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Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

Using learning stations to develop student literacy for L2/L3 English learners in upper-secondary school in Norway

Sveinung Benjamin Sjøberg Løfaldli

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Abstract

This study investigates the use of learning stations as a teaching method for developing student literacy for L2/L3 English learners. The study takes place at an upper-secondary school in Norway. The case study follows two groups of students: one group of vocational students and one group of academic specialization students to find whether learning stations is an effective tool for these groups. The goal of the lessons is to develop the students' ability to think and read critically. The study discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the teaching method, including the issues concerning big student groups and lack of teacher-provided structure at the learning stations that are student-led. During the project, the productivity level of the vocational students significantly increased although some of the students had trouble with the looser structure. The teaching method also worked well with bigger student groups, but the teacher experiences some issues with invisible students. In the future, one should measure the long-term impact of the increased productivity level of the students.

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1.0. Introduction

1.1. Teaching context

While working in various schools and with various age groups, I have personally used learning stations for teaching a variety of concepts to various age groups. I have also witnessed the use of learning stations by other teachers at multiple schools for multiple purposes. Håstein & Werner (2014) describe that teachers would use learning stations to provide differentiated instruction for their students. In Norway, all students have the right to be provided with instruction that is suited for their skills and prior knowledge (Education Act section 1-3, 1998). With learning stations, students get to approach problems in various and partly self-chosen ways, allowing the students themselves to create differentiation that is suited for the individual student in specific classroom situations.

Lauritzen, Strandbu, Rasmussen & Adolfsen (2016) claimed that the use of learning stations in Norwegian classrooms has decreased (p. 63) because of the non-specific upper limit to how many students there may be per teacher in a student group (Education Act section 8-2, 1998). One should note that this law is expected to be changed, making it illegal to have more than 16 students per teacher for school years one to four and more than 21 students per teacher for school years five to 10 for regular teaching activities (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2018). The new law is expected to be put into effect from the beginning of the 2018 school year. Therefore, one may expect to see an increased use of learning stations in Norwegian schools in the upcoming months and years. However, since the upcoming changes to Education Act § 8-2 are not concerned with upper-secondary school, it is difficult to predict how student group sizes will change for years 11 to 13 over the next few years.

Student group sizes vary greatly at the upper-secondary level, as demonstrated by this thesis' field study: The group of vocational students consists of 10 students, while there are 31 students in the group that is studying academic specialization. The group of 31 students are divided into two groups every other lesson, making them groups of 15 and 16, respectively. This provides an opportunity to work with learning stations with smaller groups as well as a big group. This may provide insight into the potential usage of learning stations for teaching various concepts at the upper-secondary level, too. Prior to this study, it was expected that using learning stations as an organizational method would be less effective with the bigger groups. That is one of the questions that this study investigates.

The main argument for the using learning stations is that they provide a teaching environment that is designed to allow students to create differentiation. Therefore, it may be beneficial to use learning stations regularly. However, if one does not regularly use learning stations as a part of one's teaching methods, the occasional use of learning stations may function as a break from the everyday teaching routine. Thus, the teaching method may serve as one of the teacher's tools to uphold or increase the students' level of motivation and contentment, which may improve the overall student performance. Although routines are important, it is similarly important that students do not become disinterested and fatigued by the lack of teaching method variation.

This thesis seeks both to provide examples on how to use learning stations effectively in the upper-secondary level classroom and to find if it would be beneficial for student learning if teachers would use learning stations in upper-secondary school. Specifically, this thesis researches whether using learning stations may be an effective method for teaching literature to L2/L3 English learners in the upper-secondary school in Norway. To find out, I have performed a field study to research two groups of students: one of the student groups is a group of vocational students, while the second group of students are a part of an academic specialization education program. I aim to compare the results from the two groups in the field study to find if and how one may use learning stations effectively.

Vocational education program students and students of academic specialization education programs follow the same curriculum for English in year 11. In this case, where the goal is to develop literacy in literature, I have found several competence objectives in the Knowledge Promotion Reform (2006) for both vocational students and students of academic specialization that justify the time investment necessary to use learning stations. It may be necessary to use learning stations more than once for the students to learn effectively while they interact with the new teaching method. This is because the first time students do something, it is likely that they are first and foremost learning how to do the activity. Once they have learnt how to interact with the teaching materials, they should be ready to acquire the knowledge that the activities intend to teach.

The competence aims are a part of the national curriculum, and serve as a contract between the country, the school owners, the schools, the teachers, and students. This proclaims that all students shall be taught the skills and the knowledge described by the competence aims. One of the purposes of the competence aims is for the aims to function as the foundation of every lesson plan that teachers in Norway make. The following competence

aims are stated in the ENGI-03, and were found to be relevant for this study (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, pp. 10-11):

Language learning

- Evaluate and use different situations, working methods and learning strategies to further develop one's English-language skills.
- Evaluate own progress in learning English.

Oral communication

- Evaluate and use suitable listening and speaking strategies adapted for the purpose and the situation.
- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education program.
- Use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication.

Written communication

- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.
- Understand the main content and details in texts of varying length about different topics.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.
- Write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation.
- Evaluate different sources and use contents from sources in an independent, critical and verifiable manner.

2.0. Theory

2.1. Learning theories

Learning theories are the foundation of everything that should occur in the classroom. Teaching practices should spring out of theories that have been tested and found to be trustworthy. Today, the Norwegian classroom is heavily influenced by the sociocultural

learning theory. In Säljö (2013), he cited his previous work from 2006, by claiming that humans do not live in a natural world, but rather in societies that have been formed through the unique skills that human beings have (p. 72). Therefore, learning theories that are grounded in primitive instincts may not be adequate as the foundation of modern classroom practices.

Sociocultural theory accepts humans as fundamentally social creatures. As social creatures, it is natural to communicate with fellow-humans to attain knowledge and skills that are useful in the world that we live in. Humans can discuss phenomena that do not necessarily occur in the moment of the conversation, but that happened in the past or may happen in the future (Säljö, 2013). Therefore, we can learn from other people's experiences and put that experience into a context that may tell an individual how that experience may be used in a future situation.

Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1997) explains that there is an expanding limit for what an individual can learn on his or her own. In other words, the more an individual learns the better the position the individual will be in to learn the next step of knowledge related to a concept. Simultaneously, the model shows a bigger limit for what an individual can learn with the help of others. This limit is also expanding for the same reasons that the limit for individually constructed knowledge increases. However, since all individuals only have the capacity to form limited number of experiences due to the limited time that we are given, it is often helpful to draw from other people's experiences to increase the knowledge and improve the skills that we have the potential to attain and develop.

Merriam-Webster defines communication as "a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs or behavior (...)" ("Communication"). The world itself requires that there must be both a sender and a receiver for communication to occur. However, the word does not imply any fixed social structure between the output and the input. Therefore, communication occurs both when the teacher provides the output and the students are passively receiving input and if there is a flatter social structure, allowing for output by both the teacher to the student, the student to the teacher and from one student to another.

The traditional classroom is not without merits. In a teacher-centered, traditional classroom, the teacher is the sole leader that has full control over the group of students that he or she teaches (Garrett, 2008). In a learning environment where students are only encouraged

to speak when they are spoken to, the teacher can control the flow of information that the students have access to. Thus, the teacher can ensure that the students receive correct input. Some students may benefit from this type of classroom atmosphere as the teacher will help them by providing structure as well as a calm and quiet learning space.

Evertson & Weinstein (2011) claimed that classroom management has two purposes: to develop an environment suitable for learning and to help the students develop their social and emotional skills. In a student-centered classroom, the student is not a mere receiver but rather an active participant that contributes to his or her own learning. One may claim that a student-centered classroom is necessary today to develop the social skills that the students need outside of school. For example, with a flatter social hierarchy, the students may practice leadership skills as well as their other interaction skills while learning from each other.

While the students construct new knowledge through interactions with teaching materials or other individuals, the teacher may help the students by employing scaffolding techniques. For example, if the student is learning to solve a new type of problem, it may help the student to have a paper with keys to solving the problem in front of him or her while the student is still learning the skill or attaining the knowledge necessary to solve the problem. In these cases, the teacher becomes to a lesser degree a manager for the students and to a greater degree a guide to knowledge. The teacher can also learn from his or her students. The days when the teacher had a monopoly on knowledge is long gone. Therefore, both the students and the teacher should benefit from the experiences of their fellow-students.

2.2 Motivation and culture

Oxford English Dictionary defines motivation as a “reason or reasons for acting or behaving in a particular way” (“Motivation”). Per Martin, Carlson, and Buskist (2013), individuals typically act with the goal of either avoiding or seeking a stimulus. The individual’s prior experiences with the stimulus either encourages him or her to avoid or seek it. In other words: individuals are either fearing an outcome and trying to avoid that negative outcome, or they are working toward being rewarded (p. 500). Examples of this include among other things fear of failure and the enjoyment of being recognized for one’s performance.

Commonly, motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, where one either performs an act out of the enjoyment of the act itself, or because one is expecting either to be rewarded or to avoid negative consequences. Teachers should acknowledge that both

intrinsic and extrinsic motivation plays roles in their students' lives, and impact how they behave. It is also important to acknowledge that motivation is not fundamentally positive if it is not directed productively. Some students simply enjoy reading, while other students may be reading because they are expecting a reward. On the other hand, some students may fail to make a wholehearted effort because they are afraid of failure.

When discussing motivation and fear of failure, it may be enlightening to see the students as performers in the school environment. Therefore, it may be valuable to learn from other sectors, where individuals are considered performers. In sports, failure is important. Frøyen (2018) points out that it is rare to find elite performers that do not fear to fail. She explains that this is because athletes must practice skills at a level, where what they are trying to accomplish is not only challenging – but close to temporarily impossible – in order to achieve the optimal amount of progress.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (1997) supports the idea that student assignments should be challenging. Based on this model, students should make the optimal amount of progress when the activity that the student participates in is almost impossible to do. When the student works toward completing a task that he or she perhaps did not think was possible to complete, the student learns something new. Thus, the student's limits for knowledge attainment expands. Teachers must account for this by exposing the students to tasks that are highly challenging, but not impossible for the individual student. The harder the challenge is, the less fear of failure must be involved for the student to commit to completing the challenge.

When students are exposed to challenges that are in their zone of proximal development, they are provided opportunities to succeed and to feel mastery. It is beneficial to the academic confidence of the students to feel accomplishment by mastering various skills and solving problems successfully. However, to accomplish an objective, it is important to identify the objectives. Typically, the Norwegian teacher writes the objectives of the lesson on the whiteboard at the beginning of all lessons to allow the students to reflect on what they already know about the lesson as a mental preparation phase. If the students are working on sonnets that day, the students may start to think about what they already know about poems, and so forth.

It may be beneficial to the students' learning to focus on both long-term and short-term goals at the start of a lesson. Bandura and Schunk (1981) found that proximal goalsetting

can improve intrinsic motivation among children, while Manderlink and Harackiewicz (1984) suggested that distal goalsetting may enhance the students' interest in a task over time. Because of these findings, teachers may benefit from using periodization techniques to divide the subject into over-arching themes. To maximize the positive effects of increased student goal awareness, the students should both be introduced to the goals of the present lesson and to the over-arching goals of the present over-arching theme at the start of every lesson. Leaning on the example from last paragraph, poems may function as one of the over-arching themes in an English literature class in upper-secondary school.

Even when students are aware of goals and are tasked with assignments that are suited to their levels of competence, they will sometimes fail to achieve their targets. When students inevitably fail, it is important that their failure does not hurt their academic confidence, but rather turns failure into learning experiences. This is important not only because one would want the students to dare to try, but also because failure itself can be beneficial to the students' development. Reed et al. (2011) found evidence suggesting that failure can make individuals smarter by opening and retaining new neural pathways compiled of the experiences that the failure involved. Therefore, teachers should aim to establish cultures, where failure and fear are not two sides of the same coin, helping their students to fail with confidence.

Meece, Anderman & Anderman (2006) found that classroom cultures, where students were focused on mastery, understanding and skill development, produced more motivated students than the classroom cultures, where competition for grades was deemed important. Johnson & Johnson (2009) promoted cooperative learning based on positive interdependence to allow the students to work together to attain knowledge and build skills, rather than on competing against each other. The two researchers found that students that work together toward a common goal are often more motivated and produced better learning outcomes than students that were not dependent on each other to receive their goals. For example, when discussing a text that two students have both read, they are dependent on each other's contributions and perspectives to learn more.

Cooperative learning, however, does not come without challenges. Buchs & Butera (2009) found that conflicts of perspectives tend to arise between students that work together, but have access to the same teaching material. These types of conflicts may decrease learning as the students focus on the conflict rather on the integration of new knowledge. They propose that students should work with complementary teaching materials to support the positive

interdependency. Per Buchs, Filippou, and Pulfrey (2018), you can reduce the conflict of opinions involved in working with the same material through decentering, which is to demonstrate that individuals' perspectives only hold parts of the truth. Thus, decentering allows teachers to retain the values of positive interdependence in their classrooms, while the students can still work with identical teaching materials.

2.3. Adaptive education

Adaptive education is one of the principles that the Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006 is built upon, and the students' right to be offered adaptive education is emphasized by the Education Act, section 1-3 (1998). The principle is politically decided and mandates that all students shall receive learning opportunities that are adapted to them. It is a common misunderstanding that the right to an adaptive education means that each student shall receive an education that is individualized. Instead, adaptive education shall occur within the fellowship of the class as specified in the Quality Framework of the Knowledge Promotion Reform (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Training, 2006, p. 5). This requires the teacher to create flexible and varied lessons plans that allow for differentiation.

Individualized differentiation, although not required, can be facilitated in a variety of ways. The question of whether one should emphasize it is both a question of values, resources and whether it is beneficial to the student and/or the collective group. To create individualized differentiation the teacher may, for example, provide assignments with varying levels of difficulty that the students may choose from or allow students to work in groups based on their level of competence. This may be both potentially advantageous and harmful to each students' progress depending on the individual student's ability to regulate his or her own learning in a development-friendly manner. For example: it may be harmful to the learner's development if he or she always chooses the easiest tasks without ever progressing to more difficult tasks.

Per Håstein & Werner (2014), the act of differentiation is the pedagogical consequence of the fact that people learn in different ways (p. 22). One of the many responsibilities of the teacher is to facilitate methods that differentiate the ways students are taught, while still guarding the fellowship of the classroom. This means that the teaching methods that the teacher employs must be flexible and varied. Students will not necessarily learn optimally each lesson, but they should have the opportunity to approach learning materials in a variety of ways. Typically, teachers attempt to facilitate adaptive education within the parameters of the collective by organizing the lessons in different ways: sometimes, the teacher may give a

lecture, while other times the students may participate in discussion groups, read individually, and so forth.

When planning a lesson, teachers may consider the students' different learning styles by presenting the teaching material in a variety of ways. Imsen (2017) described learning styles as the theory that individuals may have certain preferences when it comes to how to learn, or that they learn the most effectively in certain environments (p. 262). Sternberg (1994) argued that "teachers must accommodate an array of thinking and learning styles (p. 38). He went on to explain that learning styles are not fixed, but flexible in the meeting with various problems, which means that an individual may prefer to solve certain types of problems one way and other types of problems in other ways. Building on Sternberg's ideas, learning styles may therefore be considered preferred habits of learning, where one may assume that students are generally better at learning in the ways that they have practiced the most and received proper instruction on how to learn.

To consider learning styles is a popular tactic for some teachers when they are planning lessons. However, there is some controversy surrounding what a learning style is and the effect that it has on learning. While Sternberg, Grigorenko and Zhang (2008) found evidence supporting the practice, Willingham (2005) failed to find evidence supporting the idea of tailoring teaching to the students' learning styles to improve learning outcome. Pashler, McDaniel, Rohrer and Bjork (2008) rejected the emphasis on learning style assessment entirely, finding little to no evidence to validate the practice. Instead, they found it troubling that educational practices are, in their opinion, sometimes based on beliefs rather than evidence.

Regardless of whether learning style accommodation improves learning outcome, exposing the students to various learning tactics and styles during a lesson or over the course of several lessons may lead to adoptive learning. The teacher creates opportunities for this to happen by deliberate lesson planning. There are several ways to plan for method variation in one lesson. Håstein & Werner (2014) suggested the use of both sequential and simultaneous variation as examples (pp. 45-46). An example of sequential variation occurs when the students first read a text individually and later discuss the text in pairs. An example of simultaneous variation is the use of learning stations, where students work with different teaching materials and problems in a variety of ways.

Håstein & Werner noted that although the teacher may facilitate adaptive learning by organization, it is important to be aware that the students themselves create variations by how they act upon instruction (2014, p. 43). Some of the students' tactics are productive, while other tactics are not. For example: some students may be slow to begin solving problems, while others will start before the teacher has finished giving instructions. In their earlier work, Håstein and Werner (2004) claim that individualized differentiation and instruction aimed at all may be two of the same thing in some cases since the students ensure their individual variations. Therefore, the teacher can facilitate individualized differentiation while simultaneously teaching the collective group, using variation in teaching methods to provide opportunities for adaptive learning.

Per Imsen (2017), students create variations when they partake in the construction of their knowledge (p. 68). This is because students do not passively receive knowledge. Instead, they interact with the input that they receive from being exposed to new information or new experiences related to problem-solving and interaction with others. These new experiences may or may not agree with what they already know or think they know, thus adding to or adjusting their knowledge base. Individuals never stop learning since we are constantly exposed to a variety of input that we interact with.

Mossige & Bunting (2014) pointed out the importance of active learners, claiming that all students need to gain experience by reflecting on what they do in the classroom (p. 105). They also pointed out that it is the responsibility of the teacher to put his or her students in a position to actively and productively take responsibility for their own differentiation considering what they are scheduled to learn in each individual lesson. If the students can make personal adjustments, the teacher can focus on giving instructions to all students while still upholding the principle of adaptive education. Here, it is necessary that students are deliberately taught how to learn by working with various learning strategies. The emphasis on teaching learning strategies is also mandated by the National Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training in its Quality Framework (The Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2006, pp. 3-4).

2.4 Critical literacy

Typically, an individual would be considered literate if he had mastered how to read and write. In the era of *fake news* that we live in, being able to read and write should not be considered good enough. Instead, students should develop skills that allow them to think critically about what they hear, read, and watch, so that they can make informed decisions as

they navigate through life. To evaluate the claims that the students encounter, it is necessary for them to understand that an individual or a collective may have ulterior motives that fuels their ambition to make people believe that a false claim is true. To underline the necessity to develop these skills, Vosoughi, Roy & Aral found that fake news spreads faster than facts because people are more likely to spread fake news (2018).

To complicate matters further, one may question whether there is only one truth or if multiple truths may coexist and whether somebody owns the truth. In the traditional classroom, where the teacher spoke, and the students listened, the teacher was the holder of the truth regardless of whether his statements were factual. In a sociocultural classroom, the students are encouraged to create meaning by putting experiences into contexts. While some truths are absolute, gray areas may be plentiful today and the meanings that students form may often lie in that grey area. Therefore, it is important that students' ability to think critically is developed.

According to Kalantzis & Cope (2016), critical pedagogy was established as a response to traditional didactics. They explain that critical pedagogy as its core is learning about real-life issues that concern the lives of the students. By reflecting on these issues, students get the opportunity to make informed decisions about where they stand on the specific issues. Here, the goal is to make the students active citizens rather than passive and compliant. In other words, the students undergo personal transformations, where they become able to take ownership of their own realities.

Freire (1999), describes the traditional classroom learning environment as a form of oppression, where the students are mere objects in their own learning processes. Here, the teacher creates discipline, while the students are disciplined (p. 56). Freire (1999) claims that the teacher has a responsibility to allow the students to become the subjects of their own learning processes through critical pedagogy. He suggests that the teacher can facilitate this by engaging in critical thinking with the students and by giving up control to become equal with the students (p. 58). In the spirit of Freire, the students must become critical thinkers before they can make non-oppressed meaning from an encounter a text, conversation, and so forth.

In critical literacy, which builds on critical pedagogy, texts are never neutral. Instead, texts always convey ideas, ideologies, and so forth. Therefore, it is necessary to interrogate multiple perspectives to find the truth or multiple truths within a text. Per Assaf (2017) there

are several dimensions to critical literacy, including to: disrupt the common place, represent multiple points of view, focus on sociopolitical issues, and to promote social action. For the sake of simplicity, the students that participated in this current study that this master thesis is based upon, were mostly concerned with understanding texts from multiple perspectives with the goal of helping the students understand that there may be nuances to the truth.

Engaging in critical literacy may help the students develop the ability to think critically about an issue. When the students think critically about an issue they are asked to evaluate whether they agree with the ideas that the texts – or in this thesis’ field study – the teaching materials present. Once the students have become aware of nuances, truths and falsehoods, they should be able to encounter future news articles, videos, and so forth without the fear of being tricked, but rather with the confidence to decipher between what adds up and what doesn’t. The objective of the teacher is to allow the students to discover nuances within the meanings that the construct in the encounter with the teaching materials and in discussions with others. This awareness should allow the students to become active citizens that are able to speak for the causes that they believe in and against the injustices that they encounter.

2.5. Learning stations

In Norway, the existing research on learning stations tends to focus on younger age groups than the participants in this study. However, the studies tend to have in common that they investigate the use of learning stations for developing the students’ ability to read and write. Palm & Stokke (2013) investigated the effects of the *Early Years Literacy Program* at schools in Oslo. One of their key observations was that students with low level competence in reading struggled to be productive at the learning stations that were not teacher-led. Consequently, it can be difficult for some students to succeed in learning stations when they are not supported by the structure that a teacher may offer. Per Palm & Stokke (2013), one solution to this issue is to have multiple teachers or assistants in the classroom that can help the struggling students to remain productive (pp. 64-65).

3.0. Methods

This chapter describes the three methods that were used to collect data, namely: observation, interviews and text analysis. The three methods were design to strengthen each method’s validity and reliability. Combined, the data from the three methods paint a picture that reflects the learning that occurred during the field study. The study’s main method for collecting data was the observation technique that was used to investigate the events of four

separate lessons. The two other method were used to dissolve any ambiguity related to what was observed in the lessons.

3.1. Observation

All observations occurred on April 18th, 2018 and on April 25th, 2018 in the classrooms of the two groups of students. The two groups that were observed both have 90-minute English lessons on Wednesdays. Therefore, Wednesdays provided the best opportunity to visit the school. One may argue that this study should have lasted for a longer period to improve the reliability of the observations. However, it was deemed sufficient to observe both groups for three hours each.

According to Rautaskoski (2012), one most commonly uses observations to register how people act in certain contexts (p. 82). For this thesis, the observations were made to investigate how the students would interact with the teaching materials and with each other. Specifically, whether the students were able to remain productive at the learning stations that were not teacher-led and whether the students chose to cooperate or work alone were points of interest during the observations. One may argue that video observations could have improved the reliability of the observation notes. However, the advantage of being a present but non-participating observer involved the ability to move around to see various phenomena from better angles.

The students were instructed to ignore the observer, who usually sat behind a desk in the corner with a notepad. For most of the time, the students seemed to ignore the observer and carried on with the lesson. However, there were two exceptions to this: in the group of vocational students, one student seemed to be impacted by the presence of an observer. The outsider seemed to make him uncertain about how to behave. The other exception occurred with the group of academic specialization students when the observer was momentarily treated as an additional teacher who was asked for clarification about something in the teaching materials. I made the decision to answer the students' question quickly to allow for the situation to get back to normal.

The field study notes indicate that some clear tendencies in the behavior of the students. Therefore, the reliability of the observations should be considered acceptable. The other methods that were used for this study was used to increase the validity of the observations. As an example, the focus interviews were conducted partly to ensure that the

analysis based on the observations was correct. For detailed insight into the field study notes, see the chapter concerning the field study.

3.2. Interviews

As part of the research for this thesis, multiple interviews were conducted. These include two focus interviews with the student participants and two semi-structured interviews with the students' teacher in addition to multiple less formal conversations with the teacher for clarification purposes in the period between March 8th, 2018 and April 25th, 2018. Some of the less formal conversations with the students' teacher happened over the phone and via emails. Due to the high number of researcher-teacher interviews, the reliability of the interviews is good. The unstructured nature of many of those conversations allowed for negotiations over meaning to ensure that both individuals understood each other properly.

Per Brinkmann & Tanggaard (2012), interviews are conducted to gain access to the interview objects' perceptions of phenomena to understand how they feel about a situation or how they perceived a situation (pp. 17-19). In this study, the focus interviews were designed to improve the reliability of the observations to learn whether there is coherence between the perceptions of the observer and the observed, and to determine whether the students had understood what the project had tried to accomplish. Also, the focus interviews aimed to investigate whether there was a correlation between what the students produced, which was addressed in the text analysis, and the students' perception of their own learning. Three – or about 30 % of the vocational students participated in one of the focus interviews. Five – or about 16 % of the academic specialization students participated in the other focus interview.

When electing participants for focus groups, Halkier (2012) claims that one should stress the importance of what one is attempting to learn. Furthermore, the groups should neither be too homogeneous nor too heterogeneous (pp. 135-138). This is to ensure that the participants can be representative for a bigger collective and that the interactions between the participants are natural and dynamic. The students' teacher elected the participants from the groups of volunteers with instructions to prioritize heterogeneous groups. The vocational students' focus group is heterogeneous in the sense that the participants represent various levels of competence that relates to English class. The academic specialization students' focus group was heterogeneous from a personal background perspective, but all participants had a high level of competence.

The focus interviews were semi-structured. For the full interview guides, see *Appendix E*. The semi-structured interviews allowed for insight into what cannot be as easily observed, such as emotions. Whenever ambiguity occurred, the issue was resolved by asking follow-up questions to ensure that meaning was transmitted from the speaker to the listener. One should note that the reliability of the focus interviews is suboptimal. This is because the exact follow-up questions were not recorded, which means that the interviews cannot be reconstructed exactly as it was first performed. One may also note that the interviewer does not have any way of knowing whether any of the interview object lied during the interview. This potentially harms the validity of the interviews. However, when combined with the data from the other methods used in this study, the interviews help to complete the big picture about the effectiveness of the teaching method. The participants' comments were recorded as notes on a notepad while the interview took place.

3.3. Text analysis

The text analysis used in this study is comprised of three parts: the use of key vocabulary, the length of the text, and the text's content. All students that were present for the first lesson that was observed were asked to write a text once they had finished the work at the learning stations about what they had learnt during the lesson. One week later they were asked to write another text that was concerned with the topic of the second lesson. Since the goal was to compare the two sets of texts to gain insight into the any progress that the students may have made, only the texts that were written by students that were present at both the first and the second lesson that was observed was analyzed. Consequently, seven sets of texts by the vocational students were analyzed, while 24 sets of texts by the academic specialization students were analyzed.

When looking for key vocabulary, I tracked the use of words from the glossary that accompanied the texts that the students read in class in addition to key words that would typically be used in the discussions about the topics. This was in line with the competence aims for ENG1-03, where the students are asked to “understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program” and to “write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, 2013, p. 10). The method sought to investigate whether the students had learnt the suitable words from the lessons to gain insight into the students' learning process and to evaluate the complexity of their writing. One may question how useful this exercise was, since only the most distracted students could possibly

end the lesson without having learnt any of the words that they had used in writing and discussions for one and a half hours.

Secondly, I evaluated the length of the texts. This was a simple exercise as one only needed to count the number of words that were in each written response. The numbers were used to evaluate the difference in length between each individual student's first and second written response. This technique aimed to gather insight into whether a topic was easier or harder to discuss for the students. Alternatively, the data could be used to identify whether the students found the topic interesting, if one assumed that students would write more about topics that interest them more.

Lastly, I investigated the content in the texts. Here, the goal was to get insight into how the students understood the writing tasks and how well they formulated their responses. Since the students each wrote two responses each, one could compare the two responses to track any progress that the student may have made in understanding the tasks and the teaching materials that led to the final writing task. This part of the text analysis also functions as an evaluation for the teacher. This is because it says something about how well the students have been taught their role as critical readers.

4.0 Field study

This chapter consists of the background for the field study, a detailed overview of the teaching method, along with the field notes from the four lessons that were observed. All observations and thoughts are field notes. The background sub-chapter explains why these groups of students were elected to participate in this field study. The teaching method sub-chapter explains the goal of the teaching method and the theory that it is based upon. The field notes provide insight into observations that were made about the students' interactions with the teaching materials and with each other during their work with the various sessions of the lessons and how the observer interpreted these events as they occurred.

4.1. Background

Having one or several teachers that I could cooperate with was essential to my research since I needed access to groups of students to conduct the research. To build upon Palm & Stokke (2013) that found that students that struggle academically tend to have trouble getting work done in learning stations that are not overseen by a teacher, I intended to two groups of students in a field study with the goal of comparing one group of vocational students to one group of academic specialization students. Before starting the project, my

hypothesis claimed that I would find a higher number of academically struggling students among the vocational student than in the group of academic specialization students. The results were supposed to provide insight into whether the use of learning stations can be beneficial for academically struggling students as well as for more well-performing students. Secondly, I wanted to investigate the effect that any increased activity may have on the students' performance as it relates to literacy skills.

The legendary basketball coach, John Wooden, famously stated that one should not make the mistake of confusing activity with achievement. In our context, this means that although students may be busy working on tasks, they may not be productive. Alternatively, the work that they do may not help them build the intended skill that they are trying to attain or improve on. However, a lack of activity can hardly be considered a sign of productivity either. If the students in the field study were struggling to stay engaged in learning activities, it would be a goal of the project to increase individual students' activity with the intention of gradually increasing their productivity.

A teacher, who I have decided to call Patrick, works at an upper-secondary school in Norway, where he teaches English to both vocational students and students of the academic specialization program. I was granted permission to do research on two of the classes that he teaches. Before I first visited them, he provided me with background information on the two groups of students that I would be observing. He described the academic specialization students as mostly self-driven and easy to work with. In contrast, he admitted that it is a tougher challenge to teach the vocational students as they seem disinterested in English and that they often do not produce much during the lessons.

Patrick and I have known each other for years, which is partly the reason why he agreed to let me to do research in his classroom. However, there were also other reasons why he took interest in the project. Specifically, he was intrigued by the teaching method that would be the basis of the project as it is significantly different than the teaching methods that he typically employs. Therefore, he saw the project as an opportunity to try something new and to grow professionally. He was particularly interested in testing the teaching method on the vocational students since there was not much to lose from trying something different. Even if the vocational students would not produce more, he was hopeful that they would find the new teaching method more enjoyable, thus increasing their motivation.

Outside this project, a typical lesson in Patrick's classroom consists of three parts: the introduction of a topic; tasks related to the topic, and a summary to end the lesson. During the introduction, Patrick often draws on the whiteboard or gives the students a PowerPoint presentation. Once the students are given the tasks, they often choose whether to work individually, in pairs or in groups and they are permitted to leave the classroom to work elsewhere. To summarize what they have learnt, the lessons often conclude with a class discussion, where students volunteer to share what they have learnt.

It is a part of the school's policy that teachers should discuss the lesson's goals with the students at the beginning of each lesson. Patrick tends to use the curriculum's competence objectives as the goals for his lessons. In my own classroom, I would have preferred to make the goals of each lesson more practical and easy to grasp, but we agreed to keep his method of goalsetting. This is because I wanted as little as possible to change for the students apart from the teaching method itself. One of my goals was to allow the students to act as they normally would as if I was not there to observe them.

An issue that we needed to address before starting the project was concerned with which texts the project's lessons would be based around. Since the project rests on competence objectives that are related to basic skills, I concluded that it was unnecessary to demand that Patrick would adjust all his teaching to suit my preferred texts. Instead, we agreed to use texts that he otherwise would have used to teach the topics that he was scheduled to teach throughout my project. Therefore, we agreed to use both fiction and non-fiction texts, which would allow the students to encounter different types of literature. In practice, we both contributed to the planning of each lesson, keeping the structure of the method intact, but the content varied.

The duration of the project and my role in the classroom also needed to be determined before the project could start. At a bare minimum, I needed the groups to produce two texts that I could compare to track any progress. We decided that they would produce one text at the start of the project and one text at the end of the project, and that I would observe both the lessons where the students would produce the texts that I would later examine. We determined that each class would participate in the project for three lessons. Thus, Patrick would also use the teaching method one time per group when I was not present.

Time was also a factor when determining what we could do in the classroom. More specifically, we had to account for the duration of each lesson when planning the lessons.

Both the vocational students and the academic specialization students have English lessons two times per week. On Wednesdays, the vocational students would participate in a 90-minute lesson, while their lessons only lasted for 45 minutes on Tuesdays. Both lessons for the academic specialization students lasted 90 minutes. However, the full group was only together on Wednesdays. Therefore, half the class had one of their weekly lessons on Tuesdays, while the other half had their lessons on Thursdays.

Patrick and I agreed that the ideal time to visit the school would be on Wednesdays. Therefore, all my observations were made on Wednesdays. I have relied on Patrick for information about what took place on the Tuesday and Thursday that I was not present. Since the vocational students' lessons are shorter on Tuesdays, we decided to tweak the structure of the lesson to account for the lack of time available to us. Consequently, the writing session was disregarded to allow time for the three learning stations, which were also shortened. For more details about the lesson plans, see *Appendix A-D*.

4.2. The teaching method

The teaching method consists of four parts: brainstorming, learning station rotation, and writing. The goal of the brainstorming session is to allow the students an opportunity to mentally prepare for the lesson ahead. During the learning station rotation, students are asked to interact with the lesson's topic by using the set of basic skills required by the different stations. For the writing session, the students would write a short text related to what they had learnt during the lesson. The combination of the different ways to interact with the teaching materials would provide differentiated instruction by including various learning styles and by allowing the students to create differentiation on their own initiative.

At the teacher-led listening station, the plan was to allow the students to reap the benefits from the traditional classroom. For any students that may have struggled because the teacher was not around to provide structure at the other stations, the listening station would be a place where they, too, would have the opportunity to be productive for 15 minutes. At the other stations, the students were in charge, and were thus responsible for creating their own structures.

It was important that the activities at the various learning stations would be difficult to complete, but not so hard that the students would give up. Therefore, we considered the students' respective zones of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1997) when planning the lessons. The greatest challenge that Patrick and I encountered as we were planning the lessons

was to ensure that the teaching materials at each learning station could be understood and interacted with properly by the students regardless of whether the students were at their first or third station of the lesson. Consequently, the teaching materials could not build on each other. Instead, the teaching materials needed to be designed in a manner that allowed the students to reveal new aspects of the lesson's topic for every learning station that they encountered.

In some cases, we were hopeful that the students would discover nuances with the addition of new aspects. In other cases, the goal was simply that the students would grasp a better overall understanding of the topic. This was where the aim of developing critical thinkers through critical literacy met the fixed realistic expectations. The students had a varying level of competence. Consequently, it was more realistic to ask some of the students to continue to learn English rather than to have complex discussions and finding their own meaning in a text.

Building on Johnson & Johnson (2009), we were hopeful that the lack of competition would decrease the fear of failure among the students. The students were encouraged to take notes from each station. These notes would be helpful to have when they would write their written responses to the writing task at the end of the lesson. They were also never forbidden to share knowledge with each other at any point. The instructions would not always explicitly tell the students to collaborate on a task, but they always had the opportunity to do so.

In each lesson, the brainstorming session would begin as soon as the teacher had started class and introduced the lesson's topic and goals. The instructions ordered the students to write down what they knew about or associated with the topic. It was unimportant whether students would write down their thoughts using full sentences or key words. As the students immediately discovered, the instructions did not forbid them from cooperating. Hence, some students shared their knowledge with each other, while other students worked alone

The station rotation consisted of three learning stations that each had its unique purpose: reading, listening, and discussing. Each group would work at a learning station for approximately 15 minutes before switching stations. The teacher led the listening station, where he would read a text or hold a lecture. Whether the listening station was a true listening station or more akin to the discussion station varied from lesson to lesson and from group to group. The more the students took the initiative to ask questions or to add to what the teacher told them, the less the station became a pure listening station. In some groups, many students

contributed at the listening stations, while in other groups only a few contributed while the rest functioned as an audience.

While working on the other learning stations, the students were left to interact with the teaching material in accordance with the instructions. On the reading station, the students were typically asked to read a text and to answer some questions about the text. On the discussion station, there were open-ended questions that the students were asked to discuss. While preparing the discussion station, it was challenging to know precisely which questions to ask and how many questions to ask. We wanted to avoid situations where the students either had nothing to talk about or weren't close to finishing their discussions by the time it was time to switch stations.

To conclude each lesson, the students participated in a writing task. Like the learning stations, the writing task also lasted for about 15 minutes. Unlike the learning stations, but similar to the brainstorming session, all students worked on the writing task simultaneously. A part of the instructions given at the beginning of each lesson was that all students should take notes during all the stations. Therefore, the students could use their notes from their brainstorming session and all three stations as sources for the writing session.

Notetaking, as the students were asked to do throughout the lessons, may be considered a part of the basic skills as it relates both to reading and writing. First, the students take notes about what they have heard or read. Later, the students read and comprehend those notes as they put them to good use in the writing session. Although the notetaking process was not considered crucial to this project, we decided to implement it as a part of the lessons to ensure that the students remained engaged in the discussions and readings. By requiring the students to take notes, the teacher also helps the students to develop sound learning habits.

As one may read from Table 1, we scheduled a break at the completion of the three learning stations. In practice, the break never lasted for 15 minutes. Instead, the scheduled break functioned as buffer time. If the teacher needed more time than the allotted 15 minutes to summarize what had taken place at the listening station, he was free to do so for each group. Typically, all stations lasted for a couple of minutes longer than anticipated. This was a result of inexact execution of the plan. Consequently, the students' break became shorter than it might otherwise have been.

Start	End	Session
00:00	00:15	Introduction & brainstorming: topics are introduced, groups are formed, and brainstorming is initiated.
00:15	00:30	Station session 1: (listening/reading/discussing)
00:30	00:45	Station session 1: (listening/reading/discussing)
00:45	01:00	Station session 1: (listening/reading/discussing)
01:00	01:15	Buffer time & break: time set aside to get back on schedule. The duration of the break depends on how much time is left.
01:15	01:30	Writing session: all students write a text related to the topic covered in the lesson.

Table 1: Breakdown of the lesson into sessions.

4.3. The vocational students – an overview

The group of vocational students consists of 10 males that are first-year students in upper-secondary school. The group consists of mostly ethnical Norwegian students as well as a couple of immigrants. There is nothing about the group’s overall attendance that indicates that something is wrong. However, it only takes moments to understand that in this particular English class, they are not the most productive group. This was indicated by how some of the students demonstratively paid more attention to what was happening on their computer screens than to what the teacher was saying during the introduction to the first lesson.

Their lessons take place in a classroom that seems too big for them. They are only about one third of the people that the classroom has seats for, and they are seated scatteredly. Although there are no pre-determined seating arrangements, they tend to sit in the same place every lesson: some in pairs, others alone and all around the room. This gives an impression of disunity among the students. It also seems to discourage cooperation among all students that don’t habitually sit together. There is one advantage to the way the students are seated: since they have more space than they need, there is no need to rearrange the desks to create stations.

There are a couple of students that stand out to me as an observer. For the rest of this thesis, I will refer to them as Oscar and Muhammad. It is evident that in this group, Oscar has

the most confidence when it comes to academically related subjects. He leads discussions and clearly trusts his intellect. He can come across as rather opinionated, but he is also one of few that evincibly cares about the subject. Muhammad is one of the immigrants in the group and he may be harder to notice since he is quiet. Relative to most of the group, Muhammad is also a hard-working student. He attempts to lead his fellow students back to subject-related topics when the conversation strays away from what they are supposed to expected to discuss. When he is rejected, Muhammad tries to do the assignments on his own.

Patrick points out that none of the students are unintelligent. He claims that the problem is that they have been told too many times that they can't. Hence, many of the vocational students lack academic confidence. He judges their disinterest as a sign of dejection. When a student associates school with failure, it should not come as a surprise that the student is demotivated. In other words: the teacher is fighting a losing battle. Not only are the students demotivated, but the teacher also acknowledges that this year with this class has been a struggle. Therefore, Patrick and I were both interested to see if things would take a turn for the better with the new teaching method.

4.3.1. Day 1 – April 18, 2018. In this class, the teacher organizes the groups. According to the teacher, the groups are not formed based on who he thinks will get the most out of each other. Instead, they are put together with the goal of keeping the students from becoming preoccupied with non-subject related activities. Per Patrick, there are some students that can not work together without harming the learning environment in the classroom. As a result, some students are put in groups with people that they don't work with as often. This, however, turned out only to be a mildly successful solution as three of the boys – one of which was a part of another group – spent much of the first 30 minutes of the first lesson discussing snowmobiles.

The classroom's learning environment improved as the first lesson progressed in the sense that the room became less audible. At the reading station, all groups seemed to do well, although it took some time for one of the groups to realize that they were also supposed to do tasks related to the text that they had read. At the discussion station, however, there was little evidence to suggest cooperation and sharing of ideas. In one group, Oscar served as the clear leader, who reprimanded his fellow students for not pulling their weight. This increased their level of activity for the duration of the time at the discussion station. In the two other groups, the students simply read the questions out loud and proceeded to answer the questions in writing individually.

At Patrick's station, there was a significantly higher level of activity than at the other two stations. At the listening station, the teacher held a lecture that sounded more like a conversation. With a 3:1 and 4:1 student-teacher ratio, all students contributed to the conversation, although some were much more active than others. Occasionally, some students switched to Norwegian when they couldn't find the right words, but the teacher efficiently led them back to the target language to continue the conversation. The level of discussion at the listening station is bizarrely high compared to the discussion station.

When the station rotation had concluded, and the students had started to work on the writing assignment, there was a striking silence in the room apart from the sound of keystrokes. Most students started writing at once, while one student struggled to start writing. This student had taken an active role at the listening station but had acted mostly destructively at the other stations. With five minutes left of the writing session, he had barely typed a heading. On a brighter note, Patrick was delighted that one student who routinely produced next to nothing, had written about 100 words in that 15-minute period.

4.3.2. Day 2 – April 25, 2018. The day before this lesson, this group had a 45-minute English lesson, where they also used this project's teaching method with modifications to account for the shorter lesson. Therefore, the students knew what was going to happen before they entered the classroom. This day, two students who were absent during the first lesson were present. Patrick was anxious to see the effect that one of those students would have on the learning environment as he is often responsible for causing disruption along with one of his friends. However, by the end of the lesson, I had nearly forgotten who the new arrival was.

This time the students did not focus on their computer screens while the teacher was giving instructions. Albeit, three out of nine students had one in-ear headphone plugged in, but there was still a sense of improvement. Patrick also divided the students into groups for this lesson, and since the students knew what was going to happen, they did not need many instructions before they started on activities at the different stations. However, this lesson served as a reminder that activity does not necessarily translate to productivity. During this lesson, there were fewer disturbances than in the first lesson. Unfortunately, it seemed like the activity that did occur on the different stations was largely non-subject related.

In one group, Muhammad tried to get the conversation back to segregation during the discussion session. His attempt succeeded for about one minute before the conversation died. In response, Muhammed put on his headphones and started to write down his answers to the

discussion questions. The other two members of his group seemed more interested in finding out how I would act if they did nothing. As a result, they got nothing done during the discussion session. None of the other groups got much out of the discussion station either, as they quickly concluded that they had ran out of things to say and started to focus on their phones and laptops instead.

The computer usage was a problem during this lesson. As soon as the students were out of sight from the teacher's perspective, the students' laptops would appear. Generally, the students would start to work on the assignment whenever they got to a new station only to stop a few minutes later. The consequence of this was lack of production: few shared ideas during the discussion and few did the tasks that followed the reading assignment. However, the students were productive at the listening station. Even the students that did not contribute much to the conversation, displayed positive body language and seemed to be listening eagerly.

It seemed strange that the students that were so eager to talk while they were at the listening station had nothing to say at the discussion station. While at the listening station, one of the groups provided a clue about the potential reason for the lack of activity at the discussion station. Oscar, somewhat annoyed, stated that he could not answer the teacher's question unless he was asked about something more specific. It is possible that many students found the open-ended questions at the discussion stations difficult to answer. Instead of trying to come up with connections that were not so apparent, they may have concluded that there was nothing to talk about.

By the end of the writing session, everybody had produced a text and handed it in. From an outsider's perspective, it was difficult to see clear evidence of progress from one lesson to the next. However, the two lessons had provided two takeaways: the vocational students struggled at the discussion station, while they bloomed while working with the teacher at the listening station. According to Patrick, many of the students seemed to be more academically productive during the 15-minute listening session than they usually are for full lessons at the time. If that is the case, it may be beneficial to improve this teaching method to make the students more productive during the other sessions, too.

The students did not get a break during the second lesson. This is because Patrick had suggested that if I was going to get any of the students to volunteer for the focus interviews, the interviews would have to take place during class. When presented with the choice of

either doing interviews or tasks, many volunteered. Patrick picked out three students to contribute to the interview with the goal of giving me access a group that would be as diverse as possible. My impression of the three students was that the three students represented three different levels of competence as it relates to English.

4.4. The academic specialization students – an overview

The group of academic specialization students are 31 people. Among those 31 students, there are about the same number of boys and girls, and a handful of the students are immigrants. The full class only attends English lessons together on Wednesdays, while they are split in halves on Thursdays and Fridays. Compared to the vocational students, the academic specialization students form a much larger group. In the context of this study, this means that the groups working at each learning station would be larger. Since Lauritzen et al. (2016) claimed that bigger class sizes contributed to why a decreasing number of teachers do not use learning stations, it would be interesting to see how the logistics would work out for this class.

The students' classroom is traditionally designed: the students are seated in rows while the teacher's desk is in the front of the room. With this design, it is challenging to facilitate cooperation among the students except if they would only work in pairs. Therefore, it was necessary to move desks and chairs around to achieve a more purposeful design where students could work in groups. Since the students would have to reorganize the classroom, they would have slightly less time than the vocational students left for the brainstorming session. However, in none of the lessons that I observed did it take the students more than two minutes to rearrange the chairs and desks into learning stations. Therefore, the lost time was marginal because of the students' efficiency.

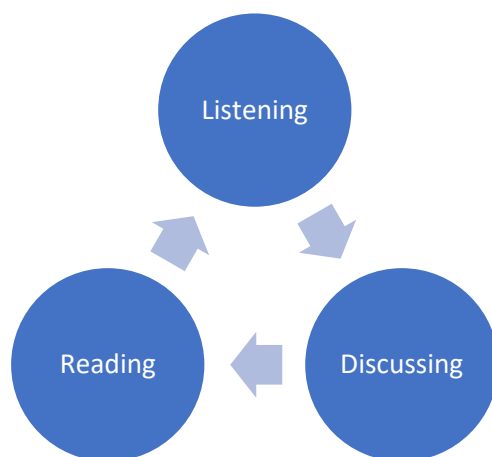


Figure 1 shows the new classroom structure post-reorganization.

With a few exceptions, the academic specialization students generally seemed confident in their academic abilities. Many of the students were eager to share their opinions during the discussions, and from listening to them it was also clear that they had mostly valid points. However, not all students seemed as engaged with the teaching material as others. A girl, who from now on will be referred to as Mia, spent large portions of both the lessons that I observed focusing on her cell phone. Consequently, she may not have learnt much from this project.

4.4.1. Day 1 – April 18, 2018. Patrick presented the lesson's topic and asked the students to create their own groups. Therefore, the students were already seated in their groups by the time the brainstorming session would begin. The students approached the brainstorming task in various ways: some started writing; a few students stared blankly into the air, while a group of girls chatted about civil rights, which was the topic of the lesson, to find common ground. One of the girls who stared into the air was Mia, and by the end of the brainstorming, she was on her phone. Mia was in the group that was seated at the listening station. In other words, the teacher was aware that she was struggling to get started, but he chose not to confront her.

The activities at the teacher's listening station played out differently from group to group. For two of the groups, the teacher mostly functioned as the leader of their discussions, while for the third group, the teacher lectured for the most part. In the two more active groups, many of the students took part in the discussions, however, with 10 students per group, it was easy to hide for students that were not so eager to share their opinions. The passive group was a girl-dominated group that seemed uncharacteristically quiet at this station since they were all active participants in student-lead discussion groups earlier in the lesson. This may have been a result of ambiguity related to the students' roles at the teacher's station.

To address the issue of invisible students, the groups were split in half when they were participating in the discussion session. Thus, the discussion session consisted of two groups that were doing the same tasks but independently of each other. In the girl-dominated group, there were two girls that acted as leaders. In these groups, the discussions were productive. The discussions seemed productive in the other groups as well. However, one could see a clear pattern of behavior, where those who contributed at the teacher-led session also contributed during the student-led discussions. Those who were passive during at the teacher's station were often passive during the students' discussions, too.

There was not much to report from the reading station: the students read quietly and took notes from what they had read. Mia, who ended up at this station as her final station, seemed more interested in Candy Crush than the teaching material, however she was not the only one with her phone out. One of the class' immigrants used his phone to look up words when he did not understand the English to Norwegian glossary. This illustrates how the use of electronic devices can be both a blessing and a curse in a classroom environment. The use of technology was not a focal point during this project, but it is important to keep in mind that the teacher's policy and the class' culture is likely to impact the students' learning.

Once the work at the learning stations had concluded, the students were asked to partake in a writing task. Mia, who hadn't said a word all class suddenly became chatty. This may indicate that she is not shy. Instead, she may lack confidence in her ability to speak English in front of others or she may feel like she has little to contribute to the discussions about the topic that was covered in this lesson. I walked to the back of the classroom to see how much the students had written: ten minutes into the writing tasks, some students had only written a few lines, while other students had written close to a full page. One should note that some students took more time to get started. It is essential to get started quickly when one only has 15 minutes to do the task.

4.4.2. Day 2 – April 25, 2018. As in the first lesson, the students were asked to form their own groups in the second lesson, too. Predictably, the three groups ended up with almost the exact same members as in the first lesson. When Patrick presented the American Dream and segregation as the lesson's topics the students seemed slightly dismayed by indicating that they had been taught about the American Dream several times in several subjects. Therefore, I was interested to see if the students would have more to offer than normal during the discussions or if they would seem bored. One of the students asked if there was going to be a writing task at the end of the lesson. This may indicate that the students were becoming familiar with the teaching method.

During the brainstorming session, the same student who had used his phone to find translations in the first lesson, used his phone to search for information about segregation. Once he found the information he was looking for, he shared his new-found insight with his classmate that was sitting next to him. Again, this shows that the use of cell phones can be helpful in classroom settings when they are used productively. Compared to the first lesson, more students partook in discussions about the topic. These conversations occurred both in groups and pairs, while some still chose to write down their thoughts by themselves.

In contrast to the first lesson when only two out of three groups satisfyingly showed engagement in the discussions with the teacher at his station, all three groups engaged in the discussions this time. However, in comparison to the first lesson, the students needed more time to become engaged in conversations with the teacher in lesson two. The group that had not been particularly engaged in the conversation with the teacher in the first lesson seemed to benefit from this station in this lesson as they had failed to be productive during then discussion station. This time, it was also noticeable that some students chose to listen only. Compared to the first lesson, there was more noise in the classroom during this lesson. This may have made it difficult for the students that sat the furthest away from the teacher to hear him properly.

At the discussion station, the girls that had served as leaders in the first lesson did were more withdrawn in the second lesson. As a result, the girl-dominated group spent most of their time at the discussion station discuss events that was going to occur outside school. Generally, the groups seemed to have more trouble at this station than in the first lesson. This may either be because the questions were too difficult or too easy. One of the groups left the scheduled discussions at discussed control in English instead. Although, this may not have been what the teacher would have wanted them to do, they were still practicing their speaking and listening skills in the target language.

The main activity at the reading station involved reading aloud. This was perhaps the primary reason why the overall sound level was higher in the classroom during the second lesson than in the first lesson. The students seemed to enjoy this learning station, and many read their character's lines enthusiastically. Since there was only five characters in the story that the students read, the all groups were split in two at the reading station just as at the discussion station. In retrospect, in may not have been a sound idea to have five groups that were either having discussions or reading aloud inside a full classroom simultaneously.

The lesson ended with a new writing task. There was some brainstorming related to the task among the students at first, but the conversation quickly died as the students started to write down their answers. Generally, the writing session seemed productive. This time, Mia seemed to be more productive than she had been during the first lesson. Occasionally, the students would stare into the air as though unsure what to write, but these breaks did not tend to take much time.

In contrast to the group of vocational students, Patrick did not have any concerns that there would not be any volunteers from the academic specialization students for the focus interview. Therefore, the interviews took place right after the conclusion of the lesson. The group was diverse and consisted of one immigrant, one girl, and two boys. While asking for volunteers, I expressed that I wanted both sexes present for the interviews. The four students took part in the focus interview as soon as the lesson ended.

5.0. Analysis

5.1. About the chapter

In this chapter, I will present my findings from studying both the vocational students and the academic specialization students. The findings are based on observations from the four lessons that I have observed; the development in the students' work; interviews with the students, and interviews with the teacher. Once the findings and thoughts about the findings have been presented, I will suggest what these findings may mean for the future of the teaching method in Norwegian classrooms. Furthermore, I will identify unanswered questions about the method and possible improvements to make the students' learning outcome better. By considering the totality of the present findings, this chapter will answer the following questions:

1. Can learning stations be an effective method for used for developing student literacy at the upper-secondary level in Norway?
2. Do the students feel that they are learning effectively with this method, and do they enjoy working with learning stations?
3. Is there a match or a mismatch between the students' perception of learning and what they produce?

5.2. Observations of the vocational students

The vocational students displayed negative body-language as a collective when the teacher started both lessons that I observed. There may be several potential reasons for this: the students and the teacher may have a poor relationship; the students may be disinterested in or otherwise demotivated when it comes to learning English; the students may have a negative impression of the teaching method that they were going to be a part of, or the students may be uncomfortable with the thought of being observed by an outsider. The truth may involve several of these reasons, but it was evident that the students were not in an optimal state of mind for maximizing their learning potential at the beginning of the lessons. The negative

body-language was demonstrated in several ways over the course of the two lessons: some students were turned away from the teacher, focusing on conversations with their fellow students; other students didn't look at the teacher, but was looking at their computer screens instead, while some students did not unplug their earphones to show that they were listening to the teacher.

Since the classroom was big and the students few, there was considerably more space in the room to sit than necessary. The school's traditional classroom outline with columns and rows had been modified by the students. The way that the students were seated in the classroom may indicate disunity: some of the students were seated together while others sat alone, and the groups and the individuals sat all around the classroom. This created the impression that some had moved around to sit with their friends, while some may not have had friends among that group. Since these students were first-year students, it is plausible that some of them have known each other since they were children, while others were just getting to know each other. In this case, the students may benefit from having to work together since this would provide them with opportunities to get to know each other better.

The groups for the learning stations were designed to keep some of the students from working together – or rather, to keep them from not doing work together. This seemed to work as planned to a certain degree, as the students sometimes discussed topics that had nothing to do with the lesson while sitting in different groups in different corners of the classroom. Moreover, the composition of the groups may have had a negative impact on the students' willingness to cooperate with each other as it seemed as if the students only and barely shared their knowledge to help each other when it was required, and never cooperated when it was not required by the tasks.

Examples of how the students chose not to work together was regularly demonstrated at the reading station. There, the students mostly seemed to do what they were supposed to in both lessons, but they never cooperated with each other. Instead, the students read the texts that were assigned and answered the questions individually. During the first lesson, one of the students failed to realize that he was supposed to answer a question once he had read the text. This could have easily been avoided if his group had cooperated since he was the only participant in his group that had not answered this question. In retrospect, some of the students may have benefited from being instructed to cooperate with their fellow-students. At the reading station, the students mostly seemed to do what they were supposed to in both lessons.

During the first lesson, the students seemed more engaged with the teaching material at the discussion station than they were during the second lesson. There may be several reasons for this: since the first lesson was more geared toward situations that the students may encounter in the job that they expect to get once they are finished with upper-secondary school, the lesson's topic may have been easier to relate to. Another plausible explanation is that it was harder to understand the magnitude of the questions at the discussion station during the second lesson. This may explain why the conversations quickly stopped as if the students concluded that there was not much to talk about.

At the teacher-led listening station, most of the students suddenly seemed like they had become somebody else. The students, who tendentially neither produced, contributed positively, or otherwise actively did what they were supposed to do at the other stations, were transformed into productive and engaged students. Also, the students' body language seemed greatly improved, as the students leaned forward as in clearly engaged in the conversation or the lecture. There may be several reasons for the sudden transformations among the students: since the groups only consisted of three to four individuals, the teacher to student ratio made it difficult to hide. Therefore, several students that may not have contributed in situations with bigger groups, may have felt obliged to participate in a more active manner. It is also plausible that the small group sizes made it less uncomfortable for the students to speak in a foreign language since the fear of failure may have been decreased as the number of listeners also decreased.

Unfortunately, the positive display at the teacher-led station did not seem to have a positive impact on the students' engagement with the teaching material at the other stations, as there was no clear difference in the behavior that the students displayed at the stations that they visited after the listening station. However, I neither observed anything that indicated that the teacher's station had a negative impact on the students' behavior. The only negative point that one may make regarding the listening station, is that the teacher cannot be everywhere at once. Consequently, there is certain examples of behavior that the teacher cannot perceive and therefore cannot correct.

The use of technology – specifically computers and cellphones – seemed to function as productivity killers. Since the teacher was busy teaching three to four students at one of the stations, he could not spend time on the students that were on their computers or phones while they were at the other stations. It seemed that several of the students often used their computers to play video games or watch videos in class instead of doing the assigned work.

However, since the teacher did not make much effort to make the students put their computers down at the beginning of the lessons, the battle over technology in the classroom may have been one of the conflicts that he did not prioritize. Regardless of the teacher's awareness, the students seemed to take advantage of the mental absence of the nearby teacher and could thus do activities that they found more joyful than the tasks that they were assigned with.

5.3. Focus interview with the vocational students

During the focus interview, the conversation revolved around the following topics: student learning outcome; student contentment concerning the three stations; student contentment with the use of learning stations; felt progression, and whether being observed impacted the students' behavior in class. Three students participated in the interview and the interview itself lasted for about 15 minutes. During the interview, the participants were asked follow-up questions to clarify their stances on the various questions. The follow-up questions tended to revolve around issues that I had been wondering about during the observations. Here is the last sentence for this paragraph.

When asked what the students thought that they had been working on during the project, one of the participants answered that he thought they had practiced getting more work done, indicating that he felt that he and his classmates had produced significantly more during this project than they usually would. One of the other two students agreed while Oscar felt that he had done about the same amount of work as he tended to do. It seemed that the effort that they had made had made a bigger impact on them than the teaching method itself. To the students, it seemed more important that they had worked harder than that they had worked on improving their personal literacy.

The teacher-led station stood out to the participants as their favorite learning station. They commented that in contrast to the discussion station, it was significantly easier to have discussions when someone was there to lead the conversation for them. Consequently, they felt that it had been difficult to get much out of the discussion station, although it had been easier during the first lesson when they were more familiar with the topic that was being discussed. They were uncertain on whether it would have helped to have a designated moderator since the questions were sometimes difficult to understand, indicating that when they had nothing more to add to the conversation they simply did not understand what arguments would be relevant for the discussions.

The participants claimed to like working with learning stations and explained that this project had been their first encounter with the teaching method. Although they were content with the teaching method, it seemed hard to pinpoint what made them content. They claimed that the duration of the sessions was unimportant when determining whether they enjoyed the teaching method or not. Per the participants, the topic was significantly more important than the duration of the session to determine whether they were content with a lesson. Building on that logic, the lesson's structure seemed to have little impact on their contentment.

When discussing whether they felt that anything had become easier with the repetition of the lesson's structure, the students nodded in agreement when one claimed that they enjoyed knowing what would come next. They claimed that having what they described as a long writing task at the end of a lesson would be demoralizing if it came as a surprise, but since they knew that the assignment was coming, they could prepare for it throughout the lesson. In that regard, they also felt that the brainstorming session had become easier since they could picture what their ideas could be used for later in the lesson. Like their perspective on the discussion station, they also found that it was easier to brainstorm about a topic that was easier to relate to. Per the participants, not everything became easier with practice as they did not find that the work at the stations became any easier with practice since the topic changed every lesson.

Finally, the students were asked whether they thought their classroom behavior was impacted by the presence of an observer. One student noted that he thought he may have worked somewhat harder because somebody that they did not know was there to watch them, but that my presence did not have an impact for most of the time. The other students felt that my presence had made no impact. One of them added that he tended to forget that I was in the classroom. The student, who felt that he had worked harder, but not because of my presence, could not explain what had made him give more effort.

5.4 Interviews with the vocational students' teacher

The teacher interviews were many as the teacher and I had ongoing conversations about the lessons. Therefore, some interviews were more structured than others, some happened right before or after a lesson, while other interviews took place when the impressions from the lessons had been given time to sink in. All interviews were revolved around student learning; student contentment; the advantages and disadvantages of the structure of the lessons, his role in the teaching method, and whether he felt that the student's behavior had changed because of my presence. Lastly, the teacher was asked about whether

he would use the teaching method in the future and whether he would recommend any changes to the teaching method.

When asked what he thought that his students had learnt during the project, he claimed that they had gotten improved insight into the topics that they have covered. This illustrates the different perspectives that students and teachers may have since the students had been unconcerned with what they had learnt by studying literature. He was, however, skeptical when asked whether he thought the students' critical literacy skills had improved. On the other hand, he noted that the students had worked dramatically harder at the teacher-led station, leading him to believe that if the students could work with similar effort on a regular basis, they would learn more in the long run.

The teacher claimed to have reason to believe that this teaching method had worked better for the vocational students than the methods that he usually uses with this group of students. He cited the students' improved composure as evidence for this. From an outsider's perspective, the students had often seemed discomposed, but according to the teacher, there were clear signs of improvement as the disturbances were less frequent and not as loud. He also thought that the teacher-led station had worked the best for the students as they had not become invisible and were thus forced to work for the full 15 minutes. He claimed that those who usually worked hard, had kept working hard, while the students that usually did not produce much, had suddenly worked drastically harder.

Per Patrick, the improvement that the students showed at the listening station was so dramatic that he found it plausible that the students got more work done during those 15 minutes than what they usually got done in one and a half hours. Therefore, he was not too concerned about the lack of effort that often occurred at the other stations since he was of the impression that there was an overall improvement. The teacher noted one advantage and one disadvantage about his role at the listening station: it had been pleasant to see the students participate more in the small groups that had been created and that he had the opportunity to lead. However, to lead the same conversation three times over the course of 45 minutes could seem too repetitive for the teacher.

When asked about the lesson's structure, the teacher commented that the repetition that the teaching method offered was also advantageous since the transitions between the activities had gradually gotten smoother as both the teacher and the students had become more familiar with the teaching method. However, he noted that he would make one change

to the teaching method in the future: as the final exercise, Patrick would have preferred to sometimes substitute the writing exercise for something else to create more variation. Specifically, he suggested that class discussions would work well as a final exercise. This would not only allow the students to share their knowledge with each other, but the exercise would also function as a quality control, where the teacher could ensure that the students had understood what they had been taught correctly.

Finally, the teacher felt that my presence had made no impact on the students' classroom behavior. He based this on the experience that he had with the vocational students in a lesson when they used this teaching method and I was absent. According to the teacher, the students had benefited the most from the teacher-led station during the unobserved lesson, too. He believed that the students had been more composed during the entirety of the project, indicating that he would have to consider using this teaching method more often with this group of students since the small groups made a huge impact on their behavior and effort. In all, he was satisfied with the changes that had been made.

5.5. Analysis of the vocational students' texts

When analyzing the texts, there were three parts of their texts that I evaluated. First, I looked for topic-specific vocabulary to see if the students would use words that they may have learnt or at least encountered during the lesson. Secondly, I looked at the length of the students' written responses to see if there may be a correlation between how engaged the students seemed in each lesson and how many words that they produced. Thirdly, I looked at the content of their texts to assess their thought process as it related to the lesson's topic. The text's content would also indicate what the students had been able to learn from the lessons. This information can be used to assess whether there is correlation between what was observed and the product that the individual student produced at the end of each lesson.

The students each wrote two texts: one at the beginning of the project and one at the end of the project. As indicated above, the two texts were meant to provide insight into the students' learning outcome from each lesson, but I also intended to compare the texts to track any progress that the students may have made by participating in the project. Specifically, I wanted to find out if any of the students showed signs of increased abilities concerning critical literacy. Because of this, I disregarded the texts that were written by students that participated in the second lesson but not in the first lesson. Since there was some absentness among the students, three students' texts were disregarded. Therefore, this sub-chapter is based on 14 different text that were written by seven different students.

Several of the texts that the students wrote at the end of the second lesson contain more difficult language than what could be found in the first texts that the students produced. This may be connected to the complexity of the topics as the second lesson's topic was more geared toward academics than the everyday work life situations that the first lesson was concerned with. It is possible that several of the students feel that there is a different standard for language used in more academically-aimed texts than in texts that are clearly aimed at vocational students. Furthermore, several of the students used words from the glossary that followed the text at the reading station to write their second text. This also happened in some of the student's text from the first lesson, but to a lesser extent.

The length of the texts from the first lesson and the second lesson were similar. In other words: those who wrote the shortest texts during the first lesson, generally also wrote the shortest text during the second lesson. Similarly, those who wrote longer texts as their first texts, also wrote longer texts in the second lesson. Compared to the group of academic specialization students, who also interacted with the second lesson's topic, the vocational students' texts were significantly shorter. Some of the vocational students wrote only a few lines in 15 minutes about the second lesson's topic, which may indicate that it was harder to grasp. A couple of the vocational students wrote one text that was about the same length as the shortest texts that were written by the academic specialization students. This provides some insight into the difference between the two classes when it comes to their level of competence as English learners.

There are some examples in the texts of nuances, which indicates that some of the students may have skills that one may associate with critical literacy. However, since the writing task that the students responded to with these texts specifically asked them to write arguments for and against a phenomenon, one may claim that many of the nuances that they showed were forces upon the students by the assignment. The goal of finding signs of improved critical thinking over the course of two weeks, may have been too ambitious for this group. Instead, many of these students are still at such a low level as language learners that one should focus on improving their vocabulary and other communication skills rather than ask them to think critically in the target language. The more frequent occurrence of more complicated language in the second text is therefore a promising finding.

5.6. Observations of the academic specialization students

The Wednesday English lessons are the first lessons of the day for the academic specialization students. Consequently, some students were tardy by a few minutes for both

lessons that I observed. Since the teacher did not want to repeat himself, the students that were late to class had to learn the lesson's topic and the goals for the lesson from their fellow-students. This seemed to be relatively unproblematic as the students that were late quickly found their groups and were filled in by whoever they were seated next to. It was more concerning that teacher did not mention the goal of the lesson during the first lesson. Because of this, the opportunity to work toward a distal goal was lost.

Many of the students individually greeted the teacher at the beginning of the lesson. This stands in contrast to the behavior displayed by the vocational students, who barely looked at the teacher. Also in contrast to the vocational students, the academic specialization students did not seem to be in a hurry to take out their computer. Instead, their attention was aimed at teacher who was in the front of the classroom, giving instructions. The students demonstrated positive body-language by sitting with a forward lean, showing that they were paying attention to what was presented on the whiteboard.

The traditional-looking classroom of the academic specialization students was completely full, but this turned out to be unproblematic when it came to group organization. The students organized themselves into groups, creating three groups with an equal number of members per group. At the discussion station during both lessons and at the reading station during the second lesson, the groups would again split into two groups with about five members per group for practical purposes. The groups were quickly organized even though it was necessary to move desks and chairs to transform the rows and columns into learning stations. Since this took less time than anticipated, more time was preserved for the brainstorming session.

It was evident that the academic specialization students were more used to working together than the vocational students. The students exhibited this frequently, but it was noticeable as soon as the first brainstorming session started: the students' willingness to collaborate during the indicated that collaboration was normal for them. Although some seemed to prefer to work alone, many of the students shared information about the lessons' topics in pairs and groups. Some students spent parts of the brainstorming session staring into the air. It was hard to tell if these students were thinking about the topic or adjusting to the day, but eventually it seemed like all the students managed to write down a few of their thoughts about the topics.

The teacher-led listening station, which was a hit with the vocational students, worked differently with the academic specialization students. The big group size seemed to have an impact as only about half of the students actively contributed to the conversations with the teacher. How the activities would unfold, depended greatly on the various groups and the students that were active participants in the conversation with the teacher in one lesson, could be completely passive in the next lesson. In one of the groups during the second lesson, Patrick struggled to get the students to take any as though all students waited for somebody else to take the initiative. Here, it was illustrated that this teaching method may struggle if the groups are too big.

Another issue with having many students and using this teaching method was revealed at the reading station during the second lesson when the students were asked to read aloud. Compared to the first lesson, when the students were not instructed how to read, the second lesson's reading station provided increased background noise for the other stations. With two discussions, two reading stations and one lecture or conversation happening simultaneously, it seemed that there was not enough space between each station to account for the increased noise. This may have been especially harmful to the activities at the listening station, where about 10 students were asked to listen closely to what they teacher had to say. As an observer, I also found it harder to hear what was said at each station.

It seemed as if most students enjoyed the reading station more when they were asked to read different parts. In the first lesson, the students had read individually and mostly answered the tasks on their own. In the second lesson, several of the students read their parts enthusiastically, and it seemed that the good mood of these students had a contagious effect on their peers. The students tendentially transitioned from reading aloud to cooperating on the tasks that followed the text that they read together. It seemed that the students found it natural to keep cooperating once they already were cooperating.

At the discussion station, the conversations seemed to flow smoothly. With about five students per group, most students seemed confident enough to share their knowledge about the topics that were discussed. Some students seemed more passive than others, but it seemed like everybody contributed to the discussions to a certain degree. The discussions, however, sometimes strayed off-course. Fortunately, the discussion almost always remained in English, which means that the students practiced the target language regardless of whether they solely discussed what they were asked to discuss. Typically, somebody in each group would take on

the role of a moderator. This helped the flow of the conversations and illuminated one of the issues that the vocational students had, where the groups rarely had leaders.

Typically, the students were given a break between their final learning station and the writing task. When they returned and were given the assignment, they acted like they did during the brainstorming session: some were slow-starters, some seemed to prefer to work alone, while some shared ideas before they began typing. When the students shared their thoughts before they began to write down their answer, they effectively installed the quality control of the plenum discussion that the teacher felt was missing for the vocational students. Naturally, those who worked alone failed to attain the knowledge that they may have missed out on by choosing to work on their own.

Throughout the lessons, some of the students used technology as the vocational students also did. However, the academic specialization students typically used their cellphones as tools for learning rather than for entertainment purposes. There were, however, exceptions to the rule, and one girl spent so much time on her phone playing Candy Crush that it seems likely that it harmed her learning process. This goes to show that cellphones and computers may play valuable roles in the modern classroom, but it can be difficult to find the right balance for what the teacher should allow or forbid. It may seem like some students can use their phones responsibly at this age, while others cannot.

5.7. Focus interview with the academic specialization students

The academic specialization students were asked questions that revolved around the same topics as the vocational students. This includes: student learning outcome; student contentment; their progression, and the observer's impact on their performance. In total, five students participated in the focus interview, including one girl and four boys. One of the boys was an immigrant, who spoke multiple languages. The interview took place in the school's library as soon as the second lesson ended, and it lasted for about 15 minutes.

When asked about what the students felt that they had been working on during the project, one of the participants noted that he believed that they had worked on new learning tactics. While answering a follow-up question, one of the other participants added that they had worked on understanding issues from different perspective, indicating that he understood that there may be several variations of the truth. This suggests that some of the students are aware of the importance of nuance in discussions, which may indicate that the students have understood some key components to critical literacy. One should keep in mind that it is likely

that the volunteers were some of the more advanced students in their class. Therefore, it is possible that their views are not representative for all their classmates.

The student enjoyed working with learning station for the most part. Four of the students agreed that the short sequences were refreshing, while one student felt that it was unnecessary to physically change stations. He was open to rotating the exercises instead of the students as a solution. Their teacher had tested how it would work to rotate the exercised only with the vocational students and he had found this to work well. Retrospectively, there seems to be nothing to indicate that moving from one station to another is beneficial for the students' learning. However, one may end up in situations where it may be impractical to move the teaching materials for various situations. In these cases, the best solution would be to move the students from one station to another.

The students claimed that it was helpful to learn about three different aspects of a topic. This strengthens the belief that the students have become more aware of nuances, thus the project seems to have made them more literate. With the academic specialization students, perhaps the main goal of the lessons had been to help the students discover nuances in discussions and texts instead of seeing phenomena as either black or white. In their written responses, there was some evidence to suggest that some of the students kept nuances in mind while they were working on different aspects of different topics at different learning stations. The students indicated that they had understood the goal and worked to read stories from different perspectives.

All five students agreed that the discussion station was their favorite station. They argued that this is because all students were given the opportunity to share their knowledge and to learn from each other during the discussions. The students claimed that there was too little work to do at the discussion station during the second lesson, adding that it can be challenging to keep the conversation flowing if there are somebody on their group that are not properly contributing. This indicates that there may be a need to develop the students' group work skills if one were to use this teaching method more frequently in the future. The students did not seem to have a dislike for any of the stations.

Interestingly, one student noted that he wished the teacher would sometimes create the groups instead of letting the students divide themselves into groups. The other students tended to agree and explained that new groups may result in better discussions. This is because the students would encounter different opinions if they were not placed in groups with the friends

that they discuss various topics with every day. The students were not concerned that new groups would cause some students to shy away from the discussions because if they did not feel confident in front of new people. Instead, the students argued that the students, who usually do not speak up during discussions, do not speak up regardless of whether they would be seated with their friends. One student disagreed and thought the teacher-dictated groups would lead to lesser discussions.

5.8. Interviews with the academic specialization students' teacher

The teacher thought his students had learnt more about the topics that had been covered. He was unsure whether the students had learnt more from some of the stations than they usually did. However, he did not believe that all the stations had been as successful for this group of academic specialization students. From knowing the students, Patrick suggested that the students may not have benefited as much from the reading stations as the other stations, as they tended to enjoy a more practical learning environment. This supports the observation that the students seemed to enjoy the reading station more when they were reading aloud to act out a play.

He was also concerned that some students may become invisible at the big teacher-led station. While there seems to be coherence between Patrick's thoughts and my own observations that some students tended to become invisible, one may argue that it would have been even easier for these students to hide in a room full of about 30 students. However, it is problematic that it might have been difficult for the students to hear their teacher properly when there was more noise in the classroom than normal during the second lesson. It is possible that this situation would improve if the classroom had round tables to ensure that none of the students would be relatively far away from their teacher.

As with the vocational students, Patrick found that it could be tedious to hold the same lecture or two have the same conversation three times in 45 minutes. However, he also found that the lessons' structures were helpful when learning to teach via the new teaching method. Since the teaching method followed a similar structure for all lessons, Patrick had gotten gradually more comfortable in the new teaching role. He noted that it feels very different to have group conversations with relatively few students instead of lecturing in front of 30 students. He explained that this had taken him some time to get used to, but the more times he practiced this teaching method, the more confident he became in his new role.

Although Patrick valued the repetition of the teaching method's structure, he also felt that the teaching method could benefit from some changes. Like he had suggested about the method when discussing the group of vocational students, he felt that the academic specialization students could have benefited from more variety. Again, he suggested that one should replace the writing session with plenum discussions occasionally. He also suggested that one could use the learning stations for producing parts of a whole. In this case, the final session would be used to put all the parts together.

5.9. Analysis of the academic specialization students' texts

For consistency, the academic specialization students' texts were analyzed using the same criteria as was used to evaluate the vocational students' texts. These criteria included: topic-related vocabulary, the length of the written responses, and the texts' content. Since some of the students were absent at either the first or the second lesson, some texts were disregarded because they could not be used in comparisons. In total, 48 texts that were written by 24 different students, were evaluated during this process. These texts were used both to compare each individual student's two texts to track any individual progress, but also to detect any collective tendencies with regards to progression or regression of exhibited skill or understanding.

The academic specialization students tended to use appropriate words when writing both of their texts. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest that the students had any progression or regression regarding the complexity of the language that they used to express their thoughts about the two topics. However, one may note that since the students demonstrated the ability to use topic-appropriate and relevant vocabulary in both their texts, it seems likely that they were able to learn new words quickly and were later able to use them in their own texts. This indicates that the students are at a high level as language learners. Therefore, it may be more reasonable to expect the students to be able to discuss nuances in the target language.

Excluding outliers, there was a significant decrease in the length of the texts from the first lesson to the second lesson. Albeit, the academic specialization students still wrote longer texts than the vocational students. There may be several reasons for the drop-off in quantity: the students may have felt that they had fewer reasons to work hard since they were more familiar with the second lesson's topic. The decrease in learning-enhancing student activity may have resulted in a worse learning outcome, here indicated by the shorter texts.

Alternatively, the second task was harder or perceived as harder, making the task more time consuming or difficult to respond to.

Lastly, the content of the texts was evaluated. Here, the goal was to gain some insight into how the students would portray their knowledge. The students' responses were deemed simpler if they summarized what they had learnt from the lesson and more complex if they were able to reflect upon what they had learnt. There is a clear tendency among some of the individual students that shows that while the second texts were shorter, the second texts were structured in a manner that may partly explain the shortened written responses. In the first texts, the students tended to summarize what they had learnt over the course of the lesson. When reading the second texts, however, it becomes clear that more students seemed to reflect upon what they had learnt. It seems that some of the students sacrificed some of the quantity or length of their written responses to achieve a higher quality in their responses as the thought processes behind some of the second written responses seemed more complex.

Although the texts generally became shorter in the students' second text, the nuances within the students' responses could be found more frequently. I find that there is not enough evidence to suggest that the academic specialization students as a group were able to achieve significant progression with regards to their abilities related to critical literacy. However, there is some evidence to suggest that a few of the students made significant progress over the course of the project. This may indicate that the increased focus on nuances and different perspectives, may have helped some of the students develop the ability to assess texts critically. It is also possible that the students had these abilities before the project began, but that they first displayed their skills during the second text because of improved understanding of what the assignment was asking them to respond to.

5.10. Is the teaching method effective for developing literacy?

Because of the limited time allotted for this project, it is difficult to state with certainty that the teaching method was effective when trying to develop student literacy. One of the unanswered questions that this study identifies is concerned with the long-term effect of the method. Some of the academic specialization students showed progress that indicated that they had started to develop their critical literacy skills. However, it would have been interesting to track the progress of these students and their fellow-students over a longer period to see if more students would make similar type of progress.

For the vocational students, the study's aim of developing skills that they could use as critical thinkers and readers was too ambitious. Because of this, the group of vocational students required the study to accept a more traditional view on what literacy is to track any progress from the group. Unfortunately, there was little evidence to suggest that the students made progress as it relates to literacy. However, the students made considerable progress in terms of work habits. Therefore, it would have been interesting to study whether the group would make significant progress in the future with improved work habits.

To trust their teacher's judgement, the vocational students seemed more focused and more productive than usual during this study. In the academic specialization students' classroom, the students almost always looked busy while they were working at a learning station. Therefore, there was conclusively a high level of activity at the learning stations. Consequently, both the groups of students got many opportunities to practice several of the basic skills, including: oral skills, reading, and writing during the lessons. Therefore, in a practice volume perspective, the teaching method was highly successful.

One should not sweep under rug that there was a lot noise during the academic specialization students' second lesson. However, it is possible that the sound level was more tiring to older ears than to the students. In any case, there was more noise in the classroom than many teachers would be comfortable with daily. Therefore, one should consider means to minimize the noise when dealing with bigger groups. One possible solution could be to move one or several of the groups out of the classroom.

Another issue that should not be ignored is the issue of the invisible students. The trouble with the invisible students was more obvious the bigger the group. With up to 10 students per teacher at the listening station, several students never or rarely voiced their opinions in the discussions with the teacher. However, one should not overestimate this issue as it seems unlikely that these students would have expressed themselves more frequently if their group consisted of 31 people instead of 10. The organization of the groups themselves occurred without any issue even with the bigger groups. Thus, one may claim that the trouble with big groups is sometimes overestimated.

5.11. Do the students feel that they are learning effectively with this method, and do they enjoy working with learning stations?

The students enjoyed working with learning stations. This becomes clear when considering the field study notes along with the students' comments from the focus

interviews. One should note that the groups found two different stations to be their favorites: the vocational students preferred the teacher-led listening station, while the academic specialization students favored the discussion station. To borrow from Palm & Stokke (2013), the students with the weaker competence tend to need more teacher-support to succeed. It was interesting to note that the students, who spent most of their time with unproductive activities, were strikingly productive when the teacher-student ratio was at its highest.

One of the reasons why many students were content with working with learning stations may have been because the teaching method allowed them to work in several different ways and with different learning styles. Firstly, since the students were asked both to read, write and, discuss, most students would encounter one or several ways to work that they could enjoy during all lessons. Secondly, since the students could create their own differentiation by electing to work alone or to cooperate with somebody else for most of the lessons, they could choose to work in the ways that suited them the best. Thirdly, the students who did not need the teacher to provide structure for them could flourish in discussions with others, where they could take on various roles in the discussions. Simultaneously, adaptive education within the fellowship of the collective was achieved.

5.12. Is there a match perception of learning and what they produce?

Although one cannot find clear literacy progress among the vocational students, one can claim that there was a match between their perception of learning and what they produced. The students claimed that they participated more and got more work done. Consequently, it is likely that they learnt more. According to their teacher, some of the students wrote significantly longer written responses than they usually do. This was especially true for their first lesson when they were both productive and working with a topic that they found interesting.

There is no evidence to suggest that the academic specialization students worked harder than normal during this project. Instead, it seemed like there was business as usual as they progressed through the lessons. There is some evidence to suggest that a few of the students have started to develop their skills as critical readers. This belief was strengthened by the focus interview, where the interview objects talked about working with a topic from different perspectives to understand different aspects of the theme. By being aware that one understands occurrences differently based on their own personal perspectives and being able to identify when they agree or disagree with ideas that they are confronted with, these students are on their way to becoming critical thinkers and active citizens.

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7.0. Appendix A: Day 1 – April 18, 2018

7.1. Vocational students

Topic: Workplace safety

Competence aims:

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education program.
- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.
- Write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation.

Pre-brainstorming: 5 minutes brainstorming - what do you think about when you hear the word workplace safety?

Bring a notebook and take notes during your different station visits.

Reading: Read Silent Alarm p. 136. What do you think the men are thinking at the end of the text? Take notes.

Listening: Discuss: Are repeated drills good or bad for safety? The fire alarm keeps repeating. What happens because of this? Are there any safety rules in the workshop that you don't follow or don't care about? Which ones and why?

Case 1: If you see someone breaking the rules in the workshop, do you tell anyone? Why or why not? If you do, who do you tell?

Case 2: Your boss offers you double pay for working overtime, but you are tired after having worked a full shift. What do you do and what could be the consequences of your choice?

Write down what people say. Take notes.

Talking: Work together to create different sentences about safety at work using the following words. Keep your conversation in English while you discuss:

- Drill (øvelse)
- Escape exit (nødutgang)
- Survival suit (overlevelsedrakt)
- Staff (ansatte)
- Safety rules (sikkerhetsregler)
- Work environment (arbeidsmiljø)
- Evacuation (evakuering)
- Prevention (forebygging)

Writing:

Andy from the text was used to waiting because of security rules. Write down two arguments for and two arguments against why you should drill the same situation many times.

Should you tell people if the rules in the workshop are broken? Write down an argument for and against. Use an argument you heard from someone else during the discussion.

7.2. Academic specialization students

Topic: Civil Rights

Competence aims:

- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.
- Understand the main content and details in texts of varying length about different topics.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.
- Write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation.

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.

- Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education program.
- Use patterns for pronunciation, intonation, word inflection and various types of sentences in communication.

Pre-brainstorming: 5 minutes brainstorming - what do you think of when you think of civil rights?

Bring a notebook and take notes during your different station visits.

Reading: Read about Mahatma Gandhi p. 194-197 and Nelson Mandela p. 200-202. Then do task 1 a, b, f, and g.

Listening: Teacher talks about civil rights. Key points: Indian independence struggle - South African apartheid - Peaceful or violent resolution (violence: India/Pakistan - South Africa vs. Zimbabwe) - who wanted to keep the system going?

Talking:

British rule in India, apartheid in South Africa, and segregation in the US were all popular at the time, but today most people think they were bad. Why do you think people at the time didn't think these things were bad? Take notes.

Not all groups have enjoyed the same civil rights in Norway as they do today. Jews were banned from the country before 1851, and homosexuality was illegal until 1972 (the same year as the first email was sent). What do you think were the main arguments for and against the legalization of homosexuality? Take notes.

Writing task:

Write a text where you summarize what you have learned about the fight for civil rights. Do you think there are any groups in Norway today that do not enjoy the same civil rights as the majority? Do you think there are any groups in Norway today that might lose their civil rights in the future? Explain.

8.0. Appendix B: Academic specialization students – April 20/24, 2018

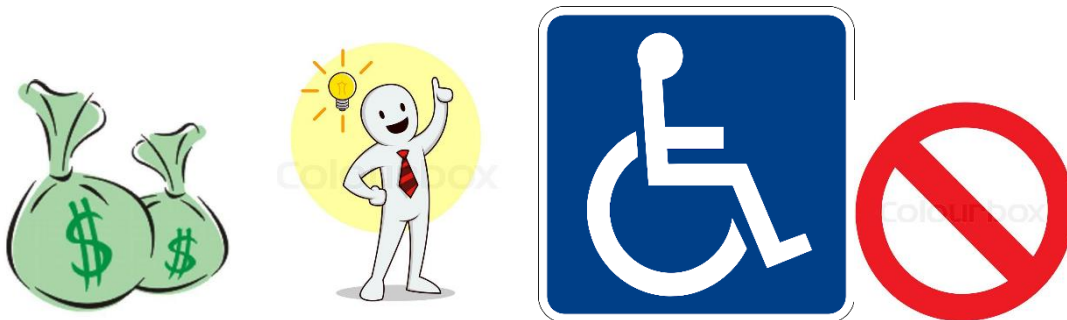
Topic: Symbolism

Competence aims:

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education program.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.
- Write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation.
- Evaluate different sources and use contents from sources in an independent, critical and verifiable manner.

What is a Symbol?

It is a sign that stands for something. We look at it and understand the meaning attached to it. We look at different symbols and decide what each one stands for or represents. We encounter symbols every day and we instinctively know the meaning of most symbols when we see them. For instance, the following symbols are all fairly well known:



However, a symbol only works if everyone involved understands the symbol. If someone has never learned that “lightning bulb = bright idea”, he would not understand what the drawing of the man with the lightning bulb means. Symbolism is thus reliant on using recognizable symbols, things most people would readily understand as a symbol. If you consider most memes, you will realize that they also rely on symbolism. The different pictures used in

memes are all symbolic of something, and without understanding what they symbolize you will not be able to understand the meme.

Symbolism in literature

Literature is chock-full of symbolism. Symbols in literature are not drawings, like the ones on this page, but rather words and phrases that are supposed to represent other ideas or concepts. Often, the symbols are not immediately apparent, and require us to read the text more than once and think about what the words mean to discover the different symbols.

Consider the following poem by William Blake:

The sick rose

O Rose, you are sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm,
Has found out your bed
Of crimson joy,
And his dark secret love
Does your life destroy.

The poem relies heavily on symbolism. In the poem we can find symbols such as:

Rose: a symbol of perfection and the flower of Venus (the Roman goddess of love). It also stands for joy and peace. The rose is always seen as feminine. A red rose can represent life, spring, passion and blood. A white rose can represent purity and virginity.

Worm: a symbol of death. It is connected with lowness, vileness and contempt. It is also a masculine force. In this poem, worm is also specifically the canker worm which eats the roots of the rose.

Storm: a symbol of chaos, confusion, fear, wildness, destruction and change. The storm can also be seen as blowing away the old and frail and giving the new room to expand. If the storm is seen to have creative effects, there must first be great wildness and destruction.

Night: a symbol of darkness, of things secret and hidden. It is also a symbol of evil. Satan is referred to as the Prince of Darkness.

Bed: a symbol of sleep and the vulnerability and innocence of sleep. It can also represent the sexual in bed. In this poem it is also, of course, a garden bed.

Do note that there are no “right answers” with regards to symbolism. Different readers may find different meanings.

Tasks

What are some symbols you encounter regularly? What do they mean?

Animals such as doves, lions, snakes, lambs, foxes, and owls and colors such as red, white, black, and green are often used as symbols. What do these symbols mean?

Discussion:

According to the *consequentialists*, it is the consequences of your actions that determine whether you have done something good or something bad. This means that it doesn't matter whether you wanted to do something good or something bad, what matters is if something good or bad happened.

The opposite view is the *deontological* view. They believe that it is your intentions that matter. They say that if you wanted to or tried to do something good, it doesn't matter if the result was bad.

Imagine the following situation: A friend of yours has just bought a new sweater, and he or she asks you what you think of it. You don't like the sweater and you think it is ugly.

According to a consequentialist view, should you tell the truth or should you lie about what you think? What about the deontological view? Can you use either of these views to defend both lying and telling the truth?

Take notes and explain your answers!

9.0. Appendix C: Vocational students – April 24, 2018

Topic: A world language

Competence aims:

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.

Reading station: Read "English - A world language" on p. 163-164. Do tasks 5.1 and 5.2.

Discussion: What is the role of English in your life today? What might be the role of English in your life in the future and in your future job? Why is it important to learn English? Explain, and write down your answers.

Teaching: Session dealing with the differences between British, American, and Australian English.

Writing: Why do you think English became the most important language in the world today? Why not French, Spanish, Norwegian, or any other language?

Why do we have so many different languages? Why can't everyone speak the same?

10.0. Appendix D: Day 2 – April 25, 2018**10.1. Vocational students**

Topic: Segregation

Competence aims:

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.

Brainstorming: What do you know about segregation and American race history?

Reading: Remember the Titans p. 186 - Work on Read and Understand Tasks

Discussion: Segregation in the US was a system where white people and black people were not allowed to use the same schools, restaurants, buses, trains, etc. The system was popular among most people at the time, but today most people think segregation was bad. Why do you think people at the time didn't think these things were bad? Take notes.

Not all groups have enjoyed the same civil rights in Norway as they do today. Jews were banned from the country before 1851, and homosexuality was illegal until 1972 (the same year as the first email was sent). What do you think were the main arguments for and against the legalization of homosexuality? Take notes.

Listening: Teacher leads a discussion on American history and the history of segregation in America.

Writing: Write a text where you summarize what you have learned about segregation in the US. Do you think there are any groups of people in Norway today that can't achieve their dreams? Explain.

10.2. Academic specialization students

Topic: Black American History

Competence aims:

- Express oneself fluently and coherently in a detailed and precise manner suited to the purpose and situation.
- Introduce, maintain and terminate conversations and discussions about general and academic topics related to one's education program.
- Understand and use an extensive general vocabulary and an academic vocabulary related to one's education program.
- Understand the main content and details in texts of varying length about different topics.
- Use own notes to write texts related to one's education program.
- Write different types of texts with structure and coherence suited to the purpose and situation.
- Evaluate different sources and use contents from sources in an independent, critical and verifiable manner.

Pre-Brainstorming: What is The American Dream?

Discussion:

Read the poem "A Dream Deferred" by Langston Hughes on p. 206

Discuss:

What is the significance of the title?

What are the possible consequences of deferring this dream, according to the poem?

Which consequence do you think comes closest to what has actually happened in America?

Are there any dreams being deferred in America today?

Take notes!

Read:

Read the play “A raising in the sun” by Lorraine Hansberry on p. 207. Pick one character each and read out loud to each other.

Do the “Understanding the text” activities on p. 212.

Listening:

Black American History

The American Dream

The Myth of the Founding Fathers

Glass ceiling

Legal segregation vs. cultural segregation

Status of minorities and women in Norway today

Writing:

Is the American Dream dead? Why or why not? May it be for some?

11.0. Appendix E: Interview guides (in Norwegian)

11.1. Interview guide – Students

1. Læringsutbytte: nå som dere har jobbet med tekstforståelse gjennom stasjonsarbeid noen ganger – hva føler dere at dere først og fremst har lært?
2. Trivsel på stasjonene: er det noen av stasjonene dere liker bedre enn andre? Og er det eventuelt noen stasjoner dere ikke liker noe særlig? Hva er det som gjør dette?
3. Trivsel med stasjonsarbeid: hvordan synes dere det er å jobbe med stasjonsarbeid på generell basis?
 - a. Hvordan hadde det vært å jobbe med stasjonsarbeid med andre temaer enn litteratur?
 - b. Hvordan synes dere det er å jobbe med flere korte økter sammenlignet med færre og lengre økter?
4. Progresjon: Om i hele tatt, hvordan synes dere det er å arbeide med litteratur på ulike stasjoner med ulike temaer nå sammenlignet med første gang dere gjorde det?
 - a. Er det forskjell på hvordan dere forbereder dere før timen?
 - b. Endring i hvor mye dere føler at dere lærer?
 - c. Effektivitet i bytte mellom stasjoner?
 - d. Forskjell på måten dere samarbeider på i grupper og par?
5. Observasjon: de gangene jeg har vært her for å observere dere – føler dere at det har endret måten dere har jobbet på?

11.2. Interview guide – Teacher

1. Hva tror du at elevene dine først og fremst har lært i denne perioden dere har jobbet med litteratur og stasjonsarbeid?
2. Hvordan opplever du at elevene dine trivdes med å jobbe med litteratur på denne måten sammenlignet med andre måter som dere kanskje har gjort tidligere – enten med denne elevgruppen eller med andre?
3. Hvilken stasjon tror du elevene dine hadde mest og minst utbytte av? Hvorfor?
4. På hvilke måter – om noen – tror du det endret elevenes læringsutbytte å jobbe med litteratur og stasjonsarbeid flere ganger sammenlignet med om dere skulle kun ha gjort det én gang?
5. Opplevde du at elevgruppen jobbet annerledes de gangene jeg var her for å observere?
6. Om du skulle ha endret ett moment ved undervisningsmetoden – hva ville du ha endret?