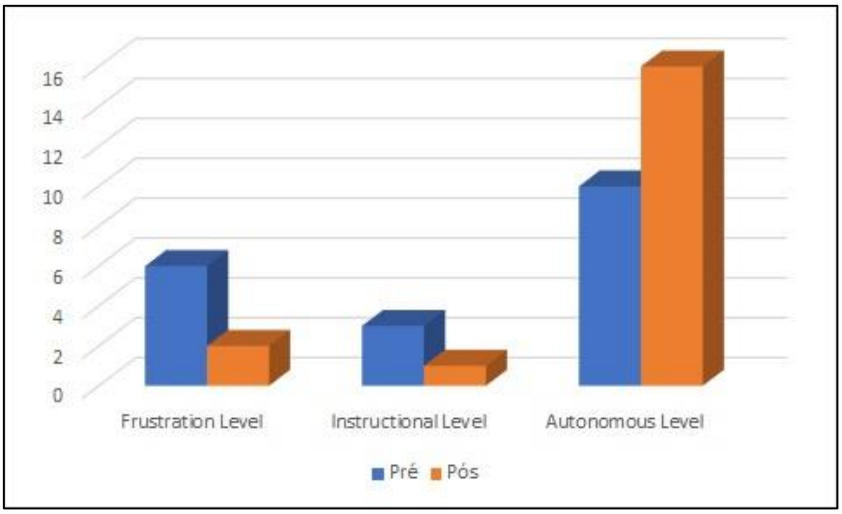

Figure 2 Classification of the Experimental Group in the Cloze Test in the Pre and Post-test (N = 19)

Table 3 Performance in the Cloze Test in the EG and in the CG (N = 40)

Group	Pre-test				Post-test			
	N	Min	Max	A(SD)	N	Min	Max	A(SD)
EG	19	5	31	22.8(7.2)	19	9	36	29.0(6.7)
CG	21	8	31	19.9(5.9)	21	5	34	24.5(7.9)

Key: EG = Experimenta Group; CG = Control Group; N = number of participants; Min = Minimum hit value; Max: Maximum hit value; A= Average; SD= Standard Deviation. Reference: Maximum possible hits: 44.
Source: Researchers data (2018).

In this sense, and despite the large intra-group differences, it is possible to observe that students have progressed significantly at all levels. At the level of frustration, the numbers decreased from 6 in the pre-test to 2 in the post-test. Students classified at the instructional level went from 3 to 1, a decrease is noted when the results of the independent/autonomous level are presented, which increased from 10 to 16.

The activities developed at PPCL allowed not only students at the instructional level to progress, but also promoted better performance among students who were at the frustration level. This result demonstrates a significant increase in the scores and, mainly, in the upward change in the classification levels.

It is noted that in the pre-test the largest number of students (13) was classified at the instructional level, followed by students at the level of frustration (6) and those represented at the independent/autonomous level (2). The results of the post-test show a positive development in the group's performance, in which students leave the instructional level of reading comprehension (from 13 to 2) and reach the autonomous/independent level (from 2 to 14).

Nevertheless, the group classified in the first level, whose reading performance is considered low (level of frustration), showed little growth. It is considered that this group was unable to achieve the results of other colleagues during the period they attended classes, performed readings related to the subjects proposed by their courses, etc.

In terms of frustration, there were 6 students in the pre-test, which corresponds to 28.5% of the population in the control group, which became 5 in the post-test, corresponding, in percentage terms, to 23.8% of the total CG population.

5. Discussion

According to Bomeny (2009) studies commissioned by UNESCO pointed out determining coefficients as to the formation of the reading habit of a people or a person, the main ones being: a) being born in a family of readers; b) having spent their youth in a school system concerned with the establishment of the reading habit; c) the price of the book; d) access to the book; and e) the symbolic value that the population attributes to the book. Thus, the family environment and the school environment are the places where one learns to cultivate the first taste for reading, and the challenges listed above can explain the data collected and presented in this research and in many others that map the amount of books read and the reading habits of Brazilians (Bomeny, 2009).

An overview of reading at a national level can be seen in the report of the fourth edition of the survey Retratos da Leitura no Brasil (Portraits of Reading in Brazil) conducted by Instituto Pró-Livro (2016). Data from the survey that interviewed 5012 people over the age of five and from different regions of the country in 2015 showed that the Brazilian reads an average of 4.96 books a year, of which 2.43 are whole and 2.53 are partially read. The result of this research shows that the lack of the habit of reading is not just a question of high school students in cities in the interior of Mato Grosso, but of Brazil as a whole.

The students surveyed stated that they do not always have the materials they would like to read at their disposal. Possibly, reading a mandatory book discourages them and demotivate them from accessing other genres and styles they might like. Several studies have proven that the pleasure of reading does not come from the way in which reading is triggered or from its duration, on the contrary, it is born from the relationship that is established between the reader and the text. It is the initial enchantment that will bring the desire to read, the act of reading and, consequently, the taste for reading (Reis, 2013).

The improvement of the EG in the test presented previously explains the effectiveness of the PPCL intervention proposal, in which the students were able to expand their lexicon based on learning reading techniques and strategies, circles and reading workshops. The CG, in turn, in the post-test results had a decrease in the minimum number of correct answers and, in relation to the maximum number, the correct answers were below the EG.

As evidenced by Kleiman (2016), understanding a written text is a cognitive act, however it cannot be reduced to this, as reading is, above all, “a social act, between two subjects — reader and author — who interact with each other, obeying socially determined goals and needs” (Kleiman, 2016, p. 12). This interactional dimension was accompanied, in most of the activities developed during the PPCL, by the interaction and the observations of the other students of the EG. Thus, each student who made his considerations about the text read, had the opportunity to express and hear the interpretations - his own and those of his colleagues.

According to Viana et al (2017), the results of experimental studies such as the one presented, demonstrate that intervention programs can have an effect on improving levels of understanding not only for students with high levels of accomplishment, but also for students with less satisfactory performances.

It is known that the classroom is a heterogeneous space and that each student learns in his own time (Santos, 2009). The CG result in the Cloze test, more specifically, when referring to students who were rated at the level of frustration, demonstrates that their performances did not match those of their group colleagues.

An experimental study by Coelho and Correa (2010) aimed to examine the progress of reading comprehension in 62 adolescents who underwent an intervention and used the Cloze test to assess their reading comprehension levels. The study demonstrated that the EG had significantly better results than the CG in reading

tasks. Evidence from the work demonstrated the effectiveness of the intervention and further suggests that progress in developing text comprehension is related to the efficiency with which adolescents monitor their reading.

Based on these EG results, it is possible to affirm the effects of the intervention in the area of reading comprehension. Anyway, the CG who did not undergo the intervention also had an improved performance in verbal reasoning, reading comprehension and writing skills, not to the point of being equal to the EG, which demonstrates the influence of external variables in the environment (example, students remained studying). Although the separation of the groups (EG and CG) occurred randomly, when comparing the results, EG students had higher averages in the tests already in the pre-test stage.

6. Conclusions

Regarding the reading habits of the students participating in this research, it was observed that: a) the majority of students (80.5%) said they like to read; b) more than half of the students (53.7%) claim to read 2 to 4 books per year; c) although more than half of the students (56.1%) confirmed to visit the institution's library, only 37.1% made a voluntary book loan; d) 43.9% of students had not yet visited the library at the time of the research; e) even with the random selection of the groups, the analysis of the averages of correctness in the Cloze test revealed an expressive result for the EG compared to the pre and post-test stages, by an increase in the average from 22 to 29, while in the CG the increase went from 19 to 24.

As can be seen through the data presented in this research, the information that illustrated the situation of young Brazilians in the area of reading is disheartening. This situation is not only a challenge for young people from specific regions or away from large urban centers, nor is it restricted to the state of Mato Grosso, where this research was carried out. The reading landscape is appalling for the whole Brazilian territory.

Last PISA report — carried out in 2018 — shows Brazil in a fragile position in the reading ranking compared to 78 other countries (BRAZIL, 2019) and recent data from SAEB carried out in 2017, and published in INEP reports (BRASIL, Ministério da Educação, 2017) reveal that students in the final years of elementary school (9th grade) have been demonstrating a minimal improvement in Portuguese since 1995, the year the exam was held for the first time. In addition, the results of students in Portuguese at high school level are no longer encouraging: the data show that high school studies, on average, has contributed very little to the cognitive knowledge of Brazilian students (BRASIL, Ministério da Educação, 2017). The average score in 1995 (Portuguese Language — High School) was 290 points, since then it has been oscillating negatively, and in 2017 the average was 268 points.

Therefore, it is considered extremely important that research with the objective of investigating aspects of reading comprehension is encouraged in the scientific environment and publicized to the community in general. It was possible to observe in the survey of research carried out with the Cloze test in the last ten years, that only 14 of the 57 articles were the result of experimental research, such as the one presented here. The importance of this type of research is notorious so that one can understand and propose thoughtful, reflective and practical solutions to the dilemmas that Education is experiencing in the country.

The present research demonstrated, through its stages, that the groups had continuous growth performances. Even the CG that progressed on a smaller scale, shows that what is proposed in the daily classroom in the researched school makes a difference in the students' results. The EG, on the other hand, showed significantly better results and higher averages than the CG, elucidating the importance and effectiveness of the intervention

program worked on in the research. If Brazilian high school faces so many problems, as it was evidenced in the presented research, it is essential that works like this point out the need to rethink the public policies that govern current education and that bring practical news in the reality of the country's schools.

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