

IMPROVING STUDENTS' READING COMPREHENSION OF BUSINESS TEXT BY USING "TELLS" STRATEGY AT FIRST YEAR STUDENTS OF STATE POLYTECHNIC OF BENGKALIS

Aswandi¹

¹English Study Program of Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis
Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis

Jl. Bathin Alam-Sungai Alam, Bengkalis, Riau, Postcode: 28711, Phone: (+6277) 24566, Fax: (+2766) 800 1000, Indonesia
e-mail: aswandi@polbeng.ac.id

Abstract: *Reading comprehension of business texts is necessary for students. However, many students, especially D3- Business Administration department of state polytechnic of Bengkalis faced difficulties in comprehending the business texts. Therefore, TELLs Strategy was proposed. TELLs strategy is a strategy which stands for Study the title; Examine for clues; Look for Important words; Look for hard words, and identify the setting. This article aimed at finding out to what extent the strategy to improve the students reading comprehension of business text and the factors that influence the changes. This classroom action research was conducted in two cycles. The result found that the students' score in reading comprehension of business texts test increased. The average score of students in cycle 1 was 64 and in cycle 2 was 70. Then, the factors that influence the improvement of students' reading comprehension of business texts were interesting teaching material, teacher's role, and students' willingness to do all procedures of the strategy. In conclusion, the implementation of TELLs strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension of business texts majoring Business Administration improved both students' score in reading tests and their interest in reading activities.*

Keywords: *reading comprehension, business texts, TELLs Strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the four language skills that should be mastered by students. They get many benefits from the store of knowledge in the printed materials. Reading is also one

of the most important tools for students to gain knowledge and fulfills their need for information. It is aimed at getting contents of the printed materials. Mastering reading can improve the other language skills, such as speaking, writing, and

listening. It helps students to develop their ability in English. However, reading was not an easy activity for many students. They did not only have to read but also had to understand the text. In fact, there were many students who had difficulty in learning how to read and comprehend what they read. They usually found difficulty in recognizing or determining the language features of a text. This kind of difficulty can be limited by understanding the genres of the English text, especially in comprehending texts.

Based on the researcher's observations and experience at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis, it was found that many students had difficulties in reading and comprehending business text. Most of the students had a problem in finding accurate information from the text such as main ideas, supporting ideas and concluding ideas.

In addition, the lack of students comprehension of Business Texts could also be seen from the result of test given by the teacher at First year students of Business Administration department. There were 20 students in this class. All of them joined this test.

The result of the test showed that the average score was only 58.

The researcher interviewed some students about their problems in comprehending reading texts. They said that they had problems in determining the texts.

Researcher found that the problem above was caused by several potential causes. It could be from the learners themselves, the teaching material and the teaching strategy. The learners who played an important role in determining their success in reading activities found difficulties in comprehending business text. It was caused by some factors that related to themselves such as their prior knowledge, their motivation, vocabulary mastery, and strategies of reading. The students had the problems because they did not have those factors, or even lack of them.

Furthermore, the researcher also found that the students at Business Administration study program used to use the simple strategy to make them easy to use it in the classroom such as reading the text by using dictionary. If the students found any problems, they would translate it into Bahasa Indonesia. These reading activities did not help much in improving the

students reading comprehension. As the result, this strategy did not give a good learning process and the student's achievement reading comprehension was failure. Therefore, the lecturer should also be creative to choose an appropriate strategy because the appropriate technique or the strategy the teacher chose can influence students' interest, motivation and their comprehension of the text and last their reading achievement

Based on the explanation above, the appropriate reading strategy is needed to be implemented in the classroom. Klinger, et .all (2007:2) states that "several theories have been proposed that suggest ways to influence understanding of the teaching reading comprehension: schema theory, reader response theory, and direct instruction". Many researchers developed strategies for enhancing students understanding of texts by using emphasizing the connection between reading and wrting, such as: using Story Maps (Baker et al.,2003); Retelling (Morrow,1986); Story Recipe (Irwin and baker,1989); TELLs (Idol-Maestas, 1985), etc. Each strategy has its own strength and weekness dealing with the students reading

comprehension problems they had. Based on the problems of the students, the researcher chose TELLs strategy to improve the students reading comprehension of business texts.

.TELLs strategy is appropriate to be applied in comprehending business text because this strategy can help the students to understand what the text about by studying the title and get the clues from it. This strategy is also very useful for students in improving their vocabulary because they are asked to look for the important and hard words. Finding the important and difficult words can ease them to understand the text. In addition, this strategy can also improve the students comprehension about the theme and setting by examining the story. Therefore, this reading strategy is appropriate for the students in comprehending business text.

The goal of TELLs is to improve students' reading comprehension ability and to help students monitor their reading comprehension using the five strategies. Other goals are to make the students more self-confident and motivated to read, to improve their reading skills and greater initiative.

Based on discussions above, an action research should be done to solve the students' problem. The research is carried out to find out whether TELLS strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension of business texts and to know the factors that influence the improvement of the students' reading comprehension of Business texts by using TELLS strategy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reading

Business Reading texts is the ability that has to be mastered by students of State polytechnic of Bengkalis, especially Business Administration department, as a soft skill that support in the world of work. Finochiaro and Bonomo (1973:119) stated that reading was carrying and getting the meaning of written material. In line with it, Hornby (1987:1043) stated that the main purpose of reading is to know the meaning of a message written. Reading is an activity performed by a reader to get messages from a text that he reads. In addition, Burnes and Page (1991:25) also stated that reading is an interactive process where readers can perform exchange of ideas through the media.

Based on the above explanation, it can be inferred that reading is a process of knowledge construction, owned by readers in achieving their goal in the activity of reading itself.

As for in understanding a text, the reader has to be prepared by knowing some of the skills needed when reading, it is meant to let the goal of reading itself can be earned. Harris (1974:9) states that in reading with understanding has some necessary skills, among others: the vocabulary mastery, the ability to determine the meaning of a phrase, sentence, even a text, the ability to understand the main idea, the sequel to an event, record and understand the details, understand the intent of the author, as well as the ability to evaluate and remember reading materials.

There are several types of text included into business texts, among others: advertisements, business correspondences, forms, charts, and graphs articles and reports, announcements and paragraphs

TELLS

TELLS (T-title, E-Examine, L-Look for important words, L-look for hard words, and S-setting) strategies

that are suggested by Idol-Maestas (1985). While, Sorrell (1990:359) states “TELLS strategy is a guided comprehension tool to prepare students for approaching reading assignments”. They are strategy instruction for reading comprehension. They can enhance comprehension and to help students understand what they read

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

The design employed in this research is Classroom Action Research (CAR). This research was conducted in two cycles of eight meetings. Kemmis and Taggart (1988) state that action research is conducted in two or more cycles. Each cycle consisted of Plan, Action, Observation, and Reflection. The participants of the research were the researcher, the collaborator and 20 students of first year students of Business Administration study program of Bengkalis. The data in the research were gathered from observation checklists, field notes, interviews, and writing tests.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings and Discussion

Findings of the research discuss data description and analysis as well as

findings and discussion of the findings. The findings are expected to answer questions stated in the formulation of the problem; 1) To what extent can TELLs strategy improve the students' reading comprehension of business texts at first year students of Business Administration Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis?. 2) what are the factors that influence the improvement of students' reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs strategy at first year students of Business Administration Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis? Based on the data which were collected from the result of the test, observation sheets, field notes and interviews, those questions above are answered in the research findings.

1. The extent to which TELLs strategy can improve students' reading comprehension of Business texts.

Cycle one

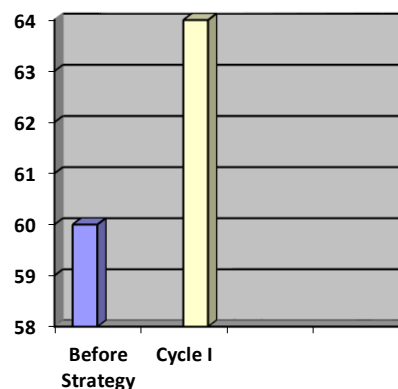
At the beginning of the treatment in cycle one; the lecturer explained everything about the teaching and learning process in comprehending business text to the students. The the process were explained in comprehending business

texts by using TELLs strategy. The researcher did the cycle one in four meetings; three meetings for treatments and one meeting for comprehension test. The researcher prepared the thing such as: the lesson plans in teaching reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs strategy, teaching materials in teaching reading through TELLs strategy, sample of Business texts, the instruments for gathering the data, test, observation checklist sheets in teaching reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs and scoring system for the test.

In the cycle one, the researcher explained in detail by giving some examples about business texts. The strategy was introduced and explained to the students in order to make them understand how to use this strategy. The procedures and some examples about how to use TELLs strategy were explained and given. After that, the students' understanding about procedures was also checked by asking some question. Then, the researchers implemented this technique during teaching and learning activities in the classroom.

At the end of the cycle the researcher gave comprehension test to the students. The data showed that the class average score of students' reading comprehension of Business text increased.

Graph 1. The comparison between Students' Average Score of Reading Comprehension Before Using TELLs strategy and Cycle I



Based on the result of the students' reading comprehension of business texts test in cycle I, the researcher found that the students' average score in reading comprehension of business texts test cycle I was 64 increased 3 points comparing with the students' average score before using TELLs strategy (58). It could be concluded that the students' average score in reading comprehension test in cycle I has increased comparing with the students'

average score before using TELLS strategy. Based on the data, there were 7 of 20 students who could achieve the minimum standard and the other students still had lower score than it. The researcher assumed that the students still had problems in reading comprehension of Business Texts.

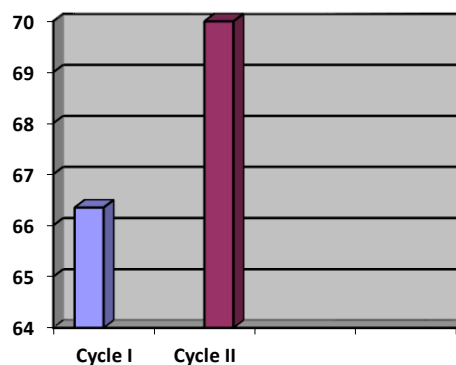
Cycle two

In the second cycle, the researcher still used the same activities as the first cycle, but there were some different emphasis due to the revised plan. The researcher did not only ask the students to write their work on their worksheet, but also asked some students to write their work on the whiteboard. This cycle also consisted of four meetings, which consisted of eighty minutes for each meeting. The first up to the third meeting were for the teaching and learning reading comprehension of business text by using TELLS strategy and a reading comprehension task was given at the end of each meeting. Then, at the last meeting of the second cycle the researcher conducted the reading comprehension of business texts test.

At the end of the cycle the researcher gave comprehension test to the students. The data showed that the

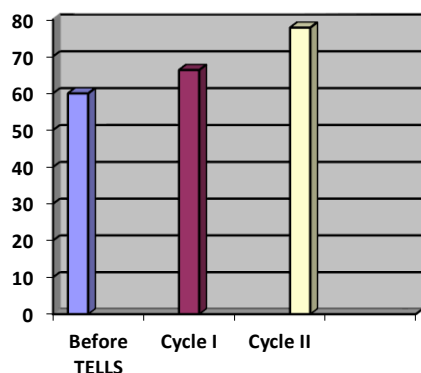
class average score of students’ reading comprehension of Business texts increased.

Graph 2. The comparison between Students’ Average Score of Reading Comprehension Test in Cycle I and Cycle II



Based on the result of the students’ reading comprehension of business texts test in cycle II, the researcher found that the students’ average score in reading comprehension of business texts test cycle II was 70 increased 6 points comparing with the students’ average score in cycle I (64). It could be concluded that the students’ average score in reading comprehension test in cycle II has increased comparing with the students’ average score before using TELLS strategy. Based on the data, all of the students could achieve the minimum standard.

Graph 3. The Improvement of the Students' Reading Comprehension of Business Texts



Based on the graph above, it could be seen that the average score of the students' reading comprehension of business texts after using TELS strategy in cycle one and two were better than before applying TELS strategy. There was a significant improvement from cycle one up to cycle two. The average score of students' reading comprehension of business texts before applying TELS was 58, then it increased to 64 in the cycle 1 and also increased 6 points in the cycle 2 became 70. It meant that TELS strategy could improve the students' reading comprehension of Business texts.

Finally, the researcher thought that the students' reading comprehension of business texts through TELS strategy had been

improved until the second cycle, because there was significant improvement of students' average score of reading comprehension of business texts. The implementation of TELS until second cycle had achieved the minimum criteria of students' achievement. So, it did not need to move to another cycle.

The factors that influence the improvement of students' reading comprehension of business texts by Using TELS strategy.

The second question of this research is what are the factors that influence the changes of students' reading comprehension of business texts by using TELS strategy at texts at first year students of Business Administration Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis?. Based on the result of the observation sheet of checklists, field notes, and interview from the cycle 1 up to cycle 2, it can be identified some factors that improves the students' reading comprehension, as in the following:

Interesting Teaching Material

Teaching material is an important thing in teaching and learning activities. Interesting and challenging

material were needed in applying TELLs strategy because in this strategy the students should be challenged to study the title by giving the prediction about what the text about. The suitable text given to the students can improve their interest in reading the text.

Based on the teaching and learning activities, it was found that unknown reading text as teaching material is a crucial. So, the suitable text for the students must be selected based on the curriculum and the students' level. In this research, the researcher chose interesting reading texts in teaching reading through TELLs strategy in order to increase the students' curiosity so that they have motivation to read the texts. It influenced the improvement of the students' reading comprehension of business texts.

Based on the field notes informed that teaching material influenced the changes of students' reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs strategy. Here are some important notes that related to the teaching material:

At the first cycle:

1. uninterested students in reading the text

2. challenging title for the students

At the second cycle:

1. Enjoyable reading texts for the students.
2. Students are interested in reading new texts

The information above showed that teaching material also helped the students to be more active during the teaching and learning activity. The students were more excited to a text which is new for them. The title of the texts also influences their curiosity in reading the text. Interesting and challenging texts motivated them to read the text carefully, especially when they study the title.

The result of interview also showed that the teaching material influenced the changes of students' reading comprehension of business texts by applying TELLs strategy. Here is the script of teacher's and students' answer:

Collaborator: Have you ever read the texts before? and what do you think about the texts given by the teacher?

Student 1 : No. I have not. I think the texts are difficult to understand.

Student 4 : Not yet sir. I think some texts are difficult.

Student 11 : No. The titles are good and challenging for me.

Student 16: No. I enjoy reading the texts. They are new story for me.

Student 18 : No. I think the texts are interesting and easy to understand.

Student 20 : No. I like the texts because they are new for me.

In short, the information from field notes and interview supported that teaching material was also one of the factors that influenced the changes of students' reading comprehension of business texts by applying TELLs strategy. Interesting and challenging texts can increase the students' curiosity to read the texts.

Lecturer's role

During teaching and learning process, the lecturer gave guidance and explanation to the students and also gave the explanation about TELLs strategy. The students got more explanations about procedure of TELLs strategy. TELLs is also an enjoyable atmosphere in learning process.

Enjoying atmosphere, the students can explore their abilities and share ideas or opinion while discussing in

solving of reading problems. In TELLs strategy, the lecturer gave guidance and explanation to the students. The students were given the strategy how to solve the problem in understanding Business texts. They had to discuss the problem what they got in the text. They also had to discuss and solve the problem together in comprehending business texts by using TELLs strategy. In other word, the guiding activities that the students had to do with their partner during teaching and learning process by using TELLs strategy was the one of the factors that influenced the improvement of students.

Some notes that related to the first factor influenced the change of students' reading comprehension of business text through TELLs at cycle 1 and 2. The result of observation and field note informed that:

1. The teacher gave motivation, self confident, and clear explanation about TELLs procedures and motivated them how to follow the learning process and the teacher involved in warm situation with the students.

2. The teacher still gave description and explanation about procedures of TELLS from the first up to the last meeting.
3. The teacher teaches all the indicator of Business texts.
4. The teacher gave the clues to the students to understand the words and they were discussed about the passage whether they did not understand the most important information in the passage.
5. The teacher always reminded the students how to comprehend the Business text.

Based on the observation checklists at the first and second cycle, it showed that the researcher had done his role as a teacher well. It can be seen from the lecturer observation checklist of teacher activity in applying TELLS strategy and from the teacher observation checklist of teaching steps. In addition, the teacher also explained all indicators of Business texts from cycle 1 to cycle 2. It means that the teacher had done his role well in applying TELLS strategy in teaching and learning activity.

The result of interview scripts also informed that the teacher had important roles to help the students in improving their reading comprehension of Business texts. Bellow was the scripts of teacher's question and answers in the interview.

Collaborator : What do you think about the way of teacher in teaching Business texts by using TELLS?

Student 2 : Sometimes, I get confused when you explained the lesson in full English. I like the way you repeat the lesson again to make us more understand.

Student 6 : I get difficulties when you explained the steps fastly. I need more time to understand about what the meaning, sir.

Student 11 : I like the way of teacher in teaching because the teacher's explanation are eaasy understand.

Student 17 : I like the way teacher teaches us. I like when you monitored and guided us to use all the steps in the strategy during the teaching and learning.

Student 18 : I like the teacher style in teaching. You always helps us to apply the steps of the strategy. Especially in understanding new vocabularies.

Student 20 :I like the way the teacher explain the strategy and the texts. Teacher helps us to understand the strategy step by step. Teacher gives us chance to ask questions if we don't understand.

TELLS strategy was an enjoyable strategy of teaching learning. It created the situation more relax because the learning method was students' center learning activity. The teacher gave clear explanation, brainstorming, and prediction to the students. He gave motivation, guidance, self-confident, and instruction to them while teaching learning process. The students got something new from teacher about the TELLs procedures. He also observed, controlled and checked the students' activity by giving help, explanation, and guidance if the students were facing the problems. He also discussed with the students the important information of the passage.

Based on the data above explains, teacher's role was one of the three factors influenced the improvement of students' reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs.

The students' willingness to do all TELLs procedures.

During teaching learning process, all students followed all procedures of TELLs strategy. The students' willingness to do of the procedures during teaching learning process was one of the factors influenced the improvement students' skill in understanding of business texts through TELLs strategy. Even though, TELLs was not familiar for them at the beginning. They always followed the steps from cycle 1 up to cycle 2 patiently. They tried to understand the procedures and benefits of TELLs. The students always showed great participations when the teacher offered some questions to guide them to understand the texts.

Some notes that related to the first factor influenced the change of students' reading comprehension of Business texts by using TELLs at cycle one.

The First Cycle.

The first meeting

1. The students listened to the teacher's explanation about procedures and benefits of TELLS
2. The students followed the all procedures but some of them still confused the procedures.
3. The students feel happy in following the learning process.

The second meeting

1. The students did this part better than the first meeting
2. They try to understand the teacher's instruction and manage their class for preparing the TELLS process.

The third meeting

1. The teacher still gave guidance and explanation the applying of TELLS procedure.
2. The student rather understood to find the clunk and clues of hard word.
3. The students more familiar with the procedure of TELLS.
4. The students did better than previous meeting

Based on the notes above, the application of TELLS at the first day of the first cycle was well organized, even though the students still confused with the procedures of TELLS. The teaching

reading at the first meeting, students felt happy in following the process of learning.

The procedure of TELLS at the second meeting was better than the first meeting. The students understood the teacher's instructions in preparing the TELLS activity. The third meeting, the students got guidance from the teacher how to understand the text in reading comprehension. Furthermore, the students did better than previous meetings.

Some notes that related to the first factor influenced the change of students' reading comprehension of business texts through TELLS at cycle

The Second Cycle.

The first meeting

1. The students showed good interest in following of reading activity.
2. The students did the TELLS procedures without asking.
3. The students tried to express their ideas and opinion.

The second meeting

1. All students listened the teacher's explanation and they read the text the hard meaning of the words seriously.
2. The student excited in following the TELLS.

3. Some of the students wrote the important ideas of the text

The third meeting

1. Students did well the procedures of TELLs.
2. The students were more confidence in expressing their ideas and opinions than previous meeting

Here were the result of interview scripts teacher's question and students' answer

Collaborator: Do you mind joining into TELLs learning activity?

Student 2 : No, I like to follow all the teachers' instructions.

Student 6 : Of course not, we got new method that made us enthusiasm.

Student 11: No I do not. The steps in this strategy are not so difficult.

Student 18: No at all, I am happy because new method of learning.

Student 17: I am happy because of enjoyable learning situation.

Student 20: No. I like joining the TELLs strategy because this strategy can help us to improve our reading ability.

Based on the information above, the willingness of students in

following all procedures of TELLs was one of the factors influenced the change of students' reading comprehension of business texts by using TELLs at cycle 2 as follows: The first and the second meeting, the students showed that they are interested in following TELLs procedures. They seemed more confident in following the learning process than before. They were not nervous in giving ideas and opinions. They felt happy and comfort in doing the procedures. The third, the students followed the procedures seriously. They tried to focus in comprehending of the text. They felt relax, enjoy, and more confident with the learning process.

Finally, this finding is line with theories which states that TELLs strategy is an effective strategy of teaching reading comprehension. Ridge and Skinner (2011) states TELLs procedure caused the increases in reading comprehension level and reading comprehension rates. The improvement of students reading comprehension by using TELLs strategy also supported by Sorell (1990). It has been found that implementing TELLs strategy could

improve the students' reading comprehension significantly.

CONCLUSION

This research was done to find out to what extent TELLS strategy can improve students' reading comprehension and to know the factors that influence the changes of students' reading comprehension at first year students of Business Administration Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis Based on the result of the research, it can be concluded that:

1. The use of TELLS strategy improves the students' reading comprehension of Business texts. The improvement can be seen in the average score of students' reading comprehension of business texts. It was 64 in cycle 1 and 70 in cycle 2. So, it increased 6 points.
2. The factors that influence the changes of students' reading comprehension of business texts are:

- a. Interesting teaching material.

Researcher found that interesting reading texts influenced the students' reading comprehension of business texts because it can increase the

students' curiosity. Interesting material can motivate the students to read the text.

- b. Teacher's role

In TELLS strategy, the teacher gave guidance and explanation to the students. The existence of the teacher really needed because he had a great influence during the teaching and learning process. The guiding activities that the students had to do during teaching and learning process by using TELLS strategy were the one of the factors that influenced the improvement of students.

- c. Students' willingness to do all of TELLS strategy.

Based on the data from the field notes, the students had high motivation and enjoy the reading activities by using the strategy. It is very helpful for the students in comprehending Business texts. In addition, the result of interviews showed that the students were interested in using TELLS strategy because it was a new strategy for them.

REFERENCES

- Baker, S., Gersten, R., and Graham, S. (2003). *Teaching Expressive*

- Writing to Students with Learning Disabilities: Research-Based applications and Examples. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 36 (2), 109-123
- Burnes, Dun. and Page Glenda. 1991. Insight and the strategies for teaching reading . Australia. Harcourt Brave Java Novich Group
- Derewianka, Beverly. 1992. *Exploring How Text Work*. Canberra: Primary English Teaching Association.
- Finocchiaro, M and Bonomo M. 1973: The Foreign Language Learner. New York: Regents publishing Co.
- Gay, L. R. *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Application*. New York: Merrie Publishing Company.
- Hornby, AS. 1987. *Oxford advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. New York. Oxford University Press.
- Gerot, L. and Wignell, P. 1994. *Making Sense of Functiona; Grammar*. Australia: Gerd Stabler.
- Idol-Maestas, L. 1985. Getting ready to read: Guided probing for poor comprehenders. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 8, 243-254.
- Irwin, J. W., and Baker, I. (1989). *Promoting Active Reading Strategies*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Kemmis, Stephen and Mc Taggart Robin. 1988. *The Action Research Planner*. (3rd edition) Victoria: Deakin University.
- Klinger, J. K, Vaughn S, and Boardman, A. 2007. *Teaching Reading Comprehension to Students with Learning Difficulties*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Morrow, L. M. 1986. Effects of Structural Guidance in Story retelling on Children's dictation of original Stories. *Journal of Reading Behaviour*, 18, 135-152.
- Ridge, A. D., & Skinner, C. 2011. Using the TELLS procedure to enhance comprehension levels and rates in secondary students. *Psychology in Schools*, 48(1), 46- 58.
- Sorrell A. L. 1990. Three reading comprehension strategies: TELLS, story mapping, and QARs. *Academic Therapy*, 25, 359-368.