University of Stavanger

FACULTY OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

MASTER'S THESIS

Programme of study: Master in Literacy Studies	Spring semester, 2017
Author: Nathalie Therese Johanne Siva Franssen	 (Author's signature)
Supervisor: Ion Drew	
Thesis title: A case study of the impact of free voluntary web-surfing on reading comprehension and motivation in an upper secondary EFL class in Norway	
Keywords: EFL reading Extensive reading Free voluntary surfing Motivation ReadTheory	No. of pages: 121 + appendices/other: 39 Stavanger, Mai 11, 2017

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

Abstract

The current study was a case study of the impact of a three-month free voluntary web surfing (FVS) programme on pupils' reading and motivation in a Norwegian upper secondary VG2 International English classroom (elective subject). The case study group consisted of 22 pupils. Twice a week, in the course of three months, each English lesson started with a reading session of approximately 20 minutes, where the pupils could access any English-speaking digital news provider.

The study aimed to find out the impact of FVS on the pupils' reading comprehension, the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online, the pupils' reading routines, their reading interests and, finally, if FVS helped them to become more critical readers. The progress of the pupils' reading comprehension was monitored on ReadTheory, an online reading comprehension programme. This was compared to a control group of six pupils from the other class of International English at the school.

The data consisted of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of two questionnaires answered by the whole class (one prior to the start of the programme and one post-programme), two interviews with eight focus pupils (one at the start of the programme and one when the programme was finished), observations during the reading sessions, and blog entries written by the pupils. The quantitative data consisted of the results achieved by both the case study group and the control group on the reading comprehension website ReadTheory. Triangulation between the different types of data increased the validity of the findings.

The research showed that the majority of the case study pupils were motivated by the extensive reading project. This was seen in the course of the observations, the discussions that followed the reading sessions, the blog entries, and also the data provided by the questionnaires and the interviews organized for the eight focus pupils. The research also showed that some pupils struggled to find interesting articles to read, which was confirmed by their relatively poor results on ReadTheory. These pupils did not seem to have the necessary proficiency in English to be able to read and enjoy the English-speaking online news.

The impact of the programme on reading comprehension was difficult to assess as the ReadTheory website did not seem to be a reliable tool to measure progress. Indeed, the pupils from the control group and the case study group recorded huge fluctuations in their grade level achievements from one quiz to another, with sometimes up to six grades in difference in the course of the three month period.

The results of the study generally showed that the computer is a good source of comprehensible input. The pupils enjoyed the reading of the English-speaking news digitally, most of them felt that the programme had generally helped them improve their reading comprehension, some changed their reading habits, some became more aware of the sources of the news published on their social media platforms, and most of them felt that they had gained knowledge about topics related to the English-speaking world. Even the two weakest pupils in the class felt that they had benefitted from the outcome of the programme.

The study also showed the difficulty for the pupils to avoid distractions when surfing on the web. It is important to be aware of the challenges pupils are confronted with when they can surf freely on the net and the impact online reading has on the overall understanding of the text.

Few research studies have been carried out about digital reading in upper secondary schools in Norway and few research studies in Norway have focused on the use of real-life materials in EFL teaching, such as online news. This study has therefore made a contribution by adding to the little research in this area.

1. Introduction

1.1 The study and its aims

This thesis is based on a study of the impact of a three-month free voluntary web-surfing (FVS) programme on pupils' reading comprehension and motivation in a Norwegian upper secondary VG2 (the second last year before graduation) International English classroom. International English is an elective subject available to most of the pupils from the programme for specialisation in General Studies. The researcher was also the teacher of the 22 case study pupils and the school was located in an urban area in the South-Western part of Norway. The case study pupils had two 20 minutes sessions a week of free digital reading of the news on English-speaking news providers and regularly visited the reading comprehension website ReadTheory[1] (see section 4.3.4) to take reading comprehension quizzes to practice reading and monitor their reading comprehension. The other class of International English (six pupils) at the case study school constituted the control group. They worked regularly with reading comprehension quizzes on ReadTheory (RT) without following any extensive reading programme.

English is the predominant foreign language in Norway and pupils are exposed to it in their everyday life through, for instance, media, social media, music and films that are not dubbed but subtitled. According to the international education company specialized in language training and educational travel, Education First (EF), after having tested 950,000 adults above 16 years of age from 54 countries and territories, the English Proficiency Index (EPI) in Norway is among the five countries in the world where the inhabitants have the highest proficiency of English (Education First, 2015)[2]. One of the reasons is the high exposure to the English- speaking youth culture, ranging from social media to YouTube, movies, TV shows, video games, music and series, which supplies comprehensible input in a low filter environment to the Norwegian teenagers. However, there is evidence that upper secondary pupils lack academic reading and writing skills.

Publications for higher education or research in Norway are also often directly published in English, either for practical purposes or partly for reasons of prestige. As

---

[1] https://readtheory.org
The programme ReadTheory is a free online reading comprehension program designed by scholars from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the College of Charleston in South Carolina in 2014.
[2] http://www.ef.no/epi/

Hellekjær (2007: 16) reports, some of the largest Norwegian companies use English as their working language, and with English being a global language and the language of business, many pupils will be required to use English in their professional lives. However, research has shown that the level of English among Norwegian upper secondary pupils from the General Studies area of specialisation is not adequate, that two thirds of them would not manage the level required for admission to universities in English-speaking countries, and they would encounter difficulties to follow higher education due to reading problems (Hellekjær, 2005).

According to a survey carried out in 2016 by the Norwegian Language Council (Språkrådet)[3], two companies out of ten use English as their official working language and eight companies out of ten use English regularly. English proficiency is hence important for the future professional life of pupils, especially in the light of studies such as the ones carried out by Hellekjær (2007a, 2009b), which found out that many Norwegian export companies suffer because of lack of appropriate knowledge in English. This is why maximal progression is important for pupils taking International English, as pupils who choose English in VG2 or VG3 usually have intentions to either study abroad or work in an international environment where they would have need for extra proficiency in English.

Fluent reading is vital for academic success and the reading abilities of Norwegian pupils are monitored through international reading surveys such as PISA and PIRLS. The disappointing results obtained at the PISA reading survey in 2000 showed that Norwegian pupils generally read with more difficulty in their mother tongue than pupils from neighbouring countries and that there was a large percentage of weak pupils in the country (Roe, 2010). This led to the introduction of national tests in reading, carried out in primary school in the fifth grade, and in the 8th grade and 9th grade of lower secondary school. Reading has hence been a focus area in schools and several projects have been launched in schools resulting in Norwegian pupils achieving better results at the 2016 PISA reading survey.

As the teaching of International English covers many topics dealing with current events and as the teaching is structured around the use of computers, free voluntary web surfing may be one way of increasing reading fluency among the pupils. Norwegian teenagers between 16 and 19 spend more than three hours a day on the Internet according to the 2015 survey carried out by Statistics Norway and only 16 % of them read Norwegian news webpages regularly (Bucht, 2012: 29). There is a potential for upper secondary pupils with

---

[3] http://www.sprakradet.no/globalassets/vi-og-vart/rapporter-og-undersokelser/undersokelse-av-engelsk_industri-bygg-og-anlegg.pdf

International English as an elective subject to build good English as a foreign language (EFL) reading attitudes and habits on the web by reading English- speaking news providers. The reading of the news may help the pupils to gain knowledge and competence in the different fields relevant to the subject curriculum and to become more confident readers of the news.

The aim of the study is to investigate the possible benefits and challenges of the FVS programme on the case study pupils. The study addresses the following research questions:

- What is the impact of FVS on the pupils' reading comprehension?
- What is the effect of the programme on the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online?
- What is the effect of the programme on the pupils' reading routines?
- What is the effect of the programme on the pupils' reading interests?
- Does free voluntary web surfing help the pupils to become more critical readers?

On their website[4], the Norwegian Research Council mentions 15 different research projects related to reading at school carried out in Norway since 2006 for the total budget of 43,4 million kroner. Institutions such as the Norwegian Reading Centre[5] at the University of Stavanger conduct different types of research projects concerning language and literacy development from pre-school level to upper secondary level. In 2015, the Norwegian Reading Centre carried out a specific survey about a large-scale extensive reading program organized for all the pupils of Haugaland VGS, a large vocational upper secondary school in Haugesund. The pupils started the day with a 20-minute free reading session before the start of the regular lessons. The purpose of the program was to increase the reading abilities of the pupils and to increase their pleasure of reading. The results were convincing and improvements on test scores were registered (Preston et al., 2015).

Reading for pleasure, as advocated by Krashen (2004), has a documented impact on the reading competences of pupils and offers numerous possible implementations in the classroom. As today´s pupils are digital natives, heavily influenced by the Internet, and as Norwegian upper secondary pupils are also required to own a laptop, extensive reading of the news from the Internet from a wide variety of materials available seemed to be an interesting way to foster the pleasure of reading, while covering a wide variety of competence aims for the EFL subject. The power to choose what to read, even though within certain limitations for the pupils in the present study, may also result in each learner becoming more independent

---

[4] www.forskningsradet.no
[5] http://lesesenteret.uis.no

and taking charge of his/her learning. It is important for the pupils to find their own way to navigate safely on the Internet.

The contribution of the present study is to consider the digital reading of the news as a successful way to foster independent and skilled reading, to develop critical thinking, and to cover numerous competence aims from the curriculum in a single project. As pointed out by both Waring[6] and Robb[7] in their personal correspondence with the researcher (see Appendixes 12 and 13), there is a lack of research in the use of extensive reading (ER) in the EFL classroom and extensive reading is unfortunately not widely used in the EFL teaching while its benefits are widely documented. Moreover, few research studies have been carried out on reading in Norway with upper secondary pupils.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides background information on the school education system in Norway, the current *LK06* curriculum, general EFL teaching in Norway with detailed information on the International English subject, and focus on reading and digital skills. Chapter 3 presents different theories of reading, with focus on extensive reading illustrated by some of the main related research projects carried out in extensive reading, digital reading, and the use of newspapers and magazines in extensive reading, both in Norway and abroad. Chapter 4 is devoted to the methods used in the present case study, with a description of the different elements of the reading project and details about the mixed methods research tools used in the study. Chapter 5 presents the results of the questionnaires, observations, blogs, and the results obtained on the website ReadTheory. More detailed information about eight focus pupils is presented in the form of a narrative of each, gathering the different sources of data. A separate section deals with the results of the case study pupils on ReadTheory. The discussion is presented in Chapter 6 and is structured in separate sections answering the five research questions, and it also addresses the limitations of the study, together with the implications and recommendations. Chapter 7 concludes on the thesis.

---

[6] E-mail from Thomas N. Robb dated 8 December 2016 to be retrieved in Appendix 12
[7] E-mail from Robert Waring dated 21 December 2016 to be retrieved in Appendix 13

2. Background

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to give some insight into the school system in Norway, EFL teaching in Norway, the Knowledge Promotion school reform (*LK06*), and more specifically the subject of International English in upper secondary school with the aspects of reading in International English. Section 2.2 presents the school education system in Norway, section 2.3 is devoted to the *Knowledge Promotion curriculum,* also called *LK06,* while section 2.4 deals with the English subject curriculum in *LK06* and the importance of reading in general and digital reading. Section 2.5 focuses on the subject of International English. The final section, section 2.6 concludes with a short summary of the chapter.

2.2 School education in Norway

In Norway, the Parliament and the Government define the goals and the framework for the education sector, while the Ministry of Education and Research (UDIR) is responsible for carrying out the national education policy. National standards are ensured through legislation, regulations, curricula and framework plans.

Compulsory education in Norway lasts ten years and comprises both the seven primary school years and the three years of the lower secondary stage. According to Norwegian legislation, all pupils leaving compulsory education should have mastered a set of fundamental skills to allow them to participate in continued education and working life (OECD, 2011: 3). Learning outcomes constitute an important indicator of how successful the authorities are in providing the learners with these specific skills.

Primary and lower secondary schools from the public sector are owned by local councils, while upper secondary schools are owned by county councils. Upper secondary school is voluntary. However, 92 per cent of all 16 to 18 year-olds were registered in upper secondary education or training in autumn 2013[8].

Upper secondary education is divided into eleven programmes: three general studies programmes and eight vocational programmes. General studies programmes are three-year programmes that emphasise theoretical subjects and lead up to the Higher Education Entrance Qualification, the education pupils must have to qualify for admission to universities in

---

[8] The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training 2014

Norway. Vocational programmes usually lead to a craft or trade certificate, normally after two years at school and a two-year apprenticeship period.

The three general studies programmes are: a) specialisation in general studies with programme areas for media and communication, natural science and mathematics, arts, crafts and design, and languages, social sciences and economics, b) sports and physical education and c) music, dance and drama. The eight vocational programmes are the following: building and construction, design, arts and crafts, electricity and electronics, healthcare, childhood and youth development, agriculture, fishing and forestry, restaurant and food processing, service and transport and finally technical and industrial production.

Pupils who graduate from a vocational programme also have the possibility to achieve the Higher Education Entrance Qualification by taking the upper secondary Level 3 programme for general university admissions certification. According to Statistics Norway (SSB)[9], six out of ten of all upper secondary pupils attend programmes for general studies and the percentage of pupils in general study programmes has been increasing in recent years.

2.3 The Knowledge Promotion curriculum (*LK06*)

In the autumn of 2006, the school reform called *The Knowledge Promotion* (*LK06)* was introduced as a replacement for the previous curriculum, *L97*. The objectives and quality framework for primary and secondary education and training are defined in *LK06*, which applies to all levels of primary and secondary education and training and comprises:

- The Core Curriculum
- Quality Framework
- Subject Curricula
- Distribution of teaching hours per subject
- Individual assessment

The core curriculum defines where the general principles of the curriculum are outlined. The cultural, educational and values foundation is stated along with the overall goals and aims of instruction. This part is linked to the quality framework, where the common principles applied to all subjects and all grades are presented. Next is the subject curricula, where the competence aims for pupils after certain specified grades are defined. All the subjects have competence aims after grades 4, 7 and 10 and after each level in upper secondary education

---

9 https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/vgu/aar/2016-02-25

and training. Most of the subjects also have competence aims after the second grade except the subjects of religion, social studies, sports, and food and health. In the subject curricula, the five basic skills are integrated in a way that is adapted to each subject. These skills are being able to read, being able to express oneself orally, being able to express oneself in writing, being able to develop numeracy, and being able to use digital tools. These five skills have to be taught across all subjects, in addition to the competence aims specific to each subject.

The intention of the *LK06* curriculum is to have one single curriculum for both primary, lower secondary and upper secondary school that is adapted to the increasing demands of today's society and that provides continuity and a controlled progression throughout school education by focusing on competences to be acquired.

2.4 The English subject curriculum

English is the only compulsory foreign language in Norwegian schools. Pupils in grades 1 to 4 receive 138 hours of English a year. The number of hours increases to 228 hours from the fifth to seventh grades. During the three years of lower secondary school (grades 8 to 10) the number of hours of English teaching is 228. However, pupils can in addition choose the subject of in-depth studies in English instead of studying another foreign language and they would then have another 227 extra teaching hours of English. At this point in their education, at the age of sixteen, pupils are expected to be at an intermediate level of proficiency in English, equivalent to B1 on the CEFR scale[10].

English is also a compulsory subject the first year of upper secondary school in the programmes for General Studies, with 140 teaching hours. These are spread over two years in the programmes for vocational education: the first year with 84 teaching hours, and the second year with 56 teaching hours. The main subject areas in the English subject from year one to upper secondary are Language learning, Oral communication, Written communication and Culture, society and literature. The use of different media and resources are among others key elements of the main subject areas and various specific competence aims are linked to each of the main subject areas according to the subject curricula (five curricula in total for the English subject, after the following grades: second grade, fourth grade, seventh grade, 10th

---

[10] The CEFR describes foreign language proficiency at six levels: A1 and A2, B1 and B2, C1 and C2. It also defines three 'plus' levels (A2+, B1+, B2+). Based on empirical research and widespread consultation, this scheme makes it possible to compare tests and examinations across languages and national boundaries. It also provides a basis for recognising language qualifications and thus facilitating educational and occupational mobility. http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre1_en.asp

grade and VG1). After having fulfilled their first year of high school, the Norwegian pupils have then reached level B2 on the CEFR scale.

Reading is one the five basic skills that have to be integrated in all subjects, together with oral skills, digital skills, writing, and numeracy. The Ministry of Education defines being able to read in English as to be able to create meaning by reading different types of texts of different lengths and complexities, to understand, reflect and acquire knowledge and insight across cultural borders (*LK06,* English subject curriculum). Reading texts fluently allows pupils to explore, discuss and learn from different types of information. The English subject curriculum emphasises the importance of the reading of a variety of different texts in English to stimulate the joy of reading to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge. It is up to each teacher to decide which texts to use in their lessons.

Digital skills in English mean to be able to use a varied selection of digital tools, media and resources to assist language learning, to communicate in English and to acquire relevant knowledge in the subject. This involves using digital sources in written texts and oral communication and having a critical and independent attitude to the use of sources. School owners are responsible for providing schools with learning materials, including ICT infrastructure and access to digital learning resources in order to enable them to implement digital skills as an integrated part of the curricula (Kvisterøy, 2015:2). Several municipalities have local initiatives to provide one mobile computing device (laptop, tablet, mobile phone or other mobile device) for every pupil in lower secondary and primary schools. The municipalities of Trondheim and Bærum are good examples, where Trondheim bought netbooks for all of their pupils in lower secondary school and increased the coverage in primary school. Bærum plans one mobile device per pupil coverage with tablets in all of their schools (Kvisterøy, 2015: 3). Another example is the municipality of Karmøy where all the primary and lower secondary school pupils use a tablet[11].

Upper secondary pupils, on the other hand, are required to own a laptop and they benefit from financial aid from the county to purchase one. The computer is therefore an integral part of their education. Teachers communicate with their pupils on online learning platforms and organize their lessons on their virtual classrooms.

---

[11] http://www.aftenposten.no/norge/Pa-denne-skolen-har-alle-nettbrett-55532b.html

2.5 The International English subject

Pupils from the different programmes for specialisation in General Studies can choose which programme area they wish to pursue in the second year within their wider study programme. International English is an optional programme subject available to most of the pupils in the second and the third year. The subject can also be chosen by the pupils who supplement their vocational education by taking the upper secondary level 3 programme, allowing them to gain the Higher Education Entrance Qualification certification.

The subject of International English (140 teaching hours per year) enables pupils from the second year to choose the subjects of Social Studies English or English Literature and Culture in their third year. The subject is assessed by one oral and one written overall achievement grade. At the end of the school year, the pupils may be selected for a written exam prepared and marked centrally, or an oral exam prepared and marked locally.

Statistics from the Ministry of Education show that less than ten per cent of the first year upper secondary pupils choose International English in the second year and the amount of pupils choosing this elective subject has decreased from 10,782 pupils in the school year of 2013-2014 to 9,895 pupils in 2015-2016[12].

2.5.1 The International English curriculum

The main subject areas of the International English subject are Language and language learning, Communication, and Culture, Society and Literature, the same subject areas as for the compulsory English subject offered from grade one to the first year of upper secondary school (or first two years for pupils in vocational programmes). However, the competence aims linked to the different subject areas go progressively more in depth and the subject of International English is particularly designed for pupils who take an active interest in the global world and who want to improve their English.

The 21 competence aims of the subject are organised around five main topics which are mainly related to international cooperation and education, such as the competence aims stating that the subject will enable pupils to locate, elaborate on and discuss international educational options and employment options, elaborate on and discuss a number of international and global challenges, elaborate on and discuss various aspects of multicultural societies in the English-speaking world, reflect on how cultural differences and dissimilar

---

[12] https://statistikkportalen.udir.no/vgs/Pages/Elevers-fagvalg.aspx

value systems can affect communication, elaborate on and discuss a selection of literature and factual prose from the period 1950 up to the present, analyse, elaborate on and discuss at least one lengthy literary work and one film, analyse and assess the role of some English-language media in international society, and gain insight into cultural expressions drawn from the English-speaking world.

2.5.2 Focus on reading in the subject of International English

The textbooks designed by the Norwegian publishing houses for the subject of International English are mainly divided into chapters devoted to the main subject area of Culture, society and literature. For example, the textbook *Access* (Anthony, 2012) is divided into six chapters. Chapter one is devoted to English as a world language, chapter two deals with the media, chapter three is about multiculturalism, chapter four about global challenges, chapter five about International English in Education and working life, and chapter six about literature and literary analysis. Each chapter presents different types of texts varying from factual texts, poems, blog entries, excerpts from novel, short stories and news articles. The textbook *International Focus* (Heian, 2007), follows the same chapter structure. The book also contains different types of texts to illustrate the different topics.

There are many texts to choose from and much to read for the pupils. However, these different topics also need to be discussed and presented through current articles from the press. The pupils are further requested to read at least one lengthy literary work and to present a major in-depth project on a topic from International English or another subject from their own programme area. It means that much reading will be required in the course of the year.

The *LK06* curriculum places a strong emphasis on 'basic skills'. The basic skills of 'being able to read' refers both to the comprehension of various texts and the act of reading. Through reading, pupils are expected to analyse, elaborate and discuss. Reading is also a major part of the subject of International English. A few specific competence aims are devoted only to reading, while many others are related in some way to reading. For example, pupils are expected to elaborate on and discuss a selection of literature and factual prose from the period 1950 up to the present. This competence aim is directly related to reading. However, the subject does not specify the type of literary texts the pupils are expected to read nor the quantity required to cover the competence aims properly. The teacher has to make these decisions. Surveys show that Norwegian teachers tend to rely heavily on textbooks (Hellekjær, 2005: 26; Knudsen, 2011: 19), which means that they rely on the selection of

texts made by the textbook author and the interpretation of the syllabus by the author of the book also.

Since digital skills are one of the basic skills integrated in all the subjects taught at school, 18 of the 19 county authorities in Norway came together in 2007 to establish a digital learning resource portal, the National Digital Learning Arena (NDLA). The counties allocate a portion of the funds that they receive from the government (50 million NOK[13]) to provide pupils with free learning resources. Some resources are designed by publishers but most of them are developed by teachers and moderated by universities and university colleges. The content provided is free and available to all pupils and teachers. The aim of NDLA is to provide high quality digital learning resources in all upper secondary subjects and to gradually replace textbooks. Unfortunately, not all subjects are covered on the learning platform and some of the material is already out-dated with links that are not active any more and with content that is no longer relevant for the pupils. There is a section devoted to English, but no specific sub-section for the subject of International English.

The use of the platform NDLA was evaluated in 2015, and it seems that the platform is not used extensively by pupils and teachers of upper secondary schools (Waagene and Gjerustad, 2015: 35). It seems that NDLA is not a good alternative to textbooks and that teachers and pupils prefer a combination of the traditional textbook with digital resources[14].

2.6 Summary

Reading skills and digital skills are heavily emphasised in *LK06* and reading is a basic skill in the curriculum. However, Norwegian pupils are still under-achievers in the PISA reading surveys.

The curriculum stipulates that schools and teachers have the responsibility to organize teaching in order to achieve the competence aims in the different subjects[15]. Teachers have to make decisions as to what and how much the pupils will read, as this is not specified in the English subject curriculum. In terms of materials, upper secondary teachers tend to combine the use of a textbook and the use of Internet resources, as the pupils are required to own a laptop.

---

[13] https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/50-millioner-til-digitale-laremidler/id100517/
[14] http://www.forleggerforeningen.no/nyhetsarkiv/ndla-bor-evalueres/
[15] https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Innstillinger/Odelstinget/1999-2000/inno-199900-089/?lvl=0#a2.8

It is questionable whether upper secondary school pupils of English in Norway receive enough reading instruction and reading training in the course of their education, as only one third of the upper secondary pupils from the General Studies branch would manage the level required for admission to universities in English-speaking countries (Hellekjær, 2005).

3. Theory and literature review

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents theory and research relevant to this case study of upper secondary school pupils' free voluntary web surfing on English-speaking news providers. Particular focus will be on extensive reading (ER) and digital reading. Section 3.2 starts with the nature of reading, while section 3.2.1 presents some theories of reading. Section 3.2.2 deals with the main reading strategies, while 3.2.3 looks at the challenges linked to reading in different languages. Section 3.2.4 presents Krashen´s Monitor Theory, while section 3.2.5 deals with the importance of motivation. Section 3.3 is devoted to extensive reading, with section 3.3.1 focussing on related research conducted on extensive reading in Norway in the EFL classroom and section 3.3.2 presenting the use of newspapers and magazines in extensive reading. Section 3.4 is devoted to digital reading or New Literacy, with sub-section 3.4.1. dealing with free voluntary web surfing (FVS) and sub-section 3.4.2 on research conducted on digital extensive reading in language acquisition worldwide. Section 3.5 briefly looks at the use of quizzes to test reading comprehension, while section 3.6 summarizes the chapter.

3.2 The Nature of reading

In order to understand how to teach EFL reading, it is important to consider different definitions of the process of reading. Day and Bamford (1998: 12) define reading as the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. The construction of meaning involves the reader connecting the information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at an understanding of the meaning.

Grabe (1999: 12) discusses what reading is, what reading requires, and what the features of fluent reading are. According to Grabe (2014: 1), reading is the complex ability to extract, or build, meaning from a text. The key component abilities and skills that allow reading comprehension to emerge, are the ability to recognize words rapidly and efficiently, develop and use a large recognition vocabulary, process sentences in order to build comprehension, engage a range of strategic processes and underlying cognitive skills, such as setting goals, changing goals flexibly and monitoring comprehension, interpret meaning in relation to background knowledge, interpret and evaluate texts in line with reader goals and purposes, and process texts fluently over an extended period of time. These processes and

knowledge resources allow the reader to generate text comprehension to the level required. All these skills work together in a complex, finely coordinated set of processes. Grabe and Stoller (2002: 8) further define reading for general comprehension as the ability to understand information in a text and interpret it approximately.

According to Hellekjær (2007b: 2), reading is the decoding of the written text, on the one hand, and the efficient process of the information, on the other hand. Reading is often taken for granted and while more than 80 percent of the world´s population can read to some extent[16], reading is a complex process that implies much more than simply decoding letters into words.

3.2.1 Theories of reading

There have been shifts and transitions in theories related to reading. The traditional view of reading, focusing on the printed form of a text, evolved to the cognitive view of reading, which enhanced the role of background knowledge in the understanding of the text. This evolved to what is now called the 'metacognitive' view of reading, where the reader has an active role in the comprehension of the text[17].

According to Dole et al. (1991:255), in the traditional view of reading, readers acquire a set of hierarchically ordered sub-skills (such as rules of grammar, word recognition, vocabulary) that build towards comprehension ability. When these skills are mastered, readers are viewed as experts who understand what they read. Nunan (1991:63) refers to this process as the 'bottom-up' view of reading, where the reader decodes symbols into their aural equivalent in order to make sense of the text. In this traditional view of reading, readers are passive recipients of information in the text, from which they try to reproduce the meaning. However, this model of reading has been criticized by several psycholinguists, such as Coady (1979), Lynch and Hudson (1991) and Goodman (1967: 126), as being insufficient since the focus is on the formal features of the language. These scholars argue that reading involves more than word perceptions and that this model slows the reader down so that they cannot understand larger language units. Therefore, another model emerged, which emphasized a higher-level comprehension process.

The second main theory of reading takes this other model into consideration, namely the 'top-down' model, which identifies reading as a kind of 'psycholinguistic guessing game' (Goodman, 1967), where the reader is at the heart of the reading process, and not the text, and

---

[16] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/resources/statistics
[17] http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/print/503

where the reader has the ability to guess, anticipate and select the elements of the language necessary to construct meaning. The language cannot be broken down into smaller fragments as the language is a complete system. This hypothesis is further called the 'whole language approach' (Goodman, 1986:30). The whole language approach comes from educators who used this approach to explain how English-speaking children become readers and the approach can also be applied to L2 learners. This approach integrates the research in psychology about the social nature of learning made by Vygotsky (1978), the research in linguistics about the functional role of language from Halliday (1978), and the research from educators such as Goodman (1967), who strongly opposed the teaching of reading and writing that focused on isolated features of the language, but instead argued that the language should be taught as a whole. Any language is a functional tool focusing on communication and engaging learners in real and meaningful reading and writing.

In the whole language approach, the focus is on communication and comprehension and the learning of both writing and reading are seen as a processes where there is an interplay between the oral and written language. Goodman (1986:30) argues: 'Speaking, listening, writing and reading are all happening in context of the exploration of the world of things, events, ideas, and experiences… Integration becomes the central motif in a whole language curriculum.' The whole language philosophy advocates that the curriculum should emerge from pupils' own interests and choices and that competence in reading in general comes from free voluntary reading. Krashen (1999:54) states: 'Much of our competence in reading and in literacy in general comes from one source: free voluntary reading. Free reading profoundly improves our reading ability, our writing ability, our spelling, our grammar, and our vocabulary.'

The whole language approach can be recognized in the English curriculum in Norway, where the focus is placed on communication and comprehension, where the importance of processes is highlighted, where the teachers try to foster a stimulating environment through discussions in which pupils are encouraged to share their knowledge and incited to take more responsibility in the learning processes linked to reading and writing.

3.2.2 Main reading strategies

Good readers are active readers and, according to Grabe (2002: 81), Day and Bamford (2002: 136) and Fitzgerald and Grabes (2005: 68), good readers use the following strategies. They make predictions of what is going to happen next in the text, make decisions about the selection of their reading, integrate prior knowledge to facilitate comprehension, skip the

insignificant parts, and concentrate on the most important pieces of information. They also often re-read the texts to make sure that they have understood them properly, make use of the context, guess the meaning of unknown words, break words into their component parts to help them understand their meaning, read in chunks, pause once in a while in order to sort out information, and internalize the material. They also paraphrase and interpret texts in order to verify whether the text is properly understood.

Day and Bamford (1998:6) further define four different styles or ways of reading: skimming (reading for quick understanding), scanning (reading to search for information), intensive reading (studying a text line by line with a focus on details of form, e.g. of grammar and vocabulary), and extensive reading (rapidly reading a large number of books for the pleasure, where information or general knowledge and the reader´s attention is on the meaning, not on the language or the text).

3.2.3 Reading in different languages

Many people around the world read in more than one language. In most cases, while these readers have learned to read in their first languages, they have also learned to be second or third language readers (Grabe, 2009:4).

Grabe (2009:141) explains that L1 instruction supports the development of L2 learning. He refers to the 'Common Underlying Proficiency Hypothesis' developed by Cummins (1996:110-111), which suggests that proficiency in L1 and L2 are interdependent across languages. This theory is also called the 'Interdependence Hypothesis'. The principle of linguistic interdependence is illustrated in the metaphor of an iceberg. For fully bilingual individuals, the two visible peaks of the iceberg are equal, but these are only the tip of the iceberg. Much of the knowledge is not seen, and below the surface there are the higher order thinking skills of, for example, analysis, synthesis, reasoning, generalizing and transferring[18]. It is then considered as an asset in the learning of English as a foreign language to be fluent in more than one language. However, the assumption that reading abilities, and the paths of their development are the same across all languages, is controversial. Grabe (2009:144-145) claims that there is now strong evidence that it is not likely to be true for specific sub-skills critical for reading, such as vocabulary knowledge, listening comprehension, morphology, syntax, and orthographic script-processing differences.

---

[18] http://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/new-resource-library/symposium-on-dual-language-education-3.pdf?sfvrsn=0

Another hypothesis in the relationship between L1 and L2 is that L2 readers need to know enough L2 vocabulary and structures so that L1 reading strategies and skills can be used efficiently to help comprehend the L2 text. Readers usually cross the threshold when they encounter L2 texts in which they know almost all of the words and can process the text fluently. The threshold will also vary depending on the reader, the text and the topic (Grabe and Stoller, 2002: 51; Grabe, 2009: 146).

Grabe (2009: 149) draws attention to major aspects of L1 and L2 reading development that are interactive and mutually supporting, where readers have control of their ability to understand a text. Strategic readers identify the purpose and type of text before reading, consider the general features of the form or type of the text, look at the introduction and the conclusion of the text to gain understanding about the topic, evaluate the purpose of the text while they read, make predictions based on prior knowledge about what will occur next in the text, compare, contrast, summarise, predict, infer, and conclude. These factors are distinct from Cummins' (1996) Common Underlying Proficiency, as these are not subject to education, instruction or specific linguistic knowledge, but are part of all learners' cognitive processing capabilities. Grabe (2009: 140) stresses the importance for teachers to understand that L2 pupils, coming from different L1 linguistic and cultural backgrounds, have differing profiles of strengths and weaknesses, not all of which will be reflected in L2 reading results.

Day and Bamford (1998: 24-25) also discuss the interaction between L1 and L2 and state that reading proficiency in L1 is one of the four elements that impacts on reading attitudes in a second language. L2 reading attitudes are acquired and developed according to L1 attitudes, previous experiences with learning to read other second languages, attitudes toward the L2, culture and people, and the L2 classroom environment. Favourable feelings for and experiences with the teacher, classmates, materials, activities, tasks, procedures and so on, can gorge positive attitudes toward reading in the L2. For example, pupils who find reading in their L1 unattractive will most likely be less than positive towards reading in a second language. Day and Bamford further argue that one of the most powerful tools to obtain proficiency in an L2 is extensive reading. Krashen (2004:9) also refers to studies that show the relationship between the amount read in a first language and the reported free reading and writing abilities in a second language.

Moreover, Atwell's (1998) reading and writing workshop method, developed for L1 reading, but which has also been adapted to an L2 context (Vatnaland, 2016), expects pupils to engage in extensive reading. Pupils need to be given the choice to read in order to be engaged in what they read. This is how pupils will enter the 'Reading Zone', defined by

Atwell (2007:11) as the invisible world where readers disappear into their reading. Atwell's approach is based on years of personal teaching experience and she believes that attitudes about reading can be changed by putting books into pupils' hands instead of teaching them isolated skills. According to Atwell (2007:18), 'It is reading that makes readers.' Teachers of L1 and L2 should therefore make sure to create the right opportunities in the classroom for their pupils to develop into readers for life.

3.2.4 Krashen's Monitor Theory

Krashen's Monitor Theory consists of five main hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis and the Affective Filter hypothesis. These five hypothesis are related to reading development and in these, Krashen makes a distinction between 'acquisition' and 'learning. Krashen´s Monitor Theory is of significance to the current study, where pupils are exposed to large amounts of second language input of their choice in a low anxiety setting.

The acquisition-learning hypothesis
For Krashen, the dominant mode of language learning is *acquisition*, the subconscious process of learning the language in informal settings and which is similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language. The subconscious acquisition of a language happens when the attention is focused on the meaning and not on the form of the language. In order to acquire language, Krashen suggests the learner must be exposed to large amounts of second language input that are meaningful, interesting, relevant, not grammatically sequenced, and happen in a low anxiety setting.

     Learning, in contrast, is conscious language knowledge, where formal rules are taught, practised and discussed (Krashen, 1982: 10). Both learning and acquisition complement each other in L2 development; the acquisition system is responsible for fluency and the production of L2, while the learning system impacts on language corrections. Learners may correct their mistakes through their knowledge about formal language rules, either before or after the production of the texts (Krashen, 1982: 15).

The natural order hypothesis
The acquisition of grammatical structures proceeds in a predictable order, where for example L1 learners of English acquire the grammatical morpheme *ing* before the third person *s*

morpheme. The order of acquisition for L2 is not the same as for L1 but, according to Krashen, there are some similarities. However, Krashen points out that the natural order hypothesis should not define the grammatical sequencing in language acquisition.

The monitor hypothesis

The monitor hypothesis explains the relationship between acquisition and learning; acquisition is central and learning is more peripheral. Krashen (1982:20) thus stresses that the goal of teachers and pedagogues should be to encourage acquisition and not learning.

The input hypothesis

The 'Input hypothesis', relates to acquisition of language and not learning. Krashen states that we acquire language by understanding language that contains structures that are beyond our current level of competence. This is represented by his 'i+1' hypothesis, where 'i' is the current level and 'i+1' is the next level. In this hypothesis, learners understand 'i+1' because they are focused on the meaning and not on the form. The 'i+1' level of competence is reached with the help of context or extra-linguistic information which makes it comprehensible.

Krashen supports his hypothesis by referring to how first languages are acquired by children. Adults (caretakers) modify their speech in order to make sure that children understand it and in order to meet the current competence level of the child. Grammar is not in focus, but the message is. The message often reflects the common interest of both caretaker and child and is predictable. The same happens in second language acquisition. The input hypothesis predicts that these simplified codes will be very useful for the L2 acquirer, just as caretakers' speech is useful for the child (Krashen, 1982:25).

The affective filter hypothesis

The concept of the 'affective filter' was first proposed by Dulay and Burt (1977). It states how affective factors relate to the L2 acquisition process (Krashen, 1982: 30). Language acquisition happens in a low-anxiety environment in which pupils are self-confident and motivated. The teacher should both supply comprehensible input to the pupils, input at the level of the pupil, and create a motivating situation in a low anxiety environment.

3.2.5 The importance of motivation

Motivation is what makes people do or not do something, according to Day and Bamford (1998: 27), and implies both expectation and value. People need to value the task they undertake and they need to expect to accomplish the task successfully. Pupils are motivated to read when they expect to understand their reading. If they feel that they will not be able to understand what they read, they will most likely not even begin to read the text. Day and Bamford (1998: 28) go even further by saying that in an ideal classroom, pupils place a high premium on reading, believing it to be of value and a source of pleasure and information. Pupils may try to read difficult texts because they value the result of the effort.

Readers often have different motivations for reading in the L2 when compared with reading in the L1 (Grabe, 2009: 134-136). In many L1 settings, people read because they have certain types of expertise or skills that they are willing to develop, or they read for enjoyment because reading is relatively effortless. L1 readers also carry out work-related tasks that involve extended periods of reading. In academic settings, people read in order to learn and be challenged by new ideas and information that they encounter. L2 readers often encounter different kinds of texts than in their L1 settings, particularly in EFL contexts. In the L2 classroom, pupils might read short excerpts of texts, and sometimes texts that are simplified. Grabe (2009: 135) further states that every person has a unique combination of motivations for reading, whether in the L1 or the L2, but that there are clear situations in which reading in the L2 will vary from L1 reading in terms of purposes and goals (and motivation is driven by goals, purposes, and persistence).

In school, teachers try to create engaging and motivating lessons in order to guarantee the best participation from the class and the best learning benefits for the pupils. Any proven technique that guarantees increased motivation and positive attitudes of the pupils is therefore attractive to teachers. Atwell (2015: 21) experienced with her reading and writing workshops that pupil choice of what to read is synonymous with pupil engagement and stated: 'My students become avid, skilled readers because they decide what they will read.' She felt also that it was her responsibility as an English teacher to provide her pupils with a large classroom library with interesting and engaging books to invite and develop the pupils' engagement with literature.

Exposure to the target language plays a vital role in the motivation to learn a second language and exposure to L2 at a young age is crucial. Johnson and Krug (1980), cited in Krashen (1982: 41), reported in their research that the amount of leisure time spent speaking

and listening to English had an impact on English proficiency The exposure of Norwegian teenagers to English-speaking youth culture therefore plays an important role in the acquisition of English, as stressed by Hellekjær (2009).

3.3 Extensive reading

Extensive reading (ER) means reading large amounts of books rapidly, where 'the purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information, and general knowledge' (Day and Bamford, 1998: 6). Extensive reading has been referred to as 'Book Flood' (Elley and Mangubhai, 1983), 'free voluntary reading' or 'pleasure reading' (Krashen, 1994), 'pleasure reading to reach the Reading Zone' (Atwell, 2007), or 'uninterrupted sustained silent reading' (McCracken, 1971: 521).

Extensive reading goes back to the 1920s and the work of Harold Palmer, who advocated that pupils should read a great deal and read quickly (Day and Bamford, 1998). However, it was only in the late 1960s and early 1970s that extensive reading gained more attention (Grabe, 2009: 312) with the concept of 'hooked on books' originating from Fader and Schaevitz (1966).

Different studies have been carried out in the field of extensive reading. One of the first and most comprehensive ones was the Book Flood Project carried out by Elley and Mangubhai (1983) on the impact of reading on primary school ESL learners in Fiji in 1981. Book floods, recommended since the 1950s, often involve stocking a classroom library with 50-100 books and encouraging pupils to read these books independently (Grabe, 2009: 312) The Fiji project showed that the primary school children enjoyed reading when high interest well-illustrated books were provided and that they could become hooked onto the reading habit even if their background did not provide much opportunity to read. Elley and Mangubhai (1983: 67) concluded that the only formula for raising literacy standards in L2 situations was to provide pupils with a range of suitable, well-illustrated, high-interest story books and to set aside time in the school program to ensure that they were widely read. It is important to note that in the early days of extensive reading, the idea of reading a great deal, reading quickly and real-world experiences were vital (Day, 2015: 294).

In another study, Hafiz and Tudor (1989) conducted an experiment among adolescent Pakistani EFL learners born in the UK but who spoke Punjabi at home. The study was conducted in a secondary school in England with a three-month extensive EFL programme

using graded readers[19]. Each day, the pupils read for an hour from a selection of 100 reading books. The hypothesis of the researchers was that pleasure reading would show improvements in the writing skills of the participants. The experiment resulted in impressive gains in reading proficiency, positive affect, and a general increase in the pupils' linguistic competence (Elley, 2001: 239; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989).

Krashen carried out several surveys of extensive reading among adults and university pupils in 1994 and 1997 and these resulted in proven gains in reading proficiency and positive affect (Day and Bamford, 1998: 34). Krashen´s (2004: 37) review of the studies on the impact of reading on literacy showed that reading is good for learners and that the only way to acquire language is to understand messages through comprehensible input in a low anxiety environment (see section 3.2.4). This is exactly what free voluntary reading does (see section 3.6.1). However, as argued by Grabe (2009: 312), the role of extensive reading in classrooms around the world is remarkably small and he wonders why extensive reading is ignored when it is potentially so important for fluent reading.

Pupils benefit from reading a great deal in the new language (Day and Bamford 2004: 1). Research studies (Arnold, 2009; Atwell, 2015; Cho and Krashen, 1994; Day and Bamford 2004; Elley, 1991; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Krashen 2004; Susser and Robb 1990; Waring, 2006) show that pupils become better and more confident readers, they write better, their listening and speaking abilities improve, and their vocabularies become richer. They also develop positive attitudes toward and increased motivation to study the new language. Krashen's (2004: 37) list of studies, showing that reading enhances literacy development, leads to what should be an uncontroversial conclusion. The result of these research studies support an even stronger conclusion, that reading is the only way to become a good reader and that we learn to read by reading.

Day and Bamford (1998: 8) claim that successful extensive reading programmes have ten characteristics and they encourage teachers to use them. They define these ten characteristics, or top ten reading principles, as what they believe are the basic ingredients of extensive reading. Firstly, pupils should read as much as possible from a variety of easy materials on a wide range of topics available. They should select what they want to read for pleasure, information and general understanding. Reading is its own reward. Reading materials should be well within the linguistic competence of the pupils in terms of vocabulary and grammar, and it should be individual and silent. Reading speed should usually be faster

---

[19] Literature adapted for language learners, categorized into levels of difficulty, often according to the number of headwords.

rather than slower. Teachers should orient pupils to the goals of the program, explain the methodology and keep track of what each pupil reads. Finally, they should guide pupils in getting the most out of the program and act as reading role models for the pupils.

3.3.1 Research on reading in Norwegian EFL classrooms

Numerous studies have been published about various aspects of reading in the EFL classroom in Norway, ranging from primary schools to university level, but none of them have dealt specifically with online extensive reading in an upper secondary EFL class. The different studies reviewed here present distinctive aspects of reading relevant to the present case study and stress the benefits of extensive reading. Some interesting research has also been carried out in the field of digital reading, but in a L1 context, and it is presented in section 3.6.

As discussed by Arnold (2009), most research on extensive reading has focused on beginning or intermediate learners of English. In Norway, a good deal of research is being conducted on L1 reading in primary school and lower secondary school and the Reading Centre of the University of Stavanger sponsors many research projects focusing on young L1 learners. However, some research has been carried out in EFL upper primary classroom, for example the study by Gilje (2014) among 6th grade primary EFL teachers and pupils. The study emphasized the importance of access to a wide selection of reading materials in in-service courses. With the help of semi-structured interviews with eight 6th grade EFL-teachers, Gilje showed that the teachers primarily based their teaching of EFL reading on textbooks, using them in similar ways, but also used additional reading materials to varying extents. Gilje argued that pre-service and in-service education play an important role in the choice of reading materials and practices by the EFL teachers.

Another researcher, Myrset (2014), aimed to find out the cognitive and affective benefits of the use Readers Theatre in the classroom through teacher interviews, pupil journal entries, and observations. Myrset based his research on a case study of using Readers Theatre, a group reading aloud activity in which pupils rehearse and perform texts, in a 6th grade EFL class in Norway. The study revealed that Readers Theatre was both an enjoyable and engaging method in EFL. The pupils were enthusiastic and they increased their confidence in reading and performing. At the same time, they also improved their reading accuracy and fluency.

When it comes to lower secondary school in Norway, some research has been conducted on the benefits of extensive reading. The awareness of the importance of reading

among reluctant lower secondary EFL readers was underlined by an action research project carried out by Byberg (2015). Pre- and post-intervention semi-structured interviews with EFL pupils and teachers showed that the majority of the learners were positive towards extensive reading as a method in learning English as a foreign language. In addition, reflecting on the importance of reading in English, all of the participants viewed reading in English as important and believed that reading promotes writing and reading skills.

In yet another research project on EFL reading among lower secondary EFL pupils, Vatnaland (2016) analysed the effect of reading and writing workshops, modelled on Atwell (1998), in a lower secondary EFL class of nine pupils. Vatnaland observed the development of the pupils' English writing competence, motivation and attitudes towards reading and writing in English, and their motivation and attitudes towards the English subject in general. Vatnaland noted more positive attitudes towards reading and writing at the end of the programme and also discovered the benefits of extensive reading as a form of meaningful and comprehensible language input in the EFL class. All of the pupils in her study improved their English writing after a year of the workshop-based teaching method and became confident and motivated English writers. What the pupils specifically mentioned as positive differences between the workshop-based teaching method and regular teaching were that no textbook was used, no typical writing tasks were assigned, and that they were allowed to make more choices about their reading and writing.

Another researcher, Bakke (2010: 89), looked at teachers' attitudes towards reading in EFL-instruction and how reading was taught in class. Bakke carried out a small qualitative study where she interviewed ten EFL teachers at six different lower secondary schools. Bakke concluded that even though the EFL teachers were aware of the importance of reading, few of them incorporated reading in their lessons. She revealed a lack of systematic teaching of reading among her informants and wished that the pupils had been given more time devoted to reading in class. Her results indicated that there were some tendencies in the teaching of reading in EFL-instruction that still needed to be addressed in order to improve pupils' abilities to use reading as a powerful tool in their daily lives.

Research has also been carried out with EFL upper secondary pupils. Hellekjær (2005) conducted a quantitative, descriptive and exploratory study among senior upper secondary level pupils from the general studies branch. The study showed that the level of English proficiency among Norwegian upper secondary pupils was inadequate and that two thirds of the pupils in the study would not manage the level required for admission to universities in English-speaking countries. They would furthermore encounter difficulties to follow higher

education due to reading problems related to poor language proficiency exacerbated by a counterproductive tendency towards careful reading with excessive focus on the meaning of unknown words.

Faye-Schjøll (2009) conducted research on the importance of reading strategies at the upper secondary level. Faye-Schjøll used twelve semi-structured interviews and discovered that L2 pupils in upper secondary school were not familiar with systematic reading instruction or reading strategies, and that teachers did not spend time reading or teaching reading in class. Faye-Schjøll noticed that these skills had not been properly taught in lower secondary and recommended more in-service education for teachers. This would make teachers more confident that they knew what reading strategies were and how to teach them. The next step would be to increase the amount that was read in class in order to create more opportunity to work on reading.

Haugaland upper secondary school started an extensive reading project in 2014 with all the pupils of the school, where the first lesson of the day was a 20-minute reading session in either Norwegian or English (Preston et al., 2015). The project was followed up by the Norwegian Reading Centre of the University of Stavanger. The positive results and positive attitudes of the pupils towards reading convinced the Thor Heyerdahl upper secondary school in Larvik to carry out a similar project[20]. The benefits of the project, i.e. the positive attitudes towards reading, were monitored through reading tests, questionnaires answered by the pupils and the teachers, evaluation from the pupils' council, and regular meetings with researchers from the Norwegian Reading Centre at the University of Stavanger.

Finally, at the university level, Arnsby (2014) investigated beginner university students' academic English reading proficiency, paying special attention to students studying the natural sciences and mathematics. With the help of qualitative interviews, Arnsby collected data from 142 students from the two faculties at the University of Oslo. Her findings indicated that there had been an improvement in university students' academic English reading proficiency since 2005, but that students still struggled with the reading of English course material. They struggled with fluent reading and with handling unfamiliar vocabulary. They were not familiar enough with the use of reading strategies and with how to read in an efficient way. The most concerning results of her study were that the respondents did not become more proficient readers of English by completing the advanced English courses in

---

[20] http://lesesenteret.uis.no/leseopplaering/lesing-i-videregaaende/20-minutter-lesing-hver-dag-gir-resultater-pa-videregaende-skole-article97990-12553.html

upper secondary school (VG2 and VG3) compared to those who only finished the compulsory first-year English course (VG1).

Finally, Thodal (2014) conducted research among university students in the light of Hellekjær´s (2005) results. With online questionnaires answered by two groups of about 130 university students studying British and Irish Literature and American Literature, Thodal investigated the role of literature and the students' reading habits in the transitional period between upper secondary school and university. The thesis focused on extensive reading of literature and the pupils' motivation for reading and learning about literature. The research aimed at evaluating whether English proficiency among pupils was a problem or not. The students reported reading habits that they themselves considered acceptable, though not necessarily sufficiently adequate at an academic level.

All these research studies stress the importance of EFL reading from primary school to university level and how important it is for teachers to devote time to the teaching of reading and to reading itself.

3.3.2 Use of newspapers and magazines in extensive reading

Day and Bamford (1998: 100) advocate the use of newspapers in extensive reading programmes in addition to other reading materials. Newspapers are cheap and widely available and are a superb resource for spontaneous reading for intermediate and advanced pupils. The layout, division in content categories, such as local news, world news, editorials and the rhetorical organization of the articles with headlines, summary paragraphs, detail paragraphs, and photo captions are broadly similar across many cultures, which makes reading easier. Newspaper articles also tend to be short, which means that readers can quickly get a sense of accomplishment from finishing them.

Day and Bamford (1998) also claim that people typically read only those parts of a paper that interest them, which is motivating. Second language learners can find an article about a topic they are familiar with if they have heard about the same news or topics in their own language. Some L2 learners may also have background knowledge in certain areas, such as international politics, music or football, which makes it possible for them to make more sense of difficult reading material.

Another argument in favour of using newspapers in extensive reading is the fact that the variety of content in a newspaper provides some excellent reading practice in the appropriate choice of reading style. By browsing through a newspaper in order to find a

specific section, the reader will practise skimming and scanning. By reading articles and captions, the reader is invited to read more carefully and to practise close reading for as long as the article holds the reader's interest.

Day and Bamford (2004) also see the benefits of reading both tabloid newspapers and broadsheet newspapers. Tabloid newspapers, with their shorter articles and catchy headlines and pictures, appear well-suited to extensive reading for second language readers who do not want to invest much time and effort in reading, whereas broadsheet newspapers are useful for advanced-level pupils. Magazines, being colourful and with an emphasis on the visual, can also help readers understand the context. They can be browsed rather than read from cover to cover and so can be quickly finished.

Krashen (2004: 113) refers to the power of magazines to promote and improve reading ability. Magazines are light reading, just as comic books and teen romance are, and are ideal sources of comprehensible and interesting reading material for some acquirers of English as a second language. Krashen (2004: 114) defines magazines as the mass media that is most directed to specific readers' interests and magazines are therefore the most valuable stimuli to reading.

3.3.2.1 Research on newspapers/magazines in extensive reading

Few studies have been conducted on the use of newspapers in extensive reading. The webpage of the Extensive Reading Foundation[21], a non-profit organisation supporting and promoting extensive reading, has an annotated bibliography of about 600 papers on extensive reading, and among these only five studies concerned the use of newspapers or magazines.

The first study mentioned in the annotated bibliography is a study carried out in France (Anthony A. E., 1943), which asserted the need to combine both extensive and intensive reading of simple books, magazines or newspapers in order to develop the pleasure of reading. Anthony stated that in order to see the benefits reading could bring to pupils, teachers had to forget all noble aspirations for developing a taste for good literature in their pupils, but needed to ensure that they were surrounded with reading materials which would attract their attention and be sufficiently simple to arouse their curiosity.

In another study, Kyongho and Paul Nation (1989) described how a particular way of selecting stories reduces the vocabulary load and increases the repetitions of new vocabulary for the learners with a limited vocabulary knowledge when they read newspaper articles. Their study looked at two ways of selecting newspaper stories: selecting running stories, i.e. a

---

[21] http://erfoundation.org/bib

story and its follow-ups, and selecting unrelated stories and the effect that they have on the repetitions of words outside the 2,000 most frequent words which are assumed to be the vocabulary of EFL high school graduates entering university. Running stories provide more repetitions of words and therefore reduce the vocabulary load and provide better conditions for the acquisition of words outside the 2,000 most frequent ones.

Grabe and Stoller (1997) carried out a five-month case study where they explored the extent to which extensive newspaper reading in Portuguese as a second language, without formal instruction, but with the aid of a bilingual dictionary, would help make progress in vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension and listening comprehension. Both authors concluded that extensive reading by reading the newspaper is a very effective way to develop vocabulary knowledge and other language abilities over time.

Cho and Kim (2005) investigated the impact of dedicating a small percentage of instructional time to read newspapers specifically written for EFL students in elementary school in Korea. No class time was set aside for free reading of newspapers, but there were numerous opportunities during the school day for pupils to read the newspapers in the newspaper corner. Progress was monitored and most likely attributable both to the newspaper-reading activities in class and the newspaper reading they did on their own outside of class. The results showed a growing interest for reading among the pupils.

Finally, the survey carried out by Arnold (2009) in her advanced German as a foreign language class is the closest to the present case study. Arnold designed an online extensive reading programme where students read magazines, newspapers, and literary texts from an online collection. This study will be further discussed in section 3.6.2.

3.4 Digital reading or New Literacy

The International Reading Association, in their position statement about new literacies and 21 century technologies, state that digital technology has affected and changed the traditional way people read and write and that there is an extensive debate about what new literacies are and how to define the term[22]. However, there are four common elements that apply to nearly all of the current perspectives of research on new literacies (Coiro et al., 2008: 7-16): (1) The Internet requires new social practices, skills, strategies, and dispositions for their effective use; (2) New literacies are central to full civic, economic, and personal participation in a

---

[22] https://www.literacyworldwide.org/docs/default-source/where-we-stand/new-literacies-21st-century-position-statement.pdf?sfvrsn=6

global community; (3) New literacies rapidly change as defining technologies change; and (4) New literacies are multiple, multimodal, and multifaceted; thus, they benefit from multiple lenses seeking to understand how to better support pupils in a digital age.

Observers have wondered whether computers threaten language and literacy and whether they are responsible for the decline of language and literacy standards. Research studies have found little reason to panic (Kern, 2015: 216), but researchers have nevertheless had a close look at what the Internet and online reading is doing to people's brains. In a digital environment, hyperreading[23] is a necessity. Moreover, Hayles (2010: 66) states that: 'There is considerable evidence that hyperreading differs significantly from typical print reading, and moreover that hyperreading stimulates different brain functions than print reading.' Hayles refers to research showing that web pages are typically read in a 'F' pattern. A person reads the first two or three lines of the text thoroughly across the page, but as the eye travels down the screen, the scanned length becomes smaller, and by the time the bottom of the page is reached, the eye is travelling in a vertical line aligned with the left margin.

Carr (2008: 1) is also interested in studying what the Internet is doing to the brain and he fears that we lose our ability to read and think deeply by our tendency to skim and to scan but not to reflect when we read online. According to Carr, the Internet's virtues of connectivity, multiplicity, velocity, and interactivity translate into short attention span, reduced comprehension, heightened distraction from irrelevant information, and compromised critical thinking. Carr agrees that the Internet is good for gathering and filtering information, for problem-solving and collaboration, but he holds up the book, however, as the medium that leads to deeper and more critical reading. Carr (2008: 8) explains the difficulty to focus on a digital text:

> When the Net absorbs a medium, that medium is re-created in the Net´s image. It injects the medium´s content with hyperlinks, blinking ads, and other digital gewgaws, and it surrounds the content with the content of all the other media it has absorbed. A new e-mail message, for instance, may announce its arrival as we are glancing over the latest headlines at a newspaper's site. The result is to scatter out attention and diffuse our concentration.

Carr refers to studies demonstrating evidence that web-based reading was characterized by distraction. In the study carried out by Zhu (1999: 331-358) for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching at the University of Michigan, test subjects read the same online

---

[23] defined by James Sosnoski in 1999 as reader-directed, screen-based, computer-assisted reading. Examples are search queries filtered by key-words, skimming, pecking, i.e. pulling out a few items from a longer text (Hayles, 2010:66)

passage, but varied the number of links. The first group read the texts in a linear fashion and the second group read the same texts with links. As the number of links increased, comprehension declined, as measured by written summaries and multiple-choice tests. Zhu found that the readers who used the links understood less well than the readers who chose to read the texts in linear fashion and the research showed the negative effect of distraction and the increased demands of decision-making on reading performance. Carr believes that this has to do with the relation of working memory to long-term memory. Hayles (2010: 68) explains: ' The small distractions involved in reading on the Internet with clicking on links, navigating a page, and scrolling down or up increase the cognitive load on working memory and thereby reduce the amount of new material it can hold'. With a traditional linear text, fewer decisions need to be made about how to read the text and in what order and the transfer to long-term memory happens more efficiently, especially when the readers reread passages and pause to reflect on them as they go along.

Digital reading is also discussed by scholars in Norway and recent research carried out among tenth graders in Norway by Mangen et al. (2013) looked at the effects on reading comprehension of reading linear texts on paper versus on a computer screen. Mangen et al. (2013: 67) concluded, like Carr, that online reading leads to poorer reading comprehension than reading the same texts on paper due to increasing cognitive demands. If texts are longer than a page, scrolling and the lack of spatiotemporal markers of the digital texts to aid memory and reading comprehension might impede reading performance. The researchers express their concerns about the ongoing digitalization in the Norwegian education system with reading being increasingly screen-based and the impact it has on reading comprehension and assessment outcomes.

In her research, Eriksen (2010) studied how lower secondary pupils read L1 online newspapers. She limited the reading material to two Norwegian webpages, *VG.no* and *aftenbladet.no*. Pupils could choose what they wanted to read and the purpose of reading was pleasure reading; no assignments were linked to the reading. Eriksen monitored how long it took for the pupils to find an article to read, which elements they focused on and how they navigated on these webpages. She found that boys used less time to orient themselves on the webpages and that only two boys used the menu page to navigate in the newspapers, whereas all the girls used the menu to orient themselves. With an eye-movement tracking device, Eriksen monitored that all the pupils avoided looking at commercials and used mainly the verbal texts as a source of information. Most of the pupils chose articles related to sports, celebrities, news relevant to children or teenagers, or sensational news.

Finally, Blikstad-Balas (2016) studied digital literacy practices of Norwegian pupils who had a personal laptop for school use in an upper secondary school in Oslo. Blikstad-Balas highlights the dichotomy between the school literacy commonly based on canonical texts requiring distinct literary practices based on academic ways of thinking and the use of academic language and the personal, informal and vernacular literacies of the pupils on the Internet. The use of laptops brings entertainment into the classroom and the lack of relevant educational Internet-based practices imply that the pupils might lack experiences with academic literacy practices.

3.4.1 Free voluntary web surfing (FVS)

Reading, in particular for young people, is increasingly screen-based rather than paperbound. In the Norwegian school system, these issues have become highly relevant as texts are increasingly distributed as PDF-files and there is a shift toward using computer-presented documents in realistic test situations (Mangen et al., 2013).

Krashen (2007 [2011: 68-69]) advocates that fluency comes with reading and states that Free Voluntary Web Surfing (FVS) promises to be a great help for second language acquirers. Krashen refers to the computer as both a skill-builder in language and literacy development and a good source of written comprehensible input. FVS encourages EFL pupils to wander through the Internet and read what interests them, following their interests from site to site, and from site to print (Krashen, 2011: 72). Day and Bamford (2002) argue that: 'The Internet is indeed an endless source of written materials available on a wide range of topics and at different levels of difficulty, where pupils can follow their own interest in the choice of material at their own level of difficulty.'

Reading for pleasure, as advocated by Krashen (2004), has a documented impact on the reading competences of pupils and offers numerous possible implementations in the classroom. As today's pupils are digital natives, heavily influenced by the Internet, extensive reading of the news from the Internet from a wide variety of materials available may be more attractive to them than intensive reading from the textbook. Atwell (2007: 11) wrote that no child ever grew to become a skilled, passionate, habitual, critical reader via a fat, bland textbook. Krashen (2011: 77) concludes by saying that:

> We should at least consider the most obvious, least expensive, and least complex application of the computer to language education, especially with those students who have already mastered the technical aspects of Internet use. All we need to do is to encourage them to something that they already enjoy doing in their first language.

Reilly (2012) stresses the fact that the young generation of today, often called the Generation Y or even the Net Gen, were born into a world of information technology. They are therefore naturally more visual than textual and therefore show a reduced tendency to read. Reilly advocates that for extensive reading programmes to work, they need to put into the pupils' hands highly visual reading material that focuses on modern-day issues. Day (2015) also believes that the Internet will become very prominent in the practice of extensive reading and that the Internet could become a major source of reading material, both in the classroom and outside of the class.

The power to choose what to read, even though within certain limitations for the pupils in the present study, can also result in each learner becoming more independent and taking charge of his/her learning. It is important for pupils to find their own way to navigate safely on the Internet and to be able to locate reliable pages to look for the information needed. FVS also allows teachers to differentiate their teaching to the pupils by recommending reading adjusted to the pupils' level of proficiency in English.

3.4.2 Research on FVS in language acquisition worldwide

One of the first reported research studies on extensive reading online was carried out by Sun (2002: 438), who implemented an experimental online reading platform for EFL college learners in Taiwan. The platform provided learners with a large number of texts about different topics, of different styles of writing, genres, and levels of difficulty. The results of Sun's research showed that the pupils held a positive attitude toward the reading system, the pupils' Internet reading ability was improved, and they became more capable of finding reading materials. These were all important for establishing the learners' independence for autonomy in L2 reading.

Another study (Dreyer, 2003: 362), carried out in South Africa among first-year EFL university students, showed the benefits of extensive reading from resources posted on the university's learning platform on reading comprehension results among students who received strategic reading instruction in this environment. The accessibility of the resources and the wide variety of texts increased the pupils' background knowledge and helped them to become more confident readers.

Additionally, Cho and Kim (2004) reported benefits of the use of the Internet in EFL teaching during the research they carried out with children in EFL classes in Korea. The

children reading interesting stories of their choice from the Internet gained significantly more in English than their peers.

In yet another study carried out by the Michigan State University, Jackson et al. (2006), cited in Krashen (2011: 73), provided computers with Internet access to 140 teenagers from low-income families and reported that more Internet use resulted in improved reading, as reflected by grades and standardized tests. Jackson et al. suggested that self-motivated reading of these texts was the cause of the gains in reading and that FVS is more appropriate for intermediate pupils, but that one should accept the fact that it takes a while to find a topic of interest.

Pinto-Silva (2006: 85) conducted yet another study on EFL extensive reading through the Internet among college students in Venezuela and found that it strengthened the students' learning. The pupils capitalized on the opportunity to gain access and read from the vast amount of information available on the web, were ensured access to updated and varied information, developed discipline in the use of their own time, and took the necessary risks to explore the texts, evaluate and make their own decisions on what to read now, and what to postpone for later. The students had more choices to read texts of their interest and they also found it easier, faster and more practical to read online than reading from printed books.

Arnold (2009: 343) conducted the study that is the closest to the present case study, with an online extensive reading programme among German second language learners. Participants were seven undergraduates and one graduate student. All of them were English native speakers aged from 18 to 23 and had studied German for two to seven years. These students of mixed proficiency levels were instructed to read German reading material from the Internet during one semester, according to their own interest. In the first lesson, Arnold's students received instructions and a list of websites to begin their search for reading material, search engines, web portals, sites of magazines and newspapers, and an online collection of literary texts. The extensive readings were often used for follow-up discussions, as in the current case study, and after each reading session, the pupils filled out a reading report in German, which was part of their final grade.

This modified extensive reading programme impacted on the students' reading motivation, attitudes, confidence in L2 reading, reading ability, and reading for pleasure outside class. Arnold stated that online materials were rarely used for extensive reading, whereas it is much easier for students to enjoy reading extensively whatever they want online, due to the popularity of Internet use in almost all universities, colleges, and schools. In

addition, students can also access the Internet through their personal electronic devices, such as their phones and can easily access their own learning anywhere and at any time they want.

Arnold concludes with the findings that this extensive reading programme achieved its goals by increasing the students' motivation to read. They became more confident in their ability to read L2 texts, improved their reading ability, and it encouraged them to read for pleasure outside of class. She stressed the fact that by allowing students to select the texts they wanted to read, they took the responsibility for the text and the reading onto themselves. She also reports the importance for the teacher to help weak students to navigate on the Internet. Some of her students experienced difficulties in finding material to read because of their unfamiliarity with German websites (Arnold, 2009: 354). Based on her findings, Arnold planned to implement this program on a larger scale by increasing the amount of reading and asking the pupils to read outside of class instead of reserving instructional time for it. In personal correspondence with the researcher, the author has admitted that her research agenda has changed since the publication of this article and she has investigated other aspects of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) since then[24].

Guo (2012) carried out research among Taiwanese college students where she examined the effects of EFL extensive reading of online materials on students' language proficiency and students' attitudes toward the extensive reading activity. The results of the study indicated a strong relationship between extensive reading and vocabulary development. The students also became more involved in class discussions. However, the limitation of this study is that it only involved the reading of a set of ten online reading materials related to the course topics, which is a serious limitation of the common understanding of the foundations of extensive reading, which happens often and in a large quantity and in a wide variety of topics and genres.

Robb (2013: 234) explains that studies concerning the effectiveness of ER in an EFL environment have been limited. The time the pupils devote to extensive reading replaces another classroom activity. Few teachers and few school-wide curricula have implemented extensive reading, even though many studies have indicated the benefits of the method. Book acquisition, management, pupil motivation and record keeping have played against the widespread adoption of extensive reading in the classroom. In Robb's correspondence with the researcher[25], Robb stressed the lack of research done on online extensive reading. His explanation is the difficulty for teachers to integrate online extensive reading in the classroom

---

[24] E-mail from Mike Arnold dated 6 December 2016, to be retrieved in Appendix 11
[25] E-mail from Thomas N. Robb dated 8 December 2016, to be retrieved in Appendix 13

as they need to track the reading for grading purposes. Robb stresses the fact that the management of online extensive programmes provides too much work for teachers and that this is what has prevented online ER from becoming popular.

Finally, Waring[26], one of the founding members of the Extensive Reading Foundation[27] together with R. R. Day and J. Bamford also stressed in an e-mail to the researcher the importance of allowing students to read what they want. Waring explained the lack of research on online reading of authentic news in the EFL classroom with the fact that most EFL teaching globally happens with students who are not able to read native-like texts online. Because of this, research tends to focus on much lower level students.

3.5 Use of quizzes to test reading comprehension

Day and Bamford (1998) elaborate on the principle that reading is its own reward. Krashen (2004: 116) argues that research suggests that: 'The intrinsic reward of reading is so great that it will stimulate additional reading.' The motivation of the reader to read the text is at the centre of the extensive reading experience and this is why extensive reading is usually not followed by comprehension questions (Robb, 2015). In reality, as stated by Cheetham et al. (2016: 3-4), institutional requirements for assessment in the form of reading accomplishments often outweigh the principle of reading for pleasure and this is why several online reading programmes are available on the market.

These online reading programmes, also called literacy programmes, are designed to enhance basic literacy skills from word recognition and vocabulary building to reading comprehension and critical thinking, and their purpose is to integrate personalized learning into classroom instruction. Some require a paid subscription while others are available for free. The main advantages of these programmes are that they provide a flexible set of resources, engage pupils, provide immediate feedback, keep records of pupils' progress, and offer the opportunity for pupils to manage their own learning.

Robb's (2015: 150) claims are similar by stating that without any follow-up activities, there would be no reading at all. Robb finds it indispensable to use tracking tools to manage

---

[26] E-mail from Rob Waring dated 21 December 2016, to be retrieved in Appendix 12
[27] The Extensive Reading Foundation is a not-for-profit, charitable organization whose purpose is to support and promote extensive reading. Dr. Richard R. Day, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, and Julian Bamford, then of Bunkyo University, Shonan Campus co-founded the Extensive Reading Foundation in 2004, using the royalties of their book, *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom* (Cambridge), as its initial source of funding. http://erfoundation.org/wordpress/about/

the pupils' completion of their ER requirements and this is why he developed, together with the Extensive Reading Association, the online reading platform called MReader, where more than 4,500 graded reader reading comprehension tests are gathered. Robb's platform is used by 80,000 pupils in about 25 countries (Robb, 2015: 146). The platform provides instant feedback with game-like features, which provides pupils with information about their progression and the level achieved in order for them to monitor their own progress, just as is the case with ReadTheory (see section 4.3.4), used in the present study.

Even if ER proponents, such as Day and Bamford and Krashen, infer that teacher evaluation of ER can negatively affect pupils' L2 reading attitudes and progress from becoming independent, self-motivated readers, this interpretation could be misleading. According to Stoeckel et al. (2012), quoted in Cheetham et al. (2016: 4), external incentives can promote reading behaviour that is autonomous and personally rewarding in the long-term. Robb (2015) found that the less motivated pupils generally appreciate confirmation that they have understood the reading and they benefit from online programmes like MReader with immediate feed-back on the reading comprehension. This is also what is expected on the ReadTheory webpage, where gamification is expected to encourage pupils to practise on the webpage and improve their scores (Romeo, 2016).

3.6 Summary

What impacts the most in L2 reading is the quantity of texts read. Extensive reading is one way to acquire proficiency in a language. The benefits of extensive reading have been documented through the numerous research studies carried out in this field internationally and in Norway in the context of EFL learning.

The shift from paper to screen has impacted on the reading abilities of learners and reading has become more and more digital. Few research projects have been carried out on online extensive reading. The prerequisites are that learners have access to a digital device at school and that the school has access to Internet. There are still very few countries where schools actively use the Internet. Most of the recent studies about the benefits of online extensive reading come from Asia. Some schools use platforms with graded readers to carry out extensive reading outside of the classroom, where the progress is monitored by the teacher on the website. Scholars refer to the issue of time involved in the monitoring and management of the extensive reading programmes as a main limitation, discouraging teachers to use them

actively in their teaching. Another worrying element is the way online reading affects reading comprehension and several scholars are concerned about this.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research project, subjects and methods applied in the study and to explain how the research aims were addressed. The research was based on a case study that took place from September 20th 2016 to January 10th 2017.

The research questions of the study aimed to find out the impact of free voluntary web surfing on the pupils' reading comprehension, the effect of the programme on the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online, the effect of the programme on the pupils' reading routines and interests, and whether the programme helped the pupils to become more critical readers. In order to answer the research questions, mixed methods research was used, i.e. the researcher gathered qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of classroom observations while the pupils were reading, the results gathered from primarily open-ended questionnaires, individual interviews with eight focus pupils, and texts published by the pupils on their blogs. The quantitative data constituted the results of the pupils' reading performances on a computer-based reading website compared to the performances of a control group on the reading comprehension website used.

The chapter explains how the research aims were addressed and why these approaches were chosen. The chapter is therefore divided into sections that deal with different aspects of the research. Section 4.2 describes the nature of the research as both a case study and evaluation research. Section 4.3 presents the four different phases of the reading project. Section 4.4 addresses the double role of the author as researcher and also the teacher of the pupils. Section 4.5 describes the school where the study was carried out and the subjects who followed the three-month free web surfing project. Section 4.6 provides an overview of the research methods applied in the study. Section 4.7 deals with the data analysis procedures, section 4.8 with the validity and reliability of the study, and section 4.9 with the ethical issues tied to the research. Finally, section 4.10 provides a summary of the chapter.

4.2 Nature of the research

The research is classroom research as this is a study where the classroom is the main research site (Dörnyei, 2007:176). It involved the 22 pupils of one class of VG2 International English and the six pupils of a second class of International English constituting a control group.

Classroom research was initiated in the 1920s and 1930s in the United States, investigating the effectiveness of teacher behaviour and talk. Lightbrown (2000:438) describes modern classroom research as the research carried out by the educator to identify and better understand the roles of the different participants in classroom interaction and to look at the impact that certain types of instruction may have on learning and the factors which promote or inhibit learning. This study can be characterized as both a case study and an evaluation research. These two approaches will be elaborated on in separate sections.

4.2.1 Case study

Case studies are important sources of educational research data. Johnson and Christensen (2012:395) define case study research as research that provides a detailed account and analysis of one or more cases. Stake (1995: XI) defines case study as the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case. Case studies provide a unique example of real people in real situations and recognize that there are many variables operating in a single case. Case studies tend to blend different types of data and this is why they often require mixed methods research. Dörnyei (2007:155) suggests that the case study approach is recommendable when exploring what is yet unknown territory. As far as the researcher knows, there have not been any case studies conducted in Norway similar to the present one.

4.2.2 Evaluation research

When interventions and social or educational programs aimed at improving various conditions are implemented, evaluation research is often carried out to determine how well the programmes work in real-world settings and to show how they might be improved (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:10). The object of evaluation studies can range from instructional methods to curriculum materials, such as textbooks and multimedia packages to programmes, organizations, educators and pupils (Borg and Gall, 1989:743).

The evaluation results have value for decision makers, such as politicians or school boards, as they convey information about the efficiency of, for example curriculum materials, such as the Norwegian digital learning platform NDLA or traditional textbooks compared to its cost.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2012), evaluation research involves determining the worth, merit or quality of an evaluation project, such as an educational program, in this case a free web surfing programme in an EFL upper secondary classroom. The results of this study might enable one to draw conclusions about the value of

this programme as a way to increase reading comprehension, develop critical thinking among pupils, and motivate teenagers to read English-speaking news online.

4.3 The reading project

The project was presented to the class at the beginning of the school year. The researcher prepared a presentation based on the theories of Atwell (2007) and Krashen (2004) about the benefits of extensive reading and books from these two authors circulated among the pupils. The researcher also showed the class a short video clip made by NRK[28], the national Norwegian television channel, presenting and commenting on the reading project started at Haugaland upper secondary school in 2014 in order for the class to understand the purpose of the present research project (see section 3.4.1).

The teacher stressed the different competence aims in the subject of International English[29] that would be worked through the extensive news-reading project and a lesson was devoted to the history of the media in general, with a focus on the English-speaking media.

In the course of these three months, both weekly lessons, one 90-minute lesson and one 135-minute lesson, started with a free reading session from English-speaking Internet news providers, followed by a class discussion and a free writing session on the pupils' blogs, used as diaries to record their reading. In addition, the pupils logged onto the ReadTheory website regularly, where they took a reading comprehension quizz.

4.3.1 The reading sessions

The pupils started the lesson by logging onto their favourite browser and looking for the website of their choice, where they would read the news for approximately 20 minutes. There were no restrictions made as far as the choice of the website, but in order to make sure that the pupils would start the reading straight away, the researcher tried to comment on the main daily news in order to inspire the pupils, or she mentioned some current news linked directly to the topics dealt with in class. Some of the topics mentioned were Brexit, studying and working abroad, the American elections, the Nobel Literature Prize awarded to Bob Dylan,

---

[28] https://www.nrk.no/rogaland/leseprosjekt-skal-gi-ferdigheter-1.11960776
[29] analyse and assess the role of some English-language media in international society, elaborate on and discuss various aspects of multicultural societies in the English-speaking world, reflect on how cultural differences and dissimilar value systems can affect communication, elaborate on and discuss a number of international and global challenges, use digital tools in an independent, critical and creative manner in the gathering of information, and in the communication and presentation of his or her own material, give an account of and evaluate the use of sources.

and #BlackLivesMatter[30], when the school hosted a Roving Scholar from the Fulbright Foundation who organized a workshop about the American Civil Rights Movements.

The researcher also tried to show different types of English-speaking media to the pupils to make sure that they would grasp the complexity of the media scene and be able to find a favourite and suitable news provider. The idea was to start each lesson with a reading session, i.e. two reading sessions a week, but because of school practicalities, some lessons were devoted to written tests and some to oral assessment.

4.3.2 The discussion sessions

The International English class gathered pupils from three different classes, namely two classes of social sciences and economics and one science class. Some of the pupils did not know the rest of the pupils that well, while others were really self-confident, as they had many of their classmates in the International English group. The pupils were allowed to sit where they wanted so that most of the time the most sociable pupils would sit close to their favourite classmates, whereas the shy pupils would sit on their own. Groups tend to develop their own internal structure, which has a significant impact on the productivity and performance of the individual members (Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000:279). Dörnyei and Kormos (2000) further claim that groups develop their own internal structure with group norms, role systems, status hierarchy and empirical evidence shows that group cohesiveness contributes to language learners' motivation.

The pupils were given the time to share their thoughts on some of the articles read during the reading sessions and were invited to react and comment on each other's reading. The length of the discussion sessions varied from one session to another, but lasted on average roughly ten minutes. The pupils were first asked if they wanted to share their reading with the rest of the class, and the researcher would afterwards randomly ask the other pupils to inform more about their own reading. From the author's experience, a good group dynamic is vital for the success of good discussion sessions.

4.3.3 The writing sessions on the blogs

After sharing their comments on their reading during the discussion sessions, the pupils were given approximately ten minutes to write down a short text on their blogs about their reading. The purpose of the short writing session was to make sure that the pupils reflected on their

---

[30] #BlackLivesMatter is an international activist social movement founded in 2013 that campaigns against violence and systematic racism towards black people. http://blacklivesmatter.com/who-we-are/

reading, asserted their views on current news, and kept track of the articles they had read and the webpages they had visited. The teacher had instructed the pupils how they should create their blogs on Google blogger. Only a few pupils had made a blog before.

After a discussion with the class, the researcher found out that the pupils did not do so much writing in English beyond tests, homework and written assessments. The use of blogs in the classroom enables pupils to challenge their IT-skills and allows them to professionalise the appearance of their work. They can create multimodal texts with pictures, sounds and hyperlinks or write just a few lines about their reading experience. It allows differentiation and enables the teacher to be supportive by posting comments on the pupils' posts in order to foster good engagement.

According to Yang (2009), a blog seems to be a helpful tool for teachers to establish an encouraging and nurturing discussion space that enhances pupil reflection. In her research, Yang (2009) also noted that pupils are concerned about anonymity on the Internet. While the pupils in the present study had been invited to leave their blogs open, most of them were afraid that their classmates might read their posts and therefore only allowed the researcher to access them.

4.3.4 The reading comprehension quizzes on ReadTheory

The free online reading comprehension programme ReadTheory was designed by scholars from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the College of Charleston in South Carolina in 2014. These scholars published a preliminary study in March 2016 and the results showed that both pupils and teachers enjoyed the website and its impact on pupil grades and overall reading confidence and ability has been documented (Romero, 2016).

This specific website was chosen in this study as it had been used by several EFL teachers from the case study school the previous school year. English teachers were enthusiastic about the programme, found it useful to train reading and reading comprehension, and reported that pupils enjoyed working with it. Regularly, either at school or at home, the class logged onto their ReadTheory page and worked independently on one reading comprehension quiz. The control group followed the same procedure.

The ReadTheory website is designed for school purposes and provides pupils with a selected variety of reading comprehension quizzes based on prior performance. It means that the first time the pupils log onto the webpage, they take a placement test (see Appendix 6). The placement test consists of a set of eight short texts the pupils have to read and are asked one comprehension question about each of them. The performance of the pupils on this pre-

test is used as a benchmark and provides the pupils and the teachers with meaningful statistics with which to judge subsequent progress and performance. According to the results obtained during the placement test, the programme then presents the pupils with a reading comprehension text adapted to their needs and skill level. Students read passages at their own pace and complete several multiple-choice questions and optional writing segments (see Appendix 7).

ReadTheory is an American website and originally designed for native speakers of English. However, the researcher had e-mail correspondence with the staff of ReadTheory[31] (see Appendix 10), and it was pointed out that several schools in Holland and Sweden use the website in their EFL teaching and it was suggested that EFL teachers would monitor pupil progress with respect to improvement and growth over time.

The webpage gave the pupils feedback on three parameters: the level progression for each quiz taken, ranging from grade one to grade 12, the Lexile level progression, and the performance on Common Core[32] question type. The Lexile Framework, founded in 1984, is a tool that aims to match a reader's level with reading texts of a suitable level. The reader's level is measured through reading comprehension tests. The score is reported as a Lexile measure. The readability of a text is measured through software that analyzes characteristics such as word frequency and sentence length and assigns a numerical value, or Lexile measure. The Lexile scale is mainly used for L1 and not for L2 (Gillis-Furutaka, 2015).

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has been implemented across the United States in 2010 and is a United States set of clear college- and career-ready common learning goals and skills defined for kindergarten through 12th grade in English language arts/literacy and mathematics. The Common Core focuses on critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills pupils will need to be successful. The CCSS for Reading evaluates the complexity of a text by taking into account the structure of the text, the knowledge demands, the word length or frequency, the sentence length and text cohesion. It also takes the motivation, the interests, and the prior knowledge of the reader into account (Smith, 2014). One of the key requirements of the CCSS for Reading is that all pupils must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school.

Further to her correspondence with the staff of RT[31] and their advice as how to use RT with EFL pupils, the researcher decided to focus on the grade progression and not the Lexile

---

[31] E-mail from Plante-Kropp A. dated 21 August 2016, shown in Appendix 10
[32] http://www.corestandards.org

scale and the CCSS. The grade progression fluctuates like this: the grades go up when the score is 90% or greater, the grades remain unchanged if the score is between 70% and 90%, and the grades go down if the score is below 70%. The questions are not genuine comprehension questions about the content of the text, but rather test the vocabulary range of the pupils and their critical thinking, making these questions sometimes rather challenging for EFL pupils. As the number of questions per quiz is between five to seven, fluctuations in grades are to be foreseen.

The expectation of the researcher was that the liveliness of the webpage and game mechanics incorporated in the programme would appeal to the pupils and motivate them to be eager to test their reading comprehension once a week. According to Kapp (2012: 1), gamification is namely the ideal process for creating engaging learning environments.

> Game elements, such as providing learners with permission to fail, encouragement of out-of-box thinking, and fostering a sense of control, create rich learning experiences. The addition of game elements on top of traditional learning environments is a way of creating learning that aids in retention and is impactful.

One of the interesting aspects of the website is that the pupils could track their progress on the website at any time. The researcher could log onto the webpage and then to the VG2 International English classroom in order to gain an overview of the reading comprehension results of the pupils in the class, and monitor the progress of the class and of each individual pupil. Teachers at the study school were strongly recommended to use and test free resources posted on the Internet and to integrate these in their teaching. The study school invited the teacher to register to at least one development project in the course of the school year. For the school year 2016-2017, several projects were suggested by the management to the teaching staff and the English teachers of the General Studies Department proposed the use of ReadTheory as a joint development project. The project was approved and the purpose was to make pupils aware of the different learning strategies available through the use of ReadTheory and to give them the opportunity to regulate their own learning, dispose of their time efficiently, plan, evaluate, and reflect on new learning situations.

4.4 The role of the researcher

Cohen et al. (2012: 296) define a good case study researcher as a researcher who is an effective questioner, listener, prober, someone able to read between the lines and adaptable to changing and emerging situations. They further stress the importance for the researcher to be

highly prepared and to have a sense of realism about the situation being researched. Finally, the researcher should be an excellent communicator and have the appropriate personality characteristics that will enable access, empathy rapport, and trust with the participants.

The researcher in this case study was the teacher of the class and the project had to be carried out as a class project. Although only eight pupils in the class were followed up closely with interviews during the research (one pupil, Frode, did not participate to the second interview as he dropped out in January due to an absence rate above 10%), the researcher had to observe all the pupils of the class during the reading sessions in order to be able to carry out the class project and to keep the whole class motivated. It was vital for the sake of the project that the researcher was a good communicator and had the trust of all the pupils in the class.

The project was not part of the graded assessment in the class and the teacher had to make sure that the pupils understood the benefits of extensive reading for the development of their reading and writing skills and stayed committed to the project. There were some problems linked to the dual role of the teacher/researcher, especially during the observations. There were often situations that needed to be attended to, such as finding a paper copy of a newspaper for the pupils who did not have their computers, helping the pupils who struggled to find an interesting article to read, and encouraging some of the pupils who tended to only look at pictures to find something to read, preventing the researcher to observe properly.

As claimed by Dörnyei (2007:188), classroom research is time-consuming and the researcher's job is not only to observe and to report, but also to convince the pupils about the value of the project and to keep them engaged. Working with pupils is challenging and one cannot expect to have the full support and cooperation of all the pupils. It is highly unlikely that every pupil will do his/her best for a project in which they have little interest and which has no direct bearing on their school grades (Dörnyei and Kormos, 2000).

4.5 The subjects

The upper secondary school where the case study was conducted was located in an urban area and had several vocational training departments, a general study department and an upper secondary Level 3 programme, allowing the pupils to achieve the Higher Education Entrance Qualification Certificate Higher Education Entrance Qualification Certificate in order to be able to access universities. The school consisted of a total of about 900 pupils and 115 teachers and the researcher had worked at the school for more than five years. The study was

carried out in the researcher's International English class with 22 pupils from VG2 from the general study department, whereas the control group consisted of pupils from the other class of International English, made up of six pupils from both VG3 and the Level 3 programme. The average obtained by the pupils of the target school in the subject of International English in 2014-2015 was considerably lower than the national result. The purpose of the control group was to compare the results achieved on ReadTheory by both groups and to discover if the free extensive reading programme impacted positively on the reading comprehension of the case study group.

The case study was followed by the whole class of 22 pupils as a class project and all of the pupils from both classes gave permission to the researcher to use their data in the present thesis (Appendix 2) The school principal also gave permission for the research to be carried out in the target class.

The class of 22 pupils consisted of 11 boys and 11 girls aged from 17 to 20. Eight pupils of the class had English as their third language and not their second language as they had a different mother tongue than Norwegian. The various mother tongues were Arabic, Chinese, Icelandic, Russian, Polish, Albanian, Korean and Tigrinya.

The sample of focus pupils in the study chosen for the two interviews (see section 4.6.1.2), one at the start of the project and the second at the end of the project, were approached by the researcher as they seemed reliable and committed to school and to the subject from the start, and were not likely to drop out in the course of the year. A new rule regarding absence[33] was namely introduced in upper secondary schools on 1 August 2016 and if the undocumented absence rate of a subject is greater than 10 per cent, as a rule, the pupil will lose the right to a final grade in that subject. Absence in the focus school is statistically much higher than in the other schools of the district, and higher than the national average. Three pupils (Marte, Frank and Frode) dropped out in the course of the second semester, due to an undocumented absence rate greater than 10 per cent. Frode was one of the eight focus pupils, and consequently did not participate in the second interview arranged in January.

Two of the pupils chosen (Song and Kjersti) were also previous pupils of the researcher. The purpose was to select pupils of mixed ability, but as the project was launched rather early in the year before major assessment had taken place, and as only 12 pupils answered the first questionnaire (see section 4.6.1.1) posted on Its Learning at the end of September, the choice was limited. The first questionnaire was anonymous and, as the

---

[33] https://www.regjeringen.no/no/aktuelt/ny-fravarsgrense-i-videregaende-skole-fra-i-host/id2505770/

researcher feared, because of the anonymity factor, combined with the fact that the project was not graded, some pupils did not feel like taking the time to answer the questions. The researcher wanted to have as many boys as girls interviewed and wanted to have a good balance among the different pupils' ethnicities. Four boys were interviewed. Frode had Norwegian as L1, and Negasi, Song and Ismael had Norwegian as L2. Four girls, Pernille, Kjersti, Agnes and Helga were interviewed and among them, only Helga, had Norwegian as her L2. One pupil among them, Frode, had more than ten per cent undocumented absence and therefore did not receive any first semester grade and later on in January dropped out.

4.6 Research tools: mixed methods

The data gathered for the thesis consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data, i.e. mixed methods. Dörnyei (2007:176-177) states that the three unique aspects of research in a classroom context are the *classroom observation* research method typical of examining learning environments, the use of *mixed methods research* by classroom researchers in order to analyse and understand classroom events, and the *complexity* of the research process. Dörnyei further states that contemporary classroom research employs the whole repertoire of available research methodological techniques and that while structured classroom observation has maintained a prominent position in classroom research, information about classrooms is also gathered by self-report techniques, such as surveys, interviews and diary studies (Dörnyei, 2007:178). Johnson and Burke (2012:51) also underline the strength of the mixed methods approach by saying that this approach helps improve the quality of research because the different research approaches have different strengths and different weaknesses. They develop this idea further by saying that by combining two or more research methods with different strengths and weaknesses in a research study, you can make it less likely that you will miss something important or make a mistake.

The qualitative data consisted of classroom observations while the pupils were reading, the results gathered from the preliminary open-ended questionnaire and the second questionnaire answered after the project was finished, the two individual interviews with the eight target pupils organised at the beginning and at the end of the project, and an analysis of the texts published by the pupils on their blogs. The quantitative data consisted of the results of the pupils' reading performances on the computer based reading website compared to the performances of the control group on the website.

4.6.1 Qualitative data collection

Qualitative research implies the study of a specific phenomenon and theories and hypotheses are developed based on what is being observed. Johnson and Christensen (2012: 377) compare the work of the researcher during a qualitative research study with a detective or novelist who would go wherever interesting and enlightening information might be.

According to Dörnyei (2007: 40), qualitative research has traditionally been seen as an effective way of exploring new areas and is useful for making sense of complex situations. The qualitative data collection in this case study consisted of open-ended questionnaires, interviews, classroom observation, and the pupils' blogs.

4.6.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires, defined by Brown (2001: 6) as any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers, are one of the most common methods of data collection in second language research. One of the main strengths of questionnaires according to Dörnyei (2003: 3) is the ease of their construction. Questionnaires allow researchers to gather different types of data about the respondents: factual, behavioural and attitudinal. The questionnaires used for the case study asked behavioural and attitudinal questions about the reading habits of the pupils.

Prior to the start of the reading programme, the 22 pupils answered an open-ended questionnaire about their reading habits on the learning platform It's Learning. The questionnaire was developed and inspired by the September Writing Survey designed by Atwell (2007: 73-74) and the Exploring Your Own Reading History questionnaire developed by Templer (2012: 10). Atwell's questionnaire had to be adapted for the present study as this study deals with online newspaper reading and not book reading. The questionnaire presented by Templer asked general questions about reading, including the reading of newspapers and magazines. In order to attempt to define their reader profile, the pupils were asked fourteen questions about their reading habits of the news in English on the Internet (see Appendix 3). The questions from the questionnaire, written in English, ranged from the type of stories they liked to read and the news providers they visited the most, to the amount of time they spent reading on the Internet.

Dörnyei (2003: 7) discusses the disadvantages of the use of questionnaires and their limitations. The respondents might be unreliable and unmotivated, the answers may also be answered superficially, which is in fact what the researcher encountered. Only 12 pupils

answered the questionnaire and some questions were not properly answered. This is one of the reasons why the interviews were crucial in the gathering of data about the reading habits of the pupils.

The second questionnaire (see Appendix 4), given to the class at the end of the project, was partly based on the questionnaire used by Arnold (2009) in her case study. The questions were divided into two groups of questions: a 1-5 Lickert-scale closed section comprising 13 questions, and a second part with 16 open-ended questions[34]. The first set of questions had to be answered by placing an X in the right box ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. The questions concerned the pupils' feedback on the reading project, ranging from questions about how they enjoyed the online reading sessions, their possible new reading habits, the type of articles they read, and if they felt they had become better readers in English due to the programme. The open-ended questions gathered information about what they liked with the project, what they eventually disliked, and asked some of the same questions as the first questionnaires in order to discover if some of their reading habits had changed. The questionnaire was a print-out and the researcher made sure that every pupil answered and delivered it back.

4.6.1.2 Interviews

Another widely used way to collect data is to interview research participants. An interview is a data-collection method in which an interviewer asks an interviewee questions (Johnson and Christensen, 2012: 198). An interview is an interchange of views (Cohen, 2011: 409) between two persons, in this case on a defined topic where participants can discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and can express their own points of view. The interview is therefore a flexible tool for data collection. The type of interview chosen for the case study was the semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews follow a set of pre-prepared guiding questions and prompts and encourage the interviewee to elaborate on the issues raised in an explanatory manner (Dörnyei, 2007: 136).

Two pupil one-to-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with the eight focus pupils (see section 4.5). The first interviews were organized a few weeks after the start of the project and were a follow-up to the first questionnaire in order to make sure that the questions were properly and thoroughly answered. The questions were in-depth questions about, for example, the Internet news providers they visited the most, the type of news they were

---

[34] Both questionnaires have been defined as qualitative data because they consisted predominantly of open-questions, even though the second one provided some figures.

interested in and how much they read the news in the course of one day. The individual discussions with the pupils allowed them to refer to practical examples of areas of interest and particular webpages they liked to visit. The recorded interviews allowed the researcher to sharpen the reader profile of the pupils.

The individual interviews were conducted in a small group room with which the pupils were familiar. Individual interviews were chosen as it was considered important for the pupils to be able to share their personal experience with the researcher without being concerned about what the other pupils in the classroom may think or say. The interviews lasted for about 20 minutes and were organized when the pupils had a study block. The pupils at the target school had five study blocks in the course of the week, giving them the possibility to work independently on their homework or tasks from the different school subjects.

As the researcher was also the teacher, there was no need for a preliminary interview to break the ice and to develop a relationship with the interviewee. The interview focused straight away on the pupils' news reading habits in order to create some baseline knowledge. The researcher started by asking the questions from the questionnaire in order to be able to discover the profile of the pupil as a reader of the news more in depth.

The interviews were recorded in order to allow the researcher to focus on the non-verbal communication and to keep eye contact with the pupils during the session and encourage them to develop their thoughts and give detailed answers. Prior to the recording of the interview, the researcher/teacher stressed once more the fact that participation in the study was voluntary and had no impact on both the written and oral grades in the subject of International English. The pupils in the school were used to having discussions with their teachers as the school where the study was conducted is a development-oriented school in which Consequence Pedagogy[35] is followed closely by the management and the teaching staff. The teachers treat the pupils as equals. Hence, building a close relationship between them was a priority for the teacher.

The second interviews were organized in January when the 3-month reading project was finished. The purpose of the interview was to receive the pupils' feedback about the

---

[35] 'Consequence pedagogy' is a method based on social learning theory and is a humanistic and existential approach. The method was developed by the Danish philosopher and pedagogue Jens Bay. The central aspects of consequence pedagogy are freedom, choice, action, consequence and responsibility (Bay, 2005).

project and to collect data about their new reader profile. The second interviews were also semi-structured and were based around the results of the second questionnaire (see Appendix 4). The second interviews allowed the researcher to make sure that the questions in the second questionnaire were properly answered and to clarify and gather more thorough information about the questions.

4.6.1.3 Unstructured observations

Observation is a widely used means of data collection and it takes many forms. The distinctive feature of observation as a research process is that it offers an investigator the opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen et al., 2011: 456). There are different ways to observe. The usual dichotomies offered are participant versus nonparticipant observation and structured versus unstructured observation (Dörnyei, 2007: 179). Structured observation involves going into the classroom with a specific focus and with concrete observation categories, whereas unstructured observation is less clear on what is being observed and the researcher needs to observe first before deciding on its significance for the research.

The observation carried out in the classroom in the present study was unstructured observation. The researcher also considered the use of the structured observation method, but feared missing the insights that could be provided by the participants themselves. The reality of the classroom is complex and a classroom of 22 young adults is a highly dynamic and unpredictable place. Structured observation with a prepared specific observation scheme would not have been representative of what happens with the pupils during the reading sessions. The researcher had to be alert, open-minded, and attentive during the observation. While observing, as the researcher was the teacher of the class, she was also a participant-as-observer, as defined by Johnson and Christensen (2012: 209). She was thus a researcher who takes on the role of an insider, similar to the participants, i.e. a full member of the group, taking part of the activities. The teacher had to take care of the practicalities in the classroom, such as making sure that all the pupils were engaged in the tasks, that they focused on their reading, that they did not discuss with their classmates, and that they did not engage with other activities on their computer. Once these were in place, the teacher could start observing the reading session and collecting data by writing narrative field notes.

The clear benefit of the teacher being the researcher was that there was no presence of an unknown person in the classroom who might have caused a change in the usual behaviour of the pupils (Dörnyei, 2007:185).

4.6.1.4 The pupils' blogs

At the beginning of the project, the pupils created their reading blogs and gave access to their blogs to the researcher. Some decided to create an open blog, accessible to everyone, and others limited the access to the teacher only. Every reading session was followed by a writing session. The blogs were used as reading diaries in order to allow the pupils to keep track of their reading of the news. Few guidelines were given to the pupils as the researcher wanted the pupils to use their blogs to practise free writing. The pupils were asked to either write about their reading experience, the content of the articles read, or their comments on the articles. Dörnyei (2007: 156-158) points out that these spontaneous diaries are usually not practical for most research studies and that in order to obtain high quality information, diary studies must achieve a high level of participant commitment and dedication. The blogs gave the opportunity to the less talkative pupils, who were reluctant to share their readings with the rest of the class, to reflect on their reading and to be able to keep track of the various articles read.

4.6.2 Quantitative data

Quantitative research is defined as research that relies primarily on the collection of quantitative data (Johnson and Christensen, 2012: 38). Quantitative proponents usually emphasize that at its best the quantitative inquiry is systematic, rigorous, focused and tightly controlled, involving precise measurement and producing reliable and replicable data that is generalizable to other contexts (Dörnyei, 2007: 34). The only quantitative data gathered in the course of the study were the data gathered on the ReadTheory webpage, accessed regularly by both the study group and the control group.

4.6.2.1 The ReadTheory data

ReadTheory provided the researcher with different types of data presented in graphs. By accessing the information of the class, the researcher could visualise a graph giving an overview of the number of quizzes taken by each pupil in the class. By moving the cursor on the names of the pupils, the programme gave the number of quizzes answered by the pupil above pre-test level, at pre-test level and below pre-test level. The second graph gave information about the grade level performance of the pupils, giving the average grade levels of the quizzes taken by the pupils in this class as each quiz has an associated grade level. The third graph gave information about the Lexile level performance of the class, the average Lexile levels of the quizzes taken by the pupils in this class with results of the pre-test score,

and the Lexile average of the pupils (see section 4.3.4). The final graph gave the results of the class in their Mastery of the Common core[36] standards in three different categories; the percentage of correct and incorrect questions related to craft and structure, key ideas and details and about the integration of knowledge (see section 4.3.4). The researcher could also select the name of a pupil and access his or her information (see Appendix 8 for an example of a student progress report).

As advised by the staff of RT, since the webpage is designed for English mother-tongue pupils in the USA, EFL teachers using the webpage should monitor pupils' progress with respect to improvement and growth over time (see Appendix 10). The researcher decided therefore to only look at the grade level performance of the pupils and not to consider their Lexile levels and their Mastery of the Common core levels.

4.7 Presentation of the data

The data collected was threefold. First, the data concerning the entire case study group, such as the results from the questionnaires, the notes taken during the observations, the pupils' blogs, and the results on the ReadTheory website. These have been analysed separately. Secondly, the data collected from the eight focus pupils from the case study group comprised all the information from the case study group supplemented by two interviews that have been transcribed. Their data has been gathered in the form of a narrative, and illustrated by some of their blog entries and charts presenting their results on ReadTheory. Thirdly, the researcher looked at the results obtained by the control group on the ReadTheory website to see if their grade level achievement increased or not in the course of the three-month.

4.8 Validity and reliability

Research validity concerns the whole research process and focuses on the distinction of 'internal validity', which addresses the soundness of the research, and 'external validity', which concerns the generalizability of the results beyond the observed sample (Dörnyei, 2007: 50). Discussions of the term 'validity' have traditionally been attached to the quantitative research tradition and some qualitative researchers have suggested that the traditional quantitative criteria of reliability and validity are not relevant to qualitative research (Johnson and Christensen, 2012: 264). In this case study, mixed research methods

---

[36] http://www.corestandards.org

were used involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Cohen et al. (2012: 179) define validity as an important key to effective research and state further that validity has recently taken many forms such as honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, and the objectivity of the researcher. Dörnyei (2007: 45) claims that one of the strengths of mixed methods research is the unique potential to produce evidence for the validity of research outcomes through the convergence and corroboration of the findings. In this case study, the various research methods have increased the validity of the study.

For example, in order to ensure the validity of the interviews, the researcher asked the same questions to the eight interviewees and tried to minimize the amount of bias as much as possible. Bias that might interfere with the validity of the data collected could be the attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer, the tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her/his image, a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her/his preconceived notions. Research has shown that it is challenging to conduct neutral interviews, as interviews are interpersonal and it is inevitable that the researcher will have some influence on the interviewee and, thereby, on the data (Cohen, 2011: 205). Even though research instruments and procedures should preferably be piloted before the launch of a project, as stated by Dörnyei (2007: 75), it was also not possible to pilot the research tools used during this study, as the case study was an experiment.

The other main quality criteria in research issues is reliability. Reliability is a synonym for dependability, consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. For research to be reliable, it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found (Cohen et al., 2011: 199). Cohen et al. (2011) also refer to several threats to the reliability of classroom observation. How do we know that the results collected from the observation are applicable to another situation? How reliable and valid is observation? Observation is very important for the pupils to take the project seriously and allows the researcher to move in the classroom to each pupil's desk and gives the opportunity to the pupils to share their reading with the researcher. It also prevents the pupils from doing something else on their computer.

Some of the weaknesses of case studies are that the results of the studies may not be generalizable, that they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective as they are not easily open to cross-checking and that they are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity (Cohen et al., 2012: 293).

This case study followed the main canons of validity and reliability listed by Cohen et al. (2012: 295) through employing accepted definitions and constructions of concepts and terms, by using multiple sources and kinds of evidence to address the research questions (through the use of questionnaires, interviews, observations), and clarified the contexts to which generalization can be made and the avoidance of bias.

4.9 Ethical issues

Before and while collecting the data, the researcher had to consider the different ethical issues linked to the research. As stated by Dörnyei (2007: 63), research in education concerns people's lives in the social world and therefore involves ethical issues. He further states that there is more to life than research and if there is a possibility for a clash between the researcher's and the participants' interests, it is clear where the priorities should lie (Dörnyei, 2007: 64). As the researcher was the teacher of the class in the course of this study, the challenge was to clearly separate each role and to focus on the data gathered during the project.

The legal aspects of research ethics and data protection are regulated by national laws. The project was approved by the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) (see Appendix 1). This procedure is compulsory for researchers carrying out research in a school in Norway in order to protect the pupils from ethical violations even though, as stated by Johnson and Christensen (2004: III), educational research imposes either minimal or no risk to the participants. NSD in the correspondence with the researcher underlined the challenge of the double role of the researcher and advised the researcher to inform the pupils adequately about the new role of the teacher as a researcher and the fact that the research was to be carried out separately from the teaching. NSD also underlined the importance of voluntary participation, which could be jeopardized by the fact that the researcher was the teacher. The teacher had to reaffirm that even though the project was a class project, the pupils could withdraw at any time without any consequences.

The pupils were also informed that any other information gained in the course of the year, beside the reading project, could not be incorporated in the research project. Confidentiality is another important ethical issue in research. The participants of the study were informed by the researcher orally and also through an information letter that the research was carried out anonymously and that the participants could not be identified. The eight pupils who were interviewed were also informed that the sound files would only be used by

the researcher and the supervisor of the research, and would be deleted after the publication of the thesis.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has described the study and explained the methods and the research tools used to conduct it. The research was performed in a VG2 International English class of 22 pupils during three months. Eight of them were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the project. The two weekly lessons started with a free web-surfing session on English-speaking web pages, followed by a class discussion session and a blog writing session, with the exception of when the class had an oral or written assignment scheduled due to curriculum practicalities. Once a week, the pupils visited the webpage ReadTheory in order to take a reading comprehension quiz.

The research methods for collecting data were questionnaires and interviews, unstructured observations during the reading sessions, notes from the discussions, and the pupils' blogs. The pupils and the school were informed about the research and gave their consent to participate in the study. The Norwegian Centre for Research Data approved the research project.

5. Results

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the research was to study the impact of a three-month free voluntary web-surfing programme of English-speaking news on pupils' reading in a Norwegian upper secondary VG2 International English classroom. This included studying the effect of the programme on the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online, their reading routines and interests, and whether free voluntary web surfing helped the pupils to become more critical readers.

This chapter presents the data collected in the study. The findings of the pre-project questionnaires are presented in the section 5.2, while the observations during the reading sessions are described in section 5.3. Section 5.4 deals with the blog entries published by the pupils and shows a selection of the entries that provided the best impressions of the challenges and achievements of the extensive reading programme. Section 5.5 presents the results of the second questionnaire answered by the pupils after the three-month project was completed. Section 5.6.1 is devoted to the quantitative data produced by the pupils on ReadTheory, while section 5.6.2 shows the results achieved on ReadTheory by the control group. Section 5.7 presents the profiles of the eight focus pupils and each gathers the information from the pre- and post- project questionnaires, the two interviews, the class observation sessions, some significant blog entries, and their results on the ReadTheory webpage. Section 5.8 provides a short summary of the chapter.

5.2 The first questionnaire

Three weeks after the start of school, after the introduction of the project in which the benefits of extensive reading were presented to the pupils and after a class discussion about the pupils' general reading habits, the first questionnaire, an open-ended questionnaire, was answered by the pupils (see Appendix 3). The questionnaire was posted on the pupils' digital learning platform and the pupils were given 20 minutes to answer it. The questions were written in English and the researcher went through them orally beforehand in order to make sure that all the questions were properly understood.

Even though almost the whole class was present during the lesson, only half of the pupils answered the questionnaire. The researcher believes that as the questionnaire was anonymous and that participation in the project did not influence the pupils' grades, ten of the

pupils did not feel obliged to fill it in. The fact that 12 pupils answered the questionnaire and ten pupils did not arguably decreases the validity of the data gathered from the questionnaire. However, as this research gathers different types of both qualitative and quantitative data, triangulation increases the objectivity and the validity of the results.

The questionnaire revealed that the majority of the pupils who answered it regularly read during their free-time. Only one pupil in the class, Ariana, was really clear about the fact that she did not like to read the news, regardless of the language, as she did not like 'bad news'. She specified that she read many novels, but not the news. Six pupils read in both English and Norwegian, one pupil, Ismael, read in Norwegian or in Russian (his mother tongue), and two of them usually read in English.

The questionnaire further revealed that none of the respondents had a subscription to a newspaper. Only one pupil, Frode, subscribed to the Norwegian monthly historical magazine *Aftenbladet Historie*. None of the respondents subscribed to an English-speaking newspaper or a Norwegian newspaper. The question that asked the pupils if they had a subscription to any newspaper seemed to be misinterpreted by two pupils, who mentioned webpages instead of paper copies of the newspapers, and these webpages were open to free access. Dennis mentioned the webpage *VG.no*, the popular Norwegian tabloid news provider, and Kjersti mentioned the webpage of the newspaper *Daily Mail*.

Eight pupils answered that they read the news on *Facebook*, three relied on *YouTube* to be kept informed, two visited the *NRK.no* webpage, i.e. the webpage of the national radio and television channel, one mentioned *VG.no*[37], and some mentioned *Tumblr, Upworthy*, and the application *Buzzfeed*. Ariana acknowledged that she did not read the news as 'it gives a person too many horrible things to think about'.

The majority of the pupils answered that they generally enjoyed reading the news on the Internet, two wrote that they did not like doing it, and two that they only sometimes did. Three of the pupils answered that they did not have any favourite website, two of them specified *Facebook* as their favourite website, two *Stavanger Aftenbladet*, and the rest of the pupils *Reddit.com, YouTube, VG.no, Tumblr* and *NRK*.

The pupils' favourite type of news varied from international news, politics, celebrity gossip, cultural news, news about animals, news about the economy, and technology. Two of

---

[37] When this question was discussed in class after the questionnaire had been filled in, the pupils stated that they mostly read the news from Norwegian news providers and that the newspapers they usually read were *VG.no*, *Aftenbladet.no*, the webpage of the local newspaper *Stavanger Aftenblad*, or *Dagbladet.no*, another national tabloid newspaper.

the pupils did not have any favourite type of news. Most of them indicated that they read the news every day, while two of them did not read the news at all. Otherwise, the duration for the pupils who read the news varied from a few minutes to one hour, with an average of 30 minutes.

The pupils indicated that they relied on the headlines and the pictures illustrating the articles when choosing which article to read. Frode usually read the most important story of the day. Song, who was interested in the economy, said that he chose the section dealing with the economy first and would then scroll down the page to look at the various stories to choose between. He would then select the one he found the most interesting. Six pupils answered that they usually read the entire article, while three said that they usually did not, and one pupil, Ismael, answered that he sometimes did.

While reading the news, some pupils would navigate on the web by clicking on the articles that seemed interesting to them. Once the first article had been read, some pupils would go back to the main page to look for another interesting article. Pernille would look at the suggestions mentioned at the bottom of the first article she read. Most of the pupils did not really seem to know how to answer this question of how they navigate on the web while reading the news, although the researcher had explained the meaning of it orally before the pupils started answering the questionnaire. Some of the answers were that they read from the top to the bottom of the article, that they navigated well while reading the news, one that he just read while navigating, and three pupils answered that they did not know how they navigated while reading the news.

The pupils were also asked if they sometimes forwarded or recommended articles to some of their friends. Most of the pupils answered 'no' to this question, while only three answered 'yes', explaining that they sometimes shared the interesting articles they read with some of their friends. The pupils were also asked if they sometimes wrote comments to the newspaper on the article they read. Most of them did not, while two answered that they did, but not on a regular basis. One pupil replied to comments already posted by others.

5.3 Observations

The week prior to the start of the reading project, the pupils had to prepare the topic 'the media' by reading the factual texts from the chapter about the media in their textbook *International Focus* (Heian and Haidri, 2007). The teacher introduced the lesson by showing

a short video clip taken from the movie *The Fifth Estate*[38] directed by Bill Condon about the news-leaking website *WikiLeaks*. The three-minute clip provided a good short review of the history of the media, from the hieroglyphs to the computer age, which illustrated the chapter of the textbook and also introduced the movie that the pupils would later watch in the course of the semester. After a class discussion about the video clip, the teacher showed a PowerPoint presentation about the history of the media, from the early media history to the birth of the information age, the power of the Internet, and the print media to the effects of globalized news.

Seven mini-lessons were organized in the course of the three-month project. The very first reading session of the programme was introduced by a mini-lesson about the main reading strategies used when one reads. The class was divided into groups of three and each group received a hand-out with short articles from *The Guardian Weekly*, which they had to either skim, scan or read intensively in order to find the information requested. They could all remember these strategies from their earlier years at school and had no problem applying them to these specific articles.

The second reading session started with a mini-lesson on the main differences between the tabloid and the broadsheet newspapers and on the reliability of sources generally. The awareness of the main differences between these types of publications is very important in the subject of International English and the pupils are expected to be able to analyse and assess the role of some English-language media in international society. They also need to assess the use of their sources and be able to review them critically for both oral presentations and written assignments.

The teacher wrote the names of the different news providers mentioned by the pupils on the board and the whole class had a discussion about which news providers they knew and the type of news published on these. The pupils were asked to check the same piece of news from different news providers in order to try to find out the main differences between them. One of the assignments from the textbook used in the school asked the pupils to retrieve one piece of news and to compare the versions from *Al Jazeera*, *CNN* and the *BBC*. The pupils enjoyed the assignment as they could visualize the differences of content presented to the readers of these three news providers and compare the pictures used to illustrate the articles.

The other mini-lessons dealt with the critical reading of pictures and the idea of 'power', the literary devices used in texts and their purposes, *Wikileaks* and the dilemma of

---

[38] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN13kl3hayg

publishing classified information, the role of social media in the American presidential campaign, as presented by Nancy Cardona, Roving Scholar from the Fulbright Foundation and, finally, the danger of fake news. The purpose of these mini-lessons was to make the pupils more aware of the choice the author and the publisher of an article made before publishing the article and the importance of the reader reading critically.

In the course of the three-month project, each reading session was introduced with the presentation of one or two recent articles related to the main competence aims of the subject of International English. As explained by Day and Bamford (2002: 137), one of the pillars of extensive reading is the teacher, who has to be a role model for learners and who has to orient and guide them in their reading. The teacher would show the article on the screen, ask the pupils if they knew what the article was about, let them first talk about what they knew about it, and would then explain it further to the class and discuss it again.

The pupils were eager to start the reading sessions and the classroom became very quiet straight away. The teacher circulated around the classroom in order to see that the pupils were reading. It became clear that the pupils were easily distracted when they sat behind their computers and could spend 20 minutes deciding what to read. The teacher noticed that the pupils tended to have many windows open on their computer and that they were constantly distracted by pop-up messages from social networks or various notifications. The teacher caught some pupils reading the news in Norwegian, receiving *Facebook* messages while they were supposed to be reading the news, or watching videos on *YouTube*. Some listened to music and some tried to finish homework in other subjects while pretending to read. Elise was once on an online shopping page looking at shoes and Agnes was once caught watching a movie instead of reading. It was definitely challenging for the teacher to make sure that they all read the news as they were expected to do.

Furthermore, the teacher noticed that some pupils struggled to find something they wanted to read and these pupils made it clear during the discussion sessions that took place after the reading sessions that they found it difficult to choose what to read. Especially Pernille, Agnes and Johanne were often scrolling down through the main page of some news providers, looking for an article to read. Sometimes, while the rest of the class were busy reading, they were still looking for a catchy article. The teacher had a chat with each of them and tried to find out the type of news they usually like to read in Norwegian and the reason why they could not find any interesting articles in English. Some easier newspapers were suggested, such as the version of *The New York Times* designed for EFL readers, *Time* in

simple English[39] or the easier version of the *New Internationalist*[40]. However, these suggestions did not prove to be popular among the three girls.

The teacher once saw that Johanne, who browsed through the main page of the *BBC* looking for an article to catch her interest, decided to read the article from *The Guardian* that her neighbour Albert was reading instead. The teacher could see that Albert helped Johanne to understand the article and Johanne seemed really happy to have read the article together with Albert. The same thing also happened once with Agnes, who usually sat besides Madhavi, who was more proficient in English and always found something interesting to read. Madhavi then helped Agnes to understand the article. Pernille usually sat on her own and the teacher tried to have available some back issues of her paper copies of *The Guardian Weekly,* where she had marked the articles liable to interest most of the pupils, and which Pernille would read. The teacher noticed that Pernille gradually seemed to find interesting articles quicker than at the start of the project.

During one of the first reading sessions, the teacher looked at what Agnes was reading and discovered that she was reading the *BBC* in Norwegian. Another website, the *Guardian*, was then tried and everything was also written in Norwegian there. Agnes could not explain how all these English-speaking websites were translated into Norwegian. The teacher checked the settings of her computer and found out that Agnes, who knew that she struggled with English, had changed the parameters of her computer to make sure that everything she read was in Norwegian. The teacher turned this function off her computer and made sure later on that she was reading in English. While Agnes was reading, she usually took notes at the same time in order to prepare her blog entry.

Some sessions, though, triggered a good deal of dedication from the pupils, for example the reading session organized right after the visit of Nishani Frasier, Roving Scholar from the Fulbright Foundation[41]. The session was about #BlackLivesMatter and police violence against young black males in the US. In the course of her presentation, Frasier had showed various video clips of contemporary hip-hop artists, such as Beyonce, Kendrik Lamar and Macklemore singing songs with allusions to recent police violence against black people. The topic made a great impression on the pupils and many of them read stories related to the

---

[39] http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com
[40] https://eewiki.newint.org/index.php/Main_Page
[41] http://www.fulbright.no/en/grants/norwegian_institutions/roving_scholars/
The Fulbright Roving Scholar Program brings American teachers to Norway to spend an academic year travelling throughout Norway giving presentations for pupils about various topics covering many competence aims from the English subject.

topic of police violence or stories related to the protest song artists. Madhavi wrote a nice blog entry after her reading session (see section 5.4).

Many articles presented to the pupils at the beginning of the reading sessions inspired them to look for other stories related to the same topic. Some stories interested them more than others. The controversy around the Nobel Prize in Literature awarded to Bob Dylan was interesting as they could follow its development during the course of several weeks. Another was the story the teacher showed them on the board about the first beauty pageant ever organized for Albino people in Kenya, presented the week after the school organized a charity day to collect money to help finance the projects the school carries out in the Kuwinda slum in Nairobi. This story was particularly interesting as the headlines the pupils retrieved from the list from *Google* were all very different and showed different perspectives. The headline from the *Guardian* was the following: *Kenya hosts world's first albino beauty pageant*. The headline from *CNN* was: *Albino beauty pageant redefines beauty amid persecution*. The *Independent*'s headline was: *World's first albino beauty contest held in Kenya to fight prejudice. AfricaNews'* headline was: *Kenya's first Mr. and Miss Albinism crowned*, while the *Daily Mail*'s was: *World's first albino beauty pageant in Kenya defies deadly stigma.* The pupils discussed the message and the position the journalists and the publishers expressed through these very different headlines and it was a nice illustration of the difference between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, with the *Daily Mail* and *CNN* interested in the sensational side of the story through the use of strong words, such as *deadly*, *prejudice* and *persecution.*

Daniel, a boy in the class who liked to participate orally but who rarely delivered any written assignments and only wrote a few blog entries (see section 5.6), had a passion for luxury cars. His way to select the article he wanted to read was completely different from the other pupils. The teacher had observed that he typed the name of the car he wanted to look at on *Google Pictures* and then chose the most appealing picture to select his reading. He seldom read another topic and also visited some specialized websites about cars. The teacher often saw him just looking at the pictures without reading any text. However, he sometimes read the whole article and even shared his reading with the girl sitting next to him. He came to class several weeks in a row without any computer and was instead allowed to read from his phone. Another pupil from the class, Linn, also sometimes searched on *Google* but not on *Google Pictures*. She looked for specific information about a particular topic and browsed through the list of entries to select the source from which to read further. She was the only pupil that the teacher saw searching for a story in this way.

The teacher noticed that the pictures attracted the attention of the pupils in their choice of which articles to read. When an article contained pictures and videos, most of the pupils would start by looking at the different pictures and would click on the video to watch it. They all had their headsets available and the teacher sometimes had to encourage them to read the article instead of watching the movie. Once, the teacher caught Agnes watching the same video of a truck slipping down an icy road in Canada[42] several times. The teacher informed her to read the article and then to move on to another article. Ariana, who disliked reading the news because she found it so depressing, asked several times if she could read a novel instead. She was introduced to the *good news* section of the *Huffington Post* and to the webpage of the *National Geographic* magazine. She seemed to find many interesting articles illustrated by beautiful pictures that she liked to discuss with her friends Helga and Kjersti, who sat close to her.

Albert liked to start his reading by browsing through the webpage of *The Guardian* and his attention was once caught by a series of pictures of the earth taken by astronauts from the International Space Station[43]. The pupils sitting close to Albert were all watching the pictures and commenting on them. The teacher decided to show these to the whole class. Albert commented on them and the pupils were fascinated by them. At the end of the lesson, Helga asked if the references of the article could be published on Its Learning as she wanted to be able to access these at a later time and show them to her parents.

The teacher noticed some patterns in the pupils' choice of articles. Some pupils browsed through the headlines of the main news providers that had been presented in class, the most popular ones being *The Guardian*, the *BBC* website, *The Huffington Post*, *CNN* and the *Sun*. Some boys who usually sat at the back of the classroom seemed particularly interested in the website of the *Sun* newspaper. As a consequence, during the mini-lesson about the main differences between the tabloid press and the broadsheet newspapers, the teacher introduced this newspaper to the class as a good example of a tabloid newspaper interested in sensational news. The teacher noticed that they always tried to read at least one serious news item in order to be able to write about that on their blog and present something serious during the discussion session.

Some other pupils read almost exclusively about the same topic, for example Jonathan, who was a musician and who had already produced music on *Spotify*, and Negasi, who loved hip-hop, often read about music. The teacher tried to find some interesting

---

[42] http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/montreal-beaver-hall-snow-slippery-1.3881744
[43] https://www.theguardian.com/science/gallery/2016/dec/29/the-earth-in-2016-as-seen-from-space-in-pictures

webpages specialized in music and showed them the webpage of the *Rolling Stone* magazine, which they discovered with interest. Afterwards, they used the page several times during the reading sessions. Jonathan, Negasi, Dennis and Ruszard usually sat at the back of the classroom and shared their reading with each other. The teacher decided not to split them as these were shy boys who benefitted socially from sharing the same interest with their classmates. Among them was Ruszard who, besides looking at the pictures from the website of *The Sun* newspaper, read exclusively articles related to sport. He liked to share his reading during the discussion sessions and with the teacher during the reading sessions.

It happened that some pupils did not have their computers and in order to make sure that these pupils could read for 20 minutes as the rest of the class, the teacher would have available some back issues of *The Guardian Weekly* that the pupils could borrow, where she highlighted interesting topics. They were sometimes allowed to read from their smartphone or to read together with their neighbour, but most of the time they read from the paper copy of the newspaper. Helga read from the paper copy from time to time and liked the articles the teacher recommended to her. She even asked more details about the subscription to the newspaper, as she enjoyed reading it.

The discussion sessions that followed the FVS were very interesting. First of all, it was the appropriate time to discuss in plenary the credibility and reliability of some sources, such as when Madhavi presented her story from a UK tabloid webpage about Madeleine McCann, the English girl abducted in Portugal who was apparently seen and recognized in Italy. The class was asked to check the webpages of the *Observer*, *The Guardian* and *The Times* to see if they could find an article dealing with the same story. When they could not, they immediately doubted the accuracy of the news presented by Madhavi. This example made them realize how difficult it was to spot fake news.

Furthermore, what the teacher found out was that the pupils selected the most serious and school-related news they read and that they did not often comment on each other's articles as the teacher had expected. They showed that they liked to share their reading with their friends during the reading sessions, but not particularly with the rest of the class. They tended to give a very brief outline of the article and many of them could not give many details about the story presented. Only a handful of pupils tended to comment on some of the stories presented.

5.4 The pupils' blogs

The pupils were asked to write an entry on their blog at the end of each reading session. They were given about ten minutes to write a short comment on their reading or a summary of the article read they liked the most. Sometimes, the pupils did not manage to finish in class, and the teacher gave them the possibility to continue their blog entry at home. The teacher tried to visit the blogs as often as possible and sometimes post comments on the blog entries. The comments did not concern the form of the entry, but were just a reaction to what the pupils did write. Some of the pupils, especially Johanne and Agnes, were reluctant to write on their blogs and the teacher observed several times that while they were reading the news, they already opened the webpage *Blogger* in order to write on their blog. The teacher advised them not to feel too concerned about the writing but to focus on the reading, as the reading was more important than the writing. The purpose of the blogs was mainly to make sure that the pupils read properly during the reading sessions so that the teacher could monitor what had been read by looking at the blogs.

The teacher soon noticed that the pupils' engagement with the blogs varied very much. Some pupils enjoyed writing on their blogs and made an effort to present nice blog entries, whereas others wrote very little, with blog entries of only a few lines, and did not use much time or energy on the writing.

The researcher has selected the entries that provided the best impressions of the challenges and achievements of the extensive reading programme. Examples from the blogs of the eight focus pupils are presented in section 5.7. The following are examples from the other pupils grouped in different categories. The first one gathers the entries showing the difficulty encountered by the pupils to find articles to read, the second shows some very short blog entries, and the third one shows the longer blog entries, where pupils expressed their feelings, besides making a short summary of the article commented on.

The following are some examples of what the pupils who could not find anything interesting to read wrote about their experience on their blogs:

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Hi!

Today I did not find anything interesting to read. I think it was because I am very tired and when i'm tired I can not focus at all.

Madhavi

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Did not find anything to read

Hello.
http://www.bbc.com/

I went on www.bbc.com and I did not find an article or something that interested me that I wanted to read or write about. I have earlier found something I have wanted to read, but not this time. When i read something I want to write about what I read, so I can share my meanings and write on my own way. That is hard to do when you cant find anything that intereste you.

Agnes

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Hi!

Today after reading tons of different news, (only the headlines) nothing seemed to interest me. I'm not really sure why, maybe its because its all about the election. Don't get me wrong I do find that interesting, but I'm just a little tired of it and now I'm just looking forward to find out who the president will be. Maybe tomorrow i'll find something better!

Helga

The following blog entry from Tuesday, November 29, 2016, is written by Ariana, who does not like to read the news as she finds it depressing.

tirsdag 29. november 2016

News recap

Hey everyone!

Today I did not find anything I wanted to read. I did however come by an article with pictures of animals in the wild which I found quite fascinating. One in particular was as this one:
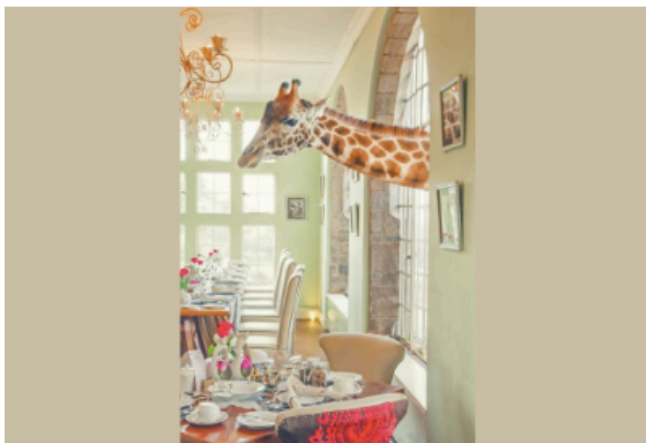
The following are examples of very short blog entries:

(Tuesday, November 22, 2016)

TIRSDAG 22. NOVEMBER 2016

Kanye West hospitalized

Kanye West has resently been admitted to hospital because of exhaustion. Only a day after canceling his Saint Pablo tour.

Markus

NOV
9

donald trump has won the election

this time i read about how donald trump has won the us election and is now the president

Dennis

(Tuesday, January 3, 2017)

tirsdag 3. januar 2017

Today I read about a brazilan man who escaped prison and put selfies on social medias where he was bragging about his escape. He was in prison for robbery.

Elise

NOV
29

ramen noodles

today i have read about the Japanese government trading elders driving licenses for discount at ramen noodles because of the increasing driving related fatalities involving elders behind the wheels. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/29/swap-driving-licence-cheap-noodles-discount-japan-older-motorists

Dennis

(Wednesday, November 30, 2016)

onsdag 30. november 2016

Today I read about how "Americans are still too fat". I think the article was interesting and worth to read. It shows how low educated homes in America choose to drink and eat unhealthy foods and drinks instead of healthy ones.

Source: http://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/americans-are-still-too-fat/

Pernille

(Wednesday, November 16, 2016)

ONSDAG 16. NOVEMBER 2016

Clothes pose ocean peril

Today i read something interesting in the newspaper. The headline is "Clothes pose ocean peril".
It stood that each cycle of a washing machine could release more than 700,000 microscopic plastic fibres into the environment.

Johanne

Some entries, on the other hand, were very personal and the pupils made comments and reflections on their reading, such as these two blog entries from Madhavi about the terrorist attack in Istanbul in January, and from Albert about the plane crash in Columbia in November.

Tuesday, January 3, 2017

Hello and happy new year!

Today I read about a tragic article that actually happened on new years eve.

https://www.theguardian.com/world/istanbul-nightclub-attack

Sadly, a nightclub in Istanbul was under attack and killed 39 people only hours after entering the new year. A lone gunman fired 180 bullets in only 7 minutes. This is such a sad thing to read. I can not imagine planning on going in to the new year ready and happy but only hours later your killed by someone who clearly is a maniac. I keep the victims and the families in my mind as always and pray that Turkey becomes a safer and better place not only for the people living there but also for the later generations that are coming.

Madhavi

(Tuesday 29 November 2016)

Plane Crash!

Today I read about a plane that crashed in Columbia last night, among the passengers were the Brazilian football team. In total 76 people died, and 6 people survived, but one died later in the hospital thus putting the survivor count at 5. The football team is really devastated, and updates about the incident is currently being updated as I write this post.

When I read these kind of articles, I often find myself sad, and I can't help but wish that this did not happen, and from the bottom of my heart I wish that the families and close friends of the victims can find peace and rest.

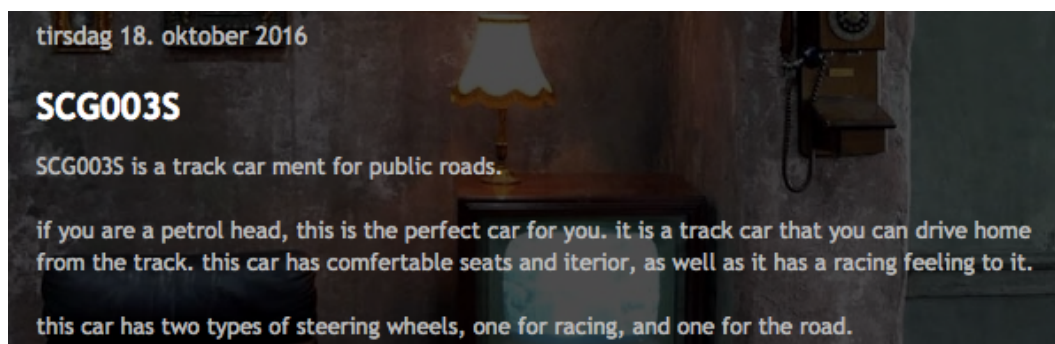If you want to read more about this, the link is here:
https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2016/nov/29/brazilian-team-chapecoense-onboard-plane-that-crashed-over-colombia-latest

Albert

Appendix 5 shows more examples of the different topics the pupils read and wrote about: terrorism, accidents, facts about celebrities, and personal point of view about feminism or alternative educational techniques. They show the pupils' engagement in their reading and the diversity of the topics chosen.

Some of the pupils read exclusively about the same topic, such as Daniel, who was very interested in cars and wrote all his blog entries about cars, and Jonathan and Negasi, who wrote about music. The rest of the class had more mixed topics on their blogs. The following is an example of one of the blog entries written by Daniel about cars.

(Tuesday 18 October 2016)

tirsdag 18. oktober 2016

SCG003S

SCG003S is a track car ment for public roads.

if you are a petrol head, this is the perfect car for you. it is a track car that you can drive home from the track. this car has comfertable seats and iterior, as well as it has a racing feeling to it.

this car has two types of steering wheels, one for racing, and one for the road.

The blogs gave much liberty to the pupils to express their reading experiences and the diversity of the entries in their form and content and the differences in the quantity of blog entries posted by the pupils showed that it was an interesting tool to use in a heterogeneous class with pupils of mixed abilities.

5.5 The second questionnaire

The purpose of the second questionnaire (see Appendix 4) was to gather the pupils' feed-back about the reading project to see whether they had gained anything from it, and whether they had acquired new reading habits in English.

This questionnaire was distributed as a paper hand-out to the pupils in order to avoid the low answer rate the researcher encountered with the first questionnaire (see Appendix 3). The questionnaire was answered by 19 pupils out of 22. Three pupils out of the class dropped out after the first semester (Marthe, Frank and Frode) and Sofie, who also struggled with the ten per cent absence rate, was away the week the questionnaire was distributed. The second questionnaire comprised both Lickert-scale questions and open-ended questions. The pupil's experiences of the reading sessions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The pupils' experiences of the extensive reading sessions

	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoyed the online reading sessions this semester	5	10	4		
I gained confidence in my reading ability due to the extensive reading sessions	3	7	6		3
It was motivating to pick my own texts to read	8	4	4	1	
I had difficulty finding articles of interest	3	5	4	7	
I had no difficulty finding articles at an appropriate difficulty level (question answered by 17 pupils)	4	6	5	2	
My reading speed did not increase due to the extensive reading sessions	1	5	10	3	
I did learn interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries	7	7	2	3	
I would have preferred to read printed materials		2	6	3	8
I enjoyed reading authentic texts	6	6	6	1	
I used a dictionary during the sessions.		4	4	6	5
I started to read more for fun in English in my spare time	2	2	6	5	4
I mostly read articles from the same genre	5	4	5	5	
I have become a better reader in English due to the reading programme	1	8	6	3	1

It is clear from the results of the questions from the second questionnaire that the pupils enjoyed the reading sessions, with 15 out of 19 of them answering that they strongly agreed or agreed with the first question of the questionnaire. The majority of the pupils were motivated to pick their own text to read and enjoyed reading authentic texts. Ten of the respondents answered that they had no difficulty finding articles at their level of difficulty and most of them acknowledged that they learned interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries. The majority of the pupils felt that they had become better readers in English due to the reading programme. Only two of them would have rather read printed material and more pupils read from the same genre of texts in the course of the reading sessions than pupils discovering new topics of interests. Only four pupils used a dictionary during the sessions, although they all had dictionaries installed on their computers. The majority of the pupils answered that their reading habits did not change after the reading project and only four pupils mentioned that they started to read more for fun in English in their spare time.

In the second part of the questionnaire with the open-ended questions, both Elise and Linn stated that they sometimes liked to write on the blog. Otherwise, nine pupils specified that what they enjoyed the most was to have the possibility to decide what to read. Five of them reported that they particularly enjoyed the smooth start of the lesson. Two of the pupils, Pernille and Madhavi, wrote that they especially enjoyed the discussion that took place right after the reading sessions. Madhavi wrote that she really enjoyed the fact that she could hear from which websites the other pupils got their news and that inspired her for the next reading session, where she would know from which site she might read. Marte and Agnes liked the fact that they were forced to read the news in English as this was something that they never did.

Song, Helga, Marte, Linn and Dennis disliked writing a post on their blog after the reading sessions. Daniel mentioned that what he disliked was that he had to read, as he simply did not like to read and Elise, Albert, Negasi and Madhavi disliked the fact that it was so hard finding interesting articles. Ariana and Kjersti wrote that they would have rather read a book instead of the news.

Eight pupils, Albert, Madhavi, Negasi, Helga, Song, Frank, Ismael and Agnes, felt that the reading project had changed their reading habits and that they read more during their free-time activities now, after the online news reading project, but only four of them started a subscription to an online English-speaking newspaper after the project. The majority of the pupils experienced that their reading habits had changed. Many of them had discovered other

news providers and would check the news from these new webpages, such as *The Guardian*, the *BBC*, *The Huffington Post*, the *Rolling Stone* magazine, and would receive newsfeeds from these on their Facebook account. Three pupils, Song, Johanne and Ismael, stated that their reading habits had changed in Norwegian and that they read more news in Norwegian since the launch of the project.

The vast majority of the pupils wrote that they felt that it was helpful to be presented with some interesting news in the beginning of the reading session, as they found it hard to decide what to read. Most of them chose an article to read because of the catchy headline and picture. Some would look at the most read stories of the day and others would first look at the topics they were mostly interested in (namely Ariana, Negasi and Jonathan).

Some of the pupils felt that they had gained better reading skills from the project, some mentioned that they just had fun reading from the net, Helga found that she had gained new reading habits, Linn and Negasi found that they had gained more knowledge about how to be a critical readers, Dennis, Albert, Kjersti, Madhavi and Markus felt that they had gained more knowledge about the world, and Marte felt that she had become more interested in reading the news generally. The rest of the class did not really know what they had gained from the project.

The majority of the pupils felt that they had become more critical readers, that they enjoyed reading the news from the Internet more than before, and that they usually read the entire article selected.

5.6 Read Theory data

As explained in section 4.6.2.1 and shown in the example from Appendix 8, the ReadTheory webpage provides different types of data presented in graphs. As advised by the staff of ReadTheory (see Appendix 10), EFL teachers should monitor pupils' progress with respect to improvement and growth overtime. This is why the grade progression is the only data from ReadTheory taken into consideration in the case study. Thus, the Lexile levels and the Mastery of the Common Core data (see section 4.6.2.1) will not be presented nor analyzed.

5.6.1 Results of the case study group

This section presents the results of the 22 case study pupils on the webpage ReadTheory. The pupils were asked to take a reading comprehension quiz as homework once a week. However,

few pupils took a weekly quiz and the teacher had to remind them to visit the webpage regularly. Some parts of the English lessons had to be devoted to ReadTheory in order to collect enough material for the research.

Some pupils, for example Song, Pernille and Albert, visited the webpage at least once a week during the course of the project, while others, for example Daniel, Elise and Ruszard, answered very few quizzes. They answered the very minimum number of quizzes, one at the beginning of the reading programme and one at the end. Two of the pupils, Sofie and Markus, never accessed the webpage and never took any reading comprehension quizzes. Sofie was one of the pupils who had a high absence rate and Markus admitted that he did not feel committed to the project, as it was not graded.

Table 2 shows the number of quizzes taken by the pupils: the total number of quizzes taken, the number of quizzes taken where the scores were higher than the placement test, the number of quizzes where the results were below the placement test, and the number of tests the pupils had achieved at the placement test level.

Table 2: Total of quizzes taken by the case study pupils on ReadTheory

	Total quizzes taken	Above pretest level	At pretest level	Below pretest level
Albert	19	16	1	2
Pernille	20	14	5	1
Helga	14	13	1	0
Linn	14	10	3	1
Frode	8	7	1	0
Madhavi	8	7	1	0
Frank	7	3	4	0
Johanna	16	3	6	7
Negasi	8	2	4	2
Agnes	5	1	3	1
Song	38	0	1	37
Frode	4	0	1	3
Ismael	10	0	5	5
Elise	3	0	3	0
Jonathan	6	0	3	3
Dennis	2	0	0	2
Ariana	15	0	3	12
Marte	6	0	1	5
Kjersti	9	0	2	7
Ruszard	4	0	3	1
Marcus	0	0	0	0
Sofie	0	0	0	0

Half of the class managed to score some quizzes above the pretest level, while the other half did not manage this and scored either at pretest level, or below pretest level. The same data is presented in the form of a chart in Figure 1.
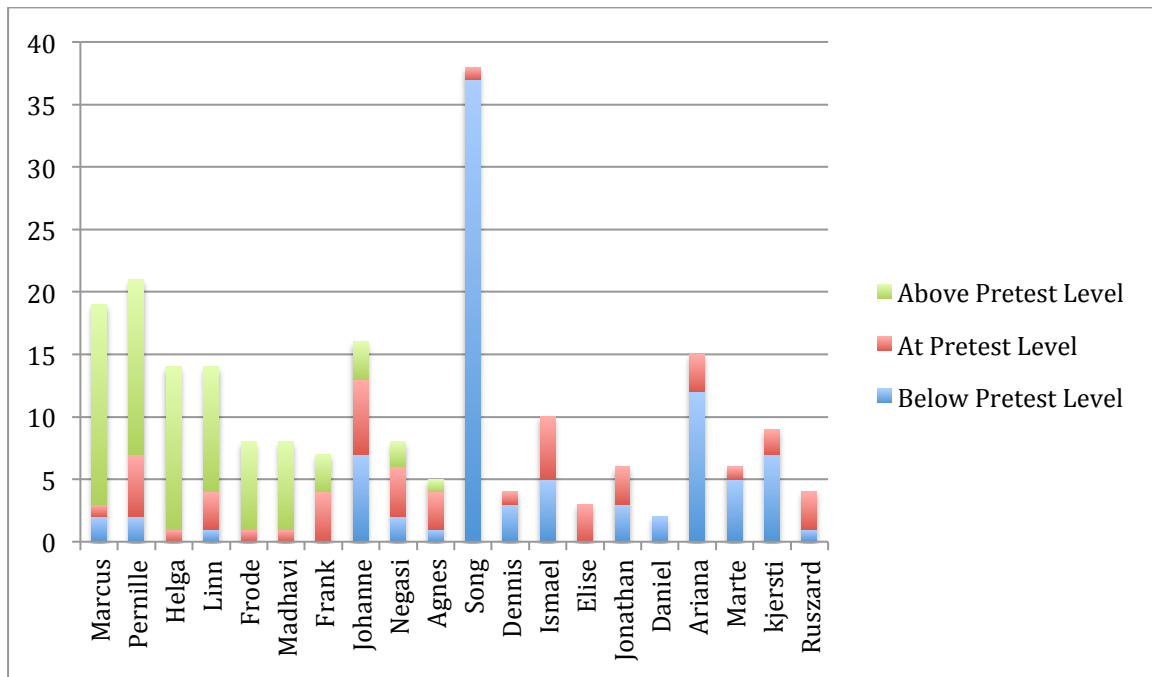
Figure 1: Number of quizzes with results compared to the placement test.

Figure 2 shows the grade achievements of the pupils at the beginning and at the end of the research period, without indications about the fluctuation of scores from one quiz to another in the course of the three-month period. All the pupils registered considerable fluctuations in their results, as seen in the student progress report sheet from Appendix 8.
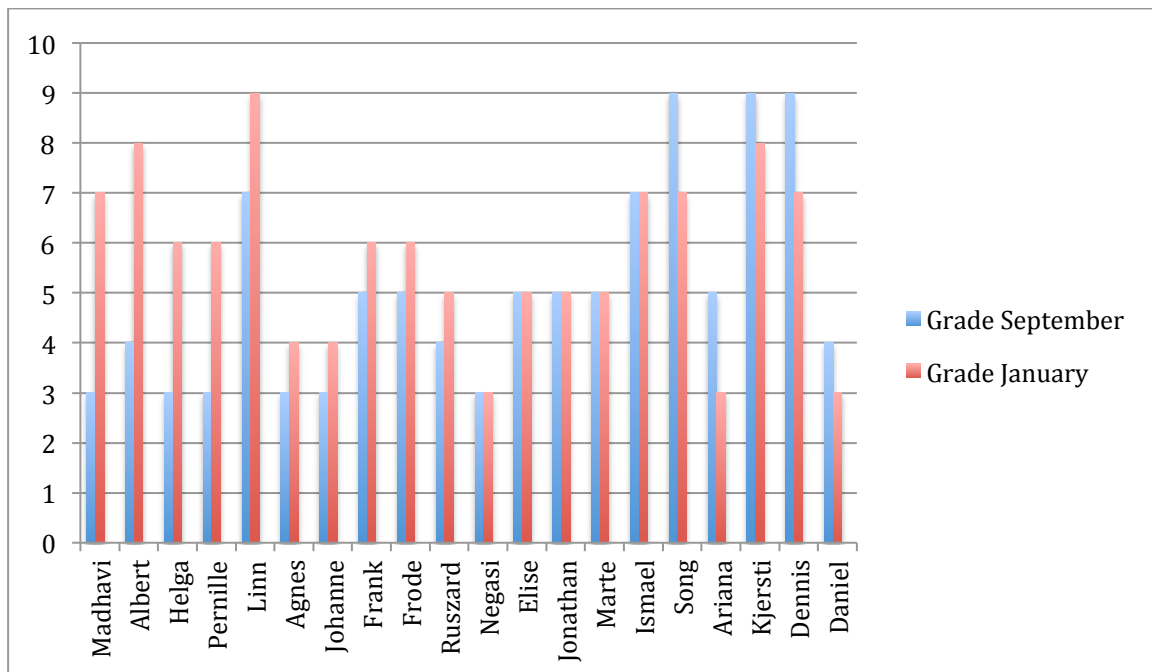

Figure 2: Case study group grade achievement in September and January

The first ten pupils on the left of Figure 2 increased their grades from September to January, while the other ten, listed on the right of the figure, either kept the same score, or decreased their score with the last quiz taken in January.

Table 3 shows the results achieved on RT for the group of pupils who improved their grades from September to January, with an indication of how many grades they climbed.

Table 3: Results ReadTheory for the pupils who improved their grades

Pupil's name	Amount quiz taken	Grade September	Grade January	Difference
Madhavi	7	3	7	+ 4
Albert	14	4	8	+ 4
Helga	11	3	6	+ 3
Pernille	15	3	6	+ 3
Linn	12	7	9	+ 2
Agnes	3	3	4	+ 1
Johanne	13	3	4	+ 1
Frank	7	5	6	+ 1
Frode	4	5	6	+ 1
Ruszard	2	4	5	+ 1

As shown in Table 3, two pupils increased their grades by four grades, two by three grades, one pupil by two grades, and five pupils by one grade. Five pupils monitored a drop in their reading scores from the placement test to the last quiz taken in January, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: ReadTheory results for the pupils whose grade level achievement decreased

Pupil's name	Amount quiz taken	Grade September	Grade January	Difference
Song	33	9	7	-2
Ariana	10	5	3	-2
Kjersti	6	9	8	-1
Dennis	4	9	7	-1
Daniel	2	4	3	-1

Two of these pupils went down by two grades, while three of them went down by one grade.

Table 5 presents the results of the pupils whose grade level stayed the same in September and January.

Table 5: Results ReadTheory for the pupils whose grade level were similar in September and January

Pupil's name	Amount quiz taken	Grade September	Grade January	Difference
Negasi	6	3	3	0
Elise	2	5	5	0
Ismael	5	7	7	0
Jonathan	6	5	5	0
Marte	5	5	5	0

This group of pupils obtained the same grade level with their last quiz as the level achieved with the placement test, but in the course of the three months, their results fluctuated both up and down.

5.6.2. Read Theory: results of the control group

The control group took between 11 and 32 quizzes in the course of the three-month project and visited the ReadTheory webpage more often than the case study group. The quizzes were taken during the English lessons, while the case study group took their quizzes as homework at home. There were, however, large differences among the pupils of this group concerning the quantity of quizzes taken. For example, Arne took a total of 32 quizzes, while Knut only took 11 quizzes between September and January.

Table 6 shows the number of quizzes taken by the six pupils of the control group. The number of quizzes taken by the pupils are sorted by colour: the darker green colour represents the quizzes with results above the pretest level, the lighter green represents the quizzes with results at the pretest level, and the mustard colour represents the quizzes with scores under the pretest level.

Table 6: Number of quizzes taken by the control group

	Total quizzes taken	Above pretest level	At pretest level	Below pretest level
Knut	11	0	2	9
Arne	32	3	5	24
Synnøve	18	12	6	0
Terje	25	9	5	11
Oddvar	17	13	4	0
Tajab	30	14	9	7

Figure 3 shows the results obtained by the pupils at their placement test in September and the last quiz taken on January 11, 2017.
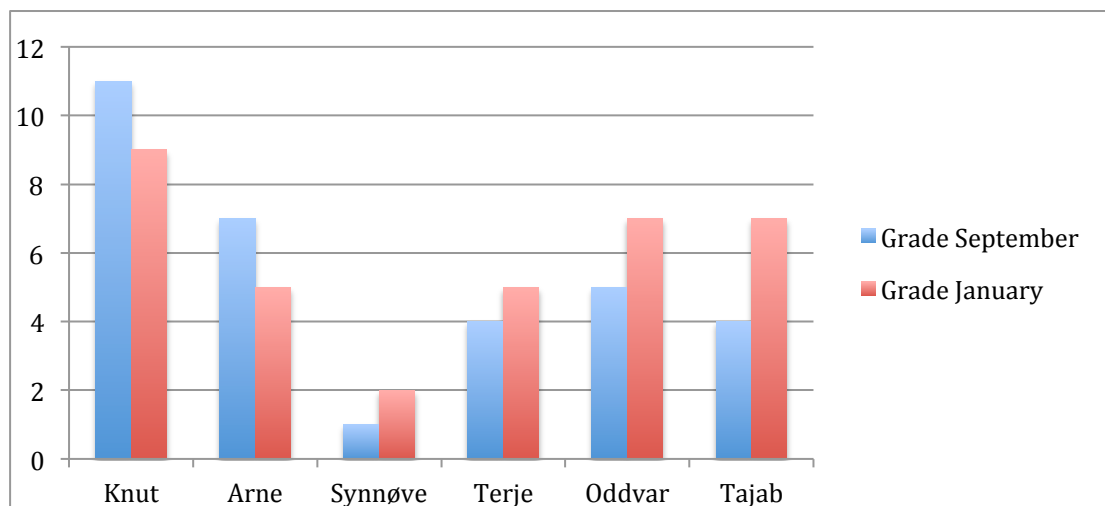
Figure 3: Control group grade level ReadTheory results

Four of the pupils increased their grades on ReadTheory from September to January, while two of them obtained poorer results in January than in September, with a drop of two grades. Appendix 9 presents charts with the progression of the individual results for each quiz taken by the six control group pupils on ReadTheory from September to January from the placement test taken in September to the last quiz taken on January 11, 2017.

5.7 The profiles of the eight focus pupils

Helga

The first pupil interviewed was Helga, who was 17 and came from Iceland. Helga spoke Icelandic at home with her parents and siblings and moved to Norway when she was 11 years old. English was hence her third language. Helga loved sciences and her elective subjects besides English were Biology and Chemistry. She would like to study medicine and this was why she chose the International English subject, as she knew that she would need proficiency in English to be able to study further. Helga enjoyed reading and rated reading at 'five' as a free-time activity on a scale from one to six. She loved to read novels, especially romantic novels and drama. She liked fantasy too. At home, Helga's family subscribed to *VG* and *Aftenposten* and she would read these newspapers once in a while. She would mainly read the news from her phone as she was often on her phone, and found it far more convenient. She would mostly rely on *Facebook* to be kept updated.

Helga enjoyed reading the news from the Internet and would mostly read about celebrities or new recipes, as she loved to cook. Helga liked to follow the political debates between the two American presidential candidates, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. She would mostly read the news in English and would hardly ever read it in Icelandic. She argued that there were not that many interesting stories in Icelandic on the topics she liked. She felt that she spoke English as well as Norwegian since she spoke English with friends. She loved to read magazines, especially fashion magazines, and she watched the news from the Norwegian television channel *NRK* every day with her parents.

Helga's favourite websites were *TeenVogue*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan* and *People* and she would read at least two hours a day from these. She subscribed to the newsfeeds from these publications on Facebook notifications and would usually select the stories that interested her the most. She might navigate further to another story according to her interest. She said that she usually read the entire articles, but would usually start by checking the length of the article first. She mostly navigated from one story to the other by going back to the main page of the publication. She sometimes went back to an article to read it again and had already sent comments on articles on the Internet.

Helga's family loved to read. She owned many books and had twice as many books in English than in Icelandic or Norwegian. The last novels she had read were *Me Before You* and *After You* from Jojo Moyes. The next book she intended to read was a crime book from a series written by a famous Icelandic writer.

Helga enjoyed reading the news during class and it was thanks to the news reading sessions that she had started to read more political news and started to follow the presidential debates from the USA. Helga liked to start her reading session with *The Sun* newspaper and *The Huffington Post*. She would browse through the headlines and look at what she might like to read.

In the course of the project, Helga wrote seven blog entries. Her entries were rather short and three of them were illustrated by pictures. The last two refer to the articles she wrote about. In two entries, she wrote that she could not really find anything interesting to read, for example: *In the news today, there was nothing that was especially appealing to read.* Two entries were devoted to a topic introduced in class. Helga would mention in her blogs the different articles she had read. She used personal comments such as: *Today's news was not as exciting as I thought that it would be*.

The following is an example of a short blog entry Helga wrote about her reading.

NOV
2

News 02.11.16

In the news today, there was nothing that was especially appealing to read. I found an article on Huffing ton post on the USA election and what the two candidates stand for. I also read an article on what the different countries in the world think that would happen if Donald Trump becomes president.

Helga answered in the second questionnaire that she enjoyed the online reading sessions, that she felt that she had gained self-confidence, and that it was motivating to be able to choose the stories she wanted to read. She felt that she had become a better reader in English due to the reading programme. She wrote in the open-ended section of the questionnaire that she liked the fact that she had been given the opportunity to read articles that interested her, but that she disliked having to write a blog entry after the reading sessions. In the course of the second interview, Helga explained that it was easy to write a summary of the article she had read, but difficult to comment on it. She felt that after a few reading sessions, there were more articles she enjoyed reading and she admitted that she read more world news and political news than before. She would now regularly visit the webpages of the *New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Huffington Post*, something that she never did before the project. She felt that she had truly gained new reading habits.

In the course of the second interview, Helga explained that the reading programme had definitely changed her reading habits and that she now subscribed to the newsfeed from *The Guardian* on Facebook. She felt that she had become a more critical reader and knew

better now which sites to trust and which ones not to trust. She checked the reliability of the source when she read something from a source she was not familiar with. She really enjoyed the paper copy of the newspaper *The Guardian Weekly* that the teacher brought during the reading sessions and has asked her parents to subscribe to it.

Helga took a total of 15 quizzes on ReadTheory and she progressed from grade 3 to grade 5 level, with one quiz peaking at grade 8 and three at grade 7.

Figure 4 shows Helga's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
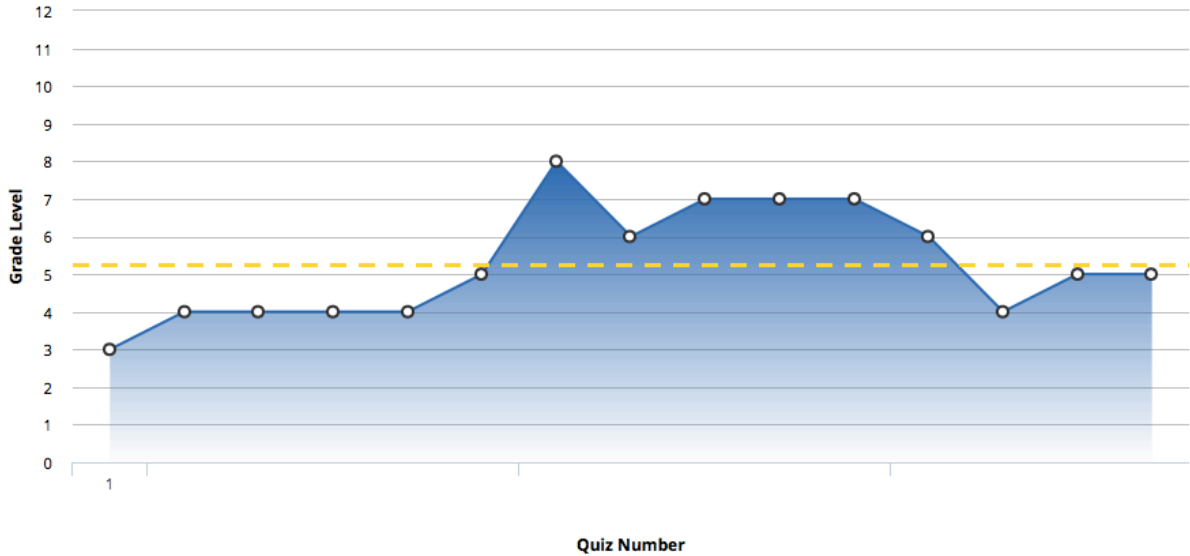
Figure 4: Helga's ReadTheory progression overview

To sum up, prior to the reading session, Helga was already reading the news in English and was mostly interested in fashion magazines. She already read from time to time the Norwegian newspapers to which her parents subscribed. Her reading habits had changed thanks to the reading programme as she learned to enjoy reading other types of news from other English-speaking newspapers. She enjoyed the fact that she could decide what to read and had made clear progress in reading comprehension on the ReadTheory webpage. She felt that she had become a more critical reader thanks to the project as she would check the source of the news before reading any suggestion on Facebook.

Ismael

Ismael came to Norway from Chechnya with his family when he was one year old. Ismael was 17 and loved to read during his free time activities. He would select the interesting

articles that appeared on his Facebook account. His parents subscribed to a Russian newspaper whose name Ismael could not remember. However, Ismael would not read the newspaper as he did not like to read in Russian very much, but would watch the news in Russian together with his parents. Ismael read Russian fluently though, and took his foreign language exam in Russian instead of the regular languages offered at upper secondary schools[44]. He received excellent grades for both the oral and written exams.

The news read by Ismael mainly came from social media. On Facebook, Ismael liked different sites and followed them from his account. He received four to five news items a day from each news provider. When he clicked on the news from Facebook, he would be redirected to the webpage of the news provider. Ismael enjoyed reading the news on the Internet and his favourite news provider was the Norwegian newspaper *VG*. He liked easy articles to read and found *VG* suitable in order to be kept informed about what happened around him. The type of news he liked was politics and world events.

Ismael would sometimes recommend articles to his friends when he knew that the topic would interest them, such as articles about the changes made in the bus schedules recently. He would not really comment on the articles, but would often disagree with the opinions of the people who had commented on them and would often be provoked about racist comments on the Internet. He often wanted to comment on these, but preferred not to and accepted that people had different opinions.

Ismael had many books in his room. His mother felt that it was very important to read books and would give him many books in Russian, novels, and sometimes also poetry. His father loved history and would even teach him some history about Russia and Chechnya. Ismael' s brother was 11 years old when they moved from Chechnya to Norway and he would often comment on how hard it was at school then and how many books they had to read at school.

Ismael wrote two blog entries in the course of the programme. He referred to the articles he had read in both of them. One entry was written in October and the other one in November. The entries were very short but written with his own words without any personal comment on the news. The following is his second blog entry, written on Tuesday 8 November 2016:

---

[44] https://www.udir.no/eksamen-og-prover/eksamen/privatist/fremmedsprak-for-privatister/

THE STOCK MARKET IS ABOUT TO CHANGE

Today i read about the stock market and the stress inverstors all over the world get to experience right before the U.S election.

In just some hours we will get to know the next president of the united states. When it comes to business much can happen if Donald Trump gets elected. It will cause a mass effect on the stock market, there is plenty of inverstors that will, within hours, loose som money - and win some.

Source: https://www.theguardian.com/business/live/2016/nov/08/stock-markets-nervous-us-election-clinton-trump-rbs-marks-spencer-live

In the second questionnaire, Ismael reported that he had enjoyed the online reading sessions this semester, but was not sure if he had gained confidence in his reading ability due to them. While he was not sure that his reading speed had increased, he had learned interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries. He read articles from different genres and preferred to read online rather than from printed material. He was neutral about the impact of the project on his reading habits. He was not sure if he would read more for fun in his free time after the project, but felt a little more motivated to read in English than before. What he liked the most was the liberty to choose what to read and he felt that he read much useful information. He did not specify anything that he disliked about the project and he felt that he had become a more critical reader thanks to the project. His reading habits had changed slightly and he would not read *VG* as often as before, but would read *Aftenposten* instead.

In the course of the second interview, Ismael also confirmed that he read slightly more in English than before, felt that he understood the news better, and checked where the news came from. According to Ismael, the reading programme had made him a better critical reader of the news. Ismael also stressed that he liked the fact that the teacher had introduced him to *The Guardian* newspaper, as he enjoyed the clear layout of the news provider. The topics he enjoyed reading about were trivialities, such as missing people, business news, news about ISIS, the war in Syria, and also the war in Crimea. He remembered that he had travelled through Ukraine while the war was going on and liked to read about the topic. Ismael particularly enjoyed being able to read in both Russian and English. He stressed the importance of understanding the position of the journalist and felt that English-speaking media tended to present Russia in a bad light. He felt that he had become a better critical reader thanks to the fact that he read in three different languages and that he had read English-speaking news during the programme. Ismael admitted that prior to the start of the project, he had read the news received on Facebook without paying any attention to the source of the

news provider. He would now check where the information came from and would see if the news was reliable or not. Most of the news he read was in Norwegian and he did not yet subscribe to any English-speaking news provider. Ismael felt that he both read better and wrote better than before. He was not sure if reading alone had contributed to that, but he felt that school had made him a better reader and writer.

Ismael took ten quizzes on ReadTheory. He started the project with grade 7, achieved grade 7 for five quizzes and grade 6 for four quizzes, and decreased to grade 5 with one quiz. His average grade level, after the three-month extensive reading project, stayed at the same level as his placement test taken in September. In the course of the second interview, Ismael said that while he really enjoyed reading the news during the extensive reading sessions, he did not enjoy taking the reading quizzes on ReadTheory as the texts were imposed on him. Some texts were nice and interesting to read, but not all of them, and he definitely preferred the extensive reading of the news part of the programme.

Figure 5 shows Ismael's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
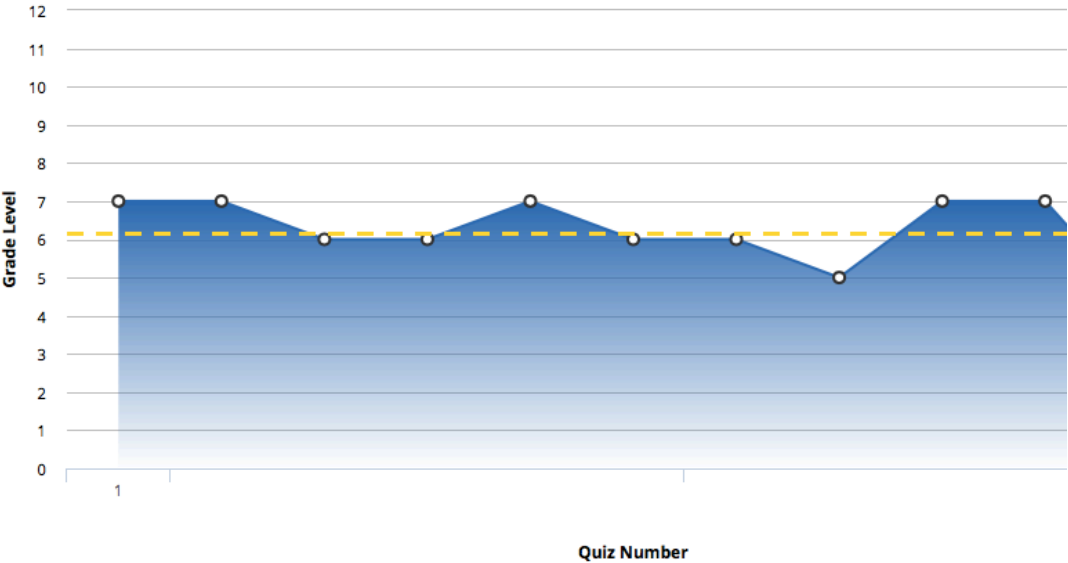

Figure 5: Ismael's ReadTheory progression overview

To sum up, prior to the programme, Ismael did not read the news in English and would read *VG*. Ismael enjoyed the reading sessions and read from several English-speaking news providers. He enjoyed the possibility to choose what to read and basically read the same type of news he used to read in Norwegian. He did not yet subscribe to any English-speaking news provider on Facebook and most of the news he read after the project was still in Norwegian.

He wrote two blog entries and no progression in reading comprehension was recorded on ReadTheory. However, Ismael felt that he had become a better and more critical reader.

Song

In the first interview, Song stated that he was 18, was born in South Korea, and had spent two years in Dubai where his father worked as an engineer and where Song had attended the International school in English before moving to Norway when he turned 11. Song spoke Korean with his parents and Norwegian with his younger sister. His mother tried to speak Norwegian to him, but Song did not like it too much as he had to correct her Norwegian. Song decided not to take the foreign language exam in Korean as he did not read fluently in the language and also struggled to write in it. He therefore chose French as his extra foreign language instead.

Song had answered the survey on Its Learning. He liked to read from his phone when he sat on the bus and liked to read the news in Norwegian. Song did not like social media. He read from *NRK.no* and sometimes from *The Guardian* after the project had started. Although Song's family did not like to read the news very much, his family received a specialized magazine about engineering that his father liked to read. Song had a 21-year-old friend who recommended news articles to him. Song did not subscribe to any news notifications on Facebook, but received some newsfeed. He had not liked reading so much previously, but now that he had started in VG2, and was taking the elective subject of political economy, he enjoyed reading business news. He liked to read in Norwegian and especially liked to read the newspaper *Dagens Næringsliv*.

Besides reading on the bus, Song did not like to read much in general, arguing that he had other things to do. He mentioned that he was thinking about starting to read 'big' books. He asked the researcher about the exact word to describe these and was looking for the word *novel*. One of his best friends at school liked to read novels and Song also wanted to start reading them. Song liked to read Manga, Japanese comic books, in English from time to time. Song would read the news in Norwegian for about 20 to 30 minutes while sitting on the bus on his way to school. He chose his stories by reading the titles of the stories and not looking at the pictures. He would read the whole article, so that he would get all the information about the story. Once he had finished the first article, he would go back to the first page and look for another story. He decided not to click on the suggestions mentioned under the first article. He would read some articles again in order to make sure that he had understood them properly. He mentioned an article about Syria he had read earlier and that he had read it several times to

make sure that he had understood it properly. He would not really recommend articles to friends.

There were many books in Song's house as his mother loved to read novels and his father bought many books when he was a student at the University of Seoul in Korea. The books were in Korean or in English and they only had a few books in Norwegian. Song's favourite book was *The Maze Runner* by James Dasher, which he read after he had seen the movie.

After the start of the project, Song found it interesting and fun to read the news in English, which he had never done before. He also tried to find the business sections on the different news providers. He liked to look at *The Guardian* and *CNN* to try to find good stories. He had started to read English news articles from his phone one week after the start of the reading project.

On his blog, Song wrote a total of nine entries, three with pictures. The articles he wrote about dealt with very different topics, ranging from the war in Syria to the battle of Mosul, to a Chinese village on top of a cliff which built a steel ladder for children to go to school, the American elections, a sinkhole in a Japanese city (with a follow-up story about this topic the following week), corruption in South Korea, and politics in the USA. Song also twice wrote that he struggled to find something interesting to read but that he somehow eventually managed to do so. He wrote in his last post: *I did not find any interesting article. So I decided to go on a website called CNN.* He wrote in an earlier post:

> *Today there wasn´t any interesting articles. I tried to browse through CNN, The Guardian, BBC and even Facebook. However, I still haven´t found any interesting articles. So, I just decided to read an article about a young girl around 11 years old who had cancer.*

Song would often give his opinion about the news he had read, such as about the story of the young girl: *This is just horrible. She had a cancer which actually survived. However, she came back to school and she got bullied after all this. I really feel bad for this young girl. Our society is screwed up.*

In the article he had read about a huge sinkhole in the centre of a Japanese city, Song wrote: *When I read this article about this huge sinkhole, my first thought was were there any casualties?* The week after, when he had read a follow-up article, he wrote the following comment: *Thank god no one was injured.* The following is his blog entry about this article.

Remember last week? I was writing about a disaster in a Japanese city of Fukuoka. There were quite big hole middle of the city. There were no injuries but what surprised was buildings. What would have happened if that hole was found under the big buildings. There would been quite big injuries. However thank god no one were injured.

Fukuoka workers managed to reopen the road after a week. Quite impressive. If this happened in Norway it would take more than a week, maybe a month? Props to the workers who worked hard repairing the road.

In the second questionnaire, answered after the end of the project, Song wrote that he had enjoyed the online reading sessions and that he had gained confidence in his reading ability due to the extensive reading sessions. He was motivated to choose his own stories and enjoyed reading authentic texts. He was one of the few pupils who used a dictionary during the sessions. He was neutral about whether he had learned interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries during the project, which may be explained by the fact that many of the stories he had read dealt with Asia, as shown in his blog. Song also answered that he did not enjoy writing on his blog after the reading sessions and that he was not really sure that he had become a more critical reader. He felt that his reading habits had definitely changed. He now read regularly from the webpage of *The Guardian*, which he really enjoyed.

During the second interview, Song commented on how the clean and relaxing lay-out and the reader-friendliness of *The Guardian* webpage invited the readers to read the articles and he would visit the webpage at least three times a week. Additionally, he felt that he enjoyed reading the news on the Internet even more than before. He said that he had started to read regularly in his spare-time from the website of the newspaper *Dagens Næringsliv* since the beginning of the project and that he intended to subscribe to the online version of the publication as they had good student discounts. He acknowledged that it sometimes helped to be given suggestions during the reading sessions, but he nevertheless often managed to find something interesting on his own. Song also said in the course of the second interview that he

enjoyed the discussions after the reading sessions as he found it interesting to listen to all the different topics the pupils from the class had read about. He even sometimes tried to search for some of the articles and topics presented during the discussion session. Song felt that he had become a better reader, had become more aware of the importance of the source of the article read, and had realized that the fact that he read more formal language in the newspaper articles helped him to write better texts.

Figure 6 shows Song's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
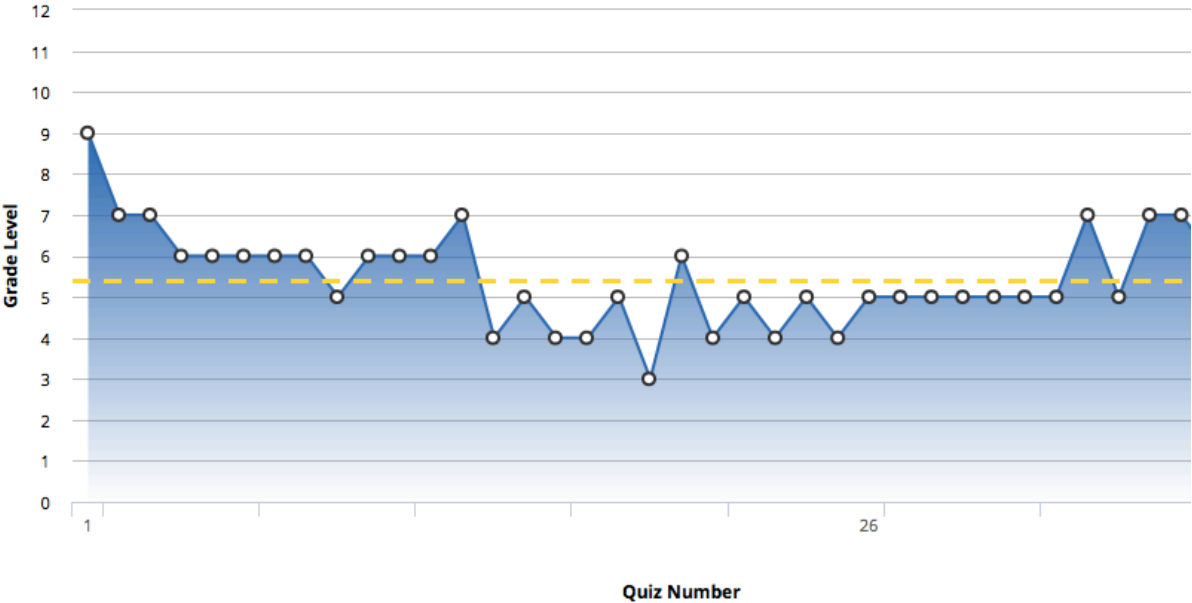
Figure 6: Song's ReadTheory progression overview

Song was the pupil who took the most reading quizzes. He reached level 9 during the placement test and tried to get back to this level in the course of the following quizzes, something that he unfortunately never managed to do. While having some results as low as at level 3 and 4, he managed to climb to level 7 for the last two quizzes.

In sum, prior to the start of the project, Song did not read any English-speaking news and read mainly from the *NRK.no* webpage. Since the start of the project, Song discovered more publications both in Norwegian and in English and changed his reading habits by reading every day from the business publication *Dagens Næringsliv* and at least three times a week from the webpage *The Guardian*. Song enjoyed the reading project as a whole and enjoyed both the reading and the discussion sessions. Although he did not enjoy the writing sessions on the blog, he nevertheless wrote nicely-reflected and illustrated blog entries. Song

was the pupil who took most reading quizzes on ReadTheory, but unfortunately without improvement from his placement quiz.

Kjersti

Kjersti loved to read, especially novels. She even read novels from the Internet that had been written by teenagers and had not yet been published. She got these on an app on her phone. Her family used to subscribe to the local newspaper and would sometimes buy *Aftenposten*, but Kjersti did not like to read the news so much. Her grandfather bought the local newspaper and her mother sometimes brought the copies back home. Kjersti sometimes flipped through the paper and sometimes visited some news webpages. She liked to visit the webpages of *Aftenposten*, *Daily Mail* and sometimes *VG*. Kjersti mainly read the news when she got home, and devoted about 30 minutes to her reading. She read the news in both English and Norwegian. She liked to read in order to relax and mainly read novels. She read the news according to her interests and received newsfeeds from *TV2*. She would read articles about a celebrity she liked and would usually select the article according to the pictures and the headlines. Some news would pop-up on her Facebook account, the ones liked by her friends, but she would not read all of them. She would sometimes watch the videos included in the articles, but not always. Depending on the time she could devote to her reading, she would check the length of the newspaper before reading the article, but usually the length of the article did not impact on her decision whether to read the article or not. She would usually look at the articles recommended at the bottom of the article she had read and would pick up the next story to read from there. She sometimes posted articles on her Facebook page and preferred stories about celebrities and animals.

Kjersti owned a collection of 200 to 300 books and her parents also liked reading. She had as many English books as Norwegian ones. The last book she had read was *Harry Potter*, which she had read for the second time. Her favourite genre was fantasy and JK Rowling was definitely her favourite author.

Kjersti enjoyed the reading project and did not find it difficult to find interesting news. She liked to read from the *Daily Mail* and *The Guardian*. She liked the *Daily Mail* already from before and Kjersti acknowledged that since the beginning of the free web-surfing project, she liked to read more English language news than before.

Kjersti wrote a total of ten blog entries, nicely illustrated with many pictures and all with the references to the articles she had read. She did not write much in these entries and related most of all what the article was about, without any opinion or comments on the news

except from her last entry about the funerals of both Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds. She mentioned at the bottom of her entry the following*: Rest in peace Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, and condolences to the family and friends <3.*

JAN 3

Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds: family pays tribute ahead of funeral

I read about the death of Carrie Fisher and her mother Debbie Reynolds, and hoe family pays tribute ahead of the funeral. Carrie Fisher was known for her role as Leia in Star Wars and Debbie Reynolds was known for her role in Singing in the rain. Only a few days after Fisher's death her mother Reynolds died too, leaving Fishers daughter Billie Lourd. Fishers daughter and half-sister have spoken publicly, as well has Fishers co-star Mark Hamill.

Rest in peace Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds, and condolences to the family and friends <3

Read more

Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds arrive for Elizabeth Taylor's 75th birthday party at the Ritz-Carlton, Lake Las Vegas, 2007. Photograph: Ethan Miller/Getty Images

In her answers to the second questionnaires, Kjersti reported that she had enjoyed the reading project and felt that she had gained confidence in her reading ability because of it. She liked to start the English lesson with the reading session and she liked the fact that she could catch up with the news. She admitted that it inspired her to read more news and she recently subscribed to the newsfeed from *The Guardian*. She did not really feel that she read more than earlier, as she had always been a passionate reader of English novels. She did not find it hard to select interesting articles as she already regularly visited the website of the *Daily Mail*. The news she was most interested in was sensational news, such as killings, missing people, and the life of celebrities. She said in the course of second interview that she recently started to subscribe to the Snapchat notifications of the *Daily Mail*. During the reading sessions, she

did not need the suggested topics to find something interesting to read as she usually visited her favourite webpage, the *Daily Mail,* and would then look at the pictures, the headlines and select the stories that interested her. She admitted that she was depressed in the course of the autumn and had dark thoughts. She had read an article about the suicidal circle, which she wrote about in her blog. She got attracted by that article while browsing through the main page of the news provider.

NOV 16

Suicide circle

The math puzzle of how Jewish soldiers would avoid death at the hands of Roman soldiers is explained.

A suicide circle comes from when Jewish soldiers would kill each other to avoid getting captured and killed by the Roman soldiers. But how do you survive the circle if you wanted to be alive, that is the question that a Jewish solider asked him self when he stood in a circle with 40 other men. A mathematician says that the jewish solider Josephus must have been standing in the 19th place in order to be the only one alive after each solider took turns on killing their neighbour.

Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCsD3ZGzMgE

Kjersti felt that she might now read faster than before, but was unsure if this had something to do with her reading the news, since she would spend more time reading English Fantasy books than doing that. Furthermore, she liked to read the same articles as her friend Adriana, who sat besides her during the reading sessions. They had different fields of interest and she used to enjoy Adriana's articles. Adriana did not like violence and avoided reading news related to the war in Syria, the Presidential campaign in the USA, and was mostly interested in topics like feminism. She discovered many interesting articles thanks to her. She enjoyed the discussion sessions and particularly liked to tell people what she read about and hoped that the others would like to read about what she had just read. She found it interesting to have dealt with the topic of the media through this extensive reading programme and mentioned that not many pupils read English-speaking articles, as they would usually just stick to *VG*. She mentioned how distracted she was from time to time when messages and notifications would appear on her Facebook account.

Kjersti took ten reading quizzes on ReadTheory and did not increase her grade level in the course of the reading programme. In fact, her level even decreased from grade 9 in September to 8 in January, with four quizzes at grade 7 level.

Figure 7 shows Kjersti's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
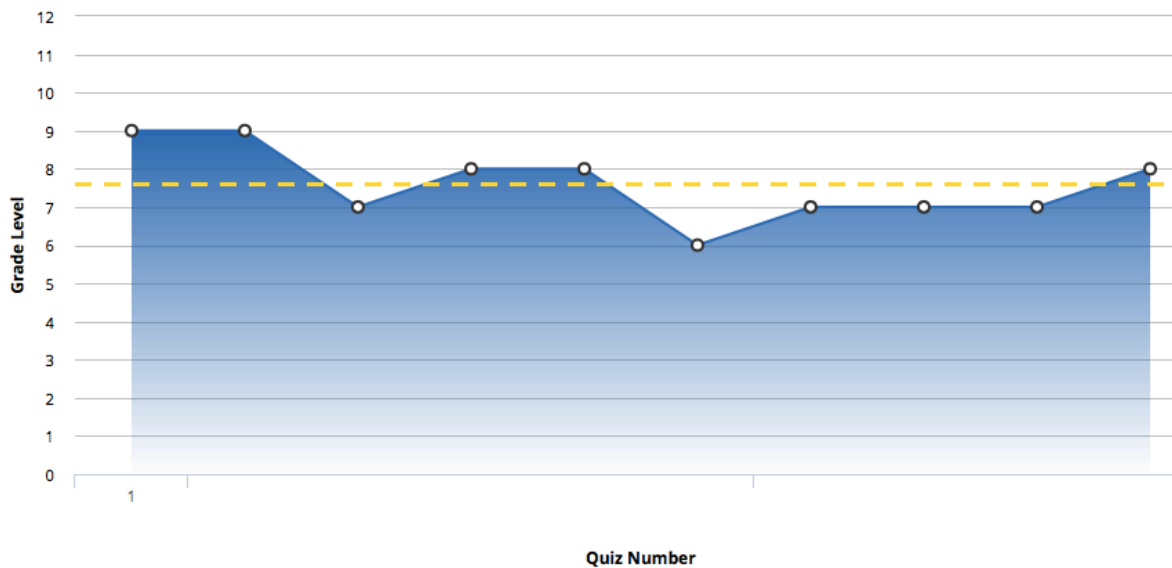

Figure 7: Kjersti's ReadTheory progression overview

In sum, Kjersti was one of the few pupils who had already regularly read the news in English before the start of the project. While the project did not change her reading habits, she had enjoyed it and particularly liked the discussion sessions, where she could share the articles she had read with the rest of the class and listen to what the other pupils had read. She wrote ten nicely illustrated blog posts. Finally, her reading comprehension did not improve on the ReadTheory progression scale.

Negasi

Negasi's parents were Eritrean and came to Norway as refugees in 1989, ten years before Negasi was born. Negasi was an only child and the language used at home was Tigrinya. Negasi spoke Tigrinya to his parents but he could not read nor write the language. His parents read only in Tigrinya and read the news online about the war. Negasi's parents did not read the local newspaper as they did not read in Norwegian. Negasi was not sure his parents would understand the paper.

Negasi liked to read the news, but not books. He did not subscribe to any newspaper but read online, especially from the webpage *Complex*[45], dedicated to hip-hop music. He discovered this page from the artists he liked, Eminem and Kendric Lamar, and received the

---

[45] http://www.complex.com

newsfeeds from *Complex* on Facebook. He enjoyed reading the news from the Internet and read mainly in English. He only read in Norwegian when it was school-related. He also liked to read about sports and his favourite team was Chelsea. He estimated that he read about an hour a day from the webpage *Complex* at home in his room. Negasi enjoyed the lesson given by Nishani Frazier, the Roving Scholar from the Fulbright Foundation who spoke about BlackLivesMatter, and he was proud to inform the teacher that he knew all the songs in hip-hop music she used in her presentation as illustrations of the awareness of injustice toward black people in the USA. He would usually read the whole article if it was about an artist he liked, would sometimes read articles again, and would recommend the articles he liked to friends.

Negasi owned two books at home; *Oliver Twist* and *the Boy in the Striped Pyjamas,* books that he had received at school and had read for school. Negasi did not really like novels but rather stories based on real stories. He enjoyed the reading program and mainly read from the webpage of *The Sun* newspaper. If he could not find anything interesting there, he would check his favourite webpage *Complex*.

Negasi wrote a total of 11 blog entries and for all the entries he cut and pasted the text from the articles to his blog without mention of the sources and without any personal comment. He also illustrated the entries with pictures. Three entries dealt with music, four with the Presidential election in the USA, and two were articles about topics that the researcher suggested to the class prior to the reading session. This example is a blog entry about Donald Trump, written on Tuesday 29 November 2016.
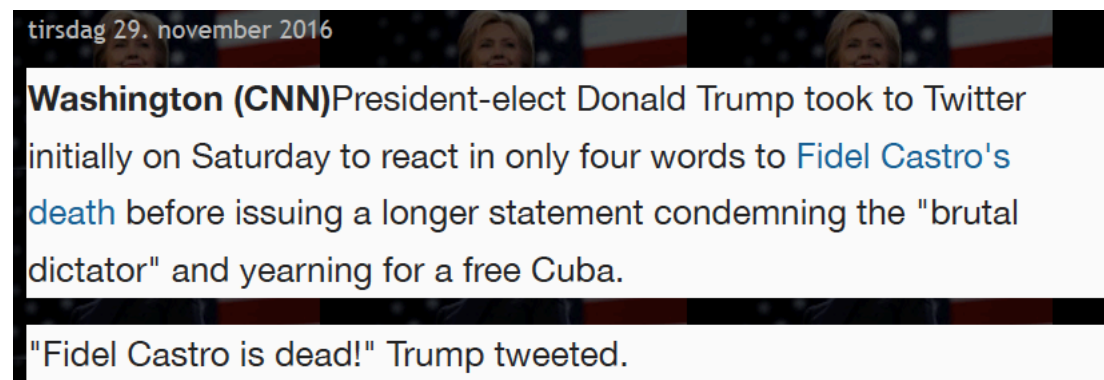
In the second questionnaire, Negasi wrote that he enjoyed the online reading sessions, liked the fact that he could read authentic texts and felt that he had learned interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries. He was unsure if he had become a better reader through the programme, wondered if the programme had

increased the speed of his reading, and was unsure if he had gained confidence in his reading ability. On the other hand, he felt that he had become more critical about the webpages he read from. He had gained the habit to check where the news came from. He explained during the second interview that he sometimes found it hard to select which article to read as he did not enjoy reading disturbing news, as he found it too depressing, and instead enjoyed reading the suggested articles from time to time. He felt that the programme had inspired him to read more about politics than he used to and he had discovered the webpage of *The Huffington Post* that he enjoyed reading from. He admitted that he read more news generally after the reading project, but still enjoyed reading about music and reading from his favourite webpage, *Complex*.

Negasi took nine reading quizzes on ReadTheory and while he scored grade 3 at the placement test, he had managed to climb up to grade 5 for one quiz. The final quiz he took in January placed him again at grade 3.

Figure 8 shows Negasi's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
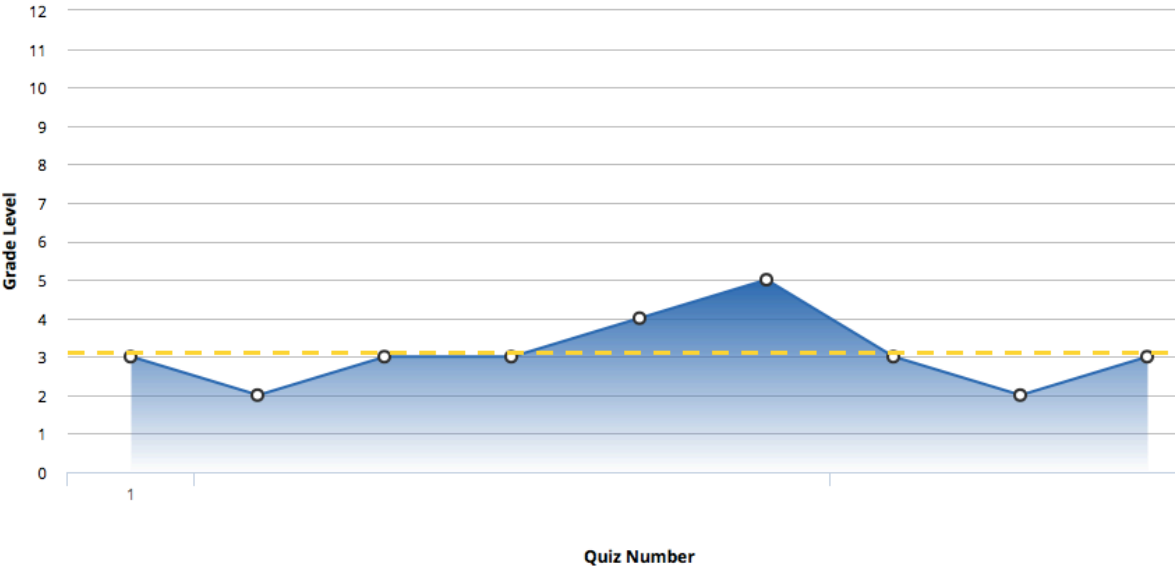

Figure 8: Negasi's ReadTheory progression overview

In sum, the reading project did not significantly change Negasi´s reading habits. He used to read news from the English-speaking website *Complex*, specialized in hip-hop music, and this website remained his favourite after the project. However, he admitted that he now read more news about politics and international affairs than before. He had liked the project and felt that he had become a more critical reader and would now check the source of the news he read. His blog entries were cut-and-paste from the websites from which he retrieved the

information. His reading comprehension monitored on ReadTheory did not increase from the beginning to the end of the project.

Pernille

Pernille was 17 and was one of the 12 pupils who answered the first questionnaire on Its Learning. She admitted that she did not like to read and her family did not subscribe to any newspaper. They used to subscribe to the local newspaper previously, but had recently cancelled their subscription. Pernille checked the news online from time to time, but could not read the local newspaper as one had to subscribe to the paper in order to be able to access all the articles. She did not like to read the newspaper and, as a matter of fact, she did not like to read novels either. She only read what she had to read for school and then sometimes flip through the local newspaper when she was at her grandparents, who subscribed to it. All her family liked to read except she and her father. There were many books at home, but Pernille would rather have read from her phone. She forced herself to read the news in order to know what was going on in the world, but did not really enjoy it.

Pernille admitted that she had always been told by her teachers that she should have read more, but it did not help as she did not enjoy reading. When she read, it was mainly the news in Norwegian and only for a few minutes. She liked to follow up on the stories she had read previously though. She mentioned as an example a story she had previously read about a girl gone missing. She liked to look for follow-up stories about this girl. She did not really know how she chose the articles she read as it depended on what she found interesting at that specific moment. She rarely read the whole article and often went back to the first page in order to look for another article or click on the articles suggested to her. She did not click on hyperlinks, nor did she directly recommend articles to friends. What she sometimes did when she had read something together with friends would be to tag them into a story related to the shared article in order to inform them about the story she had just read. She gave as an example a story she had read about the Kardashians.

Pernille had many books at home and many of her relatives loved to read. She struggled to pick up a story from the main pages of the news providers as she found it hard to select something interesting. She liked the fact that the teacher introduced the lesson with a topic and an article so that she had the possibility to try to find out something about this topic on her own.

Pernille wrote 12 entries to her blog and seemed to be one of the pupils who took her blog most seriously. She referred to the topics of the different articles she had read in the

course of the reading sessions. She did not specify the reference to the article she had read online, but would mention the name of the website she had visited and would write a few sentences about the topic of the articles. Although she never used pictures to illustrate her entries, the style of her entries was clear and she related the subject in a very humble and modest way. One day, she even read five articles which she wrote about on her blog on Wednesday, November 16, 2016.

onsdag 16. november 2016

Hospital in India fined after cremating the wrong body

Today I read five different articles. Not everyone were exiting, but some were.

A hospital in India is being fined after cremating the wrong body. They gave away the wrong body to a family. I didn't understand if the body wasn't supposed to be cremated, but anyways they gave away the wrong one. This is something that should not happen.

Sweden is re-opening a murder case from 1986. Even though that is a long time ago, it is good that they are opening the case. This time they might figure out who killed the earlier Prime Minister Olof PAlme 30 years ago.

A women from New York, is saying she found a dead rat sewn into her dress she bought at Zara. That made me not want to buy anything more from Zara. I saw a picture, it wasn't good to see, but it is awful to think she maybe found a rat in a dress.

I read a little bit about the Oklahoma shooting at an airport, and also to french tourists that died while snorkelling in the Great Barrier Reef. Both of these stories are really sad, and I wish it didn't happen.

Pernille said in the second interview that she had enjoyed the reading project. She liked to be able to decide what to read and to hear what the others had read in the course of the discussion. She found it hard to find interesting articles to read, but felt that it was good for her to be forced to read. She encountered that it was difficult to select something to read as nothing really interested her. She did not like to read about politics and global affairs. She was more interested in reading what she usually liked to read in Norwegian, namely articles related to celebrities or to crimes. She found it useful to receive the suggestions at the beginning of the reading sessions and read articles about these several times.

One reason Pernille found it hard to read and enjoy articles was that the vocabulary was too complicated and there were far too many words she did not understand. She visited the page *The Times in Plain English*, recommended by the teacher but, for a reason she cannot really explain, Pernille did not enjoy the page and only visited it once. According to her, the reading programme did not change her reading habits in English as she had not really

read the news in English before the project, and did not do so after either. She could not say that her reading speed had increased either and she had not gained any confidence in her reading ability due to the extensive reading sessions. What she pointed out in the second questionnaire was that her reading habits had changed slightly in her mother tongue, and that she had started to read more news in Norwegian from different sources: *TV2*, *Stavanger Aftenblad*, *Rogalands Avis* and sometimes *VG*. She would try to read from these every day and definitely preferred to read the news at home rather than at school.

Even though Pernille did not seem to have particularly enjoyed and seen the benefits of the extensive reading programme, she seemed to be one of the pupils who increased their grades the most on ReadTheory. While the placement test put her on level 3, she had managed to climb to level 7 in January with an average of 4,5.

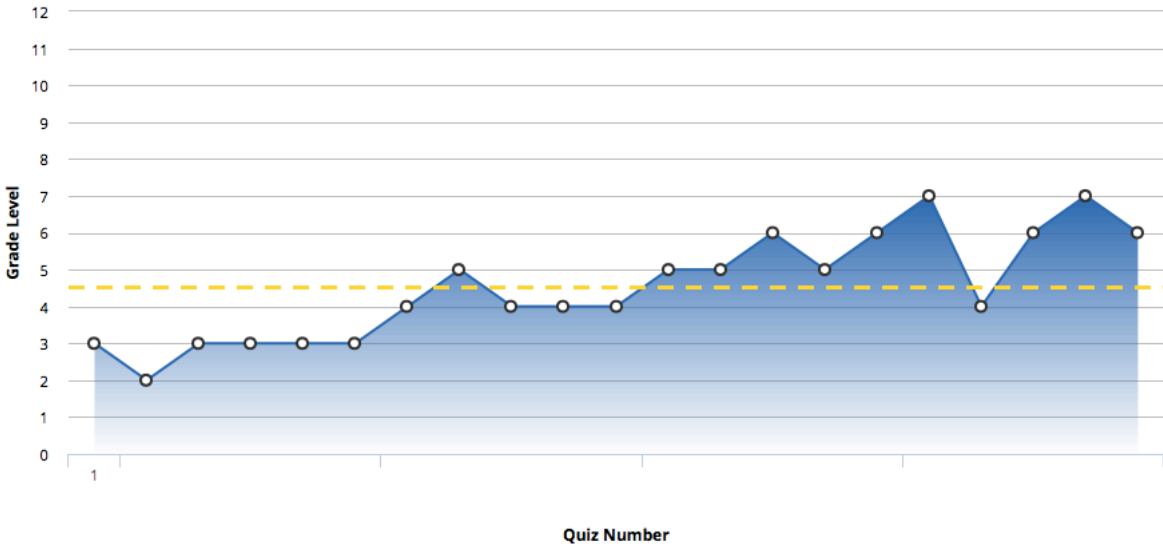Figure 9 shows Pernille's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.

Figure 9: Pernille's ReadTheory progression overview

To sum up, while Pernille enjoyed the reading project, she claimed that she found it hard to find anything interesting to read. She had not read the news in English before the project and did not really change this in course of it. However, she admitted that she read more news in Norwegian after the project. She enjoyed the suggestions given in class, wrote many interesting personal blog posts about her reading, and had progressed on ReadTheory.

Agnes

Agnes said in the first interview that she did not like to read the news and that her family did not subscribe to any newspaper. She sometimes read the news on the Internet if it appeared on her Facebook account and if it sounded interesting. These news items would be articles liked or commented on by her Facebook friends. Some of these articles were in Norwegian but most of them were in English. The online news she occasionally read was in Norwegian and published on the websites of *VG* or *Aftenposten*. She would not usually visit English websites, but, after the start of the program, she acknowledged that she liked to read from the *BBC* website. Agnes pointed out that there was a good deal in English on Facebook.

Agnes often shared the interesting articles with her friends, but would not comment on them. When she was younger, she loved to read and read many books, but she did not really read any more. She found it hard to start a book, but when she had read a few chapters, it was easier to read further. She had read the first *Harry Potter* book in English and all the others in Norwegian. She did not have books in her room any longer; these were in the library in their home. Her parents read a good deal and often recommended books to her, but it did not really help change her attitude.

Agnes found it hard to select something interesting to read during the reading sessions. She emphasised the fact that they had to write afterwards and that she found it stressful. She found it hard to know what to write about the articles and often started to write while reading, but found it helpful and enjoyable to receive recommendations in class.

Agnes wrote nine entries to her blog and never used any pictures to illustrate them. She always provided the reference to the article she read and wrote her blogs in a very personal tone, as in the following example about slippery roads in Montreal.

Wednesday, December 7, 2016

Cars, buses and trucks are crashing in Montreal since it is so slippery

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/06/mayhem-montreal-snow-buses-cars-trucks-crash

Hi! Today i went on theguardian.com, i found an article about the roads being so slippery that cars, buses and trucks slips, they crashes in to each other. Even the police cars cant drive properly, they slips and glide. This is in Montreal, where it is very snowy now. This can be very dangerous, specially with the buses since they are so big and heavy so they can hit everyone that are close. There are a video in the article that shows when buses, cars and trucks crash into each other, and you can see that the drivers cant control where they slide since its so slippery so they cant stop it either.

Agnes did not always manage to finish her blog entry in the course of the time devoted to it in class. She would then finish the entries at home. She wrote twice about how hard it was to find something to read, as in the following entry:

Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Did not find anything to read

Hello.
http://www.bbc.com/

I went on www.bbc.com and I did not find an article or something that interested me that I wanted to read or write about. I have earlier found something I have wanted to read, but not this time. When i read something I want to write about what I read, so I can share my meanings and write on my own way. That is hard to do when you cant find anything that intereste you.

Agnes confirmed during the second interview that it was still hard to find interesting stories at the end of the programme and that she felt that the texts were generally too complicated. What she liked to read in Norwegian was local news about her city, things going on in her neighbourhood that might impact on her family or friends. She found it hard to explain her preferences. She usually picked up the stories by looking at the pictures. She only once visited the webpage from *The Time in Plain English* and did not like the fact that it did not provide daily news. Some news was old and thus not interesting. She might have preferred news related to teenagers as she found the regular English-speaking newspapers too difficult.

She mentioned in the second interview that she found it very motivating to pick her own texts to read and to read from authentic texts. She enjoyed the reading sessions and enjoyed the fact that they gave her the possibility to catch up with news published outside of Norway. She sometimes read the articles recommended by the teacher and would often read from the webpage of the *BBC*. She enjoyed listening to the articles read by the other pupils in the class. She also felt that she had become a more critical reader and that the project had helped her to see topics from different points of view. She stressed the fact that the news found on these news provider webpages was news intended to be read by adults and she would have preferred to read articles intended for teenagers with easier topics to understand. Her reading habits had not changed as she did not subscribe to any newsfeed from any English-speaking newspaper, but would read more of what her friends liked or recommended on Facebook, as they were the stories that mattered for people of her age.

Agnes took six reading quizzes on ReadTheory and the results of her first reading lesson placed her at level 3. She then climbed to grade 4 with her third quiz, dropped to grade 2 with her fifth quiz and achieved level 3 with her last quiz, the same result as the one obtained with her placement test taken in September. Her average grade on the reading comprehension website was grade 3.

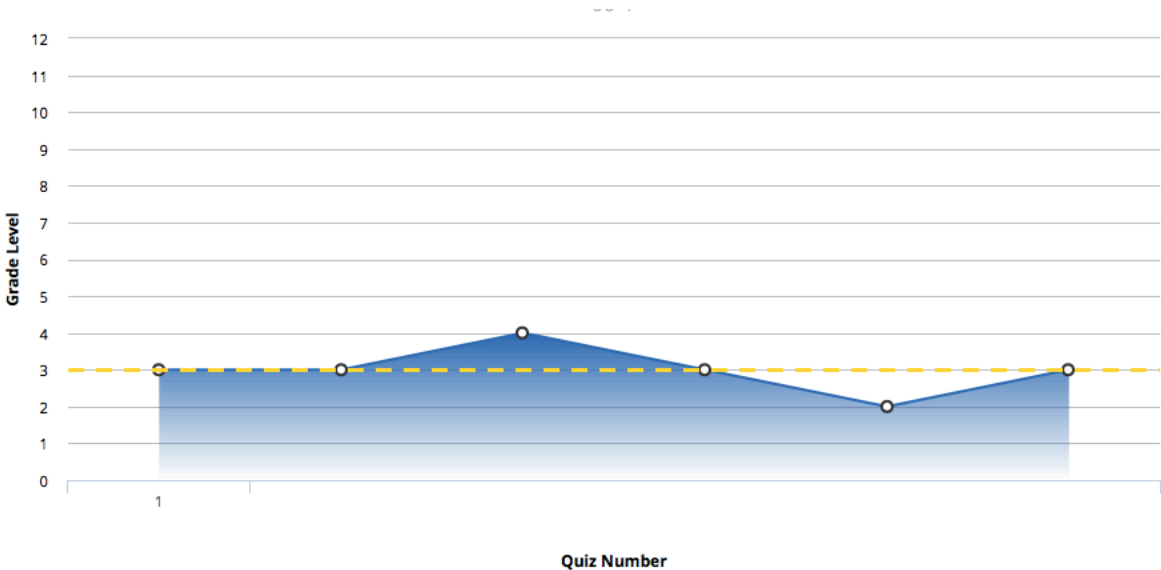Figure 10 shows Agnes' grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.

Figure 10: Agnes' ReadTheory progression overview

In sum, Agnes had not liked to read prior to the project and had hardly read the news in English. She found it hard to find interesting news on the English-speaking news providers as she found the articles too complicated and uninteresting. She was mostly interested in local news about her community and her city. She wrote several interesting blog posts, but pointed out that she did not like to write on her blog. Agnes' average level of achievement on ReadTheory was grade 3, the level she reached with the placement test, and the result she obtained with the latest quiz taken in January.

Frode

Frode was 19 years old and he liked to read. He was the only pupil in the class to subscribe to a publication; he subscribed to the Norwegian history magazine *Aftenposten Historie*. Frode mainly read the news from *NRK.no*, but did not have a favourite website. He enjoyed reading the news from the Internet as he found it fast and easy. He would spend up to one hour a day

reading the news. He liked political news, but also read about sports, cars, and the main football teams. He would usually read the news in Norwegian and novels in English. He liked the English language and preferred to read novels in English. His favourite genre was Fantasy. When reading the news on the Internet, Frode would look at the headlines and the titles of the articles to see if any would appeal to him. He would also make sure that the news was recent.

When the content was interesting, he would read the entire article and would look at the related stories recommended by the news provider in order to choose the next article to read. He would sometimes go back to an article that he had previously read, especially when he had to write an assignment at school. Frode would not often forward or recommend articles to friends, but would prefer to be more social and to discuss the article verbally with his friends or classmates. He never wrote comments to the newspaper on the article he had read.

Frode wrote seven short entries to his blog and without providing the references of the articles he had read. Neither would he always mention the source visited. Frode's reading interests were really diverse, ranging from English history to the American election, the war in Syria, and Leprosy in California. Frode read from many different webpages, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian*, the *NAACP* website and the *BBC*'s history magazine. The entries written on his blogs synthetised the content of the articles he had read without any personal comments on the pieces of news9 as in the following blog entry, posted on Tuesday, November 22, 2016.

tirsdag 22. november 2016

BBC`s history magazine

Today I read an issue from the BBC`s history magazine. The magazine were brought by my teacher Nathalie. The main theme of this issue was the Norman conquest of England and the social changes which transpired afterwards. William ascended to the english throne in 1066 and ushered in an era of architectural change. Castles and cathedrals were built all over England, slavery abolished and feudalism instituted. The issue also included a section where historian professor Harold James and economist Dr Hassan Hakimian comperes todays financial situation in western countries with the financial situation during the great depression.

Frode did not answer the second questionnaire as he was absent the day it was distributed in class and no second interview could be scheduled. He had dropped out after the first semester because his absence rate was higher than ten per cent. Frode accessed the ReadTheory webpage several times in the course of the three months and made progress from grade 5 to grade 7, with one quiz peaking at grade 8.

Figure 11 shows Frode's grade level progression on the ReadTheory website.
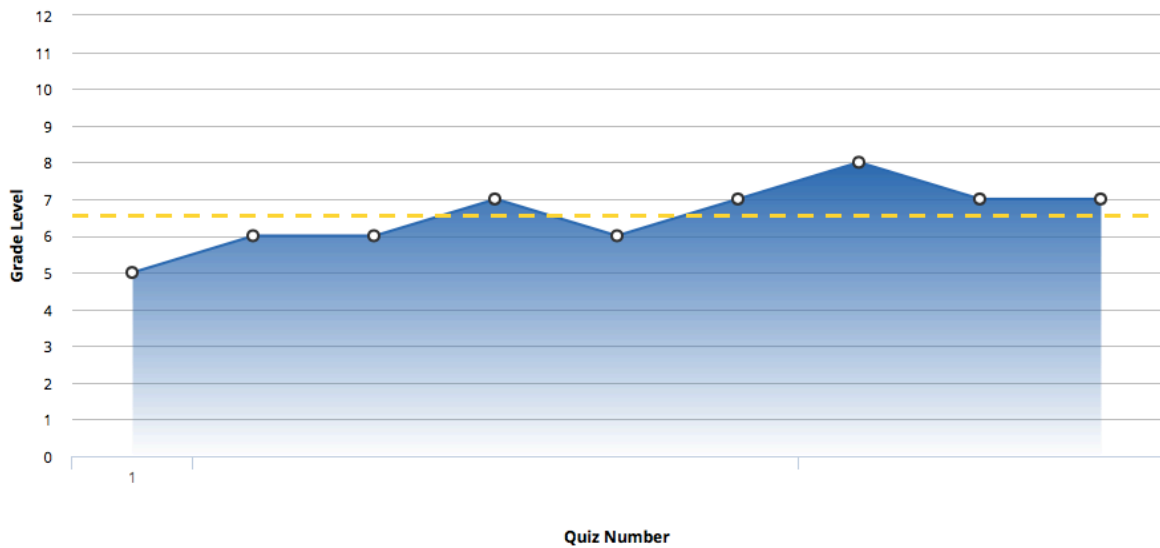

Figure 11: Frode's ReadTheory progression overview

To sum up, Frode enjoyed reading and subscribed to the magazine *Aftenposten Historie* in Norwegian. He usually read the news in Norwegian and novels in English. During the reading sessions, Frode read from various English-speaking news providers and wrote interesting blog entries where he summarized the articles he had read. Frode made progress in reading comprehension on ReadTheory.

5.8 Summary

The current chapter has presented the different results collected in the course of the study in a way that aims to provide a picture of the whole class, while at the same time taking a closer look at the eight case study pupils in their reading of the news and the impact of the three-month extensive reading of the online news on their reading habits and reading comprehension.

The pupils read the news twice a week in the course of the extensive reading programme and while very few of them were used to reading the news in English at the beginning of the project, several pupils changed their reading habits and started to regularly read the news in English. Some pupils also reported that the project had changed their reading habits in Norwegian by reading the news more often and that they had become more critical about the source that published the article. Most of the pupils read the news on Facebook.

The reading comprehension of the pupils was measured on the ReadTheory website before the beginning of the reading project and at the end of the three-month project. Two pupils of the class never visited the webpage and, out of the 20 remaining pupils, eleven improved their reading comprehension. In the control group, which did not follow any extensive reading programme, four pupils out of six also increased their grade level on the reading comprehension website ReadTheory.

The majority of the eight case study pupils had enjoyed the reading sessions of the news. They particularly enjoyed the fact that they were reading online, that they could make their own choices, and that they could share their reading with their classmates after the reading sessions. Some pupils experienced difficulties in finding interesting articles on their own and enjoyed the suggestions given by the researcher at the beginning of the reading sessions.

6. Discussion

6.1 Introduction

The present study is a case study of the impact of a three-month free voluntary web-surfing programme on pupils' reading and motivation to read in a Norwegian upper secondary VG2 International English classroom. The previous chapter presented the research results from the study. The present chapter will discuss the main findings in the light of the research questions and in relation to the theory and research presented in Chapter 3.

First, section 6.2 discusses the impact of the project on the pupils' reading comprehension. Section 6.3 discusses the findings in terms of the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online. In section 6.4 the reading routines and the reading interests of the pupils are discussed, while section 6.5 discusses whether the pupils became more critical readers as a consequence of the three-month reading project. Sections 6.6 addresses the limitations of the study, while the implications and recommendations based on the findings of the study are presented in section 6.7. Finally, the chapter is summarised in section 6.9.

6.2 The impact of the project on the pupils' reading comprehension

One of the aims of the study was to investigate the impact of the project on the pupils' reading comprehension. Firstly , the qualitative data gathered during the interviews of the seven focus pupils (one of them, Frode, dropped out right before the end of the programme and did not take the last interview), together with the answers from the second questionnaire, provided the researcher with useful information about the development of the pupils' reading comprehension. Secondly, the quantitative data registered by the pupils on ReadTheory (RT) monitored the progression of the reading comprehension of the pupils in the course of the three months. There is some tension between the two main sources of data. Whereas the qualitative data gathered generally shows a positive picture of the pupils' beliefs about their development of reading, the quantitative RT data does not seem to confirm benefits in reading comprehension for a number of pupils. It provides some questionable results that will be discussed further in the course of this section.

In their answers collected from the second questionnaire, ten pupils stated that they had gained confidence in their reading ability due to the free voluntary reading sessions (FVS) and nine felt that they had become better readers in English due to the programme.

Moreover, the focus pupils stated in the course of the second interview that they had enjoyed the digital reading of the news and felt that they had become better readers. This supports Krashen's (2004; 37) view that we learn to read by reading and that extensive reading is a way to develop reading proficiency and to positively affect linguistic competence.

However, the results of the case study pupils on ReadTheory show another picture of the impact of the FVS project on the pupils' reading comprehension that questions the validity of RT as a source of reliable data. The RT results of the case study group show that ten pupils out of 20 increased their grades at the end of the three-month programme, that five achieved the same results after the programme as before, while five pupils scored lower in January than in September. Two pupils did not work on the RT website and some pupils took very few quizzes. The pupils' progression on RT was not regular, but comprised much fluctuation, which also decreases the validity of the tool. As stated on the RT website, these results should be used as general guidelines and teachers should serve as ultimate judges of the reading skill and ability of the pupils.

Half of the pupils (those whose RT scores increased) seemed to have benefitted from the ER programme, as many of them showed dedication during the programme, participated actively in the discussion sessions, and wrote interesting entries on their blogs. However, it is difficult to interpret why the scores of five pupils decreased in the same period. Two of the focus pupils, Song and Kjersti, were among those whose scores decreased. They pointed out in the course of the second interview and in the second questionnaire that they had enjoyed the reading of the news and that they felt that they had benefitted from the FVS programme. However, while working on RT in class, Kjersti told the researcher that she was not motivated by the quizzes and explained that it was difficult to climb one level up. This required passing a quiz without a single mistake and the questions were rather complicated and tricky. She was not attracted or stimulated by the game mechanics of the programme and took the quiz as she was instructed to take them, without checking the results achieved and did not try to improve her score. Song, on the other hand, was motivated by the RT website as he liked to play games. While he achieved grade 9 with his placement test, he never managed to return to the placement test level, during the course of the three months during which he took numerous quizzes. Song seemed to be an example of a pupil whose placement test was inaccurate.

The researcher contacted the staff of RT concerning this phenomenon in February and their explanation (personal correspondence 2017, Appendix 9) was that the nature of the pre-test itself might lead to errors in placement, as the pre-test comprises only eight questions (one per text) to determine a students' level (see Appendix 6 for examples of questions at

different grade levels). Mork, a researcher who uses ReadTheory with her college students, also commented on the fact that the initial placement testing was sometimes inaccurate, often placing students at a higher level than their overall performance in the system would indicate[46]. Once the placement test has been registered, the programme chooses a quiz at the grade level of the placement test, and these quizzes generally comprise between five to eight questions about the same text (see Appendix 7 for an example of a regular quiz).

In his efforts to regain the level of his placement test, Song demonstrated that the game mechanics incorporated in the website appealed to him and motivated him to take more tests in order to improve his score. In the course of one and the same day, Song took twelve quizzes, where he scored grades 6, 6, 6, 7, 4, 5, 4, 4, 5, 3, 6 and 4. In a discussion with the researcher, Song admitted that he liked to play games and that he desperately wanted to get back to the initial placement level at grade 9.

The teacher should arguably have reset Song's quiz data when it was clear that his placement test was not accurate, as advised by the staff of RT, so that he could have started again, hopefully at the right level, and could have experienced the satisfaction of monitoring progress on the webpage instead of experiencing the frustration of not to being able to reach the original placement test level again. The problem was that it took a while to discover that there was something wrong with his placement test, as most of the pupils also achieved irregular results on RT. Neither Kjersti nor Song managed to reach the level of their placement test in January. Song's average grade level achievement was 5,5 from September to January, while Kjersti's average grade level achievement was 7,5, only 1,5 grade from her placement test, whereas Song's average results were still 3,5 grades below his placement test. Therefore, the explanation provided by the staff of ReadTheory seem plausible.

As far as the other pupils who decreased their grades are concerned, Ariana, who was an avid reader of English-speaking novels, confessed to the teacher that she did not feel committed to the RT website and did not try to increase her grades there; she just took the quizzes as advised. As for Dennis and Daniel, they acknowledged that they did not care about their progress on the webpage RT.

Some pupils like Madhavi, Albert, Linn and Pernille, were clearly dedicated and committed to the project with good participation during the discussion sessions, nice personal comments on their blogs, and the four of them made progress on RT. This seems to indicate

---

[46] E-mail from Cathrine-Mette Mork dated 24 March 2017 to be retrieved in appendix 14.

that their placement test was correct, and that the reading sessions impacted on their results on RT, as they showed a regular progression in the course of the three-month period.

The results from the pupils from the control group were proportionately higher than the case study group's. Four pupils increased their grades, while two of them decreased theirs. The control group did not follow any extensive reading programme in the course of the three months, but worked with tasks from NDLA, texts from the textbook *International Focus*, with news articles posted on It's Learning, and read a novel, *Things Fall Apart*, from Chinua Achebe. The teaching in this class did not give the pupils the choice of what to read but they still seemed to have read a good deal.

The difference in achievements between both groups leads to another reflection about the comparability of both groups. The focus group contained 22 pupils from VG2, all aged between 17 and 18, whereas the control group only consisted of six pupils, all older than the VG2 pupils, as the control group included a combination of VG3 and upper secondary level 3 programme pupils (see section 2.5). The level 3 programme pupils are usually highly motivated pupils who have already finished their vocational training and who want to gain entry to higher education. They also needed good grades in order to be able to enter their specific programme, which had limited places. The case study group, on the other hand, consisted of ten pupils who took VG1 at the case study school and 12 pupils who took the first year in other schools of the district. They had to change school because their grades were inferior to the average required to be able to continue at the school where they took their first year of upper secondary. The case study school is namely one of the general studies high schools without any grade requirement for application. Consequently, many students with low grades in the district apply to the case study school.

There was thus a large discrepancy in the level of ability and motivation between the groups and this was also reflected by the absence rate. None of the control group pupils exceeded the 10% absence rate, whereas seven did in the case study group and four pupils dropped out in the course of the year. Moreover, the control group pupils took the RT quizzes during class, while the pupils from the study group were expected to take these reading quizzes at home, resulting in some of them hardly visiting the webpage.

While the case study group perceived RT as a good tool to improve reading comprehension and felt that RT should be used regularly during the English classes, the researcher nevertheless questions the reliability of the RT website as a tool to monitor reading comprehension because of the fluctuations in the results obtained by the pupils from one quiz to another. The placement test namely consists of eight texts with one single multiple-choice

question each. The first question presents a grade 5 level text to the users and if the question is correctly answered, the second text will be one level up, a grade 6 level text, and so on. If one question is wrongly answered, the next quiz will be one level under the failed quiz. It means that if the user manages to answer all the questions correctly, the user will pass one grade up with each text and the placement test will be assessed at grade 12. The researcher took four placement tests herself and scored 5 on the first test, 11 on the second one, 7 on the third one and 4 on the last one, all of them taken the same day. This confirms the instability of the results.

Moreover, the types of questions asked to the pupils do not always check the overall comprehension of the text, which is usually the case in the EFL textbooks. The RT questions are closed ones with only one correct answer and are sometimes very precise about nuances of vocabulary, while other questions might deal with logic that one may find in a maths test. Finally, if one only considers RT as a provider of various types of short texts to pupils to practise reading, it may be considered a good tool. However, if one wants to consider the results obtained on RT as an assessment of the achievements in reading comprehension, the tool does not seem to be completely reliable and appropriate for EFL learners in Norway. The Norwegian school system advocates formative assessment with feedback on how to improve performance, whereas RT is based on summative assessment based on scores and grades. Even as advised by the staff of RT, the progression of the pupils does not always give a clear indication of their reading comprehension, as the large fluctuation in results decreases the validity of the tool.

Nonetheless, the RT webpage has confirmed that a handful of pupils (Agnes, Johanne, Negasi and Daniel), who indicated early on in the course of the project that they found it difficult to choose anything interesting to read, as they experienced the articles from the English-speaking news providers as too difficult and boring, also scored poorly on RT, with no significant progression monitored. These results have functioned as an indicator to the teacher that these pupils needed extra help and care in order to find reading at their i+1 level (Krashen, 1982: 20).

It is rather concerning that four pupils out of the VG2 class found it too challenging to read the English-speaking press as, at the age of 16, Norwegian pupils are expected to be at an intermediate level of proficiency in English and should be able to read authentic texts. One could argue that these pupils should have read more at earlier stages of schooling. Agnes, Johanne and Daniel admitted that they did not read much as they did not like to read, not even in Norwegian. Agnes used to be a passionate reader as a child but lost the interest when she

started lower secondary and Negasi defined himself as a person who liked to read, but who only owned two books. Research carried out by Hellekjær (2005) questioned whether upper secondary school pupils of English in Norway had received enough reading instruction and reading training in the course of their education, as only one third of the upper secondary pupils from the General Studies branch (VG1) would manage the level required for admission to universities in English-speaking countries (see section 3.4.1).

ReadTheory and the FVS programme were two interesting ways to focus on reading comprehension in the class of International English as most of the pupils enjoyed both. It is not, however, possible to confirm that the FVS programme had a clear impact on the pupils' reading comprehension achievements as the reliability and validity of RT as a quantitative tool seems to be very weak. Mork (see Appendix 14) commented on the results obtained on RT in her correspondence with the researcher, stating that the student levels did not improve dramatically over the course of use, even if they increased at all. Mork suggested that the students might have to use the system more often or over a longer period of time to see substantial gains.

What is reasonable to infer is that it is highly recommendable to start extensive reading programmes earlier on, as it is not enough to begin such a programme when EFL pupils are 17 or 18 years old. The pleasure of reading needs to be nurtured and fostered with reading and writing projects much earlier, as advocated by Atwell (2007: 107), as demonstrated by Vatnaland (2016) in her study of a reading and writing workshop in an 8th grade EFL class, by Myrset's (2014) study of using Readers Theatre in a 6th grade EFL class, and by Gilje (2014), with her research on the importance of access to a wide selection of reading materials in EFL upper primary classes. With the gradually more digitalized lower secondary schools in Norway, a similar project to the case study project could even be considered by lower secondary teachers, who could select easier websites, where pupils could read for pleasure.

There is a good deal of pressure on upper secondary school teachers to cover the various competence aims in their subject, to organize their lessons in line with academic success, and to prepare the pupils for the possible oral and written exams. As advocated by Atwell (2007: 110), young adults' wish to experience independence, personal meaning and sense of power can be obtained with extensive reading and, as shown in this case study, can be obtained with free digital reading of the English-speaking news.

6.3 The impact of the project on the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online

Most of the research on extensive reading shows that motivation to read is the key (Arnold, 2009; Atwell, 2015; Cho and Krashen, 1994; Day and Bamford 2004; Elley, 1991; Elley and Mangubhai, 1983; Hafiz and Tudor, 1989; Krashen 2004; Susser and Robb 1990; Waring, 2006). According to Day and Bamford (1998: 27), motivation is what makes people do or not do something and implies both expectation and value. The pupils of the case study group were informed about the benefits and the value of extensive reading on the overall process of language acquisition. The expectation was that, with a better command of the English language, they would obtain better results in the International English subject.

The answers from the second questionnaire showed that the majority of the pupils found it motivating to read real-life texts (see section 5.5) and enjoyed reading authentic texts. The observations during the reading sessions and the comments written on the blogs also demonstrated that most of the pupils were motivated by the project. As stated by Krashen (2011: 70): 'Input needs to be interesting for acquisition to take place optimally; high interest ensures that the acquirer will actually pay attention to the input.'

The majority of the pupils stated in the second questionnaire that they enjoyed being given the choice of what to read and many found it motivating to begin the English lessons with a smooth start and the possibility to catch up with the news. It was very interesting for the researcher to see how quiet the classroom turned within a few minutes when the pupils started to read, and how eager some of them were to share their reading with the teacher. For example, Ruszard, who is very interested in sports, showed an article about the French football player Zinedine Zidane and asked the teacher if she knew him and what she thought of him. The same applied to Ariana and Kjersti, who often read the same articles, or Ruszard, Jonathan and Dennis, often giggling at stories they read and which they wanted to share with each other. Albert, who liked to read about the American presidential campaign, was often eager to share the latest news at the start of the reading session, which triggered a positive effect among the pupils who suddenly felt more compelled to read about this specific topic. Daniel started the reading lesson once by asking if any other pupil had heard about the plane crash in Medellin with a whole football team onboard. Other boys heard about it and started to discuss the tragedy and afterwards several pupils started to check their news providers to read about it.

Kjersti mentioned in the course of the second interview that she liked to share her reading with the rest of the class during the discussion sessions. This was positive as Kjersti is

a pupil who lacks self-confidence and does not want to talk or make presentations in front of the whole class. Mahavi wrote in the second questionnaire that what she liked the most about the project was the fact that she could decide what to read. She also liked the discussions about the articles in class afterwards because then she got to hear what others had read about and from which news site, so that next time she could know which site to read from.

Another sign of the motivational benefits of the project was that some of the pupils even came back when the class was finished to acquire the reference of an article mentioned during the reading session, for example Helga, who asked about the article presented by Albert about the pictures taken from space, or Linn, a very shy pupil, who asked about an article presented by Ariana about women´s rights.

Several pupils developed a positive attitude towards reading the English-speaking news, such as Madhavi, who wrote in the second questionnaire that she always liked to read the news. She had previously just read headlines, whereas now she almost read the whole article. Frank wrote that he definitely read more in his spare time now. As discovered by other researchers (e.g. Arnold 2009; Myrset 2014; Vatnaland 2016), the pupils developed positive attitudes to reading and the reading sessions created a nice atmosphere in the classroom, where all the pupils felt that they could contribute during the discussion sessions. No pupil was reluctant to talk after the reading session and while some liked to discuss their reading in detail, others would just say a few words.

As argued by Blikstad Balas (2012), it is important that schools create relevant educational Internet-based practices so that pupils can use the Internet for academic literacy practices in order to be well-prepared for higher education and for their professional lives. It seems that the extensive reading programme provided the pupils was a positive reading experience and motivated several of them to read more news in their mother tongue and more news in English. Some of them started to subscribe to several English-speaking newspapers on their Facebook account and some pupils, such as Song, started to read more news from Norwegian news providers.

6.4 The effect of the programme on the pupils' reading routines and reading interests

The programme had a clear impact on the reading routines of some pupils in the class. Almost half of the class said that the project changed their reading routines, as they read more in English, Norwegian, or in the other languages they mastered during their free-time after the project. Four pupils reported that they had started to read more in English for fun in their

spare time and five pupils reported that they had started to read articles in different genres than the ones they usually read. However, most of the pupils answered in the second questionnaire that they generally read articles in the same genre as previously. For example, Dennis, who liked to read about cars, read mostly about cars, and the ones who liked gossip news and articles about celebrities, for example Kjersti, kept on reading about the same topic. Negasi and Jonathan, who liked to read news related to music, continued to read about the same topic in the course of the three months. Only eight pupils tried to vary the topics of the articles they read, such as Albert, who wrote that he now read international news and not just the news from *VG*, and Marcus, who did not work on ReadTheory, but wrote in the second questionnaire that he now reads different types of news, from *The Guardian* and *CNN* and was more interested in politics than before. Jonathan who, at the start of the project liked to read *The Sun* together with his classmates Ruszard and Dennis, wrote later on that *The Sun* was not very good, so he was not using it anymore and would instead read from, e.g. the *BBC* and the *Guardian*.

It seems that the pupils already had well-established reading routines prior to the case study and that the majority of them enjoyed reading the news digitally. Some read the news only in Norwegian, although the majority read the news in both English and Norwegian. Most of the pupils read the news on Facebook and only read the articles that appealed to them. They all reported during the first interview what their favourite news website was and the types of news they would usually read. Some pupils, like Ariana, said from the start that she did not like to read the news and confirmed at the end of the project in the second questionnaire that what she learned from the FVS programme was that she was now completely sure that reading the news was not something for her.

A positive outcome of the project was that, because of the FVS programme, nine pupils who already read about 30 minutes a day from various websites, discovered other news providers, expanded their areas of interest, and started to read English-speaking news more. As Krashen (2011: 77) concludes, all it takes to use FVS in language teaching is to encourage the pupils to do something they already enjoy doing in their first language.

6.5 The impact of free voluntary web surfing on the pupils' critical thinking

The *LK06* curriculum emphasizes the integration of the 'basic skills' at school. In the course of the case study, both reading skills and digital skills were in focus. Besides, the English subject curriculum stresses the importance of reading a variety of different texts in English in

order to stimulate the joy of reading to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge. Through reading, pupils are expected to analyse, elaborate and discuss. By working with digital skills, as explained in section 2.4, the purpose of the teacher is to foster and develop a critical and independent attitude to the use of sources among the pupils. Supporting Krashen's (2011: 69) view that digital reading appears to be a good source of comprehensible input, the majority of the pupils answered that they enjoyed digital reading and preferred digital reading to traditional paper reading. Furthermore, teachers in upper secondary schools in Norway are invited to use free quality resources from the Internet instead of expensive textbooks.

The results from the second questionnaire showed that the majority of the pupils experienced that they had become more critical readers and that they paid more attention to the source of the article they read after the ER programme. They were more aware of the position of the author and the publisher and would question the purpose of the article before reading it. The majority of the pupils also felt that they had learned interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries and they demonstrated critical thinking in the course of the discussions when they questioned the articles presented by their classmates, or asked for information.

However, while some pupils showed a good deal of reflection and personal thoughts on their blogs and in the course of the post-reading discussions, the majority of the pupils often made a very short summary of what they read, and there was not so much depth in the search of more knowledge. Only a few pupils read follow-up stories from one session to the other, for example Song, who read some follow-up stories of the earthquake in Japan. Helga enjoyed reading about the American elections during the reading sessions, and Madhavi found a personal interest in reading about politics and topics linked to the challenges of multiculturalism. These pupils showed a wish to gain more thorough knowledge about a specific topic.

Another reason why the pupils might not have gained so much in-depth knowledge about the topics they read during the reading sessions could be the position of Carr (2008) on the effect of digital reading on the brain and that of Mangen et al. (2013) on the effects on reading comprehension of reading linear texts on paper versus on a computer screen (see section 3.6). The pupils may indeed have struggled to focus on the digital articles because of the hyperlinks, the advertisements, the email alerts, and message notifications that would have distracted them and disturbed their attention.

Some pupils struggled to find interesting articles to read and it may be that the articles were too difficult for them. Day and Bamford (2004:12) define reading as the construction of meaning from a printed or written message. The construction of meaning involves the reader connecting the information from the written message with previous knowledge to arrive at an understanding. The pupils who found it difficult to find anything to read may have known too little about the topics dealt with in the English-speaking newspapers to have been able to reconstruct the meaning of the articles.

Reading is a complex process that implies much more than just decoding letters into words (Hellekjær, 2007b: 2). The fact that few pupils could discuss in depth the content of their articles showed that they may have lacked understanding of the information read in the articles. Based on the results from the interviews, questionnaires, blogs, observations and achievements on RT, several pupils like Agnes, Johanne, Dennis and Negasi, were weaker than the rest of the class and had not yet reached the intermediate level in EFL that is necessary to be able to enjoy and benefit from the reading of authentic texts. The authentic texts from the main news providers seemed to be too challenging for them and this is probably why they often claimed that the news was boring, and that they spent a good deal of time trying to find something interesting to read. Krashen (1982: 20) states that we acquire language by understanding language that contains structures that are beyond our current level of competence. It seems that the language used in the news providers chosen by these four pupils was too far beyond their current level, and that it may have been an advantage if they had worked consistently with simplified versions of newspapers like the *Time in plain English* or the simplified version of the *Internationalist* in order to benefit properly from their reading.

6.6 Limitations of the study

Different limitations and weaknesses can be addressed in relation to the study. The first important limitation was that it was not possible to monitor how much the pupils actually read. During the observations, it was clear that many pupils spent much time looking at the titles, the pictures, and browsed from the main pages of the news providers. The researcher hoped to be able to use the blogs as a way to monitor what the pupils had read, but as only a few of them wrote reflected texts on their blogs, and as many of the pupils decided to pick up one single article and write a summary of it, the researcher could not really monitor how much they actually read during the reading sessions. Few blog entries, such as the one from

Pernille (see section 5.8), provide information about the number of articles read in the course of the reading sessions.

In her study, Arnold (2009) proceeded differently by asking her seven pupils to write an exhaustive report of their reading at the end of the reading sessions. However, her research focused on seven college students and not 22 upper secondary pupils; she could expect a higher commitment from her students than the researcher of the case study. Robb (2015:150) also found it indispensable to use tracking tools as follow-up activities to make sure that the pupils read and this is why he developed his Moodle Reader platform. As discussed by Dörnyei (2007:188), working with pupils is challenging and one cannot expect to have the full support and cooperation from all the pupils. Some will show little interest in the project if it has no direct consequence on their school grades. Nevertheless, the researcher chose to trust the pupils and to hope that they were convinced about the value of the project to be kept engaged, in line with the consequence pedagogy of the case study school (see section 4.6.1.2).

Another limitation of the study was that the project did not fulfil all the criteria for extensive reading, as the pupils were only supposed to read the English-speaking news (and not anything of their own choice). Two pupils commented on this limitation and expressed their wishes to read novels instead. As the project was a class project, the teacher wanted the whole class to work with the news. These two pupils wrote nicely-illustrated blog entries and also liked to share their reading with the rest of the class, but as they told the researcher in January, they did not challenge themselves on RT as they did not feel committed to the programme. Ariana in particular commented on the fact that she disliked to have to read the news.

It might also have been better to evaluate the progress on reading comprehension differently. While many of the pupils seemed to enjoy extensive reading and understood the benefits of it, their reading progress was being assessed with a programme that did not allow them to choose which text to read. The strong contrast between the free digital reading on the Internet and the reading quizzes on RT, where the pupils could not choose what to read, might also have prevented some pupils not taking RT seriously. Ismael made an interesting comment about RT in the course of his second interview. He encountered RT as boring and found the texts from the RT webpage far less inspiring than the free reading from the news. It may be an idea for RT to give the users the choice of which text to choose among a pool of texts from a specific grade level in order to let them decide which quiz to take.

6.7 Implications and recommendations

Most of the 22 pupils who participated in the case study enjoyed the FVS project, the majority of them felt that they increased their reading comprehension, their motivation to digitally read the news in English, some of them changed their reading routines and gained new reading interests thanks to the programme, and the majority of them felt that the programme had helped them to become more critical readers. Few research projects have been carried out in extensive reading with Norwegian upper secondary EFL pupils and these results show that FVS can be considered in Norwegian EFL teaching.

The English subject curriculum emphasises the importance of reading a variety of different texts in English to stimulate the joy of reading to experience greater understanding and to acquire knowledge. It is up to each teacher to decide which texts to use in their lessons. Hellekjær (2007: 29) expected a shift towards extensive reading in EFL teaching with the implementation of the *LK06* curriculum to ensure that pupils became fluent readers. Unfortunately, extensive reading has not yet become widely used in Norway nor in the rest of the world. As argued by Grabe (2009: 312), the role of extensive reading in classrooms around the world is remarkably small and he wonders why extensive reading is ignored when it is potentially so important for fluent reading. As the case study showed, ER can indeed be used efficiently in classrooms as many pupils showed positive attitudes to individualized reading, were stimulated by real-life reading, gained confidence in their language abilities, and acquired important general comprehension of the world around them.

As ER needs to take place during a relatively long period of time in order to monitor benefits among the pupils, this case study was organized over a period of three months. While the researcher encountered that the project was perceived as interesting by most of the pupils, it was difficult to motivate the weaker pupils to read the news over such a long period of time. After the three-month project, the teacher introduced another session of extensive reading with the reading of a QuickReads[47] novel. QuickReads novels, sponsored by the UK Reading Agency, are short books, specifically designed to be easy to read, and are written by renowned authors. The teacher presented 20 different titles to the pupils and gave a short summary of each book in order to help the pupils to make their choice. The pupils were given one week to read their book. Once again, all of them enjoyed their reading and presented their book in class with enthusiasm. It was also much easier for the teacher to supervise the reading sessions compared to the digital reading sessions, where there was no guarantee that the

---

[47] https://readingagency.org.uk/adults/quick-guides/quick-reads/

pupils were actually reading during the whole session. The teacher realized that it would be a good idea to vary the type of reading material in a larger scale extensive reading experiment that would cover the different types of reading materials the pupils have to read in the course of the year, e.g. the news, novels, short stories, poems, songs, blogs and factual texts.

It is also challenging to run an ER programme in an EFL classroom due to numerous practical limitations. This particular case study required a good deal of work from the teacher to check what the pupils were reading during the reading sessions, what they had written on their blogs after the reading sessions, and what their results were on the quizzes taken at home on ReadTheory. During the reading sessions, the teacher noticed that the seating of the pupils was important and that the arrangement of the furniture was also vital in order to ensure the possibility for the teacher to circulate freely among the 22 pupils and look at their screens to be able to help the ones who could not find anything to read, or to encourage the ones who were distracted to focus on their reading of the news. The blogs also required a good deal of work and the teacher only managed to post comments on blog entries from time to time, whereas she had expected to be able to do this on a regular basis. According to Robb, (personal correspondence 2016; Appendix 13), such ER programmes require too much work for the teachers and this has prevented ER from becoming popular. It is clear that the researcher underestimated the amount of work linked to the organization of the reading sessions and that it is recommended that teachers who want to implement such a FVS programme have to take these practicalities into account. On the other hand, this type of programme allows the teacher to differentiate the teaching according to the level of the pupils without any extra preparation work and without stigmatizing the weaker pupils. The weaker pupils only wrote a few lines on their blogs, while the proficient pupils read more complicated articles and wrote longer blog entries.

Another argument in favour of the use of FVS in EFL teaching is the fact that many scholars and teachers agree that the benefits of computer-based extensive reading is the large amount of interesting material available from the Internet that can generate greater interest among teachers and pupils than traditionally structured materials do. Dao (2014:75) points to the limited cost of FVS versus paper-based extensive reading from printed documents since the latter requires a large collection of books or other printed materials. Upper secondary pupils are required to own their own laptop and most of the teaching is computer-based. It is therefore vital that the Internet is not only used by pupils for entertainment purposes, but also for academic purposes. A FVS programme of the news, like the case study one, is perfectly adapted to the upper secondary Norwegian EFL classroom with the integration of four of the

five basic skills that need to be part of all subjects: digital skills, reading, writing and oral skills. The programme helped the pupils to become better critical readers and gain more knowledge about facts and events from the English-speaking world. While the OECD[48] is currently trying to gather knowledge and understanding on creative and critical thinking skills in education with the idea of the development of a possible module on creativity that would be part of the PISA 2021 international assessment, it is important that teachers focus on pedagogical activities that foster these skills.

Finally, one cannot generalize the findings of the case study. The research was limited to one single class of 22 pupils of mixed abilities, with seven of them having English as their third language, and the control group was not comparable to the case study pupils as the pupils were so few (only six) and older than the case study group.

To conclude, FVS programmes should be considered in Norwegian EFL teaching, in upper primary, lower secondary, and in upper secondary classes. As advocated by Atwell (2007; 110), teachers can help create and sustain generations of skilled, passionate, critical, readers by organizing frequent, sustained, pleasurable free-choice reading experiences in their classes.

6.8 Summary

Even though the results obtained by the case study pupils on ReadTheory compared to the results of the control group were not as expected, the majority of the case study pupils seemed to benefit from the extensive reading programme. The majority of the pupils gave positive feedback on the reading project and none of them reported that they disliked the reading sessions. They felt that they had spent their time wisely on the net, felt that they had increased their reading comprehension, and had become more critical readers. They experienced online reading of the news as motivating, as they enjoyed being given the liberty to choose what to read. Some of them started to read the news more often after the programme, both in their mother tongue, in Norwegian, and in English.

The majority of the pupils felt that they understood better what happened in the world. Eight pupils stated that the programme helped them to widen their range of topics of interest. Unfortunately, some of them struggled to find interesting stories to read during the whole

---

[48] http://www.oecd.org/edu/ceri/assessingprogressionincreativeandcriticalthinkingskillsineducation.htm

three-month programme. Most of the pupils found that it was helpful to be presented with some topics at the beginning of the lesson in order to guide them on the net.

Since the learning process is a cumulative one, ER should be promoted much earlier in the system. This FVS programme has been relatively successful and has helped to develop the reading skills of the majority of the pupils of the class. The time devoted to reading in class has proven to be very valuable in terms of increased self-confidence for the pupils, positive social interaction between the pupils, general knowledge of the English-speaking world and its news providers, and has strengthened critical thinking among the pupils.

In this era of post-truth, it is vital that pupils learn how to recognise fake news from a young age and how to think critically and analyse what they read on social media and on news providers. Schools have an important role to play in making sure that young people have a chance to present and debate different views and opinions.

Finally, the subject of International English is an elective subject in the second year of upper secondary, only chosen by few pupils. If the level of EFL proficiency is namely questionable among Norwegian pupils, as claimed by Hellekjær (2005), the Department of Education could perhaps consider the possibility of making International English compulsory for all pupils of general studies.

7. Conclusion

The current study was a case study of the impact of a three-month FVS programme on pupils' reading and motivation to read in a Norwegian upper secondary VG2 International English classroom. The case study group consisted of 22 pupils. The sample of pupils was representative of the Norwegian urban areas, with a good mix of pupils of different ethnicities and of mixed abilities, with several pupils facing different types of challenges, making it difficult for them to attend school every day. Twice a week, in the course of three months, each English lesson started with a reading session of approximately 20 minutes, where the pupils could access any English-speaking digital news provider. Nine reading sessions were introduced by a mini-lesson (about various topics, such as reading strategies, the different types of news providers, critical reading of pictures, the notion of power, literary devices, the role of social media, and fake news). All the reading sessions were introduced by suggestions of current articles from the main digital broadsheet newspapers in order to inspire the pupils by showing them examples, as recommended by Day and Bamford (2002).

The study aimed to find out the impact of free voluntary web surfing on the pupils' reading comprehension, the pupils' motivation to read English-speaking news online, the pupils' reading routines, their reading interests and, finally, if free FVS helped them to become more critical readers. The progress of the pupils' reading comprehension was monitored on ReadTheory, an online reading comprehension programme. This was compared to a control group of six pupils from the other class of International English at the case study school.

The expectations were that the case study pupils would increase their reading comprehension, enjoy their reading, would become better critical independent readers and that the programme would encourage them to read English-speaking news providers on a regular basis in order to expand their knowledge in school-related topics and in current events. It was also expected that the case study group would register better achievements on RT after the three-month extensive programme than the control group.

The data consisted of a combination of both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data consisted of two questionnaires answered by the whole class (one prior to the start of the programme and one post-programme), two interviews with eight focus pupils (one at the start of the programme and one when the programme was finished), observations during the reading sessions, and blog entries written by the pupils. The quantitative data consisted of the results achieved by both the case study group and the control group on the reading

comprehension website ReadTheory. Triangulation between the different types of data increased the validity of the findings.

The research showed that the majority of the pupils were motivated by the project. This was seen in the course of the observations, the discussions that followed the reading sessions, the blog entries, and also the data provided by the questionnaires and the interviews. However, only some of the pupils changed their reading routines and acquired different reading interests as a result of the project. The majority of the pupils answered in the questionnaires that they had become better critical readers, although this did not appear clearly in the blog entries. The project was not graded and most of the pupils experienced the blogs as rather demanding, which may be why some did not write very much. The impact of the programme on reading comprehension was difficult to assess as the ReadTheory website did not seem to be a reliable tool to measure progress. Indeed, the pupils from the control group and the case study group recorded huge fluctuations in their grade level achievements from one quiz to another, with sometimes up to six grades in difference in the course of the three months period. The quizzes on RT define a grade level performance on the basis of a short text with five to six questions and require a good deal of concentration and focus on grammar and vocabulary. The essence of extensive reading, on the other hand, is on reading related to pleasure, information and general understanding (Day and Bamford, 2002).

The results of the study generally showed that the computer was a good source of comprehensible input (Krashen, 2007). The pupils enjoyed reading the English-speaking news digitally, most of them felt that the programme helped them generally improve their reading comprehension, some pupils changed their reading habits, some became more aware of the sources of the news published on their social media platforms, and most of them felt that they gained knowledge about topics related to the English-speaking world.

The study also showed the difficulty for the pupils to avoid distractions when surfing on the web. It is important to be aware of the challenges pupils are confronted with when they can surf freely on the net and the impact online reading has on the overall understanding of the text, as highlighted by Mangen et al. (2013: 67).

FVS also seemed a good way to provide adapted teaching to the pupils of the class. All of them had the choice to read what they wished at the level of difficulty they wanted. The teacher spent more time with the weaker pupils, trying to discover their areas of interest in order to maximize the outcome of their reading sessions and to foster a good learning environment in the classroom, where all the pupils could contribute to the discussions with

their reading. Even the two weakest pupils of the class felt that they had benefitted from the outcome of the programme.

Few research studies have been carried out about digital reading in upper secondary schools in Norway and few research studies in Norway have studied the use of real-life materials in EFL teaching, such as online news. According to Waring, in his correspondence with the researcher (see Appendix 12), EFL teaching globally happens with students who are not able to read native-like texts online, but with much lower-level students (CEF A1 A2). Because of this, that is where the research is. Arnold (2009) also mentioned the lack of research conducted on online ER. This study has therefore made a contribution by adding to the little research in this area.

In terms of future research, it seems that the use of the software ReadTheory could be researched further in the EFL class in Norway as the programme is new and there is no research dedicated to it as of yet, except from the one published by the university team that developed it and the current study. It would also be interesting to run a similar project with an eye-tracking device in order to find out how much the pupils actually read in the course of reading sessions. One could thus gain a better understanding of whether there is a tendency to skim texts when reading online and the distractions caused by the blinking advertisements, the alerts, and the hyperlinks, as discussed by Carr (2008), Hayles (2012), Mangen et al. (2013), and Blikstad-Balas (2016). This information might be relevant for the Department of Education that aims at digitalizing school on a larger scale.

8. References

Alessi, S. and Dwyer, A. 2008. 'Vocabulary assistance before and during reading.' *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Vol. 20, No. 2: 246-263.

Arnold, N. 2009. 'Online extensive reading for advanced foreign Language learners: an evaluation study.' *Foreign Language Annals*. Vol. 42, No. 2: 340-366.

Arnsby, E. 2013. *How do Norwegian beginner students' experience the reading of English course material at university? A mixed-methods study*. MA Thesis. University of Oslo.

Anthony, A. E. 1943. 'Intensive and extensive reading in secondary school language course.' *The French Review,* Vol. 16, No. 6: 495-500.

Anthony, J., Mikkelsen, R. and Burgess, R. 2012. *Access to international English.* Oslo. Cappelen Damm.

Atwell, N. 1998. *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading and learning* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Atwell, N. 2007. *The reading zone*. New York: Scholastic.

Atwell, N. 2015. *In the middle: A lifetime of learning about writing, reading and adolescents.* (3rd Edition) Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Ausubel, D. P. 1968. *Educational psychology: A cognitive view*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Barrett, M. E. and Datesman, M. K. 1992. *Reading on your own: An extensive reading course*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Bay, J. 2005. *Konsekvenspædagogik.* Copenhagen: Borgen Forlag Gyldendal.

Blikstad-Balas, M. 2012. Digital literacy in upper secondary school – what do students use their laptops for during teacher instruction? *Nordic Journal of Digital Literacy*. Volume 7, No 2: 81-96.

Borg, W.R. and Gall, M.D. 1989. *Educational research: an introduction* (5th ed.) London: Longman.

Brown, J.D. 2001. *Using surveys in language programs.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Breivik, L, Olsen, R.V. and Hellekjær, G.O. 2016. The complexity of second language reading. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. Volume 28, No 2: 161-182.

Bucht, C. and Harrie, E. 2012. *Young people in the Nordic digital media culture.* Göteborg: Nordicom.

Byberg, L. Bacher. 2015. *A group of Norwegian lower secondary learners' reading experiences in English as a foreign language*. MA Thesis. University of Stavanger.

Carr, N. 2010. *The shallows. What the Internet is doing to our brains*. New York: W.W. Norton.

Cheetham, C, Harper, A. Elliott, M. and Ito, M., 2016. Assessing student attitudes toward graded readers, MReader and the MReader challenge, *The Reading Matrix*: *An International Online Journal*, Volume 16, No 2: 1-19.

Chen C., Chen Shu-Chu, Chen Shu-Hui and Wey S. 2013. The effects of extensive reading via e-books on tertiary level ELF students' reading attitude, reading comprehension and vocabulary. *TOJET*, volume 12, Issue 2: 303-313.

Coady, J. 1979. A psycholinguistic model of the ESL reader. In R. Mackay, B. Barkman, & R.R. Jordan (Eds.), *Reading in a second language: Hypothesis, organization and practice* (pp. 5-12). Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morisson, K. 2011. *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). Oxon: Routledge.

Coiro, J., Knobel, M., Lankshear, C. and Leu, D.J. (Eds). 2008. *Handbook of research on new literacies*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Cummins, J. 1991. 'Interdependence of first- and second-language proficiency in bilingual children'. In E. Bialystok (Ed.), *Language Processing in Bilingual Children*. 70-89. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R. R. and Bamford, J. 1998. *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R. R., and Bamford, J. 2002. 'Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Volume 14: 136-141.

Day, R. R. and Bamford, J. 2004. *Extensive reading activities for teaching language*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Day, R. R. and Bassett, J., Bowler, B., Parminter, S., Furr, M., Prentice, N., Mahmood, M., Stewart, D. and Robb T. 2011. *Bringing extensive reading into the classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 10-21.

Day, R. R. 2015. 'Extending extensive reading'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Volume 27/2: 294-301.

Dao, T. N. 2014. 'Using Internet resources for extensive reading in an EFL context'. Hawaii Pacific University *TESOL*, Working Paper Series, Volume 12: 72-95.

Dole, J. A. Duffy, G. G., Roehler, L. R. and Pearson, D. D. 1991. 'Moving from the old to the new: Research on reading comprehension instruction'. *Review of Educational Research*, Volume 61: 239-264.

Dörnyei Z. 2003. *Questionnaires in second language research*. Oxon: Routledge.

Dörnyei, Z. 2007. *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dörnyei, Z. and Kormos, J. 2000. 'The role of individual and social variables in oral task performance.' *Language Teaching Research*. Vol. 4, Issue 3: 275-300.

Dulay, H. and Burt, M. 1977. Remarks on creativity in language acquisition. In Burt, M., Dulay H. and Finnochiaro M.(Eds.), *Viewpoints on English as a second language*. New York: Regents. 95-126.

Elley, W. B. 1991. 'Acquiring literacy in a second language: The effect of book-based programs'. *Language Learning*, 41(3): 375-411.

Elley, W. B. 2001. 'Conclusion: what have we learned?' *International Journal of Educational Research*. 35: 237-246.

Elley, W. B. and Mangubhai, F. 1983. 'The impact of reading on second language learning. '*Reading Research Quarterly* 19: 53–67.

Fader, D. and Schaevitz, M. 1966. *Hooked on books*. Berkley: Berkley Publication Corporation.

Fitzgerald, J. 1995. 'English-as-a-second-language learner's cognitive reading process: A review of research in the United States.' *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. 65: 115-152.

Fitzgerald, J. and Graves, M.F. 2005, 'Reading supports for all', *Educational Leadership*. Volume 62 number 4: 68-71

Gilje, T. M., 2014. 'Teacher cognition and the teaching of EFL reading in Norwegian upper primary classrooms'. *Acta Didactica Norge*. Vol. 8. Nr. 2. Art. 18: 1-17.

Goodman, K. 1967. Reading: A psycholinguistic guess game. *Journal of the Reading Specialist, May*: 126-135.

, K. S. 1986. *What's whole in whole language?* Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Grabe, W. and Kaplan, R. 1996. *Theory and practice of writing*. New York: Longman.

Grabe, W. and Stoller, F. 2002. *Teaching and researching reading*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

Grabe, W. 2009. *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hafiz, F. M. and Tudor, I. 1989. 'Extensive reading and the development of language skills'. *ELT Journal*, Vol. 24, Issue 1: 5-13.

Harestad Bakke, M. 2010. '*Teaching reading in EFL-instruction. What are teachers' attitudes towards reading in EFL-instruction and how is it taught in class?*' MA Thesis, University of Oslo.

Hayles, K. 2010. How we read: close, hyper, machine. *Ade Bulletin*, nr 150: 62-79.

Heian, B. and Haidri Sjøvoll, R. 2007. *International focus*. Oslo. Gyldendal.

Hellekjær, G. 2005. '*The Acid Test: Does upper secondary EFL instruction effectively prepare Norwegian students for the reading of English textbooks at colleges and universities?*' Ph. D. Thesis. University of Oslo.

Hellekjær, G. O. 2007b. 'Reading: From a forgotten to a basic skill'. *Språk og Språkundervisning*, (2): 23–29. 6 pages

Hellekjær, G. O. 2007c. The implementation of undergraduate level English medium programs in Norway: An explorative case study. In R. Wilkinson and V. Zegers (Eds.), *Researching content and language integration in higher education* (68–81). Nijmegen & Maastricht, Netherlands: Valkhof Pers & Maastricht University.

Hellekjær, G. O. 2009a. 'Academic English reading proficiency at the university level: A Norwegian case study'. *Reading in a Foreign Language, Vol. 21,* Issue 2:198-222.

Hellekjær, G. O. 2009b. 'Fremmedspråk i statsforvaltningen - en behovsanalyse'. Unpublished Article. *Fremmedspråksenteret*.

Hellekjær, G. 2009. 'Academic English reading proficiency at the university level: A Norwegian case study'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, Volume 21, No. 2: 198-222.

Hellekjær, G. O. 2012. 'A survey of English use and needs in Norwegian export firms'. *Hermes – Journal of Language and Communication in Business* no 48: 7-18.

Hovd Faye-Schjøll, L. 2009. '*Reading in upper secondary: What do they read, how is it taught, and what are the teachers' attitudes towards the teaching of reading?*' MA Thesis, University of Oslo.

Huang, H.-C., Chern, C.-L. and Lin, C-C. 2009. EFL learners' use of online reading strategies and comprehension of texts: An exploratory study. *Computers & Education,* 52*:* 13-26.

Huchin, T. N. and Coady, J. 1997. *Second language vocabulary acquisition: A rationale for pedagogy*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Johnson, R.B. and Christensen L. 2012. *Education research: quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches*, (4nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Kapp, K. 2012. *The Gamification of learning and instruction*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Kern, R. 2015. *Language, literacy, and technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Krashen, S. D. 1982. *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Krashen, S.D. 2004. *The Power of reading: Insights from the research* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth. Heinemann.

Krashen, S. D. 2007. 'Free voluntary web-surfing'. Originally published in Myers, J and Linzmeier, J. (Eds), *The Proceedings of 2007 International Conference and Workshop on TEFL & Applied Linguistics*, Department of Applied English, Ming Chuan University, Taiwan. Taipei: Crane Publishing Company. pp. 7-14, 2007. Reprinted in Libraries Unlimited (ed) 2011, *Free Voluntary Reading.* Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, LLC. 67-77.

Krashen, S. D. 2011. *Free voluntary reading*. Santa Barbara: Libraries Unlimited.

Krashen, S. D. 2013, *Second language acquisition. Theory, applications, and some conjectures.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lightbrown, P. 2000. 'Classroom SLA research and second language teaching'. *Applied Linguistics.* Volume 21: 431-462.

Lynch, B. and Hudson, T. 1991. EST reading. In M. Celce-Murcia (Ed.) *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (2nd ed.). New York: Newbury House.

McCracken, R. 1971. 'Initiating sustained silent reading', *Journal of Reading*, Volume 14, No. 8: 521-524.

Moats, L. 2007. *Whole language high jinks: How to tell when "scientifically-based reading instruction" isn't*. Washington, DC: Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

Mørk Røkenes, F. 2016. *Preparing future teachers to teach with ICT*. Ph. D. thesis, Norwegian Institute of Science and Technology.

Myrset, A. 2014. *A case study of the benefits and challenges of Readers Theatre in a 6th grade Norwegian EFL class*. MA thesis. University of Stavanger.

Paran, A. 1996. 'Reading in EFL. Facts and Fictions'. *ELT Journal.* Vol. 50, Issue 1: 25-34.

Pinto-Silva, J. 2006. 'Extensive reading through the Internet: Is it worth the while?' *The Reading Matrix*, Vol. 6, No. 1: 85-96.

Robb, T. 2005. 'Quizzes – A sin against the sixth commandment?' In defense of MReader. *Reading in a Foreign Language*. Volume 27, No 1: 146.151

Robb, T. N. and Susser, B. 1990. 'EFL extensive reading instruction: research and procedure.' *JALT Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2: 161-185.

Roessingh, H. and Kover, P. 2003. 'Variability of ESL learners' acquisition of cognitive academic language proficiency: What can we learn from achievement measures?' *TESL Canada Journal*, Vol. 21, Issue 1: 1-21.

Rumelhart, D. E. 1977. 'Toward an interactive model of reading'. In S. Dornic (ed.), *Attention and Performance IV*. New York, NY: Academic Press. 573-603

Smith, F. 1971. *Understanding reading*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Smith, M., Schiano A., Lattanzio E. 2014. 'Beyond the core'. *Knowledge Quest*. Volume 42, No 3: 20-29.

Stahl, S., and Miller, P. 1989. 'Whole language and language experience approaches for beginning reading: A quantitative research synthesis.' *Review of Educational Research*, Vol. *59, Issue 1*: 87-116.

Stake, R. 1995. *The Art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Stanley, G. 2013. *Language learning with technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sun, Y.C. 2003. 'Extensive reading online: An overview and evaluation.' *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning.* Volume 19, Issue 4: 438-446.

Thodal, E. M. 2014. *Investigating the transitional period between upper secondary school and the situation at the university focusing on expectations, academic proficiency, the role of literature and students reading habits*. MA thesis. University of Stavanger.

Vatnaland, H.M. 2016. *Reading and writing workshops in the EFL Classroom*. MA thesis, University of Stavanger.

Waring, R. and McLean, S. 2015. 'Exploration of the core and variable dimensions of extensive reading research and pedagogy.' *Reading in a Foreign Language*. Volume 27, No. 1: 160-167.

Waring, R. 2006. 'Why extensive reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs.' *The Language Teacher*. Vol. 30/7: 44-47.

Yang, S.-H. 2009. 'Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice.' *Educational Technology & Society*, Vol. 12/2: 11–21.

ZHU, E. 2006. 'Interaction and cognitive engagement: An analysis of four asynchronous online discussions.' *Instructional Science*, Vol. 34/6: 451–480.

Website resources:

Bonnet, G. (Ed.). 2004. The Assessment of pupil's skills in English in eight European countries 2002, The European Network of Policy Makers for The Evaluation Of Educational Systems. Retrieved 12 October 2016. Available from: <https://www.eva.dk/projekter/2002/evaluering-af-faget-engelsk-i-grundskolen/projektprodukter/assessmentofenglish.pdf>.

EF EPI, The world´s largest ranking of countries by English skills. Retrieved 12 October 2016. available from : <http://www.ef.no/epi/>.

Carr, N. 2008. Is Google making us stupid? What the Internet is doing to our brains. *The Atlantic*. July/August issue. Retrieved on September 22 2016.Available from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/07/is-google-making-us-stupid/306868/>.

Grabe, W. 2014. Key issues in L2 reading development. Retrieved 14 September 2016. Available from <http://www.nus.edu.sg/celc/research/books/4th%20Symposium%20proceedings/2).%20William%20Grabe.pdf>.

Hellekjær, G. O. 2007a. Fremmedspråk i norsk næringsliv - engelsk er ikke nok! *Fokus på språk*. Volume 3. Retrieved 15 September 2016. Available from <https://brage.bibsys.no/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11250/147924/Fokusnr3.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

Kjærnsli M., Roe A. 2010. På rett spor, Norske elevers kompetanse i lesing, matematikk of naturfag i PISA 2009. Universitetsforlaget. Retrieved 2 September 2016.
Available from <https://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/forskning/internasjonale_undersokelser/pisa_2009/5/pisarapporten.pdf>.

Kjærnsli M. and Olsen R. V. 2013. Fortsatt en vei å gå. Norske elevers kompetanse i matematikk, naturfag og lesing i PISA 2012. Universitetsforlaget. Retrieved 4 October 2016. Available

from <http://www.uv.uio.no/ils/forskning/prosjekt-sider/pisa/publikasjoner/publikasjoner/fortsatt-en-vei-a-ga.pdf>.

Knudsen, S. 2011. Internasjonal forskning på læremidler – en kunnskapsstatus. Høgskolen i Vestfold. Retrieved 7 October 2016. Available from <www.udir.no/Upload/Rapporter/2012/laremidler_hive.pdf?epslanguage=no>.

Kvisterøy J. 2015. European School net. Country report on ICT in education. Norwegian Centre for ICT in Education. Retrieved 2 October 2016. Available from <http://www.eun.org/observatory>.

Bruk av Engelsk i Industri og Bygge- og anleggsvirksomhet. 26.01.2016. Retrieved 2 October 2016. Available from <http://www.sprakradet.no/globalassets/vi-og-vart/rapporter-og-undersokelser/undersokelse-av-engelsk_industri-bygg-og-anlegg.pdf>.

Gillis-Furutaka, A. 2015. 'Graded reader readability: Some overlooked aspects.' *Journal of Extensive Reading* 3(1). Retrieved 2 October 2016. Available from <http://jalt-publications.org/jer/>. Language Education Policy Profile. Norway. Language Policy Department Strasbourg. Ministry of Education and Research Norway. 2003-2004. Retrieved 7 October 2016.

Available from <https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Profile_Norway_EN.pdf>.

Ministry of Education and Research 2013. English subject curriculum. Retrieved 10 June 2016. Available from <http://www.udir.no/kl06/eng1-03>.

Ministry of Education and Research. 2015. Engelsk Veiledning til læreplan (English guidance to the curriculum). Retrieved 10 June 2016. Available from <http://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/veiledning-til-lareplaner2/engelsk---veiledning-til-lareplan/tilpasset-opplaring-i-fag/>

Ministry of Education and Research, Education, from kindergarten to adult education, 2007. Retrieved 1 October 2016. Available from <http://www.udir.no/upload/brosjyrer/5/education_in_norway.pdf?epslanguage=no>.

Munoz, C. 2010. On how age affects foreign language learning. Advances in research on language acquisition and teaching, 39-49. Retrieved 1 October 2016. Available from <http://www.enl.auth.gr/gala/14th/Papers/Invited%20Speakers/Munoz.pdf>.

National Research Council, projects about reading in school. Retrieved 22 September 2016. Available from <https://www.forskningsradet.no/prosjektbanken/ - /explore/statistics/query/querystring=lesing skole&view=stats&dist=pbaarbelopcalcnav&counttype=sum&chart=trend&lang=no&sortby=%252Bpbaarstart%252Bpbaarslutt&navigators=pbkilde,S,FORISS,S,kilde,S,FORISS&lang>.

NOKUT, General information about education in Norway. Retrieved 2 October 2016. Available from <http://www.nokut.no/en/Facts-and-statistics/The-Norwegian-Educational-System/education-in-norway/>.

Nunan, D. 1991. Language Teaching Methodology. A textbook for Teachers. Retrieved 22 September 2016. Available from <https://archive.org/stream/ilhem_20150321_1903/[David_Nunan]_Language_Teaching_Methodology_A_Tex_djvu.txt>.

OECD. 2011. Review on evaluation and assessment frameworks for improving school outcomes. Country Background Report for Norway. Retrieved 7 October 2016. Available from <http://www.udir.no/globalassets/upload/larerplaner/fastsatte_lareplaner_for_kunnskapsloeftet/prinsipper_lk06_eng.pdf>.

Preston, G., S. Haugen and Mossige M. 'Spennende resultater etter leseprosjekt ved Haugaland videregående skole 2014 – 2015'. (Exciting results after reading project at Haugaland High School). Retrieved 10 June 2016. Available from <http://lesesenteret.uis.no/leseopplaering/lesing-i-videregaaende/spennende-resultater-etter-leseprosjekt-ved-haugaland-videregaaende-skole-2014-2015-article98010-12553.html>.

Romeo, G. 2016. ReadTheory.org. Data collection study 2.0, a preliminary study concerning the effectiveness of an online reading comprehension and writing program. Retrieved 10 June 2016. Available from <http://www.readtheory.org/static/pdf/RTStudy2.pdf>.

Statistics Norway, Upper secondary education, 2015. Retrieved 2 October 2016. Available from <https://www.ssb.no/en/utdanning/statistikker/vgu/aar/2016-02-25>.

Templer, B. 2012. 'Extensive free voluntary reading and free voluntary listening. Some thoughts on why? and how? in Bulgaria.' Presentation, BETA Annual Conference, 31 March 2012, Ruse/Bulgaria. Retrieved 10 September 2016. Available from <http://goo.gl/cuQ3D>.

The Education Mirror, 2014, Facts and analysis of kindergarten, primary and secondary education in Norway, Norwegian directorate for education and training. Retrieved 1 October 2016. Available from <http://utdanningsspeilet.udir.no/en/>.

UDIR. 2013. English subject curriculum. Retrieved 7 October 2016. Available from <http://www.udir.no/Upload/larerplaner/Fastsatte_lareplaner_for_Kunnskapsloeftet/english/5/English-subject-curriculum-2013.pdf>.

Waagene, E. and Gjerustad C. 2015. Valg og bruk av læremidler. NIFU. Retrieved 7 October 2016. Available from <http://www.nifu.no/publications/1259528/>.

9. Appendixes

Appendix 1: Approval NSD

NSD

Ion Drew
Institutt for kultur- og språkvitenskap Universitetet i Stavanger
Postboks 2557 Ullandhaug
4036 STAVANGER

Vår dato: 10.11.2016   Vår ref: 50441 / 3 / HIT   Deres dato: Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 07.10.2016. All nødvendig informasjon om prosjektet forelå i sin helhet 08.11.2016. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

50441	Study of the Impact of Free Voluntary Web Surfing in an Upper Secondary EFL Class in Norway.
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Stavanger, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Ion Drew
Student	Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger er meldepliktig i henhold til personopplysningsloven § 31. Behandlingen tilfredsstiller kravene i personopplysningsloven.

Personvernombudets vurdering forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 31.05.2017, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Kjersti Haugstvedt

Hildur Thorarensen

Kontaktperson: Hildur Thorarensen tlf: 55 58 26 54

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

NSD – Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS   Harald Hårfagres gate 29   Tel: +47-55 58 21 17   nsd@nsd.no   Org.nr. 985 321 884
NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data   NO-5007 Bergen, NORWAY   Faks: +47-55 58 96 50   www.nsd.no

Personvernombudet for forskning

Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Utvalget informeres skriftlig og muntlig om prosjektet og samtykker til deltakelse. Informasjonsskriv mottatt 08.11.2016 er godt utformet.

Personvernombudet legger til grunn at forsker etterfølger Universitetet i Stavanger sine interne rutiner for datasikkerhet. Dersom personopplysninger skal lagres på privat pc, bør opplysningene krypteres tilstrekkelig.

Forventet prosjektslutt er 31.05.2016. Ifølge prosjektmeldingen skal innsamlede opplysninger da anonymiseres. Anonymisering innebærer å bearbeide datamaterialet slik at ingen enkeltpersoner kan gjenkjennes. Det gjøres ved å:

- slette direkte personopplysninger (som navn/koblingsnøkkel)
- slette/omskrive indirekte personopplysninger (identifiserende sammenstilling av bakgrunnsopplysninger som f.eks. bosted/arbeidssted, alder og kjønn)
- slette digitale lydopptak

Appendix 2: Letter of consent

Request for participation in my research project
A study of the Impact of Free Voluntary Web-Surfing on Reading Comprehension in an Upper Secondary EFL Class in Norway

Background and aim
While being your International English teacher at Bergeland VGS, I am also a master´s student at the University in Stavanger. My research project is to study the impact of free voluntary reading from the Internet on reading comprehension. While the project is going to be carried out as a class project, my research is going to focus on 8 pupils from the class, 4 boys and 4 girls.
You do receive this letter as I would like you to be one of these 8 pupils.

Clear distinction between my role as a teacher and my role as a researcher
As I have mentioned in the class, this project is NOT going to be graded, it is only an extensive reading project having as a purpose to increase your reading proficiency, your reading motivation, your general knowledge, your critical reading and hopefully also your vocabulary and writing proficiency. This project will **not** be part of your written and oral evaluations of the year.
I will exclusively use in my Master´s thesis the information gathered in the course of the reading project.

How will the project be carried out?
Twice a week for three months, the class of International English will start the lesson with a 20-minute reading session on English-speaking news websites of their choice. The students will choose the texts they find engaging and compelling and read understandable news for pleasure. The reading session will be followed by a 10-minute class discussion about the various news articles and subsequently a 10-minute free writing session on the students´ own blogs. In addition the students will once a week log onto their page of the computer-based reading programme Readtheory and will work independently on one reading comprehension lesson.

What does it mean for you to be part of my study?
It means that I am going to focus on the 8 of you during the reading sessions, discussion sessions and have a close look at your blogs also. I would follow and monitor the progress of your reading comprehension on the readtheory website also.
The whole class has answered the reading questionnaire from Its Learning and I will interview the 8 of you to learn more about your reading habits.

What happens with the information I gather about you in the course of the project?
All the personal information about you is going to be treated confidentially. The interviews will be recorded on my computer and only me and my supervisor will have access to them. The project is anonymous and your names are not going to be mentioned in my work. My survey will be completed by the end of Mai and after this date the data will be deleted from my computer.

Participation is voluntary
It is voluntary to participate in the project and you can decide at any moment not to be part of it anymore, without even giving me a reason for this. You would still have to carry out the class project but I would not incorporate information about you in my research any more and I would delete the information related to you. Would you have any question, ask me in class or get in touch with me on my mobile : 997 14 196

Thanks in advance for participating,

Kind regards,

Nathalie Franssen
99714196
Master´s student
UIS

Agreement to participate to the research

I have received the information about the research project and I agree that Nathalie Franssen will use the results from the questionnaire, the data collected during the interview, the notes gathered during the class observations, class discussions and the information contained in my blog in her master´s thesis.

(Signature of the student participating, date)

September questionnaire about the News.

1. On a scale of 1-6, how do you rate reading as a free-time activity?

   _____

2. Do you subscribe to a newspaper?

   _____

3. Where do you get the news from? Facebook, YouTube, online newspapers?

   _____

4. Do you enjoy reading the news on the Internet?

   _____

5. What do you like to read?

   _____

6. In which language?

   _____

7. Which websites would you read from?

   _____

8. How much time do you spend daily reading the news?

   _____

9. What type of news are you interested in?

   _____

10. How do you choose the article you want to read?

11. Do you usually read the entire article?

_____

12. How do you navigate while reading the news?

_____

13. Do you sometimes go back to an article you have read?

_____

14. Do you recommend articles to friends?

_____

Appendix 4: Questionnaire 2

January questionnaire about the News project.

	Strongly agree	agree	neutral	disagree	Strongly disagree
I enjoyed the online reading sessions this semester					
I gained confidence in my reading ability due to the extensive reading sessions					
It was motivating to pick my own texts to read					
I had difficulty finding articles of interest to me					
I had no difficulty finding articles at an appropriate difficulty level					
My reading speed did not increase due to the extensive reading sessions					
I did learn interesting information about society, culture and current events in the English-speaking countries					
I would have preferred to read printed materials					
I enjoyed reading authentic texts					
I used a dictionary during the sessions.					
I started to read more for fun in English in my spare time					
I mostly read articles from the same genre					
I have become a better reader in English due to the reading programme					

1. What did you like most? (the fact that you could decide what to read, the smooth start of the lesson, the possibility to catch up with the news, …)
2. Was there something you disliked in the reading project?
3. On a scale of 1-6, how do you rate reading as a free-time activity after the newspaper reading project? Do you feel that you read more now?
4. Do you now subscribe to an online English-speaking newspaper?

5. Have your reading habits changed? Did you discover a new interesting news provider that you are going to use in the future? Did you subscribe to some newsfeed on Facebook after Where do you get the news from? Facebook, Youtube, online newspapers?

6. Do you enjoy reading the news on the Internet more than before?

7. Do you read different topics, different type of news than before?

8. Which websites do you read from now?

9. How did you choose the article you wanted to read during the project?

10. Did you find it hard to understand the titles of the articles?

11. Did you usually read the entire article?

12. How did you navigate from the first article to the next ones while reading the news?

13. Do you feel that you have gained something from this project? What?

14. Did it help that I suggested some topics and articles?

15. Do you feel that you have become a more critical reader?

16. Do you feel that you used your time wisely during the reading sessions?

Appendix 5: Examples of blogs from the study group

Here are a few examples of the different topics the pupils wrote about in their blogs.

SEP
14

London terror plot

In today's class I read the article London 'terror plot': Teen appears in court accused of planning mass-casualty nail bomb attack on Buckingham Palace and Elton John. I found the article on The Sun.
The article is about 19-year old student Ali Syed and his terror plan that was allegedly inspired by IS.
He also targeted London's busy Oxford Street and military bases.

The article says that *"police believe he originally planned to be a suicide bomber, and wanted to buy machine guns or pistols to carry out a 'lone wolf' killing spree."*
Reading this I felt frightened and upset that this could have happened, especially since I am going to London very soon. I find it crazy that people could do such cruel things to innocent human beings.

Picture from The Sun.

Marte

(Wednesday, November 30, 2016)

News recap

Article was written: 28.11.2016

Today I read about Chimamanda Ngozi. In this article, specific she talks about beauty, femininity, and feminism. One of the questions asked was **"why do you think things that are associated with femininity, like fashion and beauty, are not taken seriously?".** To which she answered something along the lined of "it`s about a culture that diminishes women. The things we traditionally think of as masculine are not things our culture dismisses are frivolous" …. I think it`s part of a larger picture of a world that simply doesn't give women the same status that it gives men". And let me tell you I could not have agreed more. It's this little thing (that are not so little) that we don't think about. I do, but others… not so much. Things such as sports which are a big part of the worlds culture, are considered as some sort of masculine property.

Ariana

Wednesday, October 26, 2016

Hello!

It's been a while since I've written on this blog. Mostly because we have been busy with some other stuff in class and I didn't have my computer for a week. But i'm back now!
Today as we were starting our normal routine to read some news, I was scrolling down on BBC.com and did not find anything that was interesting. I don't know if it was because I was tired or because I wasn't really in the mood to read. Miss Franssen came over to my desk and recommended me this article because she thought this might interest me, and she was right!

http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-37431005

This article is about a Malawian woman named Natasha Annie Tonthola and her fight against Malawi's "hyenas". At first when I read this I thought about hyena the animal but apparently a hyena in Malawi is a man. It is a man who is paid to have sex with young girls from his village as part of a sexual initiation ritual. They say that after the sexual intercourse with the young girls, the girls have finally become a woman. They brainwashed young girls into thinking this was normal and a tradition. But in fact, this is a sick thing and how Natasha survived this and made something out of her life is something that I know I would never be able to do. After all the sexual assaults, physical abuse and poverty she opened her own restaurant and established a organisation which has been called Mama Africa Foundation Trust. This is really a strong and inspiring story and it did make me feel sad but also grateful. Grateful that I live in a safe and rich country where I can get a free education. The fact that she is optimistic about the future despite everything that's happened, just proves that she is a strong and confident girl who will make something even bigger of herself.

Madhavi

DEC 7

Sean Paul is back with a boom and he is here to stay
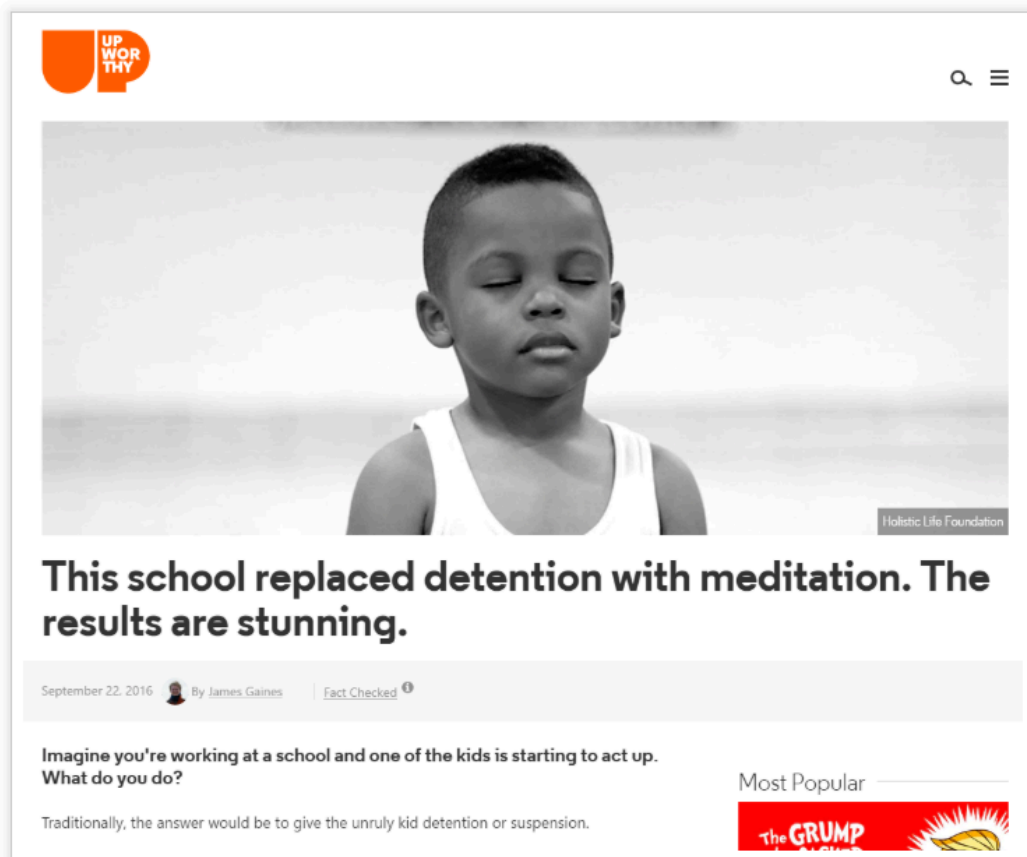
Sean Paul hit his huge wave of fame 14 years ago. Now he is now back featured on the latest single from Clean Bandit along with Anne-Marie. The song has been received very well and has been climbing the charts internationally. The Jamaican musician and producer has been doing great this year, working with artists like Sia and Little Mix. The well-known dancehall and reggae star has officially planted his feet in the modern mainstream music. I personally hope he will continue sharing his dancehall and reggae rhythm in his future songs. It's something I personally find very interesting and superb on the dance floor. It brings the summer warmth we all long for.

Source: http://www.bbc.com/news/entertainment-arts-38211920

Jonathan

Replacing detention with meditation

I came across this article a couple of weeks ago and I really liked it, so I decided to write a bit about it today.

Robert W. Coleman elementary school in Baltimore offers their students meditation instead of regular detention. In partnership with *Holistic Life Foundation,* the school has created a meditation room decorated with lamps and pillows where the students are encouraged to meditate. Studies has shown that mindful meditation has severeal positive effects on our minds and bodies.

Read full article here: http://www.upworthy.com/this-school-replaced-detention-with-meditation-the-results-are-stunning

Linn

Appendix 6: Examples of quizzes from the placement test on RT

A Fighter for Equality

Nelson Mandela was born in 1918 in South Africa. At this time, South Africa was a difficult place for black people to live in. That's because white people (the Dutch and later the British) controlled the land. Under their control, the whites and blacks were kept apart. Things like housing, education, medical care, beaches, and other public services were segregated. In nearly all cases, things given to whites were far better than those given to blacks. This time was known as "Apartheid".

Mandela did not like apartheid. He viewed it as unfair and wanted change. He decided that the only way to see this change was to fight for it. So, he began to fight against apartheid. He fought to help black South Africans gain equality. He did this mostly through the use of sabotage. He felt this was the best way to get attention and to communicate his message. Also, he figured it was a kind of attack that caused the least harm to innocent people.

Eventually, Mandela was arrested for his actions and spent 27 years in prison. He was finally released from prison in 1990, whereby he resumed his fight for equality. Four years later, he became the first black president of South Africa. He died in 2013, but remains a symbol of hope and freedom for people around the world.

Using the information in the passage as a guide, we can assume that after being released from prison, Mandela

A. left Africa for America

B. resumed his use of sabotage

C. gained political power and popularity

D. spent most of his time and money campaigning

E. worked to combat poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS

Submit

Grade 4 , 630L

Matt Is Moving

Matt is moving into a new bedroom. He has four pieces of furniture to move: a chair (no big deal), a bed (which has to be taken apart), a dresser (really heavy), a desk (also heavy) and a couch (awkward, but surprisingly light). Matt has to plan out how he will move everything in. The bed must go in first, as it has to be taken apart to fit through the doorway. (Plus it will be easier to put the bed back together if it's the only thing in the room.) After the bed is in, the heavy stuff should follow. Then the awkward stuff. The chair can go in anytime after the bed.

Which choice lists the furniture in an order in which
Matt could successfully move into his new bedroom?

A. couch, desk, bed, chair, dresser

B. chair, bed, desk, dresser, couch

C. bed, couch, chair, desk, dresser

D. bed, chair, dresser, couch, desk

E. bed, desk, chair, dresser, couch

Submit

Grade 11 , 1390L

As You Like It

As with all of Shakespeare's comedies, *As You Like It* is lighthearted even when approaching serious themes. And this play concerns the heaviest of themes: love, family, and the meaning of life. It approaches the themes both in somber, philosophical ways as well as more frivolous, comedic ways. No doubt, it is Shakespeare's ability to bring up important and serious issues even in a play so devoted to such seemingly blithe plot points that make *As You Like It* a classic of the theater.

The play concerns the love affair between Rosalind and Orlando, two courtiers who are kicked out of the royal court due to family dramas. Rosalind takes a disguise as a young man and, as that man, advises Orlando on the proper way to love Rosalind —herself! All of this occurs in the forest outside the court, setting up one of three major dualities that Shakespeare explores in the course of the play: the joys of pastoral living versus the pains of society. The other two dualities concern extreme views of love—sentimental love versus real love—and rival views of life—a view that life is pointless versus one that suggests that love makes it have a point. In typical Shakespearean fashion, the playwright does not pick a side in any of the debates but instead argues that the middle path is best. Thus, life may be pointless (or as the famous dialogue from the play puts it, "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players," suggesting that life has no purpose and is just a series of lines told by people unable to control their own plots or actions), but love makes it worth living, and life should have a balance between nature and society. Such a philosophical message is impossible to imagine in a television sitcom or other

153

comedic work of the present, and it is that message and exploration that make *As You Like It* endure.

Appendix 7: A grade 6 reading quiz from ReadTheory

-quiz info-

Adding Chores

When I turned 9, my parents put me to work. Like my older sister before me, I now had chores to do. I could no longer spend my days playing games.

My first chore was easy. I had to take care of the cat. That meant I had to organize her toys and feed her each day. I also had to play with her for ten minutes. My dad still changed her litter box. I just had to do the small things.

And Another Chore...

But then I turned 10. Then my parents gave me real chores. Now I had to help dry dishes each night. Worse, I had to take care of the cat still too!

When I turned 11, my parents gave me still another chore. I had to actually wash the dishes. And dry them. And take care of the cat.

And More...

The next year, I also had to change her litter.

The year after that, I had to start cleaning all of the kitchen.

When I turned 14, I was in charge of taking out the trash too. It all seemed like too much work to me. So I complained. My parents just laughed. "You think you're overworked?" they smirked. It seems they thought they did more work than I did!

The Lesson

Of course, they actually did. It occurred to me years later. They both worked full-time jobs and did almost all the jobs in the house.

I realize now how much work it is. Now that I live alone as an adult, I see that I have to do all of the chores. So at 26 years old, I have all the jobs I had as a child and then some. I wish I had a daughter like me to clean up after my cat too!

Quiz Type: Reading Comprehension

Directions: Answer the questions using the information presented in the passage and your own critical thinking skills. Note that you will never be asked to rely on information existing outside the passage.

☐ **Show Quiz Difficulty Information**
Check this box to show quiz difficulty on the quiz passage page by default.

Quiz Grade Level:
The reading difficulty of this passage and its associated questions is **Grade Six**. This is a relative measure designed to approximate U.S. grade school levels, developed by ReadTheory to calibrate our reading comprehension lessons in terms of their overall difficulty. (Note that both passage text difficulty and question difficulty are used to derive this measure.) If a student is performing above or below his or her associated U.S. grade school level, then this is not necessarily an indication of superior or inferior reading ability. Our difficulty level labels (and analytics presented elsewhere in the site) are to be used as general guides, whereas parents and teachers should serve as ultimate judges of reading skill and ability.

Lexile® Level:
The Lexile level difficulty of this passage is **850L**. (Note that passage text difficulty alone is used to derive this measure.) The Lexile Framework is a scientific way to match readers with text using the same scale. Recognized as the standard for matching readers with texts, Lexile measures connect learners of all ages with resources at the right level of challenge. Lexile measures provide a clear way to monitor progress toward college and career readiness. Lexile Framework for Reading is embodied in much of Common Core's Appendix A. Today, Lexile measures are used at the school level in all 50 states, and 20 states report Lexile measures statewide on their year-end assessments. Click **here** for further documentation about this measure.

Passage Sources:
No sources were consulted in the composition of this passage.

All contributing sources (including text and images) used in the creation of this passage have been cited wherever possible or applicable. The majority of our sources include primary and secondary quality source materials. Excepting images, tertiary sources (wikipedia, etc.) are consulted only in small part, usually when a detail or fact is widely supported elsewhere. Although we make our best effort to maintain our source lists for each passage, the nature of electronic source material is transient. For this reason, some sources may be out of date or no longer available. Please **contact us** to report any missing or broken links you may find to electronic sources cited.

PASSAGE   QUESTIONS   **1** 2 3 4   A **A** A

The narrator's first chore involved each of the following EXCEPT

A. playing with the cat

B. feeding the cat

C. changing the cat's litter box

D. organizing the cat's toys

⊘ That's correct! You earned 1 knowledge point.

Next Question ⇒

Challenge Question What's this?

Which of the following is true of the narrator?

   A. She was assigned her final chore when she was 15 and has not had to complete chores since then.

   B. She was assigned her first chore when she was 8 but only had to complete it until she turned 10 when she was given a new chore.

   C. Each year, she was assigned an additional chore and no longer had to complete all of the other chores she had been assigned.

   D. Each year, she was assigned an additional chore but still had to complete all of the other chores she had been assigned.

Submit

Challenge Question What's this?

According to the narrator, how old was she when she first had to clean the kitchen?

   A. 11

   B. 12

   C. 13

   D. 14

Submit

When the narrator states that her parents "thought they did more work than I did" in paragraph 7, she is mostly being

✏️ highlight text

A.   dishonest

B.   humorous

C.   truthful

D.   serious

Submit

Perfect Score!

Continue ⇒

Quiz Complete!

Ready to move on? We've prepared your next quiz and we think it's just right for you.

✔++

Your score is **100%** (4/4). You earned **38 knowledge points** in total.

Correct answers: **4 knowledge points**
Challenge question bonus: **4 knowledge points**
Perfect score bonus: **30 knowledge points**

Next Quiz ⇒

Ace! Congratulations, you got a perfect score! You won't be seeing this quiz again :)

Based on your outstanding performance on this quiz, we think you're ready to move up a level. We'll make your next quiz a little harder.

Learn more

Why Does My Reading Level Change?

ReadTheory adapts to your performance. This means your reading difficulty level may change after each quiz you take. Your level may go up, down, or remain unchanged based on your score. Here's how it works...

Level up: score **90%** *or greater*

Level unchanged: score *between* **70%** and **90%**

Level down: score *below* **70%**

Our system selects a quiz (a passage and questions) for you at random from the pool of available quizzes at your current level. If you pass this quiz (score between 70% and 89%), it is never shown to you again and you remain at your current level. If you perform poorly on the quiz (score 69% or less), then the quiz is replaced into the pool of available quizzes and your level decreases by one. If you perform outstandingly on the quiz (score 90% or more), then the quiz is never shown to you again and your level increases by one.

Continue Learning!

Appendix 8: Example of a student progress report on ReadTheory

Critical statistics and graphs for every quiz completed since inception. Click or hover for details.

419KP
Knowledge Points

3G/620L
Pretest Average
(Grade/Lexile)

Tenacity
Resource Level

9/9
Quizzes Passed

5.7G/805L
Program Average
(Grade/Lexile)

learn more

Grade Level Progression

Grade level for each quiz taken
Click and drag graph to zoom in
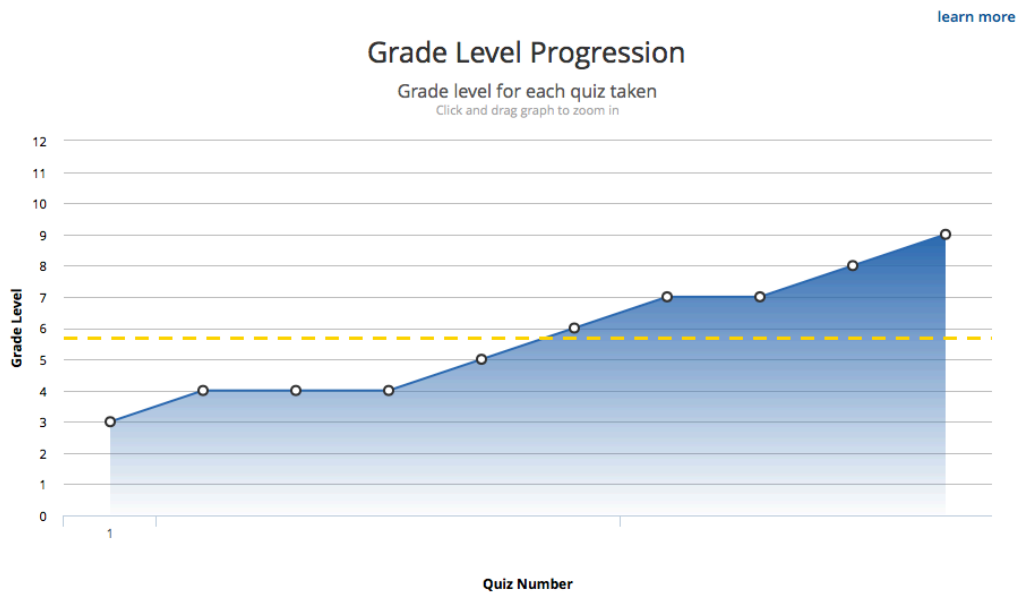
Quiz Number

Lexile® Level Progression

Lexile level for each passage read
Click and drag graph to zoom in
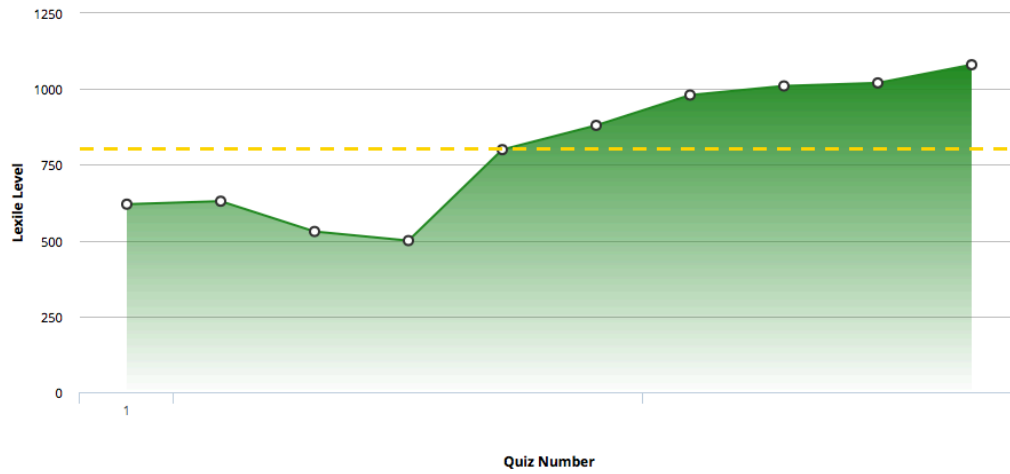
Quiz History

Critical data for every quiz completed since inception.

Quiz Number	Quiz Title	Date Taken	Grade Level	Lexile Level	Score
9	Jury Duty	03/28/2017	Eight	1020	100%
8	Ostriches	02/01/2017	Seven	1010	100%
7	Glowing in the Dark	01/04/2017	Seven	980	80%
6	Fitness Test	11/12/2016	Six	880	100%
5	Time With Grandpa	11/01/2016	Five	800	100%
4	Selena's Birthday	11/01/2016	Four	500	100%
3	Machines	10/20/2016	Four	530	85%
2	New Shoes	10/20/2016	Four	630	87%
1	Understanding Mars	09/20/2016	Three	620	100%

Your pretest grade score was level three. Click here to learn more.

Appendix 9: Results from the control group on RT

Here are the individual results on ReadTheory from the six pupils of the control group from September to January. The yellow line shows the average obtained by the pupil.
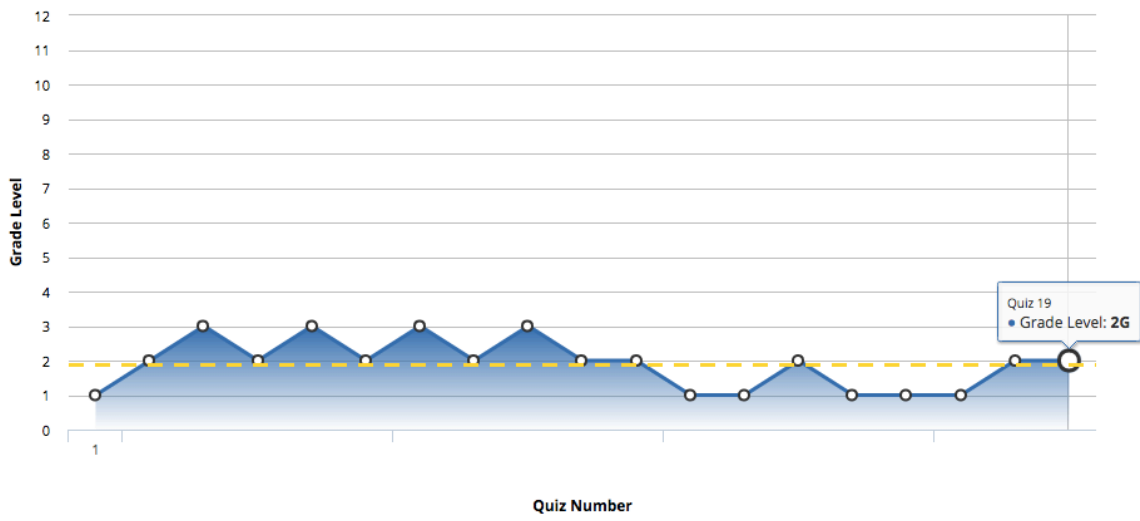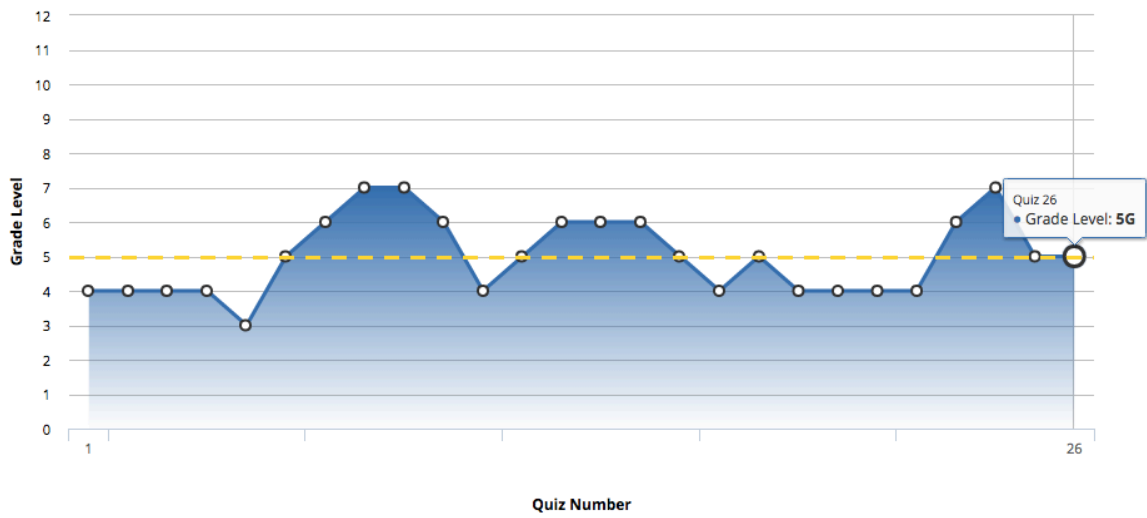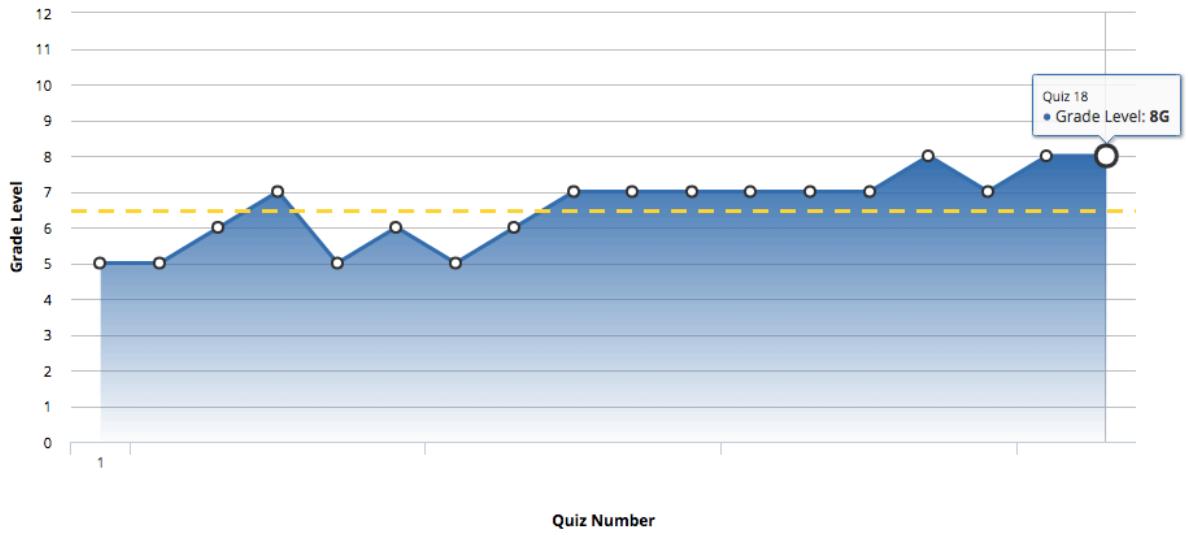
Knut
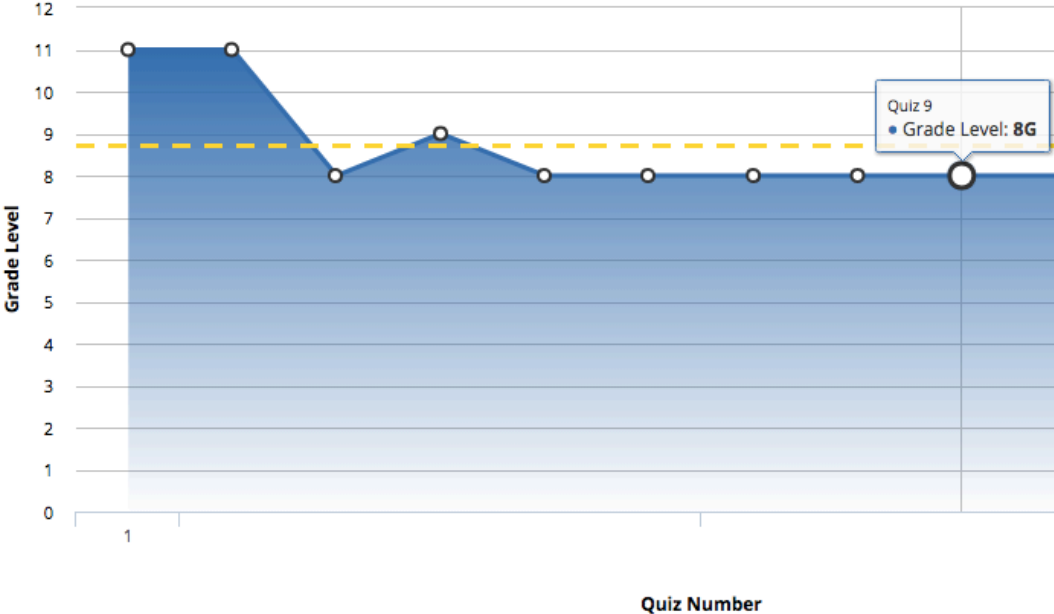
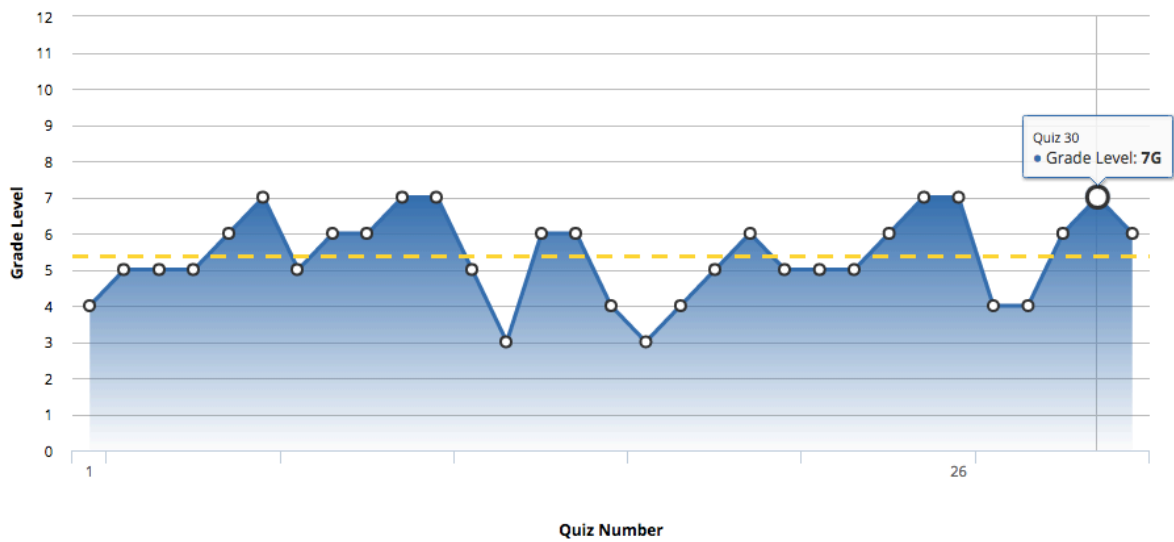

Arne
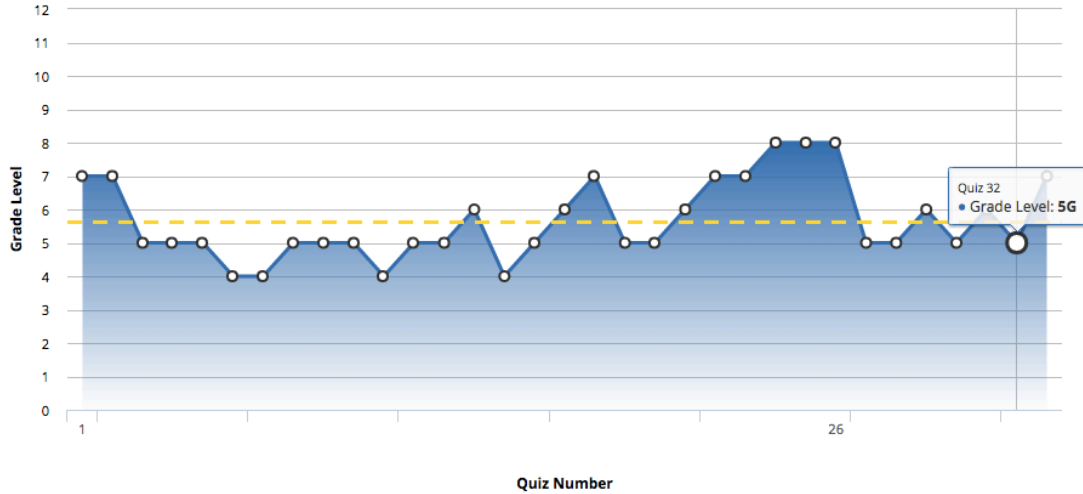
Synnøve

Terje

Oddvar

Tajab

Appendix 10: E-mail correspondence with ReadTheory

From: **Contact Form** <contactform@bigcommerce.com>
Date: Sun, Aug 21, 2016 at 10:20 AM
Subject: 'siva.nathalie@gmail.com' submitted the form from your 'Contact Us' page
To: readtheorymail@gmail.com

'siva.nathalie@gmail.com' submitted the form from your 'Contact Us' page

A user has submitted the contact form on your store.

Here are their details:

Email Address:	siva.nathalie@gmail.com
Phone Number:	+4799714196

Dear ReadTheory,
I am a Norwegian EFL teacher and I am planning to use your website to increase and monitor the reading comprehension among my students. Do you know if other EFL teachers have used your website in their classrooms. I would like to get their feedback about how it works.
Thanks in advance for your reply,
Regards,

Nathalie Franssen

Read Theory Workbooks
http://www.readtheoryworkbooks.com/

On 21 Aug 2016, at 22:50, ReadTheory Staff <support@readtheory.org> wrote:

Hello and thank you for contacting us.

ReadTheory and its accompanying materials were designed with native English-speaking pupils in mind, but we still believe the site to be appropriate for English language learners. I am an American EFL instructor in Germany myself, and I use our passages with my students as well.

We know that many other ESL/EFL classrooms also use ReadTheory, especially in the Netherlands and Sweden. However, we have not conducted any specific surveys targeting our EFL teachers and students specifically.

For reference, our levels are meant to approximate US elementary, middle, and high school grade levels. For example, a 16-year-old native English speaker in the US would be expected to be at level 10 or 11. However, his or her *native* English competence is immeasurable based on CEFR metrics, which are designed to measure late-learner *foreign* language competence. In other words, this native-speaking student would be at or beyond a C2 CEFR level, even though a level above C2 does not actually exist.

We simply suggest that our ESL/EFL teachers monitor student progress with respect to improvement and growth, rather than as a strict comparison to native speaker norms. If your students' levels generally increase over time, then they are making progress, even if they are not 100% on par with their age-matched grade level for US native speakers.

I hope this helps. Please let me know if you have any follow-up questions or concerns.

Sincerely,
Amanda P.
ReadTheory Support

On Thu, Feb 2, 2017 at 4:36 AM, Nathalie Siva Franssen <siva.nathalie@gmail.com> wrote:
<Screenshot 2017-02-02 10.27.04.png>

Dear Amanda,

I am now looking at the Grade level performance of one of my colleague's class and I find it strange that some of the pupils did score so high during the placement test. The same thing happened in my class and one pupil tried desperately to come to his placement test level and never managed.

Have you heard of this before? Do you have an explanation for it?

Regards,

Nathalie

On 03 Feb 2017, at 01:26, ReadTheory Staff <support@readtheory.org> wrote:

Greetings,

Thank you for contacting us about this issue. We do not know of any particular reason why this would be the case. We have seen that some students ask for and receive help on the initial pre-test (usually from a parent) and this causes a number of issues.

The other main cause of this is just the nature of the pre-test itself. The pre-test uses only 8 questions to determine a student's level. While the vast majority of our users are accurately placed, this small sample size will naturally lead to errors in placement (too high or too low).

If ever you believe that a student is at the wrong level, you have the ability to reset that student's progress from the progress report screen. This will erase all of their quiz data and allow them to retake the pre-test again. They will retain all of the Knowledge points.

Please let me know if I can be of any more assistance.

Sincerely,

Sean M.
ReadTheory Support

Appendix 11: E-mail correspondence with Mike Arnold

From: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen [mailto:NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no]
Sent: Monday, December 05, 2016 9:42 PM
To: narnold@pdx.edu
Subject: Extensive reading programmes using online materials

Dear Mrs Arnold,

I have read your article about Online Extensive reading for advanced foreign language learners with great interest. I am currently writing my master thesis in Literacy Studies here at the university of Stavanger in Norway and the topic of my thesis is a case study in my own English EFL classroom where my pupils have 2 sessions of 20 min. a week of extensive online reading of English speaking news.

I am currently writing my literature chapter and find it extremely hard to find other studies of digital extensive reading. Would you happen to know of some that you could recommend me?

Thanks in advance,

Best regards,

...

Nathalie Franssen

From: Nike Arnold <marnold@pdx.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, December 6, 2016 5:55 PM
To: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen
Subject: RE: Extensive reading programmes using online materials

Dear Ms. Franssen,
I have to admit that my research agenda has changed since the publication of that study and I have investigated other aspects of CALL. I do know, however, that several researchers submitted a proposal for a panel discussion about ER and technology for this year's CALICO conference. I believe Thomas Robb was one of them. CALICO is about to announce which proposals got accepted. The conference program will be available online at www.calico.org

Home - CALICO

www.calico.org

CALICO (Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium) is devoted to research and development of technology in second language acquisition.

I hope that helps. Good luck with your thesis!
Nike Arnold

Nike Arnold, Ph.D.
Hear My Name
Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics
Portland State University
503.725.8258
UCB 325-C
Personal Website
Department Website

Appendix 12: E-mail correspondence with Robert Waring

On 2016 Dec 10, at 17:17, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:

Dear Mr Waring,

I would like to use your above mentioned article in my Master thesis about free voluntary web surfing in a Norwegian EFL upper-secondary class, but can´t seem to find the reference of the publication in the Journal of Extensive Reading.

Could you please provide me with the full reference of the article?

Thanks in advance for your help.

Best regards,

Nathalie Franssen

From: Robert Waring <waring_robert@yahoo.com>
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2016 5:23:19 PM
To: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen
Subject: Re: Why Extensive Reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs

Hi

Thanks for citing it.

Waring, R, 2006, Why extensive reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs
, The Language Teacher vol 30 (7)

All the best

Rob

On 2016 Dec 19, at 21:11, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:

Dear M. Waring,

Thank you for your reply.

You wrote very interesting articles about extensive reading. I really like the one you published in April 2015 about the different approaches of extensive reading and it illustrates very well the complexity of ER. I find it as well difficult to understand why some researchers call extensive reading the fact that their students can choose between ten texts posted on their website for example. The choice is far too limited.

In my master thesis, I write about the project I have carried out in my own EFL grade 12 class here in Stavanger, Norway. My pupils were given 20 minutes at the beginning of the two weekly classes, to read whatever they wanted from English-language news providers. It is fascinating to see what they are all interested about. What a variety of interests. No textbook could ever offer this. My pupils still have to fill in a questionnaire and I have to carry out interviews to look at the outcome of the project, but I feel that so far, they have read much more than they would without this ER programme and they have discovered many different webpages they have enjoyed. But I see as well how difficult it is to combine such a programme with the rest of the curriculum.

Have you heard of other projects carried out at high-school with extensive reading of the news? The closest to my project is the one carried out by Arnold in 2009. I have been in touch with her and she advised me to contact Thomas Robb who recommended me to check the www.erfoundation.org bibliography section. I didn´t find anything quite similar in the bibliography. Would you happen to know of any?

Thanks in advance for your time,

Best regards,

Nathalie Franssen

| Promoting Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language
www.erfoundation.org

Promoting Extensive Reading in English as a Foreign Language

From: Rob Waring <waring.rob@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 21, 2016 4:25:05 PM
To: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen
Subject: Re: Why Extensive Reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs

Hello Natalie,

Please call me Rob.

Thanks for the email. I read your email with great interest. I completely agree that allowing students to read what they want is the best. You are so lucky your students are at the right level to delve into the web at this level. My university students would flounder. :)

These is, as you say, a lack of work in this area in L2. I think the reason is that most of EFL teaching globally happens with students who aren't able to read native-like texts online, but with much lower level students (CEF A1 A2) and because of this, that is where the research is.

There is one attempt by Grabe and Stoller with Portuguese students in James Coady's book, 1997 that I recall. And Kyongho, Hwang and Nation, Paul (1989) Reducing the vocabulary load and encouraging vocabulary learning through reading newspapers. Reading in a Foreign Language Vol. 6 (1)

I hope that helps

Rob

On Dec 23, 2016, at 17:09, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:

Dear Rob,

Thank you for your kind answer. I will try to find these articles you mention. I still find it quiet hard to believe that there has not been more research on newspaper online reading.

Concerning the level of our students, as you may know, Norwegian is very close to English and English is almost a second language here. I am myself French speaking from Belgium and have Dutch as a second language, English as a third language and Norwegian as a forth language. When you listen to the radio for example here in Norway, some parts of the news might come from the BBC and is therefore in English, some features might be in Swedish or Danish and people would understand all these languages. Such a difference with what happens back home in Belgium!

It is indeed very interesting to teach English here in Norway as we would not focus too much on the form, but the classes would be more social sciences classes in English. They all watch movies in English language, watch youtube clips in English and have no problem to communicate in English. What they lack is more the academical English and this is why the project has been interesting. Many of them read now the Guardian, the New York Times, BBC news, while the weaker students would read the Time in Plain English.

Well, it might be interesting to have our pupils exchange emails with each other and exchange their experience about learning English <OutlookEmoji-😊.png>

I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy new year, full of positive surprises with our students.

Regards,

Nathalie Franssen

From: Rob Waring <waring.rob@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, January 2, 2017 2:33 PM
To: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen
Subject: Re: Why Extensive Reading should be an indispensable part of all language programs

Thanks for the info Nathalie,

All the best to you and yours

Rob

Appendix 13: E-mail correspondence with Thomas N. Robb

On Thu, Dec 8, 2016 at 2:54 AM, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:
Dear Mr Robb,

Nike Arnold has been kind enough as to give me your name as the person who might help me find more information about extensive online reading programmes in the EFL classroom.

As you will see in my correspondence with Nike Arnold, I am currently writing my master thesis on a case study implemented in my own EFL classroom of year 12 pupils in Stavanger, Norway. The study is a three-month free voluntary web surfing programme from English-speaking news providers. I have introduced my pupils with some of the main English-speaking news providers in the beginning of the school year and they start our two weekly lessons with a reading session of about 20 minutes, followed by a class discussion and a free writing session (10 minutes) on their own blogs. In order to monitor the progress in reading comprehension, they visit the webpage www.readtheory.org once a week and take a quiz. In the meanwhile, the other class of year 12 EFL only works with the weekly quiz. The 3-month period is not yet over but I already see some progress among the pupils and we all really enjoy the discussions where all the pupils tell about their reading. It is amazing to see how diverse their interests are.

I am currently working on my literature chapter and haven´t yet found many studies about free voluntary web surfing. Whereas so many scholars and teachers advocate the use of Extensive reading, and all agree that the Internet is the right tool to captivate and interest teenagers, I find it hard to believe that I cannot find more publications debating the benefits of it.

Do you know of any studies I could refer to? Are you familiar with the webpage Readtheory? It is designed for English speaking pupils, but in my correspondence with them, they informed me that some schools in Denmark and the Netherlands use the programme in their EFL classes.

I am looking forward to your kind reply,

Best regards,

Nathalie Franssen

Online Reading Activities | ReadTheory
www.readtheory.org

Online reading activities for all levels. Improve your reading ability using this fun, interactive, educational tool in school or at home.

From: tomrobb@gmail.com <tomrobb@gmail.com> on behalf of Thomas N. Robb <trobb@cc.kyoto-su.ac.jp>
Sent: Wednesday, December 7, 2016 7:14:29 PM
To: Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen
Cc: Ion Patrick Francis Drew
Subject: Re: Fw: Extensive reading programmes using online materials

Hello Natalie,

I'm afraid that I can't be of much help either. The reason is that in Japan, as in many other countries, it is difficult to get students to do outside reading unless it can be tracked by the teacher. This is why I developed MReader.org which provides quizzes for *books* that students read outside of class. The students receive the word count of each book towards a set word count goal for each quiz they pass and get the cover of the book placed on their own personal page.

We offer quizzes for books only because online material is ephemeral and normally is not graded.

I had a look at readtheory.org and it looks interesting. I might try it with my own students if it has a tracking mechanism for the teacher.

There is another site for L2 English learners, http://er-central.com that offers short articles and quizzes and even listening material, that might be useful for your students, but I'm afraid that I can't point you at relevant literature.

You might try the Extensive Reading Foundation annotated bibliography, though, which has summaries of about 600 papers on Extensive Reading: http://erfoundation.org/bib

I hope this helps a bit!

Cheers,
Tom Robb

On Thu, Dec 8, 2016 at 2:26 PM, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:
Dear Tom,

Thank you for your reply. I see indeed the point in tracking the students' reading and progress. This is why I ask my students to write on their blogs after their reading session.

ReadTheory allows indeed teachers to track the progress of the class and you will see attached some screenshots from my own class where you can see their grade level performance, the number of quizzes taken, the points earned and their mastery of ELA Common Core Standards. You can as well click on each student and see the student's individual progress. Some quizzes also require the writing of a short essay that has to be corrected by me. I do not use these results in my own grading system as here in Norway, but my pupils understood the fact that extensive reading is important for them for both their oral grade and written grade at the end of the school year and they seem to enjoy their reading.

Thank you for these sites you recommend and I will have a look at them.

Have a great day and thanks again for your kind help,

Best regards,

Nathalie Franssen

Thank you Nathalie, for the reply and screenshots.

The problem with sites like this and having students write in their blog, etc., is that YOU are willing to do all of that checking, but all of that is too much to expect of the average teacher. This is one reason why extensive reading isn't done so much despite its benefits. Generally, it is too much work for the teachers and this has prevented ER from becoming popular.

I'll definitely try the site for *my* students though!

Cheers,
 Tom

Hello Nathalie,

And a Happy New Year to you, too. Many of my colleagues are quite apprehensive about how things might develop in the future, but as you say, all we can do is to keep our nose to the grindstone and hope that things turn out for the better.

CALICO would be a good forum for your study, but the presentation deadline has already passed, and in fact, I've already received my rejection. :-(I'll be going anyway, though!

Another forum would be the Extensive Reading World Congress to be held in Tokyo this coming August. We expect about 500 people from around the globe to attend. http://erfoundation.org/erwc4

The 4th Extensive Reading World Congress | Pathways to ...
erfoundation.org

* The annual JERA conference is a 'conference within a conference'. All presentations in Japanese will be vetted and programmed by JERA.

By the way, I did try ReadTheory with my students. They liked it, but unfortunately the site doesn't seem to be very user friendly. There is no way that I could find to bulk upload student registrations, nor a way to download a report for the students. Any thoughts on this?

Cheers,
 Tom

On Tue, Jan 3, 2017 at 5:50 PM, Nathalie Therese Johannes Siva Franssen <NT.Franssen@stud.uis.no> wrote:

Dear Tom,

I hope that you have had a nice relaxing holiday and I wish you a very happy 2017. I like to think about what Obama told his girls after the elections, that we should not worry about the apocalypse but look at places where we can still push to keep the world moving forward. I guess that this is what we are all doing as teachers/professors.

I checked the Calico website and was wondering if I would try to come over to the conference in Flagstaff. Do you think that I could also present my study?

Have a great day,

Best regards,

Nathalie Franssen

Appendix 14: E-mail correspondence with Cathrine-Mette Mork

Re: Utilisation de ReadTheory en classe d´anglais langue étrangère   Inbox   x

Cathrine-Mette Mork <cmork@sky.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp>   Mar 24
to me

Bonjours, Nathalie.

Merci beaucoup pour ton message!

Ja, min far aer Norsk, men I snakker bare litt! Jeg ear helt Canadisk. Also, my written French and Norwegian are terrible, after having lived in Japan for over 20 years (but there again - my written Japanese is not great either, sadly)

For efficiency's sake (I'm a little busy today), I'll respond to you in English, if that is OK. (My work keyboard is only set up for English and Japanese anyway.)

Your email is timely, as I just finished preparing a poster presentation about ReadTheory which I will give (pending acceptance) at the JALTCALL conference in Shikoku this year. I will attach it to this email for your perusal (I will also upload it to academia, but not until it is accepted - you can connect with me there if you like: https://mic.academia.edu/CathrineMork)

The poster covers an introduction to the system and some questionnaire feedback I received from students. Not rigorous research, but it seems promising to build upon for the future. Let me know if you have any questions about it. Yes, I also think this website is excellent. I particularly like that the questions require reasoning skills that can develop their critical thinking ability. Questions of this nature are not all that common, I feel. I will continue to use the system and hope to get more data that might support further work. I am open to collaborations, by the way. :)

BTW, j'ai deja eu la pleasure de parler avec M. Tomas Robb a un conference quelepart. Il est tres connu!

I am so jealous that you live and work in Norway! I would love that... Nous sommes preseque le meme age, Nathalie. Moi j'ai 48 ans. :)

Amicalement,
Trine Mork
(Trine c'est un nickname pout Cathrine-Mette)

ReadTheory for university EFL readin
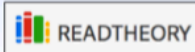
**READTHEORY** · **Cathrine-Mette Mork** ☀ **Miyazaki Interna**

Introduction

What is ReadTheory?

ReadTheory (readtheory.org) is an online reading practice platform that supplies students with an extensive library of passages targeting individual levels. Learners are assessed on comprehension through a series of multiple choice questions and optional written responses. The system uses algorithms and *Lexile* (lexile.com) level information to initially place students at an appropriate starting point. Readers move up (or down) in level as they work through ReadTheory. Answers and detailed explanations are available upon completion of each section. The platform is designed for American K12 readers, adhering to national benchmarks specified by the *Common Core State Standards* (CCSS - corestandards.org).

How does ReadTheory work?

- Teachers can create a class account and student accounts, or have students create their own account and join a teacher's class.
- Students take an initial placement test (around 30~40 minutes) which can be done during or outside class time.
- ReadTheory employs the *Lexile Framework* to match learners with resources at appropriate challenge levels.
- Students read passages at their own pace and complete several multiple choice questions and (optional) writing segments. The questions stress problem solving, analytical skills, and critical thinking. In adherence with the CCSS, the questions address key ideas and details, integration of knowledge, and craft and structure.
- Records of quizzes taken are available in graphs. Quizzes are broken down by grade level in relation to student pretest grade level scores.

Quizzes Taken
Number of quizzes taken by students in this class
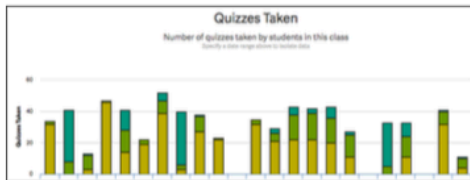
- Students move through grade levels (a relative measure designed to approximate U.S. grade school levels) based on quiz scores:
  - ▲ Grade up: score 90% *or greater*
  - ▶ Grade unchanged: score *between* 70% and 90%
  - ▼ Grade down: score *below* 70%
- Students earn "knowledge points" primarily by answering questions correctly, using resources to make discoveries, and performing well on quizzes. Points unlock designated titles, designs, and other game mechanics built into the program, but have no affect on grade or *Lexile* levels.

Knowledge Points
Knowledge Points earned by students in this class

Method

Why was ReadTheory used?

- As the structure of typical ReadTheory sessions resembles that of MIC's final exams for reading courses, it was hoped that the system would:
  1. familiarize students with the exam format,
  2. improve students' reading skills,
  3. provide students with a tool for self-directed learning.
- The questions are designed to improve critical thinking ability and develop an understanding of the scope, structure, intention, memory, and vocabulary of reading passages.
- Teachers can observe student activity through class accounts and view extensive reports showing student levels and progress.
- ReadTheory is motivational due to its incorporation of game mechanics.
- The system assigns readings appropriate to individual level, and allows for level changes in accordance with performance.
- It is free.

How was ReadTheory used at MIC?

- The system was piloted in two freshmen EFL reading courses at MIC in 2016: RDG1 (spring) and RDG2 (fall). There was no overlap of students between the courses.
- Each class (of 18 students) was allotted a number of ReadTheory quizzes to complete by 4 deadlines in the semester. RDG2 students were allotted a higher number of quizzes to complete.
- Students were graded only on completion of work, not on progress through the system or level attained.
- Questionnaires addressing student perceptions were completed at the end of each semester.
- Student progress in the system was analyzed.

Student Questionnaire

In a study by Romeo (2016), almost 80% of learners surveyed rated their overall satisfaction with ReadTheory as 8/10 or higher. Nearly 30% of all respondents rated their satisfaction level as 10/10. Results from the ReadTheory questionnaires conducted at MIC at the end of each semester (before final exams) similarly yielded positive levels of satisfaction overall for the 36 respondents.

Number of respondents who completed different percentages of ReadTheory quizzes				
Above target	Target	75%~99%	60%~74%	60%>:
7	14	7	5	3

How often respondents accessed ReadTheory					
Almost every day	A few times a week	A few times a month	A few times a semester	I crammed	I didn't use it.
0	14	15	4	3	0

Extent to which students believed...	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Using RT was enjoyable.	3	15	11	7	0
Using RT was interesting.	3	16	15	2	0
The reading passages in RT were interesting.	4	16	13	3	0
The RT system was easy to use.	7	13	11	4	1
Using RT was good practice for me.	9	17	8	2	0
Using RT helped me improve my reading skills.	5	21	8	2	0
I used RT mostly on my cell phone.	15	12	6	2	1
I plan to use RT in the future for personal study.	1	20	14	1	0

Extent to which students believed...	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I didn't check.
The progress data received from my teacher OR the RT system was motivating.	2	14	14	3	1	2
Getting badges on the RT system (shown to me by my teacher) was motivating.	4	15	14	2	0	1

Optional Student Comments

Rationale for completing the number of ReadTheory quizzes reported:
Because, I want to improve reading skill. (+3 more similar comments)
Learning by short stories is very comfortable for me. Because, I was able to study little by little. If stories so long, I may had to spend much time. (+1 more similar comment)
ReadTheory is fun and some stories are interesting. (+3 more similar comments)
Because it was homework. (+2 more similar comments)
Because, I want to get good score. (+4 more similar comments)

Rationale for reported infrequency of ReadTheory use:
At first, I did everyday, but after reach this gole I hardery do it.
I have lots of things to do. Especially, I did also have to submit another many homeworkers. (+2 more similar comments)

General Feedback regarding the ReadTheory system
It is easy for me to use. (+4 more similar comments)
I get the badge, higher motivation. (+4 more similar comments)
Read theory was good for me. I got good reading skill. (+3 more similar comments)
It is short story. It's easy to do during short time. (+2 more similar comments)
Also, it help my reading speed to improve.
It was interesting.
There are a lot of problems. However, I could resolve these. (+1 more similar comment)
I think that teacher did have to control amount of boderline about reading. Read theory...needed too much time in order to get score. Probably, all students get tired and uncomfortable in terms of motivation.

Progress Reports

Although students generally progress from the RDG1 course to the RDG2 course, there were multiple sections of each course taught by different instructors. The classes were streamed, and many instructors did not employ ReadTheory. It was expected that average ReadTheory scores for RDG2 would be higher than those of RDG1 due to level changes from spring to fall, and due to streaming, which initially placed the RDG1 students using ReadTheory at a lower level than those RDG2 students using it. This level difference was reflected in a comparison of the 2 sets of class charts. The graphs shown below at left represent data from RDG1: a class synopsis, grade performance levels, *Lexile* performance levels, and a CCS mastery breakdown. Students are represented by the bars. The graphs below at right show data from one sample student in RDG2. Yellow diamonds at left and yellow dotted lines at right represent placement test level results.

Conclusion

Pros:
- The platform was rated highly by students.
- The instructor found the system informative of student efforts and easy to use.
- ReadTheory reading content is extensive and continually expanded.
- ReadTheory is mobile-friendly and therefore highly accessible.

Cons:
- Initial placement testing was sometimes inaccurate, often placing students at a higher level than their overall performance in the system would indicate.
- Student levels did not improve dramatically over the course of use, if at all. Students may have to use the system more often and/or over a longer period to see substantial gains.
- Whether ReadTheory helped prepare students for finals was not investigated.

References

Kapp, K. (2012). The gamification of learning and instruction: Game-based methods and strategies for training and education. San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.

Romeo, G., Hock, T., & Plante-Kropp, A. (2016). A preliminary study concerning the effectiveness of an online reading comprehension and writing program. ReadTheory.org Data Collection Study 2.0. https://readtheory.org/static/pdf/RTStudy2.pdf

Cathrine-Mette Mork   cmork@sky.miyazaki-mic.ac.jp