

Reading Comprehension in a Foreign Language at UNICEN. Towards a more Comprehensive Test for BA Students of Distance Education

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Reading comprehension is a crucial skill for both attaining knowledge and bettering humans' lives. Yet, the process of reading and understanding academic and disciplinary texts in a Foreign Language comprises an in-depth knowledge of the language and the attainment of many complex skills – to understand main ideas, to make inferences, to develop a critical stance. Usually, students' reading comprehension skills are tested in a two or three-hours exam with source texts unknown to them and instructions which need to be processed and solved during that time limit. Nevertheless, students at the BAs of Distance Education at UNICEN do not have the same prior knowledge of the English language when they start the course of reading comprehension or have not even dealt with academic and/ or scientific texts in their mother tongue in previous levels of education. Moreover, students do not generally develop a solid knowledge of the English after the eight-month reading instruction course. Thus, a more comprehensive procedure was implemented in the last two examination boards. To assess the repercussions of such procedure, a questionnaire was implemented. The preliminary results showed an increase in students' confidence, exam performance and students' commitment to the challenging instructions proposed.

Index Terms—Academic And Disciplinary Texts– English As A Foreign Language– Reading Comprehension