

MASTERARBEIT | MASTER'S THESIS

Titel | Title

Exploring the impact of an extensive reading project in mixed-ability classrooms: An action research project on internal differentiation and reading attitudes

verfasst von | submitted by
Alina Kemper BEd

angestrebter akademischer Grad | in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education (MEd)

Wien | Vienna, 2025

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt | Degree programme code as it appears on the student record sheet:

UA 199 507 509 02

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt | Degree programme as it appears on the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Lehramt Sek (AB) Unterrichtsfach Englisch Unterrichtsfach Französisch

Betreut von | Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl Privatdoz.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to my thesis supervisor Univ.-Prof. Mag. Dr. Susanne Reichl for her invaluable guidance throughout the writing process of my thesis. Her genuine interest and enthusiasm for this project have been encouraging and motivating.

I would also like to thank my friend Larissa, who has supported me throughout my studies.

Abstract

As educators navigate teaching in mixed-ability classrooms, creating meaningful reading experiences that engage all learners is both vital and challenging. The research aims of this action research project were twofold: to investigate the influence of a class library project on students' attitudes towards reading and to examine the effectiveness of differentiated instruction in a heterogeneous EFL classroom. Using pre- and post-intervention questionnaires, structured observations, and reflective practice, the study gathered qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate the class library project's impact in a particular teaching context.

The action research project was conducted over seven months in two fourth-grade classes at a Viennese middle school. Students were provided with a variety of graded readers aligned with their language proficiency levels and interests. To support their learning, learners completed differentiated reading portfolio tasks designed to promote autonomy, foster engagement, and address the diverse needs of learners in a mixed-ability EFL classroom while maintaining a focus on reading enjoyment.

Within this specific setting, the findings suggest a positive effect of the class library on both the students' attitudes towards reading and differentiated instruction. It was particularly noteworthy that students' attitudes towards reading in their leisure time improved to a greater extent than attitudes towards reading at school. In addition, the differentiated tasks contributed more to the popularity of the project than the actual reading of the graded readers. Furthermore, prior experience with reading projects did not necessarily correlate with more positive reading attitudes or enhanced engagement. Routines and a well-structured, calm learning environment played a more crucial role in promoting reading for pleasure. Although this action research supports the idea that reading projects involving graded readers are ideal for differentiated language teaching, disadvantages for low-proficiency learners were not entirely overcome. Adjustments made in the second cycle of the action research project emphasised that separating reading from task completion and restricting the use of digital tools improved learner autonomy and promoted a focus on reading.

Zusammenfassung

Sinnvolle Leseerfahrungen in heterogenen Klassen zu schaffen, stellt für Lehrer:innen eine besondere Herausforderung dar. Die Forschungsziele dieses Aktionsforschungsprojekts ließen sich in zwei Hauptbereiche unterteilen: Zum einen wurden die Auswirkungen einer Klassenbibliothek auf die Einstellungen zum Lesen meiner Schüler:innen evaluiert, zum anderen wurde im Rahmen der Aktionsforschung die Wirksamkeit differenzierter Unterrichtsgestaltung analysiert. Zur Datenerhebung wurden qualitative und quantitative Methoden eingesetzt, darunter Erhebungen mittels Fragebögen vor und nach der Intervention, strukturierte Unterrichtsbeobachtungen und reflektierende Praxis.

Das Aktionsforschungsprojekt wurde in zwei vierten Klassen einer Wiener Mittelschule über einen Zeitraum von sieben Monaten durchgeführt. Den Schüler:innen wurden „Graded Readers“ bereitgestellt, die an ihre sprachlichen Kompetenzen und Interessen angepasst waren. Ergänzend bearbeiteten sie differenzierte Aufgaben in einem Leseportfolio, die darauf abzielten, die Lernautonomie zu fördern und den vielfältigen Bedürfnissen der Lernenden in einer leistungsheterogenen Klasse gerecht zu werden.

Die Ergebnisse der Aktionsforschung zeigten einen positiven Effekt der Klassenbibliothek sowohl auf die Einstellungen der Schüler:innen zum Lesen als auch auf die Möglichkeiten der internen Differenzierung in den untersuchten, heterogenen Klassenzimmern. Besonders interessant war dabei, dass die Schüler:innen vor allem die Einstellungen zum Lesen im außerschulischen Kontext verbesserten und die differenzierten Aufgaben zum Teil mehr zur Beliebtheit des Projekts beitrugen als das eigentliche Lesen der „Graded Readers“. Darüber hinaus korrelierte die Vorerfahrung einer der beiden Klassen mit Leseprojekten nicht unbedingt mit einer positiveren Einstellung zum Lesen oder einem größeren Interesse. Vielmehr spielten Routinen und eine gut strukturierte, ruhige Lernumgebung eine entscheidende Rolle.

Obwohl dieses Aktionsforschungsprojekt unterstrich, dass Leseprojekte sich grundsätzlich gut für differenzierten Sprachunterricht eignen können, konnten Nachteile für leistungsschwächere Schüler:innen nicht völlig ausgeglichen werden. Anpassungen im zweiten Durchgang des Aktionsforschungsprojekts verdeutlichten, dass die Trennung von Lesen und Aufgabenerarbeitung und die Reduzierung von digitalen Hilfsmitteln das Potenzial haben die Lernautonomie und die Konzentration auf das Lesen zu verbessern.

Table of contents

List of Tables and Figures.....	i
List of Abbreviations.....	i
1 Introduction	1
2 Theoretical framework.....	4
2.1 ER in the EFL classroom	4
2.1.1 Review of similar ER projects.....	8
2.1.2 Implementation of ER in the Austrian (lower-secondary) curriculum.....	9
2.2 Reading attitudes and motivation in language learning.....	11
2.3 Differentiation.....	14
2.3.1 Internal differentiation in an ER project.....	17
2.3.2 A case for Graded Readers	18
2.3.3 Determining students' proficiency levels and identifying students' reading interests	20
2.3.4 The book selection process.....	22
2.3.5 Instructional approaches and task design	24
2.3.6 The reading environment.....	27
3 Research design and methodology	29
3.1 Methodological framework: AR project.....	29
3.2 Research group and setting	32
3.3 Analytical framework	32
4 The AR project.....	36
4.1 Penguin Readers introduced	36
4.2 Preparatory steps.....	38
4.2.1 Identifying students' reading interests.....	38
4.2.2 The book selection process.....	38
4.3 Instructions and materials for the first project cycle.....	40
4.3.1 Internal differentiation in task design.....	42
4.4 The reading environment.....	44
4.5 The book fair: final stage of the first project cycle.....	45
5 Evaluation of the first project cycle	47
5.1 The first project cycle: observations and reflections	48
6 Revised instructions and materials for the second project cycle.....	56
6.1 The second project cycle: observations and reflections.....	58
7 Findings on student attitudes towards reading: a quantitative analysis of student questionnaires.....	62
8 Discussion	71
8.1 A class library project presents valuable opportunities for internal differentiation and fosters learner autonomy, but low-proficiency students are still at a disadvantage.	71

8.2	Students' reading attitudes outside of class improved, but at school students prefer reading for production over reading for pleasure.	73
8.3	Students who had previous experience with a class library project required less guidance at the start and routines were key to a supportive reading environment.	74
8.4	Students recognise the value of ER for language acquisition.....	74
8.5	An AR project is invaluable for designing and trialling an ER project but, in this study, quantitative data diverge from subjective observations and reflections.	76
9	Conclusion	77
10	Works Cited	80
11	Appendix	86
11.1	Administrative documents.....	86
11.2	Questionnaires and analysis of quantitative data.....	88
11.3	Documents for the first project cycle.....	99
11.3.1	Detailed project plan for Cycle 1	99
11.3.2	"Why do we read" PowerPoint slide.....	101
11.3.3	Reader interest questionnaire.....	102
11.3.4	Reading portfolio instructions and assessment Cycle 1	103
11.3.5	Reading portfolio tasks "Standard Mittelschule" Cycle 1	105
11.3.6	Reading portfolio tasks "Standard AHS" Cycle 1	118
11.3.7	Materials for the Book Fair Presentations.....	132
11.3.8	Book Fair schedule.....	135
11.3.9	Analysis tables for Cycle 1	138
11.4	Documents for the second project cycle.....	145
11.4.1	Detailed project plan for Cycle 2	145
11.4.2	Reading portfolios for Cycle 2.....	146
11.4.3	Materials for the Book Club Meetings.....	156
11.5	Analysis tables for Cycle 2	164

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1 : Penguin reader's levels of difficulty ('Penguin Readers Handbook' 3).....	37
Table 2 : Selected books in Cycle 1 and in Cycle 2	40
Table 3 : Overview of portfolio tasks for the first project cycle	41
Table 4 : Differences and variations in tasks.....	42
Table 5 : Categorisation of portfolio tasks by task type.....	43
Table 6 : Incorporation of Eisenmann's (66) principles into portfolio work.	44
Table 7 : Genres of selected graded readers.....	48
Table 8 : Overview of portfolio tasks for the second project cycle.....	57
Figure 1 : Model of variable motivating learners to read in the L2 (Day and Bamford 28).....	12
Figure 2 : Model of acquisition and development of L2 reading attitudes (Day and Bamford 23).....	13
Figure 3 : Graphic depiction of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Lev Vygotskij (1978) .	20
Figure 4 : The six steps of Action Research (Efron and Ravid in Orosz, Recino, and Ochoa 645)	30
Figure 5 : Distribution of chosen portfolio tasks in the first project cycle.....	49
Figure 6: Answers to Item 4	63
Figure 7: Individual student answers to Item 4	63
Figure 8 : Average results for Item 4 by class	64
Figure 9 : Average results for Item 5 by class	65
Figure 10 : Distribution of scores for Item 5.....	65
Figure 11 : Individual student answers to Item 5	66
Figure 12 : Average results for Item 9 by class	67
Figure 13 : Individual student answers to Item 9	67
Figure 14 : Average results for Item 10 by class	68
Figure 15 : Distribution of scores for Item 10.....	69
Figure 16 : Individual student answers to Item 10.....	69
Figure 18 : Results Item 11 post-project questionnaire.....	70
Figure 17 : Results Item 11 pre-project questionnaire	70

List of Abbreviations

AHS	“Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule”
AI	Artificial intelligence
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference
CLT	Communicative Language Teaching
EFL	English as a foreign language
ER	Extensive Reading
ERF	Extensive Reading Foundation
L1	First language
L2	Second language
MLA	Modern Language Association
MS	“Mittelschule”
SSR	Sustained Silent Reading

1 Introduction

“Reading should not be presented to children as a chore, a duty. It should be offered as a gift.”

Kate DiCamillo

On March 10th, 2025, Felix Stadler, education spokesman of the green party in Vienna, told *Der Standard* that the majority of second-year Mittelschule students can barely read two paragraphs and then answer comprehension questions (John). Rose Horowitch begins her article, published in the November 2024 issue of *the Atlantic*, with the sentence: “To read a book in college, it helps to have read a book in high school.” In investigating the causes of the decline of classics being read in U.S. classrooms, Horowitch’s troubling findings reveal that many students, even at a college level, struggle to finish entire books. The article identifies several factors contributing to this development, stating that digital distractions alone cannot entirely be blamed. Instead, it points to shifts in educational priorities, such as the emphasis on standardised testing, which has led to a focus on different skills. Teachers now tend to assign shorter texts or only excerpts of larger ones rather than entire books (Horowitch). In 2023, author Katherine Marsh had already made a similar discovery finding cause for the deterioration of reading abilities among students in the way reading is taught. Marsh states that today, children are trained to analyse what they have read instead of enjoying the story. With the introduction of the standardised Matura in Austria and corresponding curricula and textbook modifications, this feels familiar and is definitely not unique to the United States.

In a second language (L2) teaching context, an Extensive Reading (ER) project, particularly a class library project, is probably the most meaningful way to counteract this movement. Harmer, for instance, emphasises pleasure as the main objective in an ER project (283). One major cause of poor reading skills and the high number of reluctant readers is the lack of effective reading techniques, strategies and practice. A class library project addresses this issue by creating opportunities for students to engage in and enjoy reading, recognising that reading is a skill that improves with consistent practice (Henseler and Surkamp 2). To test this hypothesis, this thesis seeks to answer the following primary research question:

1. How does a class library with graded readers impact students' attitudes towards reading for pleasure?

To explore this research question, key literature on ER including, for example, foundational works by Bamford and Day (1998) and Hedge (1990) as well as more recent publications by Grabe and Stoller (2020), Hedgcock and Ferris (2018) and Hall (2016) will be discussed. Insights from the literature review informed both the design of the intervention of this Action Research (AR) project and the discussion of the findings.

“Fairness does not mean everyone gets the same. Fairness means everyone gets what they need.” This quote from American author Rick Riordan fittingly introduces the secondary research question of this study:

2. In how far does a class library with graded readers help with internal differentiation in a mixed-ability EFL classroom?

In the context of this project, some learners speak English almost fluently, while others struggle with the most basic concepts and hardly live up to what is expected at their grade. This observation and the consequential difficulty in teaching this heterogenic group are not unique to my classrooms. The wide range of learner abilities at Viennese schools is often topic of discussion among teachers. Given the diversity of my students, my goal for this thesis was to design a project that connects differentiated instruction with reading for pleasure. Therefore, alongside introducing English literature to my students in a way that they come to enjoy reading longer texts, I wanted to ensure that each student could progress within their individual abilities. A class library project comprising a variety of graded readers and involving while and post-reading tasks adapted to differing learner needs offered a promising approach to internal differentiation in an ER project.

While some students had prior experience with a related ER project, to others the concept was completely foreign. Research on ER suggests that at least one full school year is necessary for an ER project to achieve meaningful results (Krashen qtd. in Brown 239). The third research question explores whether this claim holds true in my teaching context:

3. How do reading attitudes and behaviours vary between students who have participated in a class library reading project for an extended period of time and those who have not had prior exposure to a class library?

To answer these research questions, an ER project was designed and conducted over the span of seven months in two of my 4th-grade EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classes. The research approach chosen for this thesis is AR. In doing AR, teachers investigate their own teaching by thoroughly observing, analysing, reflecting and improving their methods within their individual teaching context (Burns 2). Consoli and Dikilitaş highlight that practitioners and learners are key contributors to innovation and knowledge in language education. They argue that meaningful change within the field comes from those actively engaged in teaching and learning (8). McNiff explains that AR is deeply context specific and that action researchers conduct research within contexts they themselves are part of (10). In the case of this AR project, the context, a Viennese Middle School with highly diverse learners from families with limited educational background where reading is rarely encouraged at home, was ideal to study internal differentiation and the influence of an ER project on reading attitudes. To sum up, this thesis does not only examine the benefits of reading for pleasure, but it also demonstrates how differentiated reading projects can create meaningful learning experiences.

2 Theoretical framework

In this part of the thesis, the theoretical background for the project is outlined. This includes previous research on ER and its implementation in the EFL classroom and the Austrian curriculum, research on reading attitudes and motivation, theories on internal differentiation and a review of similar ER projects.

2.1 ER in the EFL classroom

Sanford and Emmott consider reading a valuable activity for language learning because it inherently evokes feelings and emotions, which often support learning processes (245). ER is widely regarded as highly beneficial for language learners, providing significant advantages for both learner motivation and learning outcomes (Brown 238).

In introducing the concept of ER to their readers, Bamford and Day state that ER involves students reading longer texts to improve language proficiency and cultivate effective reading practices. ER differs from intensive reading (IR), where shorter, independent texts are frequently used to practice reading strategies, introduce and learn grammatical concepts, or work on vocabulary. IR texts are often accompanied by different question formats to practice and assess detailed reading comprehension (Nation 25–26). Fittingly, Hedgcock and Ferris describe IR as “reading closely” (172) and ER as “reading for quantity” (219). While Carrell et al. (228) acknowledge the usefulness of IR they underscore that ER must not be neglected, stating: “People learn to read by reading, not by doing exercise” (qtd. in Hedgcock and Ferris 222). Harmer points out that both, IR and ER are beneficial for language acquisition (283).

Bamford and Day can be considered as widely recognised figures in the study of ER. They have been publishing research in this field for nearly three decades. Their book “Extensive Reading in the second language classroom”, published in 1998, remains a foundational work in ER research. It compiles reviews of studies on the benefits of ER from across the world and provides practical guidelines for implementing ER in language teaching. Even though the publication is over 25 years old, the findings presented there remain valuable today and inform the planning of ER projects in contemporary EFL classrooms. If anything, Bamford and Day were ahead of their time placing emphasis on learner autonomy, project-based learning and learning for pleasure. At the beginning of their book, Bamford and Day identify ten

characteristics of ER which guided the early planning stages of the reading project presented in this thesis (7–8).

1. Students read as much as possible, perhaps in and definitely out of the classroom.
2. A variety of materials on a wide range of topics is available so as to encourage reading for different reasons and in different ways.
3. Students select what they want to read and have the freedom to stop reading material that fails to interest them.
4. The purposes of reading are usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
5. Reading is its own reward. There are few or no follow-up exercises.
6. Reading materials are well within the linguistic competence of the students. Dictionaries are rarely used while reading because the constant stopping to look up words makes fluent reading difficult.
7. Reading is individual and silent. Students read at their own pace and choose when and where to read.
8. Reading speed is usually faster rather than slower because students read material well within their linguistic competence.
9. Teachers orient students to the goals of the program, explain the methodology, keep track of what each student read, and guide students in getting the most out of the program.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader for students. (Day and Bamford 7–8)

Bamford and Day further outline that the primary goal of implementing ER in language teaching is to improve reading skills in the TL, enabling students to become proficient enough to view reading not merely as a school task but as an enjoyable activity (6). A key consideration in this thesis, which explores students' attitudes towards reading and the impact an ER project can have on them, is Hedgcock and Ferris' assertion that ER has the potential to demonstrate to students their ability to read in the L2, often motivating them to read for pleasure. As a secondary yet very beneficial effect, reading supports students in improving their overall language proficiency, which, in turn, can further enhance their motivation to learn (228).

While Hall highlights the "incidental acquisition of vocabulary and structures" and the automatic processing of the TL as significant benefits of ER, he also acknowledges that the reported improvements in vocabulary acquisition may have been overstated in the literature on ER (462). Bamford and Day devote an entire chapter of their book to the profound impact ER can have on vocabulary development in L2 acquisition (16–19). They specify, however, that a certain level of word knowledge is necessary to conduct a successful ER project (19). Students should become familiar with certain words to the extent that they do not have to think about

their meaning but recognise them immediately (Day and Bamford 16). According to Bamford and Day, reading large quantities of texts helps develop sight vocabulary as well as general vocabulary, i.e. words learners can recognise in different contexts and use actively in speaking and writing (19). In line with Bamford and Day, Hedgcock and Ferris also emphasise the pivotal role ER programs should play in language teaching, arguing that they should be part of every language classroom. In addition to expanding vocabulary, Hedgcock and Ferris outline six advantages of ER, explaining that it “improves comprehension skills, develops automaticity, enhances background knowledge, builds vocabulary and grammar knowledge, improves production skills and promotes L2 readers’ confidence and motivation” (Hedgcock and Ferris 222). In relation to student motivation, Krashen argues that learners acquire proficiency more easily when they are engaged in activities that genuinely interest them (17). While this may seem like a rather basic observation, it is particularly relevant in the context of this project, where many participants are not easily motivated by grades and are generally reluctant to study. Therefore, considering this in planning a project that sets out to capture students’ interest and improve their attitudes towards learning, or in this case reading, is crucial.

In addition to benefits regarding the learners’ vocabulary repertoire and grammar acquisition, well conducted ER projects can improve the students’ attitudes towards studying the L2 and even inspire them to choose to read in the L2 in their leisure time. ER projects can not only enhance students’ reading skills but they also have the potential to improve their confidence and encourage them to use the L2 outside the language classroom (Hedgcock and Ferris 228). Hall adds that literature promotes meaningful connections with ideas that can resonate with the learner. Thus, even though reading is not the most interactive medium, it can be considered a meaningful interaction essential for language development, as literature provides language for learners to interact with, and any form of interaction is fundamental to acquiring a new language (460).

ER also contributes to improving writing skills (Day et al.). To practice writing in any language, reading offers content to write about, linguistic resources to articulate thoughts, and rhetorical examples to draw inspiration from (Hedgcock and Ferris 228). Post-reading exercises for this project included writing prompts where the texts students had read served as inspirations for their writing. Krashen asserts that good writers must also be good readers and that a strong writing style develops more from reading practice than from writing practice alone (137). This underscores the value of devoting a large amount of class-time to ER projects and Sustained

Silent Reading (SSR). However, while Hedgcock and Ferris acknowledge the importance of reading they point out that extensive writing exercises do have the potential to enhance written production and metalinguistic awareness (228).

There are also voices that criticise the efficiency of ER and, thus, the value of dedicating large amounts of class time to it. Laufer, for instance, argues that the benefits for vocabulary learning have not been proven (qtd. in Brown 239). Brown disagrees, describing Laufer's reasoning as “inefficient”. However, consistent with Hedgcock and Ferris, he also disputes Krashen's claims that ER alone is sufficient to learn a language (Brown 239–40).

Despite the obvious benefits of ER programs, they are not always part of L2 teaching. The most obvious reasons for this are time-constraints and the anticipated increased workload for educators (Brown 240). Since the effects of ER often only manifest after an extended period of time, teachers are sometimes hesitant to dedicate the amount of class-time required for an ER project to succeed. Renandya and Jacobs describe this reluctance as the “issue of legitimacy”, where teachers feel uneasy spending a significant amount of class-time observing and helping the students rather than engaging in more traditional teaching activities (11–12). This means that teachers often prefer to take an active role in the classroom – where they engage in instructing, lecturing and clarifying, and might feel uncomfortable in this slightly different, more passive, role.

The positive impact of ER in language teaching is considerable, widely recognised and its positive effects on various aspects of language acquisition are strongly supported by empirical studies. Bamford and Day compared a variety of studies on ER conducted around the world from the 1980s and 1990s, all of which demonstrated a positive effect of ER programs regarding vocabulary acquisition and writing performance. In addition to these studies, which focused on different language skills, they also highlighted some research demonstrating a positive effect of ER projects on students’ reading attitudes (Day and Bamford 32–39).

Since the publication of these reviews, more recent research has not only reinforced Bamford and Day’s conclusions (Hedgcock and Ferris 223; Grabe and Stoller 105–08; Webb and Chang 651) but also introduced new developments in the field. For instance, Boutorwick et al. point out that ER allows learners to acquire knowledge and skills incidentally while engaging with texts (150). In their 2019 study, they compared a traditional ER-only approach with an ER-plus approach that incorporated post-reading activities, concluding that while both ER approaches

are beneficial, the ER-plus model provided opportunities for deeper vocabulary development (150–72). Although this project did not target improving a specific language skill, an ER-plus approach was implemented. In contrast to Boutorwick et al.'s approach, this project included while- and post-reading tasks, focusing not solely on vocabulary acquisition but on a diverse range of skills that will be further elaborated in Chapter 4. Finally, Macalister notes that the implementation of ER will differ across classrooms but emphasises that it is essential to incorporate ER into every language-learning environment (255).

2.1.1 Review of similar ER projects

Similar studies have demonstrated the positive impact of ER projects in different contexts. In 2013, Minkowitsch investigated motivation and engagement in an Austrian ER project, concluding that students' motivation and participation increased over the duration of the project (Minkowitsch). In 2023, Pedersen and Grann conducted an AR project examining Norwegian lower-secondary students' attitudes towards reading English books. Similar to the methodology used for analysis in this study, their students answered pre- and post-project questionnaires to provide information about their reading attitudes. In addition, Pedersen and Grann conducted ten student interviews to gather additional information. By analysing questionnaires and interviews, they found that their intervention had improved their students' attitudes towards reading English literature (Pedersen and Grann). In 2019, Bayram examined the impact of an ER programme on university students' reading comprehension. She compared reading-comprehension test results between two groups, only one of which participated in an ER programme. Findings demonstrated a positive impact of ER on reading comprehension and underscored that the number of books read significantly contributes to improved reading-comprehension skills (Bayram).

A considerable number of AR projects reflecting on different ER programmes have been published in recent years. These include AR projects investigating learner attitudes and motivation by Ito and Ateek conducted in 2020 and 2024 respectively (Ito; Ateek). In 2022, Ebenhöh established a class library in her Austrian second-grade lower-secondary EFL classroom to evaluate its impact on vocabulary acquisition, specifically focusing on low-level learners. She concluded that ER had a particularly positive effect on receptive vocabulary skills (Ebenhöh). Moreover, in 2023, Oxley and McGeown examined reading-for-pleasure practices at schools in the UK. They did an extensive literature review to compile common classroom practices regarding ER and conducted small-group interviews to gain insights into students'

perceptions thereof. Their findings revealed very diverse views and experiences (Oxley and McGeown).

In their recent book, Grabe and Stoller present different AR project ideas with a focus on ER programmes. Research foci vary from investigating teacher roles and specific project parts to examining student motivation and student perceptions but notably the research questions in these projects are quite narrow, focusing on a very particular aspect compared to this thesis' research questions. The research methods the teachers use to investigate their teaching range from focused observation sheets, comprising yes-or-no questions and teaching logs to teacher surveys and student questionnaires (Grabe and Stoller 228–61). Investigating the research methods used in similar studies helped to decide on an appropriate method for this project which will be presented in the following chapter.

This review of studies on ER in EFL teaching shows that there are a considerable number of studies and AR projects investigating ER's impact on reading attitudes and on language proficiency across various language skills. However, there appears to be a research gap concerning internal differentiation in ER projects, making this a particularly intriguing area for further investigation.

2.1.2 Implementation of ER in the Austrian (lower-secondary) curriculum

In many secondary education settings, government-mandated requirements often leave little room for ER reading programs and reading for pleasure during class time (Hedgcock and Ferris 231). To evaluate the accuracy of this claim within the context of Austrian education, this section explores how ER is implemented in the Austrian lower-secondary curriculum within the context of L2 teaching.

The Austrian curriculum for lower-secondary education is guided by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The competencies described there are formulated in "can-do statements" and divided into the areas of listening, reading, writing and speaking (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, *BMBWF* 43). The CEFR provides standardised guidelines for language courses, exams, textbooks, and other materials in Europe. It outlines what is expected of language learners to master effective communication, detailing the necessary skills and knowledge at varying levels ranging from A1 to C2. These levels serve two purposes: on the one hand, they provide a clear and standardised way to measure, describe and compare language proficiency. On the other hand they help track

learners' progress throughout their learning journey (Council of Europe 1). By the end of lower-secondary education, Austrian EFL students are expected to reach level A2+, with some specific descriptors from level B1. For reading, the curriculum specifies:

Schülerinnen und Schüler können: einfache, klar strukturierte Jugendliteratur oder Sachliteratur mit befriedigendem Verständnis lesen und darin enthaltene Einstellungen (u. A. der handelnden Personen oder Autoren) erkennen und einfache, altersadäquate Texte verstehen und spezifische Informationen entnehmen. (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, *BMBWF* 46).

The Austrian curriculum places significant emphasis on the development of reading comprehension skills. This includes the development of reading strategies as well as detailed and global reading comprehension (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, *BMBWF* 145). The Austrian curriculum further specifies that students should be familiarised with books in the foreign language (FL) and that children should be introduced to reading because reading forms the foundation for lifelong learning. The curriculum focuses on introducing students to simple, authentic and age-appropriate texts (*BMBWF* 53). In this context, explicit reference is made to the use of *authentic* texts, a term that is the subject of debate and not clearly defined. The benefits and drawbacks of using authentic texts and a comparison to materials explicitly produced for language learning, will be discussed in a later section of the thesis (see 2.4.1 Graded Readers).

As discussed in the previous section, the positive impact of ER on L2 acquisition is well established. Bamford and Day, among others, point to the need to include ER in EFL curricula (19). Notably, no study has been found in which the positive impact of ER was not demonstrated. Therefore, various scholars argue for the integration of ER into L2 curricula. Bamford and Day, for instance, propose four options to integrate ER in an L2 curriculum:

1. offering separate courses
2. integrating ER into a reading course
3. adding ER as a non-credit component to an ER course
4. providing extracurricular activities for ER (41).

The Austrian curriculum specifies that the development of the outlined reading skills is intended to occur within regular classroom lessons; it makes no reference to supplementary reading courses, as proposed by Bamford and Day.

Although reading, particularly the development of comprehension skills, is as a key element of the curriculum, it does not address fostering a love of reading, neither in the students' L1 nor as part of L2 acquisition. This resembles the situation in New Zealand described by Boyask et al. Focusing on general reading instruction, they criticise the lack of emphasis on reading for pleasure in New Zealand's curricula and point out that despite its known advantages, reading for enjoyment is often notably absent in teaching curricula (Boyask, Harrington, Milne, and Smith 170). Boyask et al. argue that schools should do more to foster a love of reading and integrate it into classroom life and curricula (179). In New Zealand, as well as in Austria, the opportunities to create pleasurable reading experiences within the classroom are entirely left to the teacher and are not supported by the curriculum, neither in the L1 nor in the L2.

While scholars such as Boyask et al. (New Zealand, 2023) and Hedgcock and Ferris (USA, 2016) are unsatisfied with the extent to which reading for pleasure is integrated in teaching curricula, Hall (UK, 2023) offers a more optimistic perspective. He highlights the growing emphasis on literature and culture in L2 acquisition in various important teaching frameworks and guidelines such as the CEFR and the Modern Language Association (MLA) (464). The national contexts of these studies suggest that recent approaches towards reading for pleasure may vary across regions. Attitudes towards its role in language teaching may be evolving, particularly within the European policy frameworks.

2.2 Reading attitudes and motivation in language learning

Grabe and Yamashita acknowledge that motivation is an elusive term often confused with attitudes. Attitudes reflect feelings and emotions towards learning that can, among other factors, be influenced by personal and educational experiences, whereas motivation refers to the reasons that push learners to want to reach their goals (224–29). Nevertheless, attitudes and motivation are closely linked; positive reading attitudes directly influence reading motivation and ultimately influence the students' decision to read in the L2 (Day and Bamford 28). Bamford and Day's expectancy-value model identifies four variables that should be considered in planning an ER project to ensure sustained engagement and motivation (28).

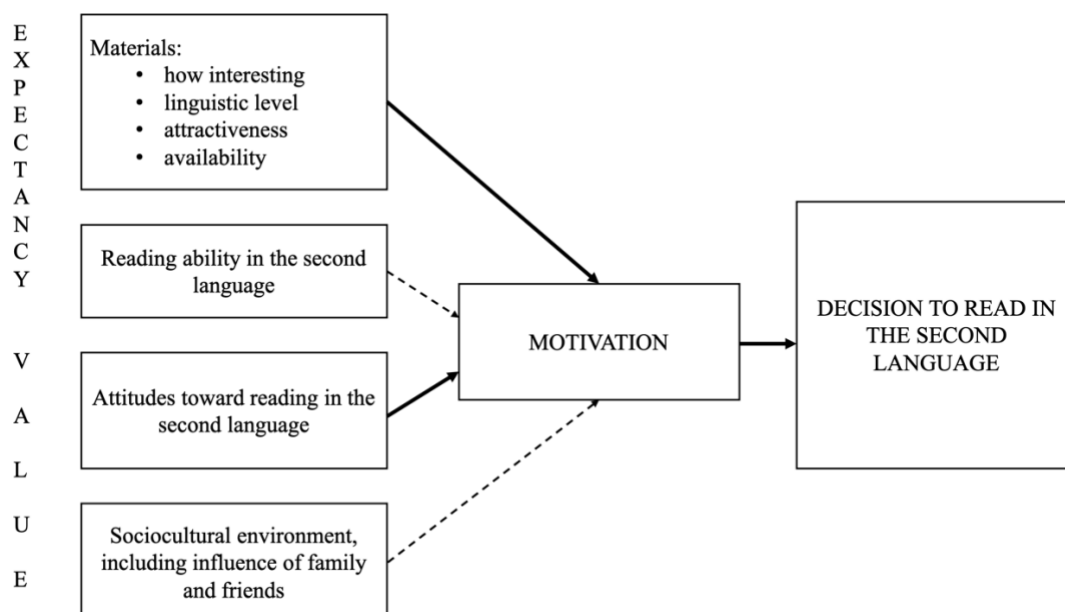


Figure 1 : Model of variable motivating learners to read in the L2 (Day and Bamford 28).

Examining the depiction of the arrows in Figure 1 reveals that materials and attitudes are considered key factors influencing reading motivation, whereas reading ability and the sociocultural environment can be compensated by the former two. In their book *How Languages Are Learned*, Lightbown and Spada emphasise the pivotal role teachers play in fostering motivation to engage with and genuinely *want* to learn a second language. Teachers can significantly influence learner motivation by cultivating a supportive environment where students are adequately challenged by setting clear and achievable objectives and ensuring students understand the relevance of their learning goals (88). Moreover, numerous scholars (Hedge; Day and Bamford; Goodwin; Richards, and Maharsi) agree that students' engagement and motivation increase dramatically when they find genuine interest in the materials used for teaching.

The main goal of the class library project is to improve reading attitudes and inspire students to develop into readers who find joy and pleasure in reading. Thus, for this thesis understanding what makes learners *like* to read is crucial. To foster genuine engagement and effective learning, it is important to understand the factors that shape students' attitudes and influence their motivation towards their schoolwork (Dörnyei 50–51). Bamford and Day acknowledge a teachers' urge to explore the origins of students' attitudes towards reading asserting that this process is essential to shaping them (22). In the corresponding chapter of their book *Extensive*

Reading in the Second Language Classroom, they present a model outlining four key influencing factors on L2 learners’ reading attitudes (22). This model is illustrated in Figure 2.

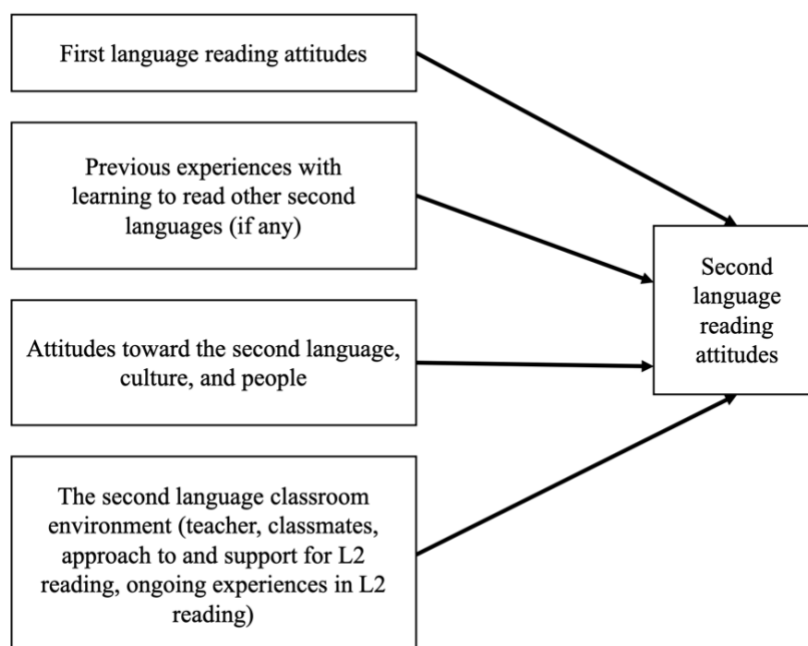


Figure 2 : Model of acquisition and development of L2 reading attitudes (Day and Bamford 23).

The first two influencing factors, “L1 language reading attitudes” and “Previous experiences with learning to read other second languages”, cannot be influenced within the scope of an ER project. In contrast, “Attitudes toward the L2, culture, and people”, as well as “The L2 classroom environment” can indeed be shaped by the English teacher. Interestingly, reading materials are not explicitly mentioned in Bamford and Day’s model, although they have a significant impact on learners’ attitudes towards reading, as findings of this study will demonstrate. Providing appropriate materials contributes greatly to an L2 environment where reading is perceived as beneficial and enjoyable. Therefore, it could be argued that teaching materials should be incorporated in Bamford and Day’s model of acquisition as part of the L2 environment.

Dörnyei underscores the significant impact positive attitudes towards the L2 community, and their culture have on language learners. He describes language learning as a “social event” (15) influenced by the learners’ perceptions of the L2 community (15–16). Hedgcock and Ferris further assert that exposure to the L2 culture not only fosters positive sentiments towards reading but can also be influenced by it (224). This connection underscores the importance of thoughtful book selection in shaping students’ attitudes. Additionally, Hood et al. stress that the role of consistent positive feedback and providing students with the time they need can impact

their attitudes towards reading and corresponding reading activities (35). To ensure a pleasurable reading experience, Bamford and Day advise teachers to recognise that reading larger texts is challenging for most students. Therefore, they recommend establishing background knowledge and designing suitable tasks to facilitate comprehension (25).

Finally, Bamford and Day point to two important aspects teachers must understand when planning an ER project. First, people are inclined to engage in activities they anticipate completing successfully while avoiding those they deem unattainable. Second, learners are motivated to engage in activities they perceive as beneficial, while avoiding those they view as lacking benefit (27). For the project at hand, this means that both the selected graded readers and the accompanying while- and post-reading activities must not be too difficult and that students need to comprehend the value of this project. This will be addressed in the preparatory phase of the intervention.

2.3 Differentiation

“One-size-fits-all instruction will inevitably sag or pinch, exactly as single-size clothing would” (How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms 13). This quote from Carol Ann Tomlinson perfectly reflects the reality of the teaching circumstances in my EFL classrooms and served as a guiding principle in the development of the class library project. Tomlinson is a leading expert on differentiated instruction, whose works will be introduced in this next section of the literature review.

In our school system, students are typically grouped by age. While Lightbown and Spada explain that age can influence L2 acquisition (92–93), it is important to recognise that learners of the same age do not necessarily share the same talents, skills and interests. Consequently, it is unrealistic to expect the same performance from all students simply because they share a classroom. The Austrian Curriculum addresses this by emphasising differentiation and individualisation in various sections, requiring teachers to adapt their teaching practices to meet their individual students’ needs. Students must be perceived as individuals and differentiated instruction must account for differences in learning age and pace (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, *BMBWF 61*). Teachers are asked to use methodologically varied learning activities to support all learners in their competence development. Furthermore, teaching should include cooperative learning forms to facilitate

linguistic interaction and assistance. Moreover, the use of digital media is encouraged as it allows for individualised learning opportunities (*BMBWF* 145).

At this point, it is crucial to clarify the distinction between individualisation and differentiation; The two terms are very similar but differ in one critical aspect. Whereas individualisation focuses on each individual learner and customises tasks to their specific learning pace, interests and talents, differentiation involves the modification of the same contents and the learning environment to provide multiple options for diverse learners (Tomlinson 3–4). According to Tomlinson, individualisation, in contrast to differentiation, has many drawbacks. Individualised teaching focuses on the learners' differing proficiency levels at a given moment instead of emphasising the ongoing learning process on each students' own terms (3–4). Nevertheless, in the Austrian curriculum, the concept of individualisation is frequently emphasised. Eisenmann states that individualisation represents the highest level of differentiation and is considered a primary objective in L2 teaching. She defines individualisation in the context of adaptive teaching as including activities specifically adapted for each individual in the classroom. This approach requires the development of learning materials and topics that reflect the diverse interests and abilities within the learner group. Additionally, optimal individualised EFL classrooms should offer personalised assistance and suitable evaluation of each student's academic development (58). While these suggestions are convincing, they are, as Eisenmann admits, very challenging at the same time. In line with Tomlinson (3–4), she acknowledges that these expectations are currently difficult to implement into actual teaching practices (72). Creating different tasks for all students usually exceeds the resources of educators (Lightbown and Spada 92).

In an effort to reduce the workload for individualised teaching, students are often grouped into various, supposedly homogenous, groups (Tomlinson 7). This occurs in Austrian middle schools when some students are graded as “Standard AHS” students and others as “Standard Mittelschule” students. Often “Standard AHS” students must answer more difficult or additional questions in a test, or they are assigned a higher word count or more complex tasks in written production. Tomlinson specifically states that such methods are ineffective as they are, understandably, often perceived as punishment. In addition, dividing, or worse labelling, students into strong and weak learners and assigning them different tasks can lead to social tensions within the classroom as students who work on a simpler task might be perceived as and feel inferior (Tomlinson 13).

Tomlinson points out that such concepts and corresponding efforts to differentiate between students are not to be confused with successful differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction focuses on the learning process and involves elements such as flexible grouping, depending on aspects like the assignment and the social arrangement (individual work, pair work, group work etc.) (5–6). According to Tomlinson, successful internal differentiation occurs when the teacher is aware of the students' needs and provides a range of choices to achieve learning. Hence, instead of increasing the workload for more proficient students, the assignment should be adapted to meet differing needs (7). In addition, internal differentiation seeks to engage students by selecting tasks based on their interests and realities to optimise learner motivation and attitudes (Tomlinson 8).

To implement internal differentiation, students must be able to work autonomously. Eisenmann defines two essential conditions that must be met to enable autonomous learning. On the one hand, students should be able to manage and direct their own learning process. They must be able to make informed decisions about what to learn, how to learn it, and how to evaluate their progress. On the other hand, teachers must create the environment and provide the necessary guidance for learners to develop and practise these skills (195). Only if students are able to work on their own is it possible for teachers to differentiate and create individualised activities and learning opportunities. Therefore, learner autonomy is crucial for successful differentiation.

Discipline is closely connected to learner autonomy. Teachers are often fearful of losing control in an open classroom with differentiated tasks. Differentiated instructions require the teacher to oversee several activities at once. Therefore, guidelines must be established to maintain order in differentiated teaching projects. This involves, for example, rules for student movement and conversations (Tomlinson 5). To establish an environment where differentiated instruction works, it is pivotal for teachers to recognise their role in such a setting. Teachers are not only bearers of knowledge who conduct lectures and inform learners about subjects matters but they can act as lecturers, coaches and facilitators at the same time. As lecturers, teachers share knowledge but as facilitators they must cultivate an environment that supports independent learning. As coaches, teachers provide guidance and support, assisting students whenever they need help (180–81). In addition, the students are not the only ones learning in a differentiated teaching situation. To make informed decisions about their needs, teachers must learn about

their students and continuously monitor their progress to introduce the necessary modifications (Tomlinson 10).

In conclusion, successful differentiated instruction can be highly effective because it provides different challenges for diverse learners and pushes each individual beyond their comfort zone to create meaningful learning experiences for all (Tomlinson 45). Moreover, Eisenmann and Summer point out that individualisation and differentiated instruction are beneficial not only to foster learner autonomy but also to increase motivation and cultivate positive attitudes towards L2 learning, an assertion that will be examined in Chapter 5 of this thesis (301).

2.3.1 Internal differentiation in an ER project

It often remains unclear how teachers can successfully cater to their students' diverse needs. This section outlines strategies for effectively implementing internal differentiation in ER projects.

As outlined in the previous chapter, in differentiated instruction, student-centered teaching methods should encourage learners to take ownership of their own successful learning. The instructions and assignments should be concept-driven, offering students different learning pathways that require them to apply fundamental concepts of a given subject (Eisenmann and Summer 301). Eisenmann and Summer identify ER as a key area for fostering autonomous learning in L2 teaching. They argue that by encouraging students to select books aligned with their proficiency levels and interests, a class library offers opportunities for individualised reading for enjoyment, effectively implementing differentiated instruction, even without individualised pre-, while-, and post-reading activities to guide the reading process (302).

Even though a class library project allows for each student to read at their own level, some students might still encounter issues, potentially demotivating them. To assist these students, Bamford and Day suggest pairing them with a more proficient reader (137–38). The advanced student reads aloud while their less proficient classmate follows along before re-reading the passages independently. More recently, Jacobs and Farrell recommended listening to a narration of the text to aid comprehension and simultaneously improve pronunciation skills. They assert that a quality narration can enhance clarity and understanding (22). Bamford and Day may not have suggested this method because in 1998 the technology needed for students to listen to separate audio-recordings was not yet available at schools. Today, however, students can listen

to narrations independently without having to read the same text, as usually they have access to personal digital devices and headphones. Providing narrations of the book to students requiring additional support may serve as an effective tool for differentiation in a mixed-ability classroom. Moreover, Jacobs and Farrell suggest offering a diverse range of tasks and allowing students to select their preferred activities. In addition, these activities could be assigned different values based on their time effort and difficulty level (79).

This section has outlined a variety of activities proposed for a differentiated ER project. One aim of this thesis is to explore how differentiation strategies can be implemented within classroom constraints. The approaches presented in this section will inform the intervention of the AR project and their effectiveness will be discussed in the Findings and Discussion chapters.

2.3.2 A case for Graded Readers

Graded readers are simplified versions of books or original stories categorised into different levels based on vocabulary and other linguistic features (Jacobs and Farrell 21). Lightbown and Spada view them as a valuable resource in language teaching, particularly for vocabulary acquisition, as they introduce learners to a manageable number of new words, ensuring comprehension while expanding vocabulary (162). In this project, graded readers are indispensable to combine ER and differentiated teaching, as some learners require texts at the most basic proficiency level. Although Kaiserseder notes that many scholars criticise them for their lack of authenticity, she also used graded readers in her class library project (20).

The debate around authentic material emerged with the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 1970s. Most representatives of CLT advocate for using authentic texts designed for native speakers, such as blog posts, newspapers, advertisements or novels rather than learner literature like graded readers. They argue that authentic texts provide a more realistic language experience compared to materials created specifically for language learning (Jones 65). Despite some educators' concerns about the simplified nature of graded readers, there are increasingly more well-written graded readers available (Hall 463). In line with Hall, various scholars including Richards (459), Maharsi (5) and Behroozian and Fazel (57) recognise the benefits of graded readers for L2 acquisition. In addition, Bamford and Day challenge the CLT movement's preference of authentic texts, advocating instead for language learner literature (61). Day even describes the debate around graded readers as "unfortunate", stating that critics of graded readers have "no evidence for their views" (16). He argues that

graded readers help students to learn *to* read and authentic material serves to learn *by* reading. However, the former must be mastered before the learner can profit from the latter (16–17). This view aligns with the approach taken in this study, where graded readers are considered as a first step in introducing students to reading English literature. Fittingly, Hedge describes graded readers as a “step on the way” (23) to ultimately read authentic texts. Furthermore, Hedge, argues that, most of the time, graded readers expose students to a more extensive range of English than the more restricted content typically found in course books (23). Moreover, Day points out that authentic text are often simply too difficult for beginning and intermediate L2 learners and thus do not fulfil the main requirement of ER for a text to be easily comprehensible (17). In addition, Claridge found that well-written graded readers can be perceived as authentic by their audience ("Simplification in Graded Readers" 144). Moreover, Jacobs and Farrell note that graded readers are especially useful for students interested in texts above their language proficiency level. They also point out that graded readers are not exclusively useful to L2 learners but can also be used to read challenging material in the native language (29). Despite their advantages, there are certain limitations as Claridge admits. She observes that most graded readers are written for intermediate levels, which leads her to criticise a lack of purposeful graded readers at beginner level ("Graded Readers" 106). However, these challenges do not diminish the overall effectiveness of graded readers. On the contrary, they underscore the need for exciting, high-quality graded readers for the most basic levels to enable teachers to engage EFL learners in ER from the start ("Graded Readers" 118).

2.3.3 Determining students' proficiency levels and identifying students' reading interests

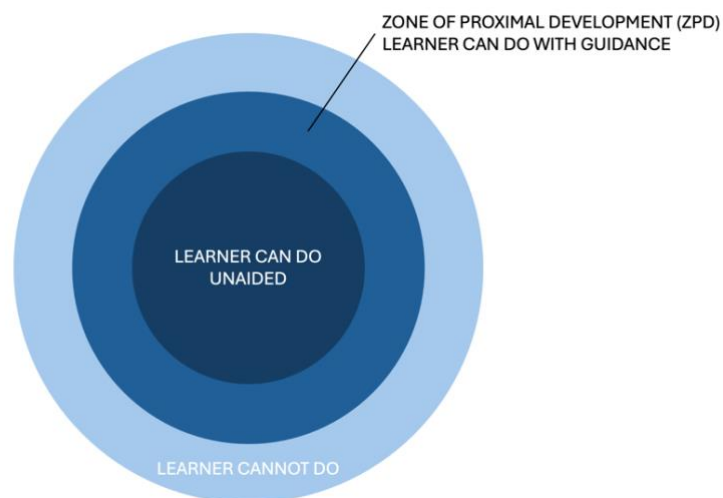


Figure 3 : Graphic depiction of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by Lev Vygotskij (1978)

Figure 3 illustrates the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), a concept developed by psychologist Lev Vygotskij. The diagram depicts three stages: tasks learners can complete independently, without help, tasks learners can accomplish with support and tasks they cannot do even with guidance. The ZPD corresponds to the second stage and represents the potential for cognitive growth, indicating that learners can tackle tasks and solve problems that exceed their current abilities when given proper support (Vygotskij 79–91). Similarly, Jacobs and Farrell identify three levels of reading materials: frustrational, instructional and independent (14). The frustrational level aligns with Vygotsky's outer circle, relating to tasks learners cannot solve, not even with support. The instructional level matches the ZPD, referring to reading materials students can comprehend with guidance from their teachers, supporting materials and other resources such as dictionaries. Intensive reading materials should ideally align with this zone to help improve learners' language skills. ER materials, however, should be at the independent level, equivalent to Vygotsky's inner circle, where learners can engage with text independently and complete tasks unaided, as ER projects focus on the independent reading process.

Therefore, Bamford and Day consistently emphasise the importance of giving students access to material they can easily comprehend. They recommend selecting texts one level below the learners' actual proficiency level to ensure full comprehensibility and to guarantee a positive reading experience, thereby reinforcing the students' confidence in their language skills (91). To help teachers determine their learners' varying reading levels, Bamford and Day suggest

having students read a passage at a presumed level and mark unfamiliar words. If more than two words are highlighted on one page, students should choose a book from a lower level to prevent frustration and demotivation during the reading process. In addition, Bamford and Day point out that students need to understand that reading fluency cannot be achieved by struggling through overly challenging or uninteresting texts merely to prove to oneself or others that one is capable (109). Choosing simple materials strengthens the students' confidence and positively impacts their reading attitudes. For some students this might mean that they need to select books below grade level. Selecting books for these students might be especially challenging as embarrassing them must be avoided at all costs. Additionally, finding interesting, age-appropriate books at low proficiency levels can sometimes be difficult (Jacobs and Farrell 15). In principle, Hedgcock and Ferris agree with this perspective, but they point out that there may be instances where students are desperate to read a particular book that may not meet these criteria. Teachers should not lose flexibility here and remember that motivation and interest are the highest priorities (239). Furthermore, teachers should encourage students to feel comfortable selecting a different text when the one they initially chose does not suit their level or interests (Day and Bamford 93).

Although Jacobs and Farrell are in line with Bamford and Day's (92) view that ER materials should be comfortably within the students' proficiency levels, they point out that not every word must be part of the students' active vocabulary. They emphasise that many words can be understood from the context or from illustrations. Additionally, in contrast to Bamford and Day, they acknowledge that reading materials slightly above the learners' proficiency level can be beneficial for some purposes. When selecting more challenging materials they recommend choosing topics the students have prior knowledge about to facilitate comprehension (Jacobs and Farrell 14). This choice is very context dependent. In a class library project, where learners read texts on diverse topics, teachers should generally discourage students from choosing books above their proficiency levels. Nevertheless, if a student is interested in a text and the teacher is confident that the student has the relevant background knowledge, Jacobs and Farrell's recommendation should be considered.

It has become evident that choosing topics and materials that interest the students and are related to their realities is vital. Dörnyei recommends a structured needs analysis to determine the learners' interests (66). Similarly, Jacobs and Farrell outline some guidelines to help learners select appropriate reading material. These suggestions include asking students about TV shows

and movies they find entertaining, previous reading experiences, books peers or classmates can recommend and considering the length, font and illustrations of the book (18–19).

2.3.4 The book selection process

A crucial element in establishing a successful ER project is the thoughtful selection of reading materials, i.e., material choice. “Material choice” here refers to both the genres and contents of the selected graded readers and the process of selecting materials itself. Students who have no or little experience with ER cannot be left to their own devices when it comes to choosing a suitable book (Hedgcock and Ferris 238). This realisation raises several questions: Should the teacher choose the books? Should the students participate in the selection process? Should each student select a book suited to their proficiency and interests, or should the entire class read the same text?

While various scholars such as Hedge, Day and Bamford, Richards and Maharsi argue that students’ freedom to select books based on their interests and reading levels fosters reading motivation and enjoyment, Ramonda states that there are instances where a teacher-chosen class reader is preferable (279). She argues that teachers face limitations in creating meaningful tasks to support the reading process when each student reads a different book. Hence, she underscores that content-related tasks are needed to engage students in meaningful discourse about their reading experiences (278). Moreover, Ramonda outlines that ER can be implemented in the curriculum and using in-class silent reading time is justifiable only if the texts read in class are teacher-chosen and correlate with the topics treated within the teaching context (279).

Contrasting Ramonda’s (279) remarks on material choice, Bamford and Day argue that a class library consisting of a diverse collection of books is preferable (133), a viewpoint Eisenmann supports by pointing out that reading the same book with the entire class is impractical as reading abilities within a classroom can significantly differ. She views an ER project as the ideal opportunity to create a differentiated learning environment that caters to varying skill levels and interests (87). In a related study, Ebenhöh concluded that selecting the right topic is key to rendering reading graded readers enjoyable and strongly influences vocabulary growth (75). In addition, Bamford and Day (26) and Hedge (38) agree that nothing is more detrimental to fostering positive reading attitudes and motivation than compelling learners to read about a subject they are not interested in. Hence, Bamford and Day as well as Hedge recommend involving students in the selection process because it offers several advantages. For example, it

facilitates selecting books tailored to students' interests and students feel ownership and involvement, which can encourage their reading motivation. To underscore their stance towards student involvement in the book selection process, Jacobs and Farrell outline eight aspects supporting student choice (16–17). Aspect 7, which emphasises that students experience a sense of authenticity and feel like “true readers” (17) when they have the opportunity to select their books themselves, seems particularly significant as one main objective of an ER project is to create independent readers who develop a love for reading and enjoy reading as a leisure-time activity (Day and Bamford 45–46). The connection between student choice and learner motivation is underscored by the concept of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in one’s ability to succeed in a specific task. It reflects a sense of agency over one’s learning experiences, reinforcing a confidence in one’s abilities (Schunk and Zimmerman 36 qtd. in Minkowitsch 22). However, while Bamford and Day only focus on the positive aspects of student choice, Jacobs and Farrell (16) also acknowledge critical voices who argue that too much freedom can undermine the value of an ER project and lack the necessary structure.

As mentioned in a previous section about reading attitudes, Dörnyei emphasises the importance of recognising the impact that positive attitudes towards the L2 community and culture can have on L2 learners (14–15). Bamford and Day argue that offering choice in book selection helps students engage meaningfully with the L2 culture, allowing each learner to explore aspects of that culture relevant to their interests. Students who choose to read about the target culture may develop a better understanding and more favourable attitudes towards it (26). Since English is a global language, it evidently exists in diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, in EFL ER projects, the concept of an L2 culture has to be understood in a broader sense. Through reading, students can explore aspects of English-speaking communities that resonate with their interests. For example, reading a book set in an American high school might familiarise students with this aspect of U.S. youth culture, social dynamics and educational systems, whereas a classic novel about a British aristocratic family could introduce the reader to British traditions, social hierarchies and historical perspectives. Connected to this, Hedgcock and Ferris highlight that attitudes towards the L2 culture are significant to create positive sentiments towards reading in the L2 and can, in turn, be shaped by exposure to L2 literature (223–24).

Considering the diverse proficiency levels within a classroom renders student choice even more relevant. Guiding students to select books suited to their reading ability and language proficiency prevents less proficient students from becoming discouraged by material that is too

demanding (Day and Bamford 29). Vice versa, more advanced students benefit equally, as they can avoid material that is too simple and instead find texts that meet their needs for an adequate challenge (Eisenmann 62).

Finally, Hedge emphasises the significance of the presentation of a text in the selecting of reading materials, noting that elements such as images, illustrations, font size, cover design, and layout can aid comprehension and positively impact students' motivation to read (38).

To address the questions raised at the beginning of this section, within the context of the present thesis, and taking into consideration the arguments made in the literature, learners should play an active role in selecting books that match their proficiency levels and interests. However, the teacher's expertise and guidance are crucial to ensure that students make appropriate choices and that the books available in the class library are suitable for the accompanying ER activities. Teachers can, for instance, guide the book selection process by compiling a selection of appropriate texts for the ER project, helping students explore their reading interests and preferences and managing the acquisition process.

2.3.5 Instructional approaches and task design

Based on numerous classroom observations during my studies, as well as my own teaching experience, I can confirm Dörnyei's observation that boring lessons with uninteresting materials are often the source of classroom disruptions (75). Especially in a reading project, it is crucial to avoid disruptions in order to create an undisturbed environment that allows students to immerse themselves in the story. Dörnyei also notes that while monotonous, systematic teaching may produce short-term success, it rarely encourages lifelong learning. Yet, this is precisely one of the main aims of the project: creating committed readers. Therefore, it is important to carefully select not only the books but also to ensure that the accompanying materials are engaging. Dörnyei outlines several important criteria for creating motivating instructional materials, which will be considered in the task design of my project. First, adequate challenges should be incorporated into tasks. Students should be given material to find solutions to problems, uncover new insights and navigate challenges. As discussed in a previous section, in diverse classrooms this can already pose considerable obstacles. Second, materials can be made interesting by connecting them to topics the students enjoy in their leisure time and can relate to. This is especially relevant for the choice of books they are to read but can also play a role in task design. Moreover, Dörnyei highlights that the tasks should include new

elements. Repetitive activities are often less intriguing. Similarly, activities that spark curiosity and encourage students to explore ambiguous or unresolved topics help prevent boredom. Additionally, most people like to use their imagination and are hence motivated to engage in corresponding activities, a vital aspect to consider when designing writing tasks. Furthermore, personalisation plays a significant role in enhancing the appeal of tasks. By relating activities to students' own lives or everyday experiences, tasks become more meaningful and interesting. While competition should be treated with caution, it can add an element of excitement. Finally, tasks where learners create an actual product and hold a final result in their hands can be very motivating (76).

Although Bamford and Day recommend avoiding while-reading activities, they acknowledge that they may sometimes be necessary in ER projects for the purpose of evaluation and monitoring. Teachers are specifically advised to refrain from asking for detailed information from the text, as this might negatively impact students' attitudes towards reading and often reduce reading enjoyment (142).

As an alternative to traditional book summaries, Bamford and Day suggest reaction reports focusing on particular parts of the story. As possible themes for these action reports they suggest a variety of topics including: characters the students identify with, personal experiences or thoughts related to the book, favourite parts, parts they dislike, how they would change the story, how they would act differently from the characters and sharing their experiences and feelings while reading (Day and Bamford 143).

For a different, motivating post-reading activity, Bamford and Day recommend short oral reports prepared and delivered by the students to a small group of peers. The aim of these oral reports can be to spark classmates' interest and encourage them to choose the book for their next reading endeavours (148–49). As a more extensive follow-up activity, Bamford and Day propose organising a book fair, where students create posters about their books and give short oral presentations, similar to an oral report (153).

Although Dörnyei's and Bamford and Day's suggestions are still relevant for contemporary EFL classrooms, it is important to acknowledge that these publications are over 20 years old. Published in 2012, Jacobs and Farrell's suggestions, might reflect more recent developments in the field. In their book, they present 54 different activities to accompany an ER project (74–

79). I chose eleven of these tasks I found most appealing and will therefore adapt for my students' reading portfolios.

“Task 3: Read aloud an interesting/important/exciting part of the book.

Task 10: Design a bookmark to suit the book. It can strictly be visual, or it can contain words.

Task 13: Create a collage to illustrate the book.

Task 17: Draw a mind map to represent what happens in the book.

Task 19: Create a timeline of events in the book, perhaps with some text to help people understand the events in the timeline.

Task 22: Design a quilt with nine squares. In each square tell something about the book.

Task 37: Talk about the character(s) you liked best and why.

Task 39: Copy interesting words and expressions into a notebook.

Task 42: Write an outline of a sequel to the story.

Task 45: Write a short note to the next reader of the book, for example, explain something that will help the next reader better appreciate the book.

Task 47: Write a letter to the author(s) of the book (Jacobs and Farrell 74–79).”

Dörnyei emphasises that pupils' motivation is closely linked to their expectation of success. Only those who expect to succeed are motivated to make an effort. Dörnyei describes various methodological approaches to convey the feeling of motivation to students. For example, he emphasises the importance of thorough preparation. In this context, preparatory tasks must be carefully selected and structured in order to take the pressure off students and not lead them into a task unprepared (58). In addition, they should also be offered appropriate support. Dörnyei emphasises cooperative learning as particularly beneficial in this context. Moreover, it is essential to clearly define success in the context of the task. The task itself should be formulated clearly and the assessment criteria should also be communicated transparently so that the students know exactly what is expected of them (58). Additionally, Dörnyei underscores that showing successful examples is often perceived as very helpful. Dörnyei also emphasises that pupils should be offered support (58). This can be provided not only by the teacher, but also by helpful resources such as classmates, tips as part of the assignment, (digital) resources and (digital) research input as well as dictionaries. The latter are often discussed controversially in an ER context.

In the process of reading a book in a foreign language, learners often encounter unfamiliar words. Using an (online) dictionary is an obvious solution. However, Bamford and Day note that looking up unknown words disrupts the reading flow (93). They reference a study by Lupescu and Day, which found that using a dictionary doubled the reading time of participants. Bamford and Day attach great importance to the decision whether or not to allow the use of

dictionaries, arguing that banning them can highlight the differences between ER and other reading activities (93–94). They stress that interrupting the reading flow by looking up words can reduce reading enjoyment (94). Hedgecock and Ferris share this view, highlighting that stopping to look up words hinders the reading flow and compromises an ER projects main objectives (241). As a compromise for teachers who want to include vocabulary tasks in their reading project, Bamford and Day suggest that students mark unknown words and look them up at the end of a chapter (94). This method not only prevents interruptions but also helps students learn to prioritise which words are worth looking up (Day and Bamford 94). This approach may be useful in projects focusing on vocabulary acquisition. In addition, it may be more suitable for a guided reading project using a class reader than an individualised class library project, where student activities can only be guided and monitored to a limited extent.

The purpose and objectives of a task or project must be clearly communicated to students to ensure they understand its relevance and are motivated to complete it. In long-term projects, such as a class library project, students can easily become overwhelmed by the volume of tasks and the number of pages they need to read. To support them, Dörnyei recommends setting short-term goals and deadlines (85). Eisenmann and Summer caution that teachers should not underestimate the time required for providing instructions, making corrections and conducting (self)evaluations. To assess student work, they recommend creating an evaluation sheet, either for students, for teachers, or both (317).

2.3.6 The reading environment

The reading environment, which includes both the physical space where reading takes place and the overall atmosphere surrounding the project, is crucial to its success. Creating an inviting and comfortable ambiance begins with how the project is introduced, as the introduction sets the tone for an engaging and enjoyable reading experience. It is vital that the teacher manages to present the project and corresponding tasks in a motivating and enthusiastic manner (Dörnyei 78). Hedgecock and Ferris even suggest creating a short presentation to highlight the project's goals and the overall benefits of ER (234). While they generally agree with Dörnyei's views, Hedgecock and Ferris caution that it is naïve to expect that students can be convinced to become avid readers simply based on their teacher talking about its benefits. In a school setting, ER projects often involve assigning reading and related tasks, which, though less likely to be seen as enjoyable, can still be more appealing than other classroom activities and foster enthusiasm for reading in a second language (Hedgecock and Ferris 234).

The reading environment includes, not only the physical space but also the reading atmosphere established by the teachers. In agreement with Bamford and Day (8) and Harmer (284), Jacobs and Farrell emphasise the significance of teachers portraying themselves as active readers and acting as "salespeople of ER" (54). These views align with Dörnyei's findings asserting that learner motivation is largely dependent on teacher behaviours. Ideally, teachers must seem enthusiastic about the content they teach (32). Consequently, to motivate students to engage in a reading project, they must portray themselves as passionate readers.

Moreover, although they focus on reader motivation in general rather than on L2 teaching, Mottram, Young and Satti's assertion that the way reading is discussed plays a pivotal role in influencing students' perceptions aligns with perspectives highlighted in L2 literature. Mottram, Young and Satti argue that reading should not be a solitary activity; instead, learners should exchange information, ideas, and sentiments about their books (62). In line with this, Bamford and Day emphasise that, in L2 teaching, creating an atmosphere in which readings are discussed without evaluation is crucial (26). While Hedgcock and Ferris agree with these remarks, they suggest book presentations or similar activities as a way to discuss the reading materials without mentioning that teachers should refrain from grading them (241).

As depicted in Figure 2, the classroom environment itself is a key source for shaping reading attitudes in an ER project. To establish a comfortable and inviting reading environment, free from disruptions, Eisenmann and Summer recommend creating distinct zones within the classroom, with each area dedicated to a specific activity. For example, an open space can be designated for movement, a separate area can be set aside for listening and speaking activities, and tables and chairs can be arranged to support a reader-friendly environment (317). One of these areas could be a learning station, where students find materials like printed task instructions, headphones, scissors, glue, and paper (316). These suggestions offer valuable insights, their implementation, however, depend on resources available in each ER setting. As will be outlined in Chapter 6, these recommendations from Eisenmann and Summer were initially not included in the project, but informed modifications introduced in the second project cycle.

3 Research design and methodology

The research aims of this project are twofold. First, it seeks to investigate students' attitudes towards reading longer texts in English and to assess the effects of the class library project on their reading habits. Second, through action research, the project examines the effectiveness of differentiated instruction as part of the class library project. Additionally, the project sets out to compare two classes with varying reading experiences to determine whether the duration of reading projects influences students' attitudes towards reading. However, this study does not aim to assess students' reading proficiency skills or evaluate any changes in language proficiency resulting from the project. Instead, this project focuses exclusively on exploring reading attitudes and the effectiveness of internal differentiation strategies used in a heterogeneous group of EFL learners.

As the literature review suggests, research on ER has consistently proven that the amount of time students spend on reading correlates with their reading proficiency and long-term reading habits. Thus, the fundamental assumption underlying this project is that dedicating a substantial amount of class time to reading books can positively impact the students' reading behaviours and create enthusiastic readers who choose to read in their leisure time.

Although this project only gathers information from a rather limited group of participants, namely two classes that I teach, it seeks to provide insights into how well-structured reading projects, and access to materials at different levels can shape students' reading attitudes and achieve internal differentiation in EFL teaching.

3.1 Methodological framework: AR project

Having established the aims of this thesis, the following sections will outline the techniques employed to gather and analyse data. The primary approach used in the thesis is action research, which will now be discussed in detail.

Over forty years ago, Schön (1983) identified reflective practice as a key theory in teaching research. In L2 teaching, this involves a mindful examination of occurrences during lessons. In his model of reflective practice Schön differentiates between reflection-in-action, which occurs spontaneously during teaching, and reflection-on-action, which involves analysing and reflecting teaching practices afterward. This retrospective analysis helps teachers assess their actions and the impact of any modifications made (Eisenmann 184–86). AR enables teachers to

critically assess and refine their teaching practices while enhancing student learning within their own classrooms. By systematically gathering and analysing classroom data, teachers can apply their findings to improve both instructional methods and student outcomes. This approach fosters professional growth and provides a supportive way to reflect on and improve various aspects of teaching (Grabe and Stoller 199–200). Furthermore, AR involves not only reflection-on-action but consists of a number of steps to complete an action research cycle to allow educators to critically assess, understand, and refine their teaching practices (Eisenmann 186). This ongoing cycle of reflection, action, and evaluation fosters consistent professional advancement (Eisenmann 187; Grabe and Stoller 204; Burns 10).

Burns states that for a teacher committed to professional growth, AR presents an opportunity to conduct an in-depth analysis of particular classroom challenges because it is concerned with issues presenting direct relevance to individual teaching circumstances (Burns 6–7). In relation to ER, Jacobs and Farrell suggest that AR can help legitimise its integration into EFL teaching by offering evidence for its effectiveness (107–108). Grabe and Stoller propose several areas to investigate in AR projects focusing on ER. One of them is examining the effect of ER on students' attitudes, as is done in the thesis (201).

Researchers delving into AR will soon discover that various models exist, each involving a different number of steps. However, the core processes across these models remain largely similar. While Burns (8) presents four steps, Jacobs and Farrell (109–12) propose a total of nine and Grabe and Stoller suggest eight steps as part of AR. The procedure in all these models, however, remains essentially the same. Depicted below is a six-step model by Efron and Ravid.



Figure 4 : The six steps of Action Research (Efron and Ravid in Orosz, Recino, and Ochoa 645)

This model was chosen because, in contrast to Burns four steps, it highlights building background knowledge, which was an integral part of this thesis, as a separate step. It is noteworthy that both Burns and Grabe and Stoller point out that the steps they outline should be viewed as a mere guideline and used flexibly. Researchers can revisit previous steps whenever necessary (Grabe and Stoller 204). Scholars agree that AR typically consists of several, at least two, cycles.

In Step 1 I defined my area of interest, which was developing an ER project to improve reading skills and reading motivation. Initially, I wanted to find effective ways to read with my students. I then refined my focus to creating a supportive reading environment and exploring how to encourage students to enjoy reading. As a next step, Step 2, I conducted extensive research on the concepts of extensive reading and internal differentiation which served as the foundation for the class library project. In Step 3, I determined the participating classes, narrowed down the research data and decided on planning and conducting a class library project in the first semester of the 2024/2025 schoolyear. I designed materials and decided on ways to collect data, including observation sheets and questionnaires. I created pre- and post-student questionnaires to gather information about the students' attitudes and habits regarding reading before and after the project. Before embarking on Step 4, I fulfilled the administrative requirements to collect data at a Viennese school and obtained consent from my headmaster, the students' legal guardians and the Schulforum. As part of the fourth step the students completed the pre-project questionnaire. Then, I implemented the class library project, dedicating approximately two 50-minute lessons a week to the reading project. During and after the reading lessons I took detailed field notes. In Step 5, I organised and analysed qualitative data gathered during my classroom observations. I then interpreted and reflected on the data, considering my personal impression from the project, the knowledge about ER I had gained through my research, and the information I had collected. Based on the insights, I then adapted the project to initiate a second cycle. Following the second project cycle, students completed a post-project questionnaire designed to identify changes in their reading attitudes. I then analysed this quantitative data to address the first research question. Finally, I reflected on the observations from the second project cycle to evaluate the overall impact on internal differentiation of the project. As part of Step 6, I continuously shared my insights and materials with team-teaching colleagues and presented the key insights, along with the materials and outline of the project, at a conference for all language teachers at my school to benefit from.

3.2 Research group and setting

The study was conducted between September 2024 and March 2025 in a Viennese middle school, involving two lower-secondary fourth grade classes consisting of 40 students in total. There were 23 male and 17 female participants. Ages varied between 13 and 16 years. I had been teaching both classes for three consecutive years in a team-teaching setting with two different team teachers. 4a was a very heterogeneous integration class of 18 students. Students in an integration class were generally very heterogeneous in terms of their learning abilities, preferences and behaviours. Despite this diversity, the class was relatively homogenous in English compared to 4b. 4b consisted of 23 students. The class was very heterogeneous concerning their sociocultural backgrounds, ages, motivation, learning abilities and English skills. Some students spoke English almost fluently while others struggled with basic concepts and retaining vocabulary. Their unmatched heterogeneity made these two groups ideal to evaluate the effectiveness of internal differentiation in a class library project, thereby addressing the second research question.

Another research objective was to evaluate whether 4b's prior experience and extended period of ER impacted their reading attitudes compared to their colleagues in 4a. In the previous schoolyear, 4a had read a class reader, "Wonder" published by Penguin Readers, but students had not participated in a class library project. In contrast, 4b has had some experience with a class library project, having started their class library in the second semester of third grade, i.e. one schoolyear prior to this project. Thus, this group was familiar with the general processes involved in a class library project but needed to adapt to changes made for this schoolyears' class library project.

3.3 Analytical framework

To gather information on the two aspects the research questions are focused on and to achieve triangulation, two methods of data collection were applied. Student attitudes were investigated through pre- and post-project questionnaires and student behaviour to observe the effectiveness of differentiated instruction was examined through reflective practice.

To investigate my students' reading habits and attitudes, I designed a German pre-project questionnaire to measure their reading enjoyment, reading frequency and other relevant factors to assess their reading attitudes. To identify any changes in their reading behaviour, following the intervention, students completed a second questionnaire. Questionnaires are a well-established data collection technique, among others recommended by Grabe and Stoller as an

adequate research method to be applied as part of AR projects. Dörnyei and Dewaele confirm that well-constructed questionnaires are an efficient method to collect and process data (7). They provide detailed guidance on designing effective questionnaires, specifying that as a first step general features such as length, layout and ensuring anonymity should be taken into consideration. Recognizing that questionnaires often hold limited interest for respondents, Dörnyei and Dewaele recommend keeping them concise (15). Following their advice, I aimed to make my questionnaire brief, targeting a completion time of no more than five minute, shorter than their recommended maximum of 20 minutes, due to my students' age, reading comprehension skills, and attention span. Additionally, Dörnyei and Dewaele stress the importance of format and layout, noting their impact on participants' motivation. The choice between paper and online formats, as well as the amount of text on each page, plays a crucial role in making the questionnaire appear short and simple (16). I opted for an online questionnaire, using Google Forms, to facilitate the evaluation of the answers. Furthermore, the topic of anonymity is a highly debated one; while some argue that anonymous questionnaires are more likely to produce honest and accurate answers, others believe that anonymity prevents researchers from linking data to respondents, which could lead to potentially missing interesting insights (Dörnyei and Dewaele 20). Given the likelihood that students might try to impress me as their teacher, I chose to make the questionnaires anonymous to encourage more accurate responses. The only identifying information collected was the class, allowing for a comparison between the two participant groups. Alongside the observations and reflections, this was an important element in addressing the third research question, which aimed to compare behaviours and attitudes between the group prior experience in a class library and the group unfamiliar with an ER project. In addition, each student was required to enter the same password for both the pre- and post-project questionnaires, enabling me to track and analyse individual changes in behaviour over time without knowing the students' identity. This approach enhanced the transparency of the study, as simply comparing the overall class performance before and after the project would not have provided enough information. By focusing on individual student progress, the analysis yielded more detailed insights and revealed insightful information.

Before compiling the questions, it was essential to select an appropriate title and provide clear instructions. For the pre-project questionnaire, I chose the title "Leseprojekt Fragebogen," adhering to Dörnyei and Dewaele's advice that an effective title should be neutral, brief, explicit, and engaging, representing the questionnaire's content without revealing too much detail (21).

The title is followed by German instructions. Bamford and Day (159) are in line with Dörnyei and Dewaele (52) who recommend designing student questionnaires in the L1. In drafting the instructions, I aimed at brevity and a friendly tone, as this can influence the participants' feelings towards the questionnaire. Dörnyei and Dewaele (22) outline several key points to include in the instruction. To keep the reading to a minimum I covered some of them orally and others in the written instructions. My written instructions explained the purpose of the questionnaire, emphasised anonymity, requested honest responses, and visually separated the instructions from the questions, as recommended by Dörney and Dewaele (22). It was helpful that most students were already familiar with the questionnaire formats used.

The primary purpose of the pre-project questionnaire was to assess my students' attitudes towards reading before setting up the class library to later determine through a post-project questionnaire whether and to what extent these attitudes and reading behaviours had changed as a result of the project. The questionnaires were based on these objectives to evaluate if the goals related to reading attitudes had been achieved. The questionnaires' key questions focused on students' reading behaviours and attitudes, exploring how frequently they read, their preferred language to read in and addressing their favourite skill (reading, writing, listening or speaking) to practice in English. In formulating the questions, I adhered to Dörnyei and Dewaele's "rules about writing items (43)": "aim for short and simple items, use simple and natural language, avoid ambiguous or loaded words and sentences, avoid negative constructions, avoid double-barrel questions, avoid hidden assumptions (43–46)."

As to the format of the questions, to assess the success of the ER project, Bamford and Day (160) suggest multiple-choice questions or questions with 5-point scale answers covering different elements of the project. Accordingly, I used both of these formats for the questionnaires, adding one multiple-choice question to nine Likert scale items. The pre- and post- project questionnaires only differ slightly. As recommended by Dörnyei and Dewaele (56), I tested the questionnaire and received feedback from fellow university students and my team-teaching colleagues. Following that, as suggested by Bamford and Day (159), I piloted the questionnaire with a class that did not participate in the project and asked them to give me oral feedback on each item to rule out any misunderstandings or ambiguities. The final versions of both questionnaires can be found in the appendix of this thesis.

Observations and self-reflection are key elements of AR (Burns 57). During each reading session, while students were engaged in reading their books or working on their portfolios, I took field notes that I later revisited and analysed. My observations centred on key aspects such as students' enthusiasm, participation and focus, as well as the effectiveness of the internal differentiation strategies I employed, both in the choice of materials and my instructional methods. To evaluate these observations, I systematically reviewed my field notes. The data was analysed qualitatively, by highlighting noteworthy notes and categorising them in relation to the findings from the literature review.

4 The AR project

Scholars such as Hedgcock and Ferris, Bamford and Day, Harmer and Krashen have researched a variety of ways to render literature accessible to students. One widely recognised approach is creating a class library. In simple terms, setting up a class library involves each students selecting a different book that matches their proficiency level and interests, reading this book during class time and/or as homework and completing accompanying tasks provided by their teacher. In their book “Extensive reading in the second language classroom”, Bamford and Day outline eight objectives to be attained in a successful ER project.

1. Students have a positive attitude toward reading in the L2.
2. Students are confident in their reading.
3. Students are motivated to read in the L2.
4. Students read without constantly stopping to look up unknown or difficult words in the dictionary.
5. Students have increased their word recognition ability.
6. Students know for what purpose they are reading what they read.
7. Students read at an appropriate rate for their purpose in reading.
8. Students know how to choose appropriate materials for their interests and language ability (45–46).

Focusing on these goals and based on the literature review, key decisions were made concerning the organisation of the class library project. These included the project presentation, the book selection process, the design of the accompanying portfolio tasks, the physical setting and classroom atmosphere as well as the feedback process. All these elements are part of the intervention that will be presented in this chapter. For a detailed overview, a project plan including the timescale and materials for the first project cycle is provided in the appendix of this thesis as well as all other materials used in the intervention.

4.1 Penguin Readers introduced

In her thesis, Ebenhöf (31) references an article by Claridge that examines the four main publishers of graded readers in Europe: Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Longman Pearson Penguin and Macmillan. Claridge highlights that Longman Pearson Penguin and Macmillan specifically focus on reading enjoyment (“Graded Readers” 118).

Although other publishers of graded readers provide convincing materials as well, and Claridge underscores that “collectively they [the publishers] are doing an excellent job” (“Graded Readers” 118) I decided to limit the choice to a single publisher to avoid confusion and facilitate the book selection process. Henceforth, the class library exclusively consisted of

books by Penguin Readers, published by Pearson Education, a British publisher for school and university books. Throughout my research, I considered numerous graded readers from various publishers. However, I often found the stories unoriginal and age inappropriate. In my opinion, Penguin Readers stand out for their range of genres. They offer adapted modern and classic literature, as well as original stories and factual texts such as biographies. In addition, my research has shown that Penguin Readers consistently adhere to the levels they indicate, which aids in selecting appropriately challenging materials.

An online handbook available on the Penguin Readers' website details the intended use of the graded readers. Each graded reader is assigned a level. The table depicted in Figure 4 shows the levels of difficulty available, which align with the Graded Readers Foundation's scale ('The Extensive Reading Foundation') as well as the corresponding CEFR level. As the level of difficulty increases, so does the length of the books and the number of headwords.

	CEFR level	Story word count	Headwords
0	Pre-A1	400–600	350
1	A1	1,000–1,600	550
2	A1+	3,000–5,000	700
3	A2	7,000–10,000	1,000
4	A2+	11,000–14,000	1,200
5	B1	15,000–18,000	1,600
6	B1+	18,000–22,000	2,000
7	B2	22,000–26,000	2,500

Table 1 : Penguin reader's levels of difficulty ('Penguin Readers Handbook' 3)

The literature review revealed that audio recordings are sometimes suggested as a resource to support students who require additional help (Jacobs and Farrell 22). Penguin Readers offers narrations of their books, read by actors that are available online. These audio recordings are accessible on the Penguin Readers website and can be unlocked using a code provided in each reader. Additionally, the pre-reading section of each book usually includes a presentation of the main characters and key vocabulary as well as information about the author, followed by one or two pre-reading questions. Throughout the text, certain words are printed in bold. These words are explained in a glossary at the end of the reader, listed alphabetically. Most books are accompanied by illustrations to aid comprehension. In the post-reading section, Penguin Readers provides while- and post-reading questions as well as ideas for project work.

4.2 Preparatory steps

Prior to starting the class library project, several preparatory steps were taken. These included identifying students' reading interests and their reading-proficiency levels, as well as selecting and ordering the graded readers.

4.2.1 Identifying students' reading interests

In her thesis on motivation and engagement in ER projects, Minkowitsch discusses various activities designed to prepare students for ER and spark their interest. Due to time constraints, I selected only a limited number of these activities, including a reader-interest questionnaire. Its purpose was not only to identify the types of stories that would appeal to my students but also to promote a sense of agency. Minkowitsch asserts that involving students in the book selection process can significantly enhance their intrinsic motivation, thereby increasing their enthusiasm for the project (72). This claim aligns with more established research by Dörnyei who recommends conducting a structured needs analysis to determine the learners' interests (66). Similarly, Hedgcock and Ferris emphasise the value of conducting a short reader-interest questionnaire to evaluate the students' potential reading interests (239). Following these recommendations, I adapted Hedgcock and Ferris' (239) interest-questionnaire for my learners. Its primary purpose was to guide students in selecting an appropriate book. When determining reading levels, I ensured that the books aligned with the learners' ZPD, prioritising comprehension over complexity to foster confidence and engagement.

4.2.2 The book selection process

At the beginning of the intervention, one lesson was dedicated to the selection of books. In line with recommendations from the literature, students were given autonomy in their choices but received guidance throughout the process. First, they were informed about their individual reading level. Then, the students explored the available graded readers on the Penguin Readers' website before discussing their selections with their peers and announcing them to the plenum. The literature has suggested several methods to establish students reading levels, such as providing them with sample texts and asking them to highlight unknown words. However, in this project, using such methods was not necessary. Having been their English teacher for three years, I felt confident that I could accurately determine my learners levels based on my knowledge of their abilities.

The reader-interest questionnaire helped evaluate whether students' book choices were appropriate. In cases of discrepancies, I discussed individual choices in one-on-one conversations. Students were either able to justify their choices or we agreed on an alternative.

To provide variety, I ordered a diverse range of books, although some readers were ordered more than once where necessary to fulfil the learners' wishes.

Table 2 lists the selected graded readers, their reading levels and corresponding CEFR levels, and the AR cycle in which they were read.

Level	CEFR Level	Book title	Cycle 1	Cycle 2
2	A1+	The extraordinary life of Nelson Mandela	x	x
2	A1+	Revolting Rhymes	x	x
2	A1+	The extraordinary life of Steve Jobs	x	2x
2	A1+	Mulan and other tales of heroes	2x	x
2	A1+	Private	2x	x
2	A1+	A Christmas Carol	x	
2	A1+	Alice's adventures in Wonderland	x	
3	A2	Alice through the looking glass	x	x
3	A2	Wonder		x
3	A2	Sherlock Holmes	2x	2x
3	A2	The summer I turned pretty	x	2x
3	A2	BBC Dynasties: Chimpanzee	x	x
3	A2	Zoo	x	x
3	A2	Dracula	3x	
3	A2	Jaz Santos vs the world	x	x
3	A2	Amazing muslims who changed the world	x	
3	A2	Elon Musk	x	x
3	A2	Ghost stories	x	
3	A2	Steven Hawking		x
3	A2	A wrinkle in time		x
3	A2	Love Frankie	x	
3	A2	Wonder		x
4	A2+	A room with a view	x	x
4	A2+	Artemis Fowl	x	x
4	A2+	Killing floor	x	x
4	A2+	Me before you	x	2x

4	A2+	Pride and prejudice	x	x
4	A2+	The boy in the striped pyjamas	x	x
4	A2+	The invisible man	x	x
4	A2+	The kissing booth	x	
4	A2+	The witches	x	x
4	A2+	The age of innocence	x	2x
5	B1	Extremely loud and incredibly close	x	x
5	B1	Frankenstein	x	x
5	B1	The night manager	x	x
5	B1	The one memory of Flora Banks		x
5		Unlocking the universe	x	
6	B1+	The darkest hour	x	2x
6	B1+	Slumdog Millionaire	x	x
6	B1+	The spy who came in from the cold	x	2x
6	B1+	Oliver Twist		x

Table 2 : Selected books in Cycle 1 and in Cycle 2

Table 2 highlights not only the diverse range of difficulty levels but also the wide variety of genres in selected readers, underscoring the broad spectrum of interests among learners. Selected genres ranged from biographies to classics, thrillers and mysteries, fantasy and science fiction, historical fiction and romances.

4.3 Instructions and materials for the first project cycle

Once the selected books were ordered, I began the first project cycle by presenting a PowerPoint slide titled “Why Do We Read?”, adapted from Hedgcock and Ferris (234). This short presentation laid out three compelling reasons to read and served to discuss the relevance of the project. Hall argues that for learners to value a reading project they must understand the benefits of ER (284). He states that “the teacher who intends to use literary texts in class will thus need to demonstrate how or why uses of literature are worthwhile” (461).

The literature also highlights that clearly defined goals and deadlines are pivotal to positively impact students’ attitudes towards ER (Lightbown and Spada 88). To address this, I developed an instruction sheet outlining the project’s rules, objectives, and deadlines. It is crucial to emphasise two requirements that are addressed in this instruction sheet. Firstly, in the initial cycle, students were required to choose four out of nine available tasks which they could work

on at their own pace and a chosen time during the project. Secondly, there were two deadlines: one after six reading sessions to provide initial feedback and one final submission deadline.

To promote meaningful engagement with the texts, I developed nine portfolio tasks informed by ER principles and principles of internal differentiation. Table 3 provides an overview of these tasks categorised by task type.

	Task name	Task type
1	Designing a cover page	Creative task
2	The Who is Who of the book	Analytical writing task
3	Vocabulary collection	Language focused lexical task
4	Drawing a scene	Creative task
5	A new ending	Creative writing task
6	Letter to the author	Guided writing/speaking task
7	Quiz Time	Language focused comprehension task
8	A diary entry	Creative writing task
9	My book review	Reflective writing task

Table 3 : Overview of portfolio tasks for the first project cycle

Hereinafter, I would like to refer to two of these portfolio tasks in particular. Hedge points out that graded readers can help to broaden learners' vocabulary range (121). Text-specific vocabulary tasks that are often available as guiding materials for graded readers aid this objective. Since students read different texts, I designed vocabulary activities that fit all readers. The tasks "Vocabulary collection" and "The Who is Who of the book" aimed to build vocabulary knowledge. The latter activity was adapted from Hedge, who states that this type of exercise is well suited to introduce or revise vocabulary (127).

Tasks in ER projects should focus on an overall understanding of the texts and, therefore, not include comprehension questions or grammar items (Day et al. 13). In the context of differentiated teaching, Tomlinson underscores that if weak learners cannot grasp everything, teachers should prioritise the essential ideas and omit less critical details (17). Consequently, most tasks only required a general understanding of the content. While certain tasks, such as "Quiz Time", "A new ending", "The Who is Who of the book" and "Diary entry", required more detailed comprehension, the portfolio work did not oblige all students to complete those activities.

4.3.1 Internal differentiation in task design

Creating differentiated tasks was integral to task design. In Austrian middle schools, students are currently divided into two groups: “Standard Mittelschule” and “Standard AHS”. As outlined in the literature review, Tomlinson, for example, views such grouping as ineffective for successful differentiation (13). At the same time, Eisenmann acknowledges that some of the ideals she describes are not fully feasible within the current educational structures (58). Therefore, adhering to the institutional requirements, two distinct sets of tasks were provided for the two groups of students. In successful internal differentiation, proficient students are not assigned a larger number of activities, but tasks and their instructions are adjusted for each group (Tomlinson 13). Therefore, “Standard AHS” students did not have to complete any additional tasks. Although both sets addressed the same core content, task instructions for “Standard AHS” students included less scaffolding and were generally more demanding. Table 4 provides an overview of the differences and variations between the two groups’ tasks.

Task	Differences/Variations
Designing a cover page	“Standard AHS” students included a brief summary.
The Who is Who of the book	“Standard AHS” students described three instead of two characters. The instructions included less German clarifications.
Vocabulary collection	No differences
Drawing a scene	“Standard AHS” students added a description of their scene.
A new ending	Scaffolding provided only for “Standard Mittelschule”
Letter to the author	“Standard AHS” students recorded an audio message to practice oral skills instead of writing a letter. Scaffolding was provided only for “Standard Mittelschule”.
Quiz Time	No differences
Diary entry	“Standard AHS” students wrote a more detailed text.
My book review	“Standard AHS” students wrote a report, “Standard Mittelschule” students completed a multiple-choice sheet.

Table 4 : Differences and variations in tasks

Furthermore, the tasks were not only differentiated between the two groups, but scholars emphasise the importance of offering task choice that align with individual students’ preferences (Jacobs and Farrell 79). Brügelmann refers to this concept as “differentiation from below”, where learners take responsibility for their own learning (17). This principle aligns with curriculum guidelines prescribing a “Baukasten” model, where students can select from a range of activities (BMBWF 145). Consequently, the nine different tasks were designed to offer a broad selection of varied tasks. Eisenmann recommends organising a reading log or reading portfolio into four sections: important facts, personal impressions, language focus and creative tasks. She proposes a range of activities for each section (89–90). Although students were not

required to complete tasks from every section, the selection of available tasks included exercises from all four areas, as illustrated in Table 5.

Section	Portfolio tasks
Important facts	The Who is Who of the book
Personal impressions	Letter to the author, A book review
Language focus	Vocabulary collection, Quiz time
Creative	Creating a cover sheet, Drawing a scene, A new ending, Diary entry

Table 5 : Categorisation of portfolio tasks by task type.

Finally, task design was informed by Eisenmann's "Checklist for a high level of individualisation" (Eisenmann 66), which outlines eleven principles. Table 6 demonstrates how these principles were incorporated into the portfolio work.

	Principle (Eisenmann 66)	Incorporation into Portfolio Work
1	"Pupils work on different problems, questions and tasks while making adequate progress within the limits of their abilities and language proficiencies.	Various tasks focusing on different skills for the students to choose from.
2	There are different textbooks, materials, learning opportunities, and language support available depending on the topic, focus of interest, and performance.	Individual readers.
3	Very gifted students receive additional learning opportunities such as an increased language input.	Differentiated instruction and separate tasks for "Standard Mittelschule" and "Standard AHS" students.
4	All students reflect their individual learning progress (metacognition).	The post-reading questionnaire did not only serve for data collection but also encouraged students' self-reflection. As active participants in the AR project, students could benefit from questionnaires as an opportunity for meaningful reflection.
5	Learning loops based on systematic feedback are implemented into the EFL classroom (monitoring)	Initial (non-graded) feedback provided after a few weeks of reading and portfolio work (Deadline 1).
6	Slower students have enough time to complete their tasks.	No time pressure during the project. Minimised number of obligatory portfolio tasks.

7	Students with motoric disorders or affective problems participate in short, guided concentration exercises.	Support for integration students by the integration teacher and additional resources, such as audio-recordings from Penguin Readers.
8	Students whose native language is not German receive additional language support.	Not necessary, as all readers and instructions are in English. Support was offered for German questionnaires.
9	High performance students are allowed to disconnect from the routine tasks after consultation with the teacher and work on their own main language focus.	See Findings. High-performance students could choose additional books after completing their portfolio tasks.
10	All students are familiar with the fact that everyone is different that there are different capacities among their peers.	Not specific to this project but has been part of the pedagogical focus since first grade.
11	Students support each other during their learning process (Eisenmann 66)".	Not applied to in this project. This project focused on autonomous learning.

Table 6 : Incorporation of Eisenmann's (66) principles into portfolio work.

4.4 The reading environment

Ideally, a class library should be physically set up in the classroom to display books for the children to see (Harmer 284). As an alternative, Harmer suggests transporting the books in boxes or trolleys (284). I opted for the latter approach, primarily because the same set of books was used in multiple classes.

Summer and Eisenmann (316) advocate for establishing learning stations where students can select tasks independently. However, I chose a different method. Each student received a binder containing the instruction sheet, assessment criteria, and all nine portfolio tasks available for selection. The main rationale was to minimise distractions during reading sessions. Recognising the significance of the physical setting and its impact on students' reading attitudes, I prioritised a quiet and comfortable reading space. Students were encouraged to get comfortable on sofas and bean bags both inside and outside the classroom. Fortunately, the recently opened school building provided a modern architectural design with adaptable learning spaces.

Optimal scheduling and duration for reading sessions in ER projects involve balancing the benefits of both in-class and independent reading time while navigating institutional constraints. Bamford and Day emphasise that while class time dedicated to SSR underscores its importance, cultivating long-term reading habits also requires opportunities for independent reading outside of class (91). As part of their ten characteristics of ER, Bamford and Day argue that allowing students to control their own reading condition, including when and how long to read, is crucial. However, institutional policies often limit this flexibility. Since homework is not allowed at the middle school where this project was conducted, two English lessons a week were dedicated to the reading project. Among others, Hedge proposes to allocate small time slots in different English lessons to a reading project (94). While many teachers use this method and assign ten to 15 minutes of SSR at the start or the end of a lesson to SSR, I found dedicating full 50-minute lessons to the reading provided students with the uninterrupted time necessary to engage with the stories.

Related to a pleasurable reading environment, assessment of reading portfolios in ER remains a controversial topic. Pedersen and Grann, for instance, argue that tasks carried out as part of an ER project designed to foster positive attitudes towards reading should not be assessed (79). Nevertheless, in the first project cycle of this class library project the portfolio tasks were evaluated. As various scholars such as Dörnyei (58) and Eisenmann (161) point out, students work and learn more effectively if they know what is expected of them. Therefore, students were given an assessment scale designed to evaluate multiple aspects of students' work, including task fulfilment, creativity, language use, organisation, and layout. This approach aimed to balance fostering a love for reading and simultaneously fulfilling formal assessment requirements necessary to grade students' performance in English.

4.5 The book fair: final stage of the first project cycle

The first project cycle concluded with a book fair. The book fair served two purposes: the primary goal was to help students choose a book for the next project cycle. A secondary objective was to provide opportunities for students to engage in discussions about their respective books, an essential component of ER since the way materials are discussed significantly influences students' attitudes towards reading (Day and Bamford 26; Mottram, Young, and Satti 62). Students prepared and delivered brief PowerPoint presentations, guided by a "presentation guide" which is included in the appendix of this thesis. The book fair involved both participating classes and was conducted over the course of two lessons. Presentations were organised in time slots, allowing students to visit multiple book fair stands.

A schedule for the book fair, to illustrate its organisation, is included in the appendix of this thesis. Naturally, students were not able to attend book presentations scheduled while their own presentation took place. Therefore, levels were distributed evenly across the time slots, ensuring that every student had the opportunity to attend as many book presentations as possible that fit their reading proficiency level. Additionally, genres were distributed evenly across the time slots as well. For instance, a student presenting “The Extraordinary Life of Nelson Mandela,” a level-2 graded reader, could listen to two other level 2 presentations and seven level 3 presentations. Similarly, the presenter of “Frankenstein” was able to attend three level-5 and seven level-4 presentations.

5 Evaluation of the first project cycle

The subsequent chapter will provide a detailed presentation of the results gathered through classroom observations. During the reading sessions, I observed my students' behaviour and documented my observations by taking detailed field notes. Initially, I intended to structure these notes prior to the intervention. However, after the first two reading lessons, I decided to take unguided field notes to obtain more descriptive observations. To ensure my notes would later be relevant to answer my research questions, I aimed to focus specifically on aspects of internal differentiation and student engagement. I focused on internal differentiation, particularly by observing how students navigated and completed the portfolio tasks while also documenting my own actions in my role as coach and facilitator.

After the first cycle had been completed, I revisited the descriptive field notes and organised them into categories to gain a thorough overview of my findings. Task design and instructions are fundamental to effective differentiated instruction. To identify potential modifications for the second project cycle, it was essential to evaluate the effectiveness of the differentiation strategies applied in task design for the first project cycle. Therefore, the first two categories were titled "Task understanding and clarity" and "Task support". The third category, "Technology", reflects its relevance to differentiated instruction, as highlighted by Eisenmann, who emphasises the potential benefits of digital tools in supporting diverse learner groups (114). Another crucial aspect in assessing differentiated instruction is student autonomy. As outlined in the literature review, Eisenmann highlights that students must learn to work autonomously to render differentiated instruction and individualised learning manageable (195). Hence, observing whether students could complete their tasks independently and identifying challenges that indicated areas for improvement in task design and instruction was vital. Finally, the last category "Engagement", allowed me to collect qualitative data in addition to the quantitative findings from the questionnaires to address the second research question. Additionally, the category "Other" enabled me to include information that did not fit into any category but was nonetheless relevant.

The tables used to categorise and analyse the field notes are included in the appendix of this thesis. Conclusions that are particularly relevant to plan the second project cycle are highlighted in orange. To address the third research question and examine potential differences between the two participating classes, I created separate tables for each class involved in the project. The following chapter will present key findings from the observations based on the descriptive notes

and reflect on specific challenges and successes that informed changes for the second project cycle.

5.1 The first project cycle: observations and reflections

Valuable insights were already gathered during the early stages of the project. The first interesting observations were made during the preparatory phase of the intervention. Students seemed intrigued by the “Why do we read?” presentation and showed great enthusiasm for the project. Observations during the book selection process demonstrated that many learners selected books I would not have chosen for them. The great variety in genres chosen by the students, particularly the surprising interest into adapted classics, underscored the importance of involving them in the book selection process. To illustrate this diversity, Table 7 categorises the selected books by genre. Even though not all texts can be clearly assigned to a single category, Table 7 offers an overview.

Genre	Book titles
Biographies / Histories	The extraordinary life of Nelson Mandela, The extraordinary life of Steve Jobs, Elon Musk, Amazing muslims who changed the world, Steven Hawking, The darkest hour
Classics	A Christmas Carol, Pride and prejudice, Frankenstein, A room with a view, Oliver Twist, The age of innocence, Dracula, Sherlock Holmes, Alice’s adventures in Wonderland
Fantasy, Science Fiction and Thrillers	Artemis Fowl, Zoo, The witches, The invisible man, Private, Killing Floor, The night manager, Ghost stories, The spy who came in from the cold
Children’s and Youth literature	Revolting rhymes, Jaz Santos vs the world, Mulan and other tales of heroes, , Wonder, Alice through the looking glass, The boy in the striped pyjamas
Contemporary fiction	Slumdog millionaire, Extremely loud and incredibly close
Romances	Me before you, The summer I turned pretty, The kissing booth, Love Frankie

Table 7 : Genres of selected graded readers.

For their portfolio work, students were offered a selection of nine tasks to choose from. As previously mentioned, they had to complete at least four of them. Figure 5 shows how many students completed each portfolio tasks.

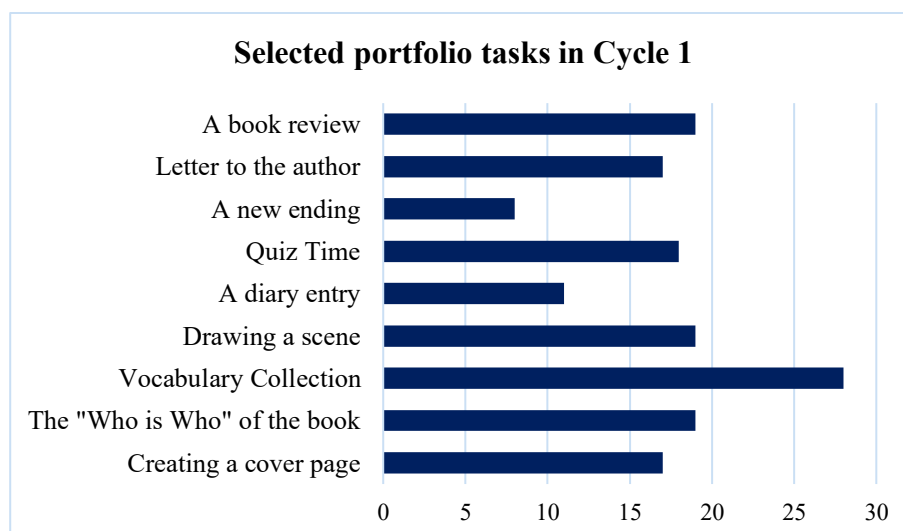


Figure 5 : Distribution of chosen portfolio tasks in the first project cycle.

Out of 40 project participants, 28 selected the “Vocabulary Collection” task, making it the most popular exercise. Despite some confusion around the “Who is Who of the book” task, 19 students still chose to complete it. In comparison, only eight students wrote a new ending to their story. Notably, seven of them were “Standard AHS” students. Similarly, only eleven students wrote a diary entry from a character’s perspective. Again, six out of these students were “Standard AHS” students. In contrast, no “Standard AHS” student chose the “Letter to the author” activity. Instead of writing a letter, “Standard AHS” students were instructed to record an audio message to the author. I can only speculate on the students’ reasoning for choosing particular tasks and avoiding others. I assume the “Vocabulary Collection” task was popular because it did not afford a lot of time to complete. Other activities might have been avoided because their design was less familiar or seemed more time-consuming. The otherwise very equal distribution among selected tasks underscores that providing a variety of choices is key to meeting different learner needs. One student did not complete any tasks, which I only discovered at the final submission. Apart from them, all participants completed at least the four required tasks. The observations have shown that even though the instructions were clear to most students, new projects always take time for students to adapt to. Overall, I feel that the tasks achieved their purposes, and that the variety was adequate to support internal differentiation and keep students interested.

Three particularly insightful observations could be made regarding task understanding and clarity. First, students continuously needed to be reminded that they were only required to complete four out of the nine available tasks. Second, and related to this, in both classes, a considerable number of students encountered difficulty understanding which worksheet was

part of which task as some tasks stretched over several pages even though each task was given an individual title. For a project that requires students to work independently, a familiar layout might help them work autonomously. This observation is worth highlighting as the clarity of task instructions contributes substantially to a good learning environment without distractions. The fewer questions students ask their peers or their teacher, the fewer disruptions there are, and the more students can engage in reading their books. Finally, another important observation regarding task understanding and clarity is related to task complexity. The “Who is Who of the book” task proved to be more challenging than expected regardless of the learners’ proficiency levels. Many students ignored the adjectives proposed to help them describe their characters, they struggled to understand the required word count, and they found it difficult to express their opinions about the characters in their books. These issues suggest that the task combined too many elements, rendering it overwhelming for students. While the intention was to give students the option to either draw or write and revise adjectives through character descriptions the instructions became unclear. Additionally, the task asked students to share their opinions. Expressing thought on characters proved particularly challenging for many learners. This might have different reasons, one possibility being that students’ overall understanding of the book was not sufficient. However, it seems likely that the task design was the main source of confusion. In a different context, this task might have been effective, in an autonomous setting, however, it was not ideal.

In a differentiated classroom, teachers should act as coaches and facilitators (Tomlinson 180–81). My field notes show that I mainly supported students by establishing the reading environment at the beginning of each reading session, recommending books, clarifying instructions, repeating portfolio requirements for the entire class, providing digital aid: for example, by installing audio recordings, and cautioning students not to lose focus. During the first cycle, only one student requested to change their book, and after reviewing relevant literature, I approved that request. Bamford and Day argue that learners should not only be free in book selection and reading pace, but they should also be able to stop reading whenever they choose to and they should read when and where they want to (27). Hedgcock and Ferris align with this perspective, highlighting that learners should be allowed to choose an alternative in case they regret their book choice (241). In theory this sounds reasonable, practically granting this level of freedom might cause difficulties regarding the projects’ time schedule. After all, allowing the student the flexibility to switch books, as would be possible in a more conventional reading environment, proved to enhance the students’ reading motivation and informed changes

made for the second project cycle. At the beginning of the next project cycle, students were explicitly encouraged to request a different book if they felt uncomfortable with their initial choice.

Despite reading fairly easy graded readers, well below their expected proficiency levels, some students struggled comprehending their stories and completing the portfolio tasks. One student deals with severe dyslexia, and guidelines by the Austrian Ministry of Education recommend audio support for students with learning difficulties (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, *Rundschreiben Nr. 24/202*). Therefore, to support low proficiency students, they received headphones and were encouraged to listen to audio recordings of their readers provided by Penguin Readers. Observations suggest that this measure was well-received. The affected students kept asking for the audio books, appeared more focused and made faster progress with their reading, even though the audio recordings were read at a slow pace. The decision to allow audio books in the project for some students was difficult to make because an important principle of ER is that students read at their own pace. I felt that the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. In Section 2.6.1. I referenced Bamford and Day who outline that weak students benefit from having texts read out aloud to them (137). My observations confirm this assertion. The audiobooks also helped with concentration. I felt that pupils who had difficulty reading were also more easily distracted. In my opinion, the headphones and reading along while listening to audio books helped students concentrate and engage in their stories.

Generally, the use of laptops was allowed during the first project cycle as some tasks required digital tools. However, observations revealed that laptops were overused and became a source of distraction. Some students used Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools such as ChatGPT and online translators to generate written texts for their portfolios. Many learners were better equipped to using AI than I had realised. Their self-confidence to submit almost poetic diary entries and alternative endings with their portfolio was rather entertaining, but it also highlighted the need for adjustments in this area. Moreover, students did not only use online dictionaries to work on the “Vocabulary collection” task but some learners looked up nearly every unfamiliar word in the text they were reading. In conclusion, digital devices are a great resource to facilitate individual learning. However, the misuse of the digital tools also demonstrated that the reading portfolio for the first project cycle aimed at too many learning goals, for example, improving

online research skills, expanding vocabulary, demonstrating creativity, etc. at once. As a result, in the second project cycle, the use of digital devices will be reduced to a minimum.

Time management proved to be a major challenge throughout the project. I corrected the reading portfolios twice: once to provide feedback after only four reading lessons and ensure students were on the right track, and again at the end for final assessment. After the first round of corrections, I made an interesting observation: many students had almost finished reading their books but had completed few or none of the portfolio tasks. Observations indicated that without strict deadlines, students often prioritised reading over task completion. This was not due to laziness but rather caused by their engagement with their reading material. Another challenge related to time-management was managing students' differing paces. One notable example illustrates this issue perfectly: a student reading "The Darkest Hour" became so inspired by the story that he spent two entire reading sessions creating a detailed "Replica of 1944 Map", as he called it, complete with marked fronts and troop movements. The map was impressive in both detail and effort, but the time spent on this endeavour caused him to fall behind in both reading and task completion. Since "The Darkest Hour" is a Level 6 book with significantly more text than other assigned readers, he struggled to catch up. The project underscored the tension between theoretical best practices for ER and the constraints of institutional time management. Teachers feel immense stress to ensure the contents of the curriculum are covered (Dörnyei 64), yet, ER prioritises providing pressure-free reading time to foster enjoyment and engagement. Balancing these competing objectives was particularly challenging, as I tried to prevent students from feeling rushed while also ensuring that the project remained on schedule.

As the second step of AR, before implementing the intervention, I conducted extensive research on how to organise an effective ER project. The literature revealed that the physical reading space provided for the students is substantial to a successful class library project. In Chapter 4, the physical setting of this project was described in detail. I observed that many students required an environment free from distractions to fully immerse themselves in the stories they were reading. Thus, I made an effort to provide as much space as possible for each student. The reading environment I had envisioned for my project was easier to establish in 4a than in 4b. Among other factors, field observations revealed that two circumstances played into this development. First, a team-teacher was always present in 4a, which had a noticeable effect on the students' discipline and allowed us to oversee them reading inside and outside the classroom

at the same time. In contrast to 4a, students in 4b worked more effectively when reading at their classroom desks rather than moving to other locations in and outside the classroom. In addition, there are less students in 4a than in 4b. Since it took five to ten minutes to establish a calm reading environment each lesson, I felt encouraged in my decision to dedicate entire 50 minutes lessons to reading instead of reading for a shorter amount of time each lesson, as some literature on ER suggests (Hedge 94). Even though Bamford and Day (155) as well as Jacobs and Farrell (55) suggest that teachers read alongside their students during SSR time, I chose a different approach. I actively walked around and observed my students as they read as I wanted them to stay focused and maintain discipline throughout the reading lessons. Particularly in 4b, it became evident that many students needed to feel constant supervision to stay focused, especially at the beginning of the project when they were not yet engaged with their stories.

Most students understood their assignment and appeared to enjoy working independently without continuous instruction. This project demonstrated that allowing freedom and autonomy in the classroom can have a positive impact, even in classes where discipline and adherence to rules are sometimes challenging. Contrary to concerns that such students may struggle with larger, self-directed projects, I observed that they were notably calmer and more engaged during the reading sessions than in most regular lessons. However, the findings revealed two key issues related to students' autonomy. The first was their reluctance to read instructions. In my experience, this is a common problem, not unique to this project. Many students struggle to read and understand instructions independently, but a project like this provides an opportunity to practice that skill. This perspective is supported by Eisenmann, who emphasises that ER projects can help foster autonomous learning, which is essential for successful differentiated teaching (195). However, through observations it became evident that some students seemed unable to enjoy reading their books while also working on their portfolio tasks. The intention was to provide added liberty to the students by giving them the option to read whenever they chose to and to complete tasks whenever they felt like working on them. For some students, this freedom seemed to be overwhelming. I was particularly astonished to see that after just a few pages, some learners began to work on tasks that were hardly feasible with so little knowledge of the story. Some students attempted to write a letter to the author or a book review after only a few reading lessons and others only started the vocabulary collection after having finished reading. Surprisingly, the more experienced class did not handle this flexibility better than their less experienced peers. I had expected my students to have the maturity to determine

at what time it was appropriate to complete which task. However, my observations proved otherwise. As result, this aspect of the project was adjusted in the second project cycle.

With regard to student attitudes towards reading, observations revealed that the majority of students were enthusiastic about reading their books. They frequently asked about additional reading sessions, some students even talked to me about their books' contents during lunch break or at different occasions and it was clear that most of them preferred reading sessions over regular English lessons. Both classes are, in terms of discipline, rather demanding. However, it was indeed possible to create a quiet and enjoyable reading atmosphere, which illustrates the students' motivation to participate in the project. Furthermore, on average and solely based on my subjective observations, girls seemed to be more engaged than their male classmates. It was also noticeable that more proficient students were generally more motivated than weaker learners, even though an attempt was made to address all students equally through internal differentiation in the tasks and, above all, through different language levels of the graded readers. More proficient students had a wider range of options, which gave them greater flexibility to choose books that matched their interests. For example, a level-5 student could select any reader from levels three to five, allowing interest in the story to guide their choices rather than strictly limiting them by ability. In the book selection process and then similarly later, in the course of the project, I noticed that for low-proficiency learners, it was specifically hard to find appealing materials and that they were among those who enjoyed reading the least. Some weaker learners frequently expressed frustration with the limited and less exciting options available at their reading level. For low-proficiency students, wanting to select books above their reading level became a recurring issue, as they were more drawn to the appealing content of higher-level texts. Convincing them to stick to readers within their assigned levels was often difficult. In contrast, starting from Level 3, finding interesting material was no longer a problem. In this context, Claridge notes that publishers often struggle to produce graded readers that are both simple and captivating for beginners ('Graded Readers: How the Publishers Make the Grade' 118). My findings demonstrate the need for better reading materials designed for beginner-level students to ensure that every student in the classroom can fully benefit from ER projects. To address this issue, I considered ordering additional low-level graded readers to expand the selection. However, due to budgetary limitations, this was not possible, and we had to continue using the existing selection in the second project cycle.

The third research question aims to identify differences in the behaviour of students with regard to the length of an ER project. 4b had already started a class library project in the previous semester. Students were, thus, familiar with the procedures and field notes reveal that in the beginning of the intervention they did indeed require fewer detailed instructions. Overall, students in 4b needed less coaching than students in 4a to complete portfolio tasks. The reading environment to enjoy reading as a pleasurable activity, however, was generally better in 4a, who had not had experience in with an ER project.

Finally, the book fair, where students presented key elements of their books, was very successful. It fulfilled its purposes: students practiced speaking by giving their presentation multiple times to small audiences, they talked about their books demonstrating overall understanding of the content and they gained an overview of the available book selection for the second project cycle.

6 Revised instructions and materials for the second project cycle

By the end of 2024, all participants had read at least one book and received feedback on their portfolio work. Additionally, they had prepared and delivered short book presentations and attended the book fair to select a second book to read. The selected graded readers for both cycles are included in the appendix of this thesis. Students were already familiar with the class library project procedures, which remained largely unchanged. There were, however, some adjustments made based on the observations and conclusions drawn from the first project cycle. The following section presents an overview of the five key modifications introduced in the second project cycle:

1. **Separate reading from task completion:** In the first project cycle, students had the freedom to decide when to read and when to work on their portfolios. While this worked well for some, it became apparent that most students would benefit from separating reading sessions from task completion. A key observation from the first project cycle was that many students fell behind with their portfolio tasks because they became fully absorbed in their reading. This insight was an important guideline for the most significant modification for the second project cycle. Students were only allowed to complete tasks after they had finished reading their books, to prioritise reading. This adjustment aimed to enhance concentration and productivity in both parts of the project. Additionally, not including while-reading activities helped shifting the focus to reading enjoyment.
2. **Reorganise portfolio layout for clarity:** To address confusion encountered during the first project cycle, in the second cycle students received an independent work plan with clearly defined obligatory and voluntary tasks. As students were already familiar with the layout of this work plan, they were expected to manage working autonomously better than in the first cycle.
3. **Read for meaning and ignore unknown words:** Following the recommendations of Day et al., the use of online dictionaries was not allowed during reading sessions in the second project cycle (13). This decision aligns with the principles outlined by Bamford and Day, particularly their emphasis on avoiding disruptions to the reading flow (45-46). Observations from the first cycle confirmed that looking up words frequently distracted students from fully engaging with the texts.
4. **Simplify assessment:** In an effort to render assessment transparent, in the first project cycle, students received a detailed assessment sheet organised into different categories. This assessment sheet proved impractical and was thus not reused in the second project cycle. Instead, the assessment aligned with the way independent work plans are typically

evaluated. Similarly to the first project cycle, assessment criteria were provided with the instructions for the independent work plan to ensure that students knew what was expected of them.

5. **“Book club meetings” with posters instead of a book fair:** Even though the book fair was successful in the first project cycle, poster presentations in “Book club meetings” were introduced to the second project cycle to provide variety. As highlighted by Bamford and Day, encouraging meaningful discussion about the stories that have been read should play an important role in post-reading activities (Bamford and Day in (Renandya and Jacobs 10)). Designing posters and participating in a Q&A about their books provided students with the opportunity to share their thoughts, opinions and emotions about the stories they had read.

As outlined, in the second project cycle, post-reading tasks were organised in an independent work plan. This independent work plan, including corresponding instructions, worksheets and assessment criteria, as well as a detailed project plan for the second cycle can be found in the appendix of this thesis. Table 8 provides an overview of the portfolio tasks included in the independent work plan.

	Task	Task type (by Eisenmann 89-90)	Learning goal(s)
Obligatory portfolio tasks			
1	My Book: Summary Sheet	Important facts Personal impressions	Developing writing skills Demonstrating general comprehension
2	Book poster	Important facts Personal impressions	Demonstrating general comprehension Showing creativity
3	Vocabulary collection	Language focus	Expanding vocabulary
4	Interview with a classmate	Personal impressions	Expressing one’s opinion
Voluntary portfolio tasks			
5	Visualisation	Creative	Showing creativity Demonstrating detailed comprehension
6	Social media update	Creative	Demonstrating detailed comprehension
7	Read Aloud!	Language focus	Developing pronunciation skills

Table 8 : Overview of portfolio tasks for the second project cycle

Two of the portfolio tasks, namely Tasks 1 and 6, were inspired by and adapted from Marlene Schwarz' Book project 5c (Schwarz). In terms of internal differentiation, in the first project cycle, "Standard AHS" students received modified, more demanding tasks than their "Standard Mittelschule" classmates. However, the analysis of the first project cycle has revealed the most important tool to differentiate in this project is the difference in reading levels of the graded readers. In the second project cycle, only the book summary task was adapted to "Standard AHS" students' advanced proficiency. They had to write a full book report, whereas their peers only completed a shorter, scaffolded summary. Additionally, in the "Read aloud" task, the passage assigned to "Standard AHS" students was longer and more complex, due to their more advanced reading materials. The independent work plans required students to get a signature for each completed portfolio task. Hence, they immediately received feedback. To conclude the project, after completing reading their second book and the related post-reading tasks, students participated in "Book Club meetings". They were divided into nine groups of five where they were grouped homogenously according to their reading levels. The four audience members each drew a question from a box to ask the presenter. Low-proficiency groups received simpler questions than their more advanced classmates. The questions used in the "Book Club meetings" can be found in the appendix of this thesis. Like the book fair, this part of the project involved both participating classes. Since the primary aim of this project was to foster a love for reading these book discussions were not formally graded. However, participation was factored into the "Mitarbeitsnote".

6.1 The second project cycle: observations and reflections

In the following section, I will reflect on the modifications implemented in the second project cycle and evaluate their usefulness for the project. The question to be answered in this chapter is: In how far did the adjustments discussed in Chapter 6 improve the project? Similar to Chapter 5, these observations and reflections are based on a detailed analysis table, which is attached in the appendix. The analysis table maintains the same categorisation as in the first project cycle, however, the text in this chapter is structured according to the five main modifications presented in the previous section.

The most crucial modification in Cycle 2 was the separation of reading from task completion. This change reduced the level of self-organisation required from the students. While they were still given a number of tasks to select from, learners no longer needed to determine when it made sense to complete a specific task as all exercises were designed as post-reading activities.

As a result, teacher-interventions necessary in the task-completion process decreased considerably and the working atmosphere was improved for two reasons: autonomous learning was facilitated and designated reading and working areas could be created and time management became easier because reading was prioritised. By the end of the project, even if students had not completed all obligatory portfolio tasks, they had at least finished reading their books. Interestingly, the total course time required for the second project cycle was reduced. While the first project cycle spanned over 22 English lessons, the second project cycle was completed within just 14 50-minute lessons. This reduction in necessary course time can, of course, partly be attributed to the circumstance that less time was required for the introduction of the project and students' familiarity with project. However, observations indicate that the main reason was the increased efficiency achieved through the separation of reading and task completion. Moreover, after a few students had finished reading, I was able to physically separate readers and students who were working on post-reading tasks from each other. It was therefore possible to create a reading space outside and a working space, where collaboration and communication was sometimes necessary, inside the classroom.

In the second project cycle, students received post-reading tasks in the form of an independent work plan. They were already familiar with this format, which greatly improved task understanding and clarity and reduced the need for teacher support. A key insight gained from both project cycles is that routine fosters autonomy, as demonstrated by the improved working atmosphere when using familiar work plans. Furthermore, in the second project cycle, the use of laptops was reduced to a minimum. Hence, the vocabulary collection task was designed in a way where online dictionaries were not required. Learning goals and instructions for this task changed but the layout remained largely unchanged. This caused some confusion among students.

In alignment with the literatures' suggestion, the second project cycle placed greater emphasis on reading for meaning and overall comprehension of the graded readers' content. In this context, prohibiting the use of digital devices during the reading phase of the project proved to be the right decision. Although students initially needed time to adapt to this change, banning laptops contributed to a reduced project duration, eliminated the danger of AI-produced texts and forced students to rely on their own skill or asking their teacher for help instead of immediately resorting to digital tools. Most importantly, however, students did not interrupt their reading flow by looking up unfamiliar words but had to rely on the context of the story to understand meaning.

Assessment criteria and evaluation procedures were completely changed and reduced to a minimum in the second project cycle. Despite the absence of a detailed assessment scale, students were equally engaged in their portfolio work, compared to the first project cycle. This demonstrated that a detailed assessment scale with a point system focusing on accuracy did not add any meaningful value to the project's objectives. Moreover, due to the modifications in feedback procedures teacher workload was noticeably reduced. Students received immediate oral feedback during the reading after completing each task instead of written feedback after project deadlines. This allowed learners to instantly correct errors or revise their work and receive immediate oral praise which, in turn, enhanced their engagement and motivation.

One obligatory portfolio task required students to design a poster for their book that they later used during the "Book Club meetings". It was interesting to observe that many students struggled to design creative posters without including too much text. The "Book Club meetings" were a purposeful alternative to the book fair.

In addition to the insights gained from the adaptations implemented, the second project cycle also revealed new unexpected findings. Some students chose to read graded readers that were not novels but, for example, compilations of different tales and stories or biographies of influential people. For these students, the scaffolding provided in the book summary task, for instance, proved confusing and ineffective. Therefore, even though research and observations from the first project cycle indicate that student choice is crucial the success of an ER project, a more homogenous book selection would facilitate the creation of post-reading activities that are suitable for all readers. Moreover, at the beginning of Cycle 2, students repeatedly asked permission to listen to music with headphones while reading. Rather than immediately forbidding it, I told them that I needed to research the matter before reaching a decision. After doing so, I communicated my informed decision to the class and gave valuable reasons for not allowing self-chosen music during reading. This experience reinforced the idea that students appreciate clear, justified rules and are more likely to accept them when they understand the rationale.

Furthermore, observations revealed that mixing reading session with unrelated tasks is not advisable and disrupts reading engagement and focus. This became apparent when, on one occasion, I asked students to finish an unrelated writing task before they received their books to continue reading. To maintain an enjoyable reading and working atmosphere, an ER project should be kept separate from other teaching contents. In addition, students who had received

support in Cycle 1 through audiobooks, were assisted in the same way in Cycle 2. Interestingly, proficient learners who read more advanced books showed little interest in the audiobooks. Finally, another simple yet very effective change in the second project cycle was the organisation of the books in the class library boxes. Handing out readers at the beginning of each lesson was time-consuming but keeping them organised by level greatly facilitated this process which helped establishing a productive working atmosphere faster.

In conclusion, an important takeaway from both project cycles is that routines contribute greatly to fostering autonomy and creating a positive learning atmosphere. This is further supported by the observation that, while the project initially ran more smoothly in 4b who had prior experience in ER projects, these discrepancies had disappeared after some time and were no longer observable in the second project cycle. Overall, the second project cycle was more effective, as both my students and I, had gained more experience, and all modifications implemented proved beneficial.

7 Findings on student attitudes towards reading: a quantitative analysis of student questionnaires

The results presented in this section were obtained using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“Nein, überhaupt nicht”) to 5 (“Ja, sehr”). To investigate potential changes in attitudes towards reading over the course of the project, students filled out pre- and post-project questionnaires. As their names imply, the pre-project questionnaire was completed by the 40 project participants before the AR project intervention and the post-project questionnaire was administered after the final stage of the second project cycle. The pre-project questionnaire comprised eleven questions whereas the post-project questionnaire only consisted of nine questions. In contrast to the post-project questionnaire, the pre-project questionnaire gathered additional information regarding the languages the learners can read in, providing insights into the linguistic diversity of the students. Additionally, in both questionnaires, students indicated their class and a codename, allowing me to compare their individual responses in pre- and post-project questionnaires while ensuring anonymity. Although 40 students participated in the project, nine had to be excluded from the individual analysis as they were not able to retain their codenames for the post-project questionnaire and thus a comparison to their previous answers was not possible.

In the following chapter, noteworthy results from the questionnaires will be presented graphically and discussed. The analysed results include findings from items 4, 5, 9, 10 and 11. All results and corresponding visual representations are included in the appendix of the thesis. Item numbers in this chapter were allocated based on the numbering in the pre-project questionnaire.

Item 4, exploring the students reading habits outside of school, is particularly relevant in addressing the first research question. The distribution of responses for Item 4 is depicted in Figure 6.

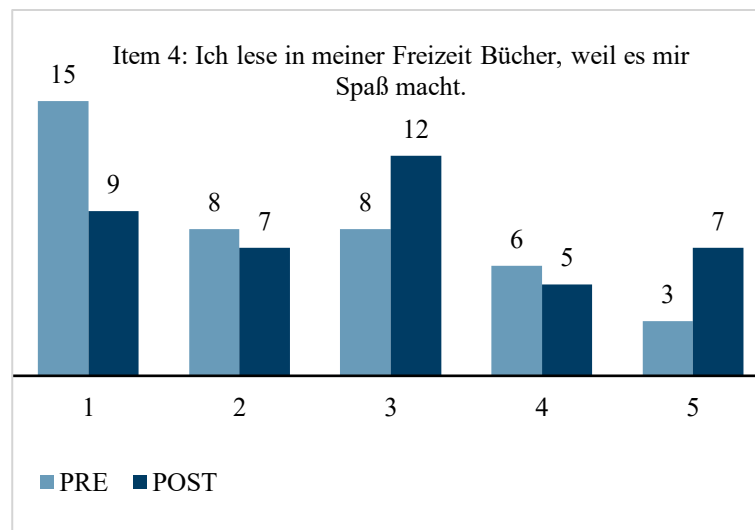


Figure 6: Answers to Item 4

The bar chart in Figure 6 indicates a shift from the majority of students not liking to read in their leisure time before the project, to 24 students selecting at least the neutral option or a more positive response (4 or 5) in the post-reading questionnaire. To gain a more comprehensive insight into the results, examining individual student responses reveals some additional findings. In Figure 7 answers in pre- and post-questionnaires of the 31 project participants that entered their correct code are compared.

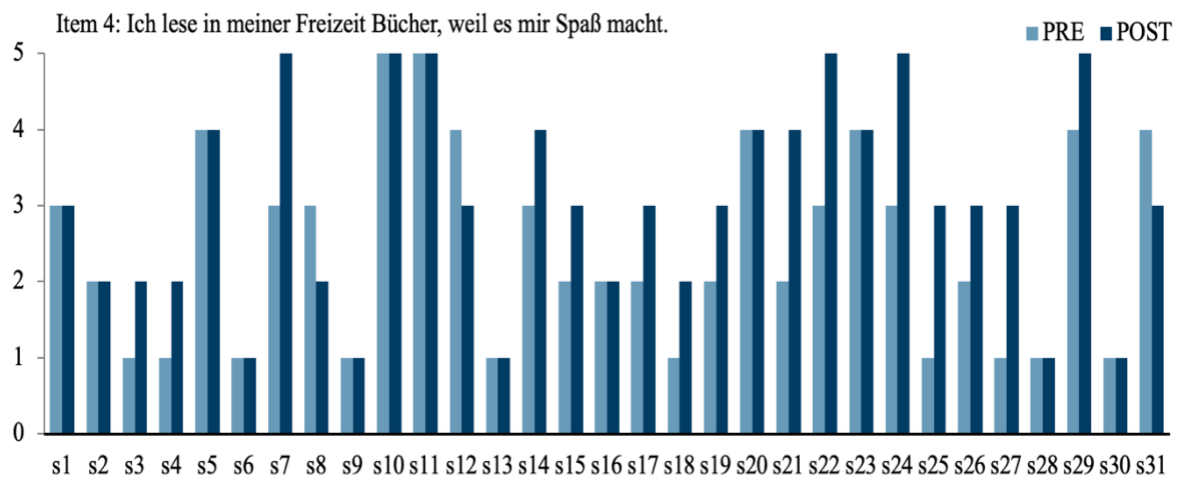


Figure 7: Individual student answers to Item 4

In total, 15 students were more likely to read for pleasure in their leisure time after the project than they were before. Among these 15 students, six students gave answers that improved by more than one point on the Likert scale. 13 students have not shown a change in behaviour and in only three cases the willingness to read outside of school has declined. Nevertheless, the overall responses to Item 4 suggest that the project had a positive influence on the students' general reading attitudes.

In this context, it is insightful to explore differences between the two participating classes. 4b had previously participated in a similar ER project, which effectively extended the period of time that they had been engaged in ER.

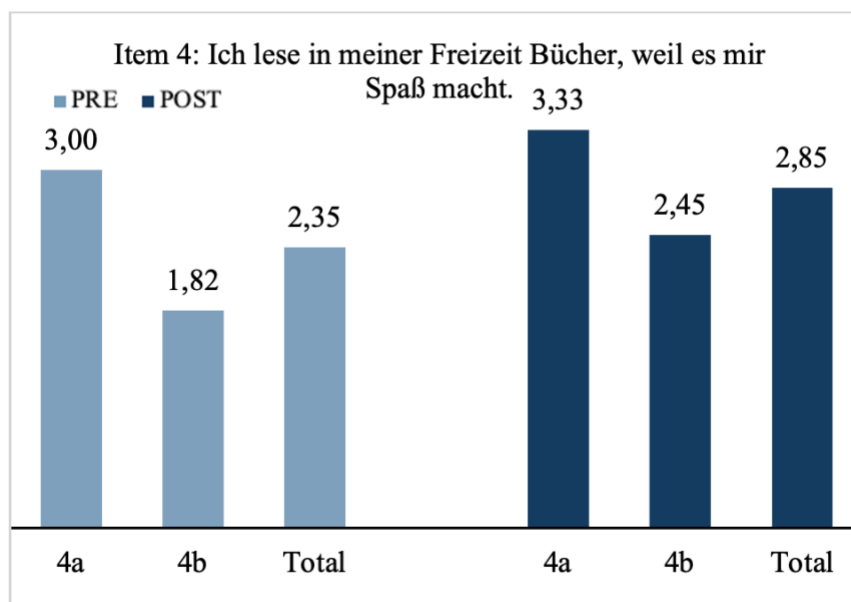


Figure 8 : Average results for Item 4 by class

Interestingly, Figure 8 reveals that attitudes towards reading were initially worse in 4b than in 4a. This did not change after the project. However, in 4b stronger positive changes were observed over the seven-month duration of this project, suggesting that a longer period of ER may have a greater impact on reading attitudes. The average score in 4b rose by 0.63 points from an average of 1.82 to 2.45 points, while in 4a it only increased by 0.33 from an average of 3 to an average of 3.33 points on the 5-point Likert scale. The results also emphasise that the average reading attitudes in 4a were already relatively high before the start of the class library project, underscoring that, given the small number of project participants, individual personalities in each class might have had an impact on the results.

Item 5 aimed to investigate students' attitudes specifically towards reading books at school. The results are presented in a bar chart in Figure 9.

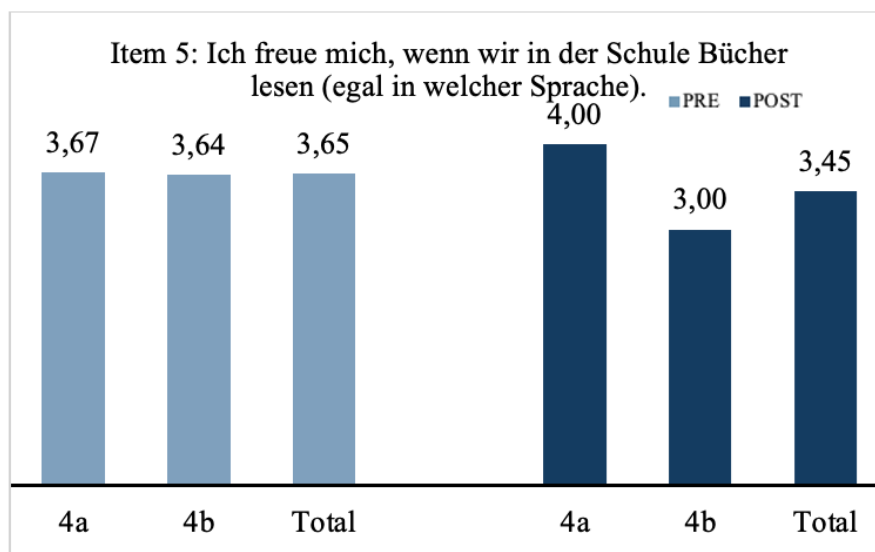


Figure 9 : Average results for Item 5 by class

Regarding the students' attitudes towards reading books at school, average scores in Item 5 declined in both classes over the duration of the project. A closer examination of the distribution of answers in Figure 10 reveals that this decline is largely caused by six students selecting “nein, überhaupt nicht” in the post-project questionnaire, whereas no one selected this option prior to the AR intervention.

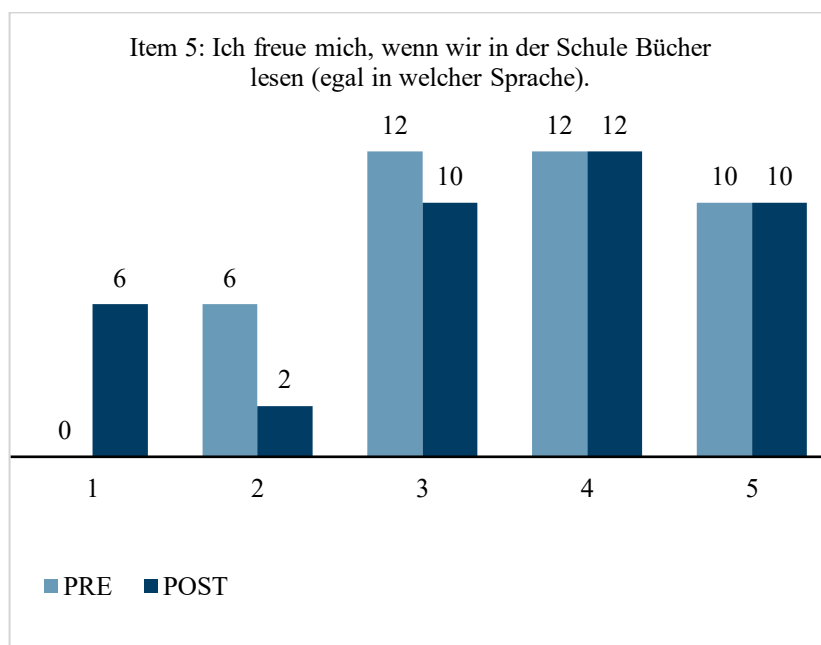


Figure 10 : Distribution of scores for Item 5

Additionally, the number of students who chose options four or five remained the same. Hence, the students selecting “nein überhaupt nicht” in the post-project questionnaire had a strong impact on the averages calculated in Figure 9.

The individual student answers to Item 5, shown in Figure 11, provide a more conclusive image.

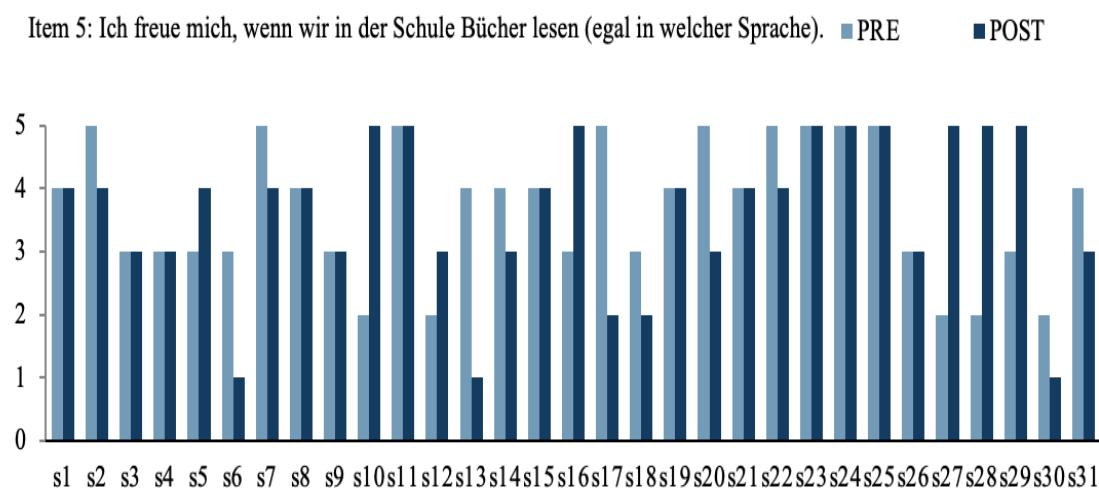


Figure 11 : Individual student answers to Item 5

Figure 11 indicates that while some students expressed a decreased interest in reading at school after the project, there were still learners who enjoyed reading at school. To be concrete, seven students (s5, s10, s12, s16, s27, s28, s29) were more pleased by reading books at school after the AR intervention than before. 13 students gave the same responses, whereas another eleven students indicated that they liked reading less after the class library project than before. In four cases (s6, s13, s17, s20) results even deteriorated by two points on the Likert scale, causing averages to drop, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Despite the decline in enthusiasm for reading at school among some students, the vast majority understood the value of ER for the purpose of improving language skills. In Item 6, students were asked whether they believed that their English skills would improve by reading English books. Average responses to this question, in both the pre- and post-reading questionnaires, are notably high, as demonstrated in Figure 12.

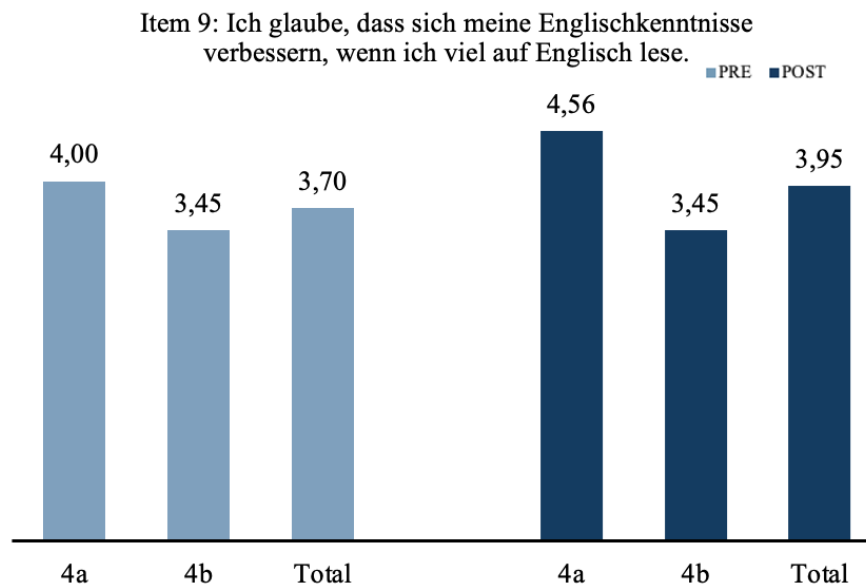


Figure 12 : Average results for Item 9 by class.

Figure 13 offers a more detailed insight into the results of Item 9.

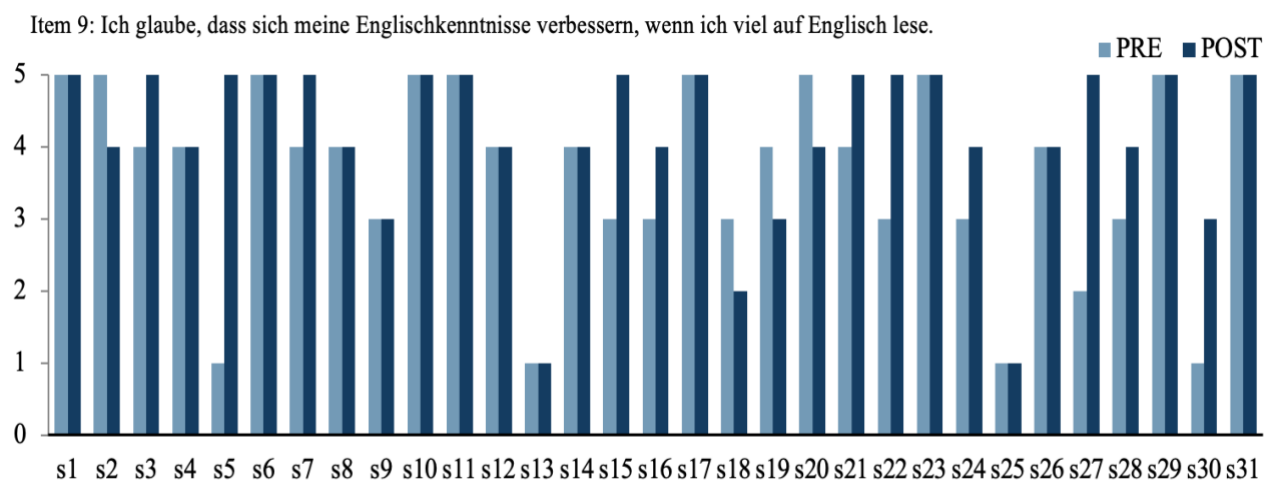


Figure 13 : Individual student answers to Item 9.

With the exception of s13 and s25, students who initially did not believe in the importance of reading to improve overall language proficiency (s5, s27, s30) dramatically changed their opinions after participating in the class library project.

Item 10 asked students whether they were looking forward to the class library project, or, similarly in the post-reading questionnaire, to what extent they had enjoyed it.

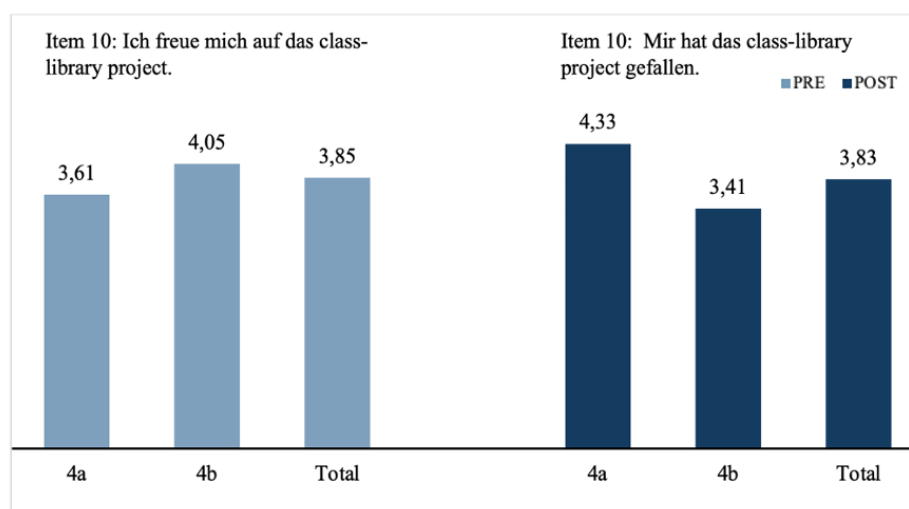


Figure 14 : Average results for Item 10 by class.

Figure 14, demonstrating the average results for this item, shows that answer scores were relatively high and noticeably higher than those in Items 4 and 5. This indicates that students were more excited about this particular ER project than about reading in class in general or reading for pleasure in their leisure time, both before and after the intervention. Examining Figure 14 in detail also reveals that, in total, students were slightly more enthusiastic about the class library project in September than they were seven months later, in March. A comparison of the two classes shows that students in 4b, who had had prior experience with an ER project, were initially more enthusiastic than their peers in 4a even though they read less in their leisure time as discussed in the analysis of Item 4. The results of the answers in the post-project questionnaire, however, reveal that the average scores of learners in 4a increased considerably, whereas, on average, 4b showed a decline in enthusiasm. Figure 15 indicates that this decrease is partly due to five students' 1-point responses in the post-reading questionnaire, indicating that these students did not enjoy the reading project at all.

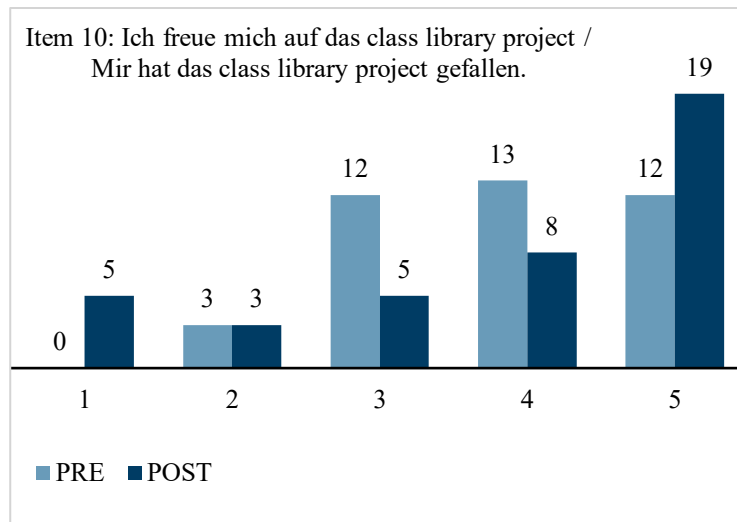


Figure 15 : Distribution of scores for Item 10.

However, more students chose the best possible answer in the post-project questionnaire than before the project intervention. Examining individual student answers allows for a closer analysis of students who gave either the least or the best possible answer in Item 10.

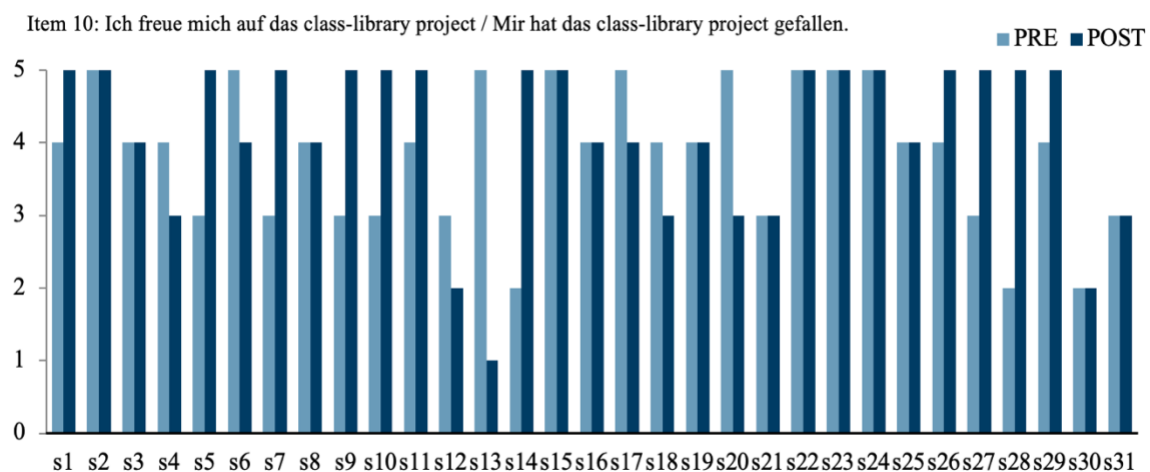


Figure 16 : Individual student answers to Item 10.

Examining Figure 16 reveals that s13 is particularly noteworthy, as they initially looked forward to the project but stated that they did not enjoy the class library project afterwards. All four other students who indicated that they did not enjoy the ER project did not remember their codes, therefore, their responses could not be analysed individually, possibly hinting at a low overall engagement in class. s1, s2, s5, s7, s9, s10, s11, s14, s15, s22, s23, s24, s26, s27, s28, s29 are the ones who enjoyed the project the most, judging from their answers in the post-reading questionnaire. Interestingly, only five of these sixteen learners had also indicated that they looked forward to the project in September. Notably, s14 and s28 initially expressed little enthusiasm for the project but later dramatically changed their minds.

Finally, and related to this, learners were asked to indicate which of the four skills, reading, listening, writing or speaking, they enjoyed practicing most in English lessons. The results are illustrated in Figures 17 and 18.

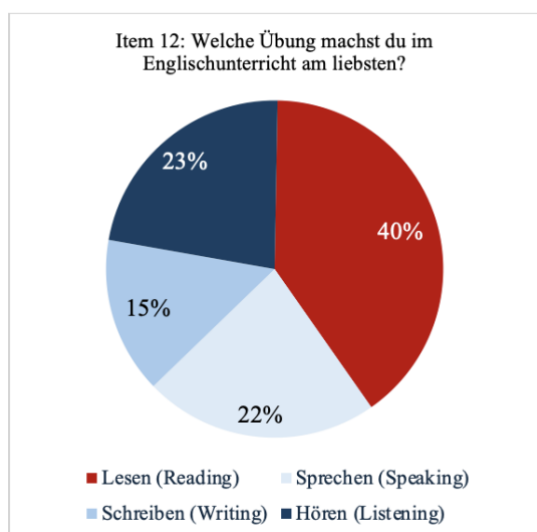


Figure 17 : Results Item 11 pre-project questionnaire

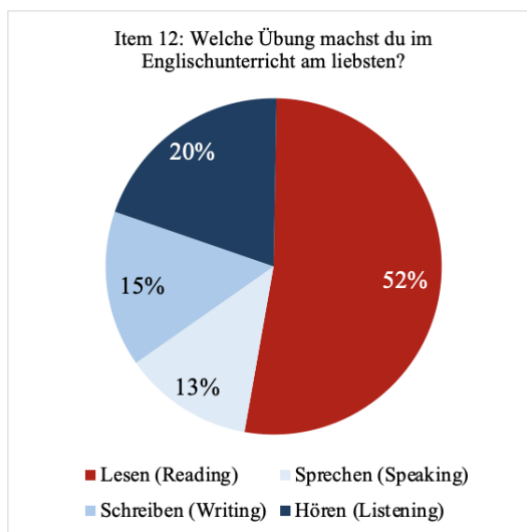


Figure 18 : Results Item 11 post-project questionnaire

By comparing Figures 17 and 18, it becomes evident that reading has always been the most popular skill by far, but positive attitudes towards it even improved over the course of the project.

8 Discussion

This thesis set out to explore the effectiveness of two central objectives of a class library project: first, its impact on students' attitudes towards reading and second, its potential to facilitate internal differentiation. The existing literature highlights numerous advantages of ER and suggests that it is beneficial not only to improve language skills but also to foster reading enjoyment and support differentiated instruction to cater to diverse learner needs. However, some claims and recommendations made in the literature appear somewhat idealistic and challenging to implement within the practical constraints of everyday school life. Therefore, the study was designed as an AR project, allowing me to examine established approaches within the specific context of my teaching environment. The research followed a mixed-method approach, combining primarily qualitative research, including classroom observations and reflective practice, with quantitative data collection obtained through pre- and post-project questionnaires. The study did not set out to collect large-scale data but focused on gaining practice-oriented insights. The following discussion chapter will explore six crucial findings that emerged from this research in detail.

8.1 A class library project presents valuable opportunities for internal differentiation and fosters learner autonomy, but low-proficiency students are still at a disadvantage.

One of the research aims was to explore whether a class library with graded readers served as a meaningful instrument to support differentiated teaching. Findings from classroom observations and reflective practice imply that internal differentiation in this project was largely successful, although certain challenges remained.

This study suggests that internal differentiation in an ER project can be achieved both through varied reading levels and differentiated task design. The latter proved to have a less substantial impact than anticipated. This became particularly evident in the second project cycle, where fewer internally differentiated tasks were provided, yet learner autonomy and time-management still improved.

Graded readers provided individualised reading materials, allowing students to work at their own pace, thus fulfilling a key requirement of differentiated instruction. This aligns with Tomlinson's views that successful differentiation involves assigning individual learners different tasks based on their level of proficiency (13). Eisenmann and Summer outline that a class library provides an ideal opportunity for differentiated instruction even without

accompanying tasks (302). Nevertheless, in this project, students were assigned while- and post-reading activities. “Standard AHS” students received more difficult tasks than “Standard Mittelschule” students. Tomlinson cautions that such grouping could lead to social tensions within the classroom (13). However, no such issues were observed during this project. Furthermore, Ramonda asserts that a class reader is more useful to facilitate content-related task design. However, the perceived effectiveness of the reading portfolios, students’ improving ability to engage in self-directed learning, and the success of the book fair and the book-club meetings challenge this claim.

One noticeable obstacle observed in the first project cycle was the freedom learners were granted in choosing when to complete each task and when to read. This choice was made in an attempt to align with principles of ER mentioned in theoretical best practice. In addition, this decision was supported by Brügelmann’s concept of “differentiation from below” (17), where learners direct their own learning. Applying an approach closer to “differentiation from above” (17) in the second project cycle, which provided learners with more structure, proved more effective.

Furthermore, in line with Claridge (‘Simplification in Graded Readers: Measuring the Authenticity of Graded Texts’ 106), this project supports the observation that not all students benefit equally from ER. Despite the efforts made to cater to every student’s needs, learners at a low-proficiency level were at a disadvantage. Classroom observations revealed that freedom in material choice was critical to student engagement. However, the reflections also show that low-proficiency learners struggled to find books that suited both their linguistic levels and interests, confirming Claridge’s critique regarding the limited availability of compelling graded readers for beginners (‘Graded Readers: How the Publishers Make the Grade’ 118).

Digital tools are frequently suggested in the literature to support autonomy and self-directed learning in differentiated classrooms (for example, Dörnyei 58 and Eisenmann 114). However, allowing laptops in Cycle 1 resulted in an overuse of online translators and AI. In addition, observations confirmed Bamford and Day’s (93) and Hedgcock and Ferris’ (241) concerns that researching words in online dictionaries hinders the reading flow and compromises reading enjoyment. Removing laptops in the second project cycle led to improved reading engagement and demonstrated that while digital devices can be a great resource for teaching, sometimes it

is better to rely on more traditional teaching methods. This observation is not necessarily unique to ER projects but applies to contemporary teaching in general.

8.2 Students' reading attitudes outside of class improved, but at school students prefer reading for production over reading for pleasure.

To begin this section, I want to refer to Hall who argues that students often need support to build the confidence to read beyond the classroom. A notable improvement in students' attitudes towards reading in their free time suggests that this ER project achieved this goal. Nevertheless, enthusiasm for reading books during class time declined. Several factors could have influenced this development.

The structured nature of reading at school might have felt restrictive to some students compared to leisure reading. Additionally, observations revealed that a number of learners found it challenging to enjoy reading while simultaneously having to complete tasks. As a result, while-reading activities were avoided in the second project cycle. Findings in Chapter 7 also demonstrated that Item 10, which asked students about their overall opinion of the class library project, received higher scores than Item 4, which examined students' attitudes towards SSR during class time. This suggests that students enjoyed other elements of the reading project more than reading itself. Depending on the aims of an ER project, this observation may hold important implications for future project planning.

Looking ahead, future research could further explore this direction by completely excluding reading tasks from the project, aligning with Bamford and Day's fifth principle of ER, which states that "reading is its own reward" (8). At the same time, the discussions in the book-club meetings and the presentations in the book fair support Hedgcock and Ferris' argument that literature provides meaningful content for students to talk or write about (228). To gain a deeper understanding of these dynamics, a comparative study, similar to Boutorwick's comparison of an ER-plus and an ER-only approach, could serve as an incentive for future research. Moreover, future studies could explore the "Reading Marathon" method, where participants are given a race map equivalent to a marathon's 42-kilometer course. Each book read contributes to their progress, with shorter or easier books counting for fewer kilometres compared to longer or more challenging ones. Students are given a specific timeframe to complete the marathon. Those who successfully finish receive rewards (Jacobs and Farrell 68). A comparison regarding student

attitudes' towards reading for pleasure between this approach and the one presented in this thesis could potentially yield meaningful insights.

8.3 Students who had previous experience with a class library project required less guidance at the start and routines were key to a supportive reading environment.

As noted in the introduction of this thesis, Krashen argues that an ER project requires at least one full school year to positively influence students' reading attitudes (Krashen qtd. in Brown 239). In addressing the third research question, this thesis investigated differences in reading attitudes and behaviours between the two participating classes. In contrast to 4a, 4b had gained prior experience with ER. Although 4b showed a more noticeable improvement in attitudes over the course of the project, questionnaire scores were overall higher in 4a. Moreover, attitudes towards SSR involving English in 4b declined during the period under investigation. Therefore, quantitative results do not offer a clear answer to the third research question. However, classroom observations provide valuable additional information. The longer the project lasted, as routines were established, student engagement and concentration improved. Furthermore, other factors, such as class size and the presence of multiple teachers contributed to a calm and focused reading environment in 4a. Interestingly, such classroom conditions are rarely addressed in the existing literature. To conclude, the development of positive attitudes towards reading for pleasure does not merely depend on the time spent reading but also on the quality of the reading environment created in the classroom.

8.4 Students recognise the value of ER for language acquisition.

A strong relationship between students' attitudes towards learning and them recognising the value of the contents they learn about has been pointed out by Bamford and Day (27). Hedgcock and Ferris (234) recommend actively highlighting the significance of an ER project in its introductory phase. Following their advice, in the preparatory stage of the intervention, I tried to *sell* the project to my students. This means that I made an effort to elaborate on the projects' objectives and its rationale. I also actively aimed to convey enthusiasm for reading and highlight other benefits of the project such as working independently or getting comfortable in and outside the classroom. Judging from the positive results of Item 9 from the questionnaires, where students were asked to indicate whether they thought reading helped them to improve in language proficiency, this approach appeared to be beneficial. Looking at individual student answers further showcases that even students who did not enjoy reading at

school or particularly like the class library project recognised the importance of reading to learn a second language.

Over the course of the class library project, even though students' opinions on other items such as their attitudes towards reading at school declined, scores on Item 9 further improved. This indicates that certain aspects of the project contributed to an increased awareness of ER's benefits for the purpose of improving language skills. As mentioned in the literature review, teachers play an important part in helping their students recognise the value of tasks and enhance their engagement (Lightbown and Spada 88). The findings of this thesis suggest that students' understanding of the project's objectives and its benefits for language acquisition combined with their sense of agency were critical to increasing participation. Some students may have been engaged in the project not necessarily because they enjoyed reading but because they recognised its relevance to their language learning.

Initially, I was reluctant to exclude assessment from this project. Dörnyei states that a detailed assessment sheet is crucial for students to understand what is expected of them and spark motivation to complete tasks (58). However, observations of the first project cycle and the subsequential adaptations regarding assessment and evaluation in the second project cycle challenge this claim. Detailed assessment sheets and grade pressure were not necessary to sustain student engagement. Instead, the reading atmosphere, student choice of materials and clearly communicated benefits of reading fostered intrinsic motivation. Although the majority of students participating in this study come from underprivileged educational backgrounds and have a tendency to be indifferent to grades, I would speculate that these findings could apply across different school types.

The critical role of students' involvement in the selection of reading materials was stressed in the literature review (for example by Ebenhöf 76, Bamford and Day 26 and Hedge 38) and reinforced by the findings of this study. Surprising book choices have demonstrated that involving students in the book selection process is pivotal. Nevertheless, as Hedgcock and Ferris (238) point out, learners should be guided in choosing an appropriate book, as was done in this project. Furthermore, acting as a role-model reader or at least demonstrating one's own enthusiasm for the project, as strongly recommended by Bamford and Day (8), for example, was in retrospect pivotal to foster student engagement.

To conclude, classroom observations reported high engagement and a generally positive and focused reading and working environment during the project. In contrast, the quantitative data indicated that not all students enjoyed the class library project. This discrepancy can be explained by the learners' apparent awareness of the project's goals and benefits.

8.5 An AR project is invaluable for designing and trialling an ER project but, in this study, quantitative data diverge from subjective observations and reflections.

In line with other representatives of AR, Burns outlines that AR usually consists of several cycles (7). Observations and reflections of this project confirmed that, regardless how well researched and carefully planned a project may be, ongoing reflection and modifications can bring about invaluable insights and meaningful changes. Conducting a second project cycle proved even more impactful than initially expected. It was during the adaptation phase and the second intervention that the class library project truly began to flourish, and, in hindsight, the first project cycle can merely be seen as a trial run. Ultimately, the class library project developed for this thesis established a foundation for the design and implementation of further ER projects in my future teaching.

A comparison of the results in Chapters 5 and 6 and Chapter 7 shows that subjective observations and reflections partly differed from data acquired through the pre- and post-project questionnaires. While my field notes documented students' enthusiasm both towards reading for pleasure in class and towards the project and its accompanying tasks, quantitative findings painted a slightly different image. Interestingly, classroom observations and corresponding reflections indicated a more positive perception of the class library project than the results of the questionnaires suggested. For instance, in 4b more students expressed excitement about the upcoming class library project than later reported enjoying it in the post-project questionnaires. While this is an interesting observation, as a teacher-researcher, my active involvement in the classroom allowed me to interpret behaviours, interactions and engagement within their pedagogical context. The qualitative data obtained through observations and reflections provides a more comprehensive understanding of the project's impact than momentary insights gained through questionnaire responses. While my observations are inevitably subjective, they are grounded in professional judgment and offer conclusive data to understand learner behaviour.

At the same time, the divergence between qualitative data and student questionnaire results may also imply that practitioner-researchers can, at times, overlook events that do not fulfil their expectations. Hence a mixed-method approach, as applied in this thesis, is advisable to obtain a broader perspective on a project's implications. On the one hand, this underscores that inviting a critical friend to the classroom every now and then can be beneficial to provide alternative viewpoints and offer more objective insights. On the other hand, subjectivity is an inherent part of AR and the observations made during this project's intervention have been interpreted in their pedagogical context which led to valuable insights and ultimately to answering the research questions of this thesis.

9 Conclusion

In Chapter 3, I outlined various compelling reasons to engage in AR, which have been underscored by the outcomes of this thesis. This project largely supported the idea that ER can be meaningful to differentiated EFL instruction. Most importantly, however, writing my thesis in the form of an AR project has given me the opportunity to engage in research that was personally meaningful to me as it benefited my students and improved my teaching methods at the same time. This project has provided me with valuable insights that have already shaped my teaching practices and will continue to do so in the future.

As the literature review in Chapter 2 has shown, ER has been widely studied for many years. This AR project has explored the challenges and opportunities involved in implementing a class library project in an Austrian mixed-ability EFL classroom. With this project, I hoped to improve students' reading attitudes and to foster a passion for reading while introducing a project that catered to individual learner needs. While the former was achieved only partially, the latter appeared to be all the more relevant.

One of the most important insights from this study is that successful differentiated teaching is not solely a matter of task design. As the findings have indicated, task design and instructions are integral to creating a productive learning atmosphere. However, differentiated teaching can only be successful when students take responsibility for their own learning and are able to work on tasks autonomously, a skill that should be nurtured from the start of their education. Ultimately, by the end of this AR project, a framework for a differentiated ER project that can be adapted and reused in future EFL classes has been developed and trialled.

Moreover, the mixed-method approach adopted in this thesis has shown that there can be discrepancies between subjective classroom observations and insights from quantitative data. However, this does not mean that qualitative results are illegitimate. On the contrary, it suggests that qualitative data can reveal information that quantitative methods might miss. Nevertheless, involving external observers could further strengthen the validity of qualitative findings in an AR project.

As AR is inherently context-specific, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all teaching contexts. As noted, the differences observed between the two participating classes were largely influenced by the individual students' characters and specific learning conditions. The small sample size, involving only 40 participating students, limits some results to the particular groups involved in the project. Future research involving a larger number of participants or a comparison of different approaches to ER and differentiated instruction may yield more generalisable findings.

Furthermore, setting up a class library required a large amount of additional work for the teacher. Brown advocates for the integration of ER programmes into textbooks, arguing that this could address many of the challenges that prevent teachers from implementing ER into their teaching (240). By incorporating ER programs into textbooks, teachers can receive structured guidance on book selection and related reading activities. This would reduce the workload associated with initiating an ER project. Furthermore, embedding ER into textbooks can help legitimise the use of valuable class-time for it (Brown 240–41).

Finally, this project has also highlighted the practical limitations of implementing ER, as it is envisioned in the literature, into actual EFL teaching. According to some scholars, an ideal ER project allows students to read one book after another at their own pace and whenever they choose to. In addition, as described in the literature, pleasure reading is not connected to schoolwork nor is it viewed as an obligation. Observations from this project indicate that achieving this within the constraints of a school setting can be challenging, especially without assigning reading as homework. For instance, Day recommends that students read as many as 20 graded readers in one school year (19). In the context of this class library project, the resources to fulfil such requirements were not available. Instead, most project participants read two books, one in each cycle.

To conclude, while ER in the context of this AR project may not have been “free voluntary reading” as Krashen envisioned it in 1993 (Krashen qtd. in Bamford and Day 7), a carefully designed ER project is definitely time well spent as it can enhance reading attitudes for some learners and foster self-directed learning for all.

Word count: 27,562

10 Works Cited

- Ateek, Mohammed. 'Extensive Reading in an EFL Classroom: Impact and Learners' Perceptions'. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, Apr. 2021, pp.109–31. doi:10.32601/ejal.911195.
- Bayram, Kara. 'The Effect of Graded Readers on Reading Comprehension Skill of EFL Students'. *Language Teaching and Educational Research*, vol. 2, no. 2, Dec. 2019, pp. 160–72. doi:10.35207/latr.554716.
- Behroozian, Sam, and Ismaeil Fazel. 'Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing'. *TESOL Journal*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2022.
- Boutorwick, TJ, John Macalister, and Irina Elgort. 'Two Approaches to Extensive Reading and Their Effects on L2 Vocabulary Development'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, vol. 31, no. 2, Oct. 2019, pp. 150–72.
- Boyask, Ruth, Celeste Harrington, John Milne, and Bradley Smith. 'Reading Enjoyment Is Ready for School: Foregrounding Affect and Sociality in Children's Reading for Pleasure'. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies*, vol. 58, no. 1, June 2023, pp. 169–82, doi:10.1007/s40841-022-00268-x.
- Brown, Dale. 'Why and How Textbooks Should Encourage Extensive Reading'. *ELT Journal*, vol. 63, no. 3, July 2009, pp. 238–45, doi:10.1093/elt/ccn041.
- Brügelmann, Hans. 'Heterogenität, Integration, Differenzierung: Empirische Befunde — pädagogische Perspektiven'. *Heterogenität, Integration und Differenzierung in der Primarstufe*, edited by Friederike Heinzl and Annedore Prengel, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2002, pp. 31–43, doi:10.1007/978-3-322-99542-1_3.
- Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung. *Lehrplan Der Mittelschule: Erster Teil Allgemeines Bildungsziel*. 2 Jan. 2023, https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/Dokumente/BgblAuth/BGBLA_2023_II_1/Anlagen_0005_602132D5_6AB7_4D68_B4E4_6CF508085BA2.pdfsig.

- . *Rundschreiben Nr. 24/2021: Richtlinien Für Den Umgang mit Lese-/Rechtschreibschwierigkeiten (LRS) im schulischen Kontext*. 20 Oct. 2021.
- Burns, Anne. *Doing Action Research in English Language Teaching: A Guide for Practitioners*. Routledge, 2010.
- Claridge, Gillian. 'Graded Readers: How the Publishers Make the Grade'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2012, pp. 106–19.
www2.hawaii.edu/~readfl/rfl/April2012/articles/claridge.pdf. Accessed 27 Aug. 2024.
- . 'Simplification in Graded Readers: Measuring the Authenticity of Graded Texts'. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, vol. 17, no. 2, 2005, pp. 144–58.
- Consoli, Sal, and Kenan Dikilitaş. 'Research Engagement in Language Education'. *Educational Action Research*, vol. 29, no. 3, 2021, pp. 347–57.
doi:10.1080/09650792.2021.1933860.
- Council of Europe. *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR)*. Language Policy Unit, Strasbourg,
<https://rm.coe.int/16802fc1bf>. Accessed 27 Aug. 2024.
- Day, Richard, Jennifer Bassett, Bill Bowler, Sue Parminter, Mark Furr, Nina Prentice, Minas Mahmood, Daniel Steward, and Thomas Robb. *Bringing Extensive Reading into the Classroom*. Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Day, Richard, and Jack Bamford. *Extensive Reading in the Second Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Dörnyei, Zoltán. *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. 1st ed., Cambridge University Press, 2001, www.cambridge.org/core/books/motivational-strategies-in-the-language-classroom/541ED85A5BA071C55E154FDA328D19BA
- Dörnyei, Zoltán, and Jean-Marc Dewaele. *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2022.
doi:10.4324/9781003331926.

- Ebenhöh, Sophie. *Vocabulary Acquisition through Graded Readers: An Action Research Project amongst EFL Beginners*. Master's thesis, University of Vienna, 2022.
- Efron, Sara Efrat, and Ruth Ravid. *Action Research in Education: A Practical Guide*. The Guilford Press, 2013.
- Eisenmann, Maria. *Teaching English: Differentiation and Individualisation*. Schöningh, 2019.
- Eisenmann, Maria, and Theresa Summer. *Basic Issues in EFL Teaching and Learning*. Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012.
- Goodwin, Prue. 'Creating Young Readers: Teachers and Librarians at Work'. *Read to Succeed*, edited by Joy Court, 1st ed., Facet, 2011, pp. 29–48,
www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/read-to-succeed/creating-young-readers-teachers-and-librarians-at-work/B663B5D58BEDD955F14794F76EE2440D
- Grabe, William, and Fredricka L. Stoller. *Teaching and Researching Reading*. 3rd ed., Routledge, 2020.
- Grabe, William, and Junko Yamashita. *Reading in a Second Language: Moving from Theory to Practice*. 2nd ed., Cambridge University Press, 2022.
- Hall, Graham, editor. *The Routledge Handbook of English Language Teaching*. Routledge, 2016.
- Harmer, Jeremy. *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. 4th ed., Pearson Education Limited, 2015.
- Hedgcock, John, and Dana Ferris. *Teaching Readers of English: Students, Texts, and Contexts*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2018.
- Hedge, Tricia. *Using Readers in Language Teaching*. Macmillan, 1990.
- Henseler, Roswitha, and Carola Surkamp. 'Leselust statt Lesefrust. Lesemotivation in der Fremdsprache Englisch fördern.' *Der fremdsprachliche Unterricht. Englisch*. vol. 41, no. 89, 2007, pp. 2-10.
- Hood, Susan, Nicky Solomon, and Anne Burns. *Focus on Reading*. National Centre for

- English Language Teaching and Research, 1996.
- Horowitch, Rose. ‘*The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books*’. *The Atlantic*, Nov. 2024, www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2024/11/the-elite-college-students-who-cant-read-books/679945/. Accessed 4 March 2025.
- Ito, Lesley. ‘Children and Extensive Reading Motivation: An Action Research Project on Extensive Reading Motivation in a Private Language School’. *Language Teaching for Young Learners*, vol. 6, no. 1, Mar. 2024, pp. 104–21. doi:10.1075/ltl.00046.ito.
- Jacobs, George M., and Thomas S. C. Farrell. *Teachers' Sourcebook for Extensive Reading*. Information Age Publishing, 2012.
- John, Gerald. ‘Schulen unter Stress: Wie die Integration in Wien Schwierigkeiten macht’. *Der Standard*, Mar. 2025, www.derstandard.at/story/3000000260531/schulen-unter-stress-wie-die-integration-in-wien-schwierigkeiten-macht. Accessed 18 Mar. 2025.
- Jones, Christian. ‘Authenticity in Language Teaching Materials’. *The Routledge Handbook of Materials Development for Language Teaching*, by Julie Norton and Heather Buchanan, 1st ed., Routledge, 2022, pp. 65–77. doi:10.4324/b22783-7.
- Kaiserseder, Lea. *Investigating the Effect of an Extensive Reading Project on Improving Intensive Reading in the ELT Classroom*. Master's thesis, University of Vienna, 2024. doi:10.25365/THESIS.75251.
- Kramsch, Claire J. *The Multilingual Subject: What Foreign Language Learners Say about Their Experience and Why It Matters*. 1st ed., Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Lightbown, Patsy, and Nina Spada. *How Languages Are Learned*. 4th ed., Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Macalister, J. ‘Implementing Extensive Reading in an EAP Programme’. *ELT Journal*, vol. 62, no. 3, Apr. 2007, pp. 248–56, doi:10.1093/elt/ccm021.
- Maharsi, Ista. Review of Extensive Reading: The Role of Motivation, by Sue Leather and Jez Uden’. *TESOL Journal*, vol.14, no. 2, Jan. 2023, doi:10.1002/tesj.701.

- Marsh, Katherine. 'Why Kids Aren't Falling in Love with Reading'. *The Atlantic*, Mar. 2023, www.theatlantic.com/books/archive/2023/03/children-reading-books-english-middle-grade/673457/. Accessed 12 Mar. 2025.
- McNiff, Jean. *Action Research: All You Need to Know*. Sage, 2017.
- Minkowitsch, Maria. *Motivation and Engagement in an Extensive Reading Project: A Practical Approach for Lower Secondary Level*. Master's thesis, University of Vienna, 2013.
- Mottram, Marilyn, Katharine Young, and Kiran Satti. 'Supporting Readers' Social Motivation'. *Reading Teachers*, edited by Teresa Cremin et al., 1st ed., Routledge, 2022, pp. 56–67. doi:10.4324/9781003215615-7.
- Nation, I. S. P. *Teaching ESL/EFL Reading and Writing*. Routledge, 2009.
- Orosz, Agnes, Uvaldo Recino, and Maria Caridad Ochoa. 'Demo Lessons and Peer Observation to Enhance Student Teachers' Competencies and Exit Profiles'. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, vol. 22, no. 6, June 2023, pp. 638–58. doi:10.26803/ijlter.22.6.32.
- Oxley, Emily, and Sarah McGeown. 'Reading for Pleasure Practices in School: Children's Perspectives and Experiences'. *Educational Research*, vol. 65, no. 3, July 2023, pp. 375–91. doi:10.1080/00131881.2023.2236123.
- Pedersen, Maren Langseth, and Hildur Grann. 'I Think Reading Is Fun, Right up to the Point Where I Have to Write Something about It'. *Action Research on the Influence of Extensive Reading on Pupils' Relationship towards Reading English Literature*. The Arctic University of Norway, 2023.
- 'Penguin Readers Handbook'. *Penguin Readers*, www.penguinreaders.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/PR_ReadersHandbook_Main-1.pdf. Accessed 17 June 2024.
- Ramonda, Kris. 'Extensive Reading and Class Readers: The Case for No Choice'. *ELT Journal*, vol. 74, no. 3, Aug. 2020, pp. 277–86. doi:10.1093/elt/ccaa017.

- Renandya, Willy A., and George M. Jacobs. 'Extensive Reading and Listening in the L2 Classroom'. *English Language Teaching Today*, edited by Willy A. Renandya and Handoyo Puji Widodo, vol. 5, Springer, 2016, pp. 97–110.
- Richards, Jack C. *Key Issues in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.
- Sanford, Anthony J., and Catherine Emmott. *Mind, Brain and Narrative*. Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Schwarz, Marlene. *Book Project 5c: Winter Term 2019/20*. University of Vienna, 2019.
- The Extensive Reading Foundation*. www.erfoundation.org/wordpress/graded-readers/. Accessed 17 June 2024.
- Tomlinson, Carol A. *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-Ability Classrooms*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1995.
- Vygotskij, Lev Semenovič. *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Edited by Michael Cole et al., Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Webb, Stuart, and Anna C. S. Chang. 'How Does Prior Word Knowledge Affect Vocabulary Learning Progress in an Extensive Reading Program?' *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, vol. 37, no. 4, Dec. 2015, pp. 651–75. doi:10.1017/S02722263114000606

11 Appendix

11.1 Administrative documents

Verpflichtungserklärung zum Datenschutz bei Durchführung einer wissenschaftlichen Erhebung an Wiener Schulen



Name des Ansuchenden

Alina Kemper, BEd

Titel der wissenschaftlichen Erhebung

Exploring the impacts of an extensive reading project in mixed-ability classrooms:
An action research project on internal differentiation and reading attitudes

1. Verpflichtung:

Ich verpflichte mich,

- .) den Datenschutz gemäß § 46 Datenschutzgesetz zu wahren;
- .) für die Ermittlung und Verwendung von personenbezogenen Daten die Zustimmung iSd § 4 Z. 14 DSG des Betroffenen und allenfalls seines Erziehungsberechtigten einzuholen.

2. Erläuterung:

Mir ist bekannt,

- .) dass es untersagt ist, personenbezogene Daten zu veröffentlichen oder an andere Personen oder Stellen zu übermitteln;
- .) unzulässigerweise ermittelte personenbezogene Daten nicht verwendet werden dürfen und unverzüglich zu löschen sind;
- .) dass sämtliche datenschutzrechtlichen Verpflichtungen auch nach Beendigung meiner wissenschaftlichen Tätigkeit fortbestehen;
- .) dass Verstöße gegen die datenschutzrechtlichen Verpflichtungen auch strafrechtliche Konsequenzen nach sich ziehen können.

3. Zustimmung zur verbindlichen Übermittlung eines digitalen Ansichtsexemplars:

Ich stimme zu,

- .) dass ich dem Stadtschulrat für Wien ein digitales Exemplar der fertiggestellten wissenschaftlichen Arbeit an office@ssr-wien.gv.at zukommen lassen werde.

Wien am 20.12.2024
Ort, Datum

Unterschrift: A. Kemper

Teilnahme an einer Befragung

Sehr geehrte Eltern,

in den nächsten Monaten sollen in der Klasse, die ihr Kind besucht, zwei Befragungen durchgeführt werden. Diese Befragungen bezwecken die Erhebung wissenschaftlicher Daten für meine Masterarbeit. Auf den Fragebögen werden den Kindern Fragen über ihr Leseverhalten gestellt. Die Fragebögen werden **anonym** auszufüllen sein und die erhobenen Daten ausschließlich zur Forschung für meine Arbeit verwendet.

Ich bitte Sie, den unten angefügten Abschnitt auszufüllen und ihn an mich zu retournieren.

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mithilfe!

Alina Kemper

Ich bestätige, dass mein Kind _____ (Vor- und Nachname) (Schulstufe 8) an den Befragungen zum Thema „Leseverhalten und Einstellungen zum Lesen“ teilnehmen darf:

☐ ja

☐ nein

Ort, Datum, Unterschrift des/der Erziehungsberechtigten:

11.2 Questionnaires and analysis of quantitative data

Pre-Project Questionnaire

Liebe Schüler:innen,
dieser Fragebogen soll mir helfen zu verstehen, wie ihr derzeit zum Lesen steht. Bitte beantwortet die folgenden Fragen **ehrlich**. Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten und der Fragebogen ist **anonym**. Das bedeute, ich weiß nicht, wer welche Antworten gegeben hat.

Gib hier deinen persönlichen Code ein: *

Ich gehe in die: *

☐ 4a

☐ 4b

1) In welchen Sprachen kannst du lesen? *

☐ Deutsch

☐ Englisch

☐ Türkisch

☐ Arabisch

☐ Serbisch

☐ Slowakisch

☐ Ukrainisch

☐ Russisch

☐ Persisch (Dari/Farsi)

☐ Andere: _____

2) In welchen Sprachen liest du regelmäßig? *

☐ Deutsch

☐ Englisch

☐ Türkisch

☐ Arabisch

☐ Serbisch

☐ Slowakisch

☐ Ukrainisch

☐ Russisch

☐ Persisch (Dari/Farsi)

☐ Andere: _____

3) Bei mir zuhause wird viel gelesen. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

4) Ich lese in meiner Freizeit Bücher, weil es mir Spaß macht (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

5) Ich freue mich, wenn wir in der Schule Bücher lesen (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

6) Ich gehe gerne in die Schulbibliothek und leihe mir dort Bücher aus (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

7) Ich lese nur Bücher, wenn es von mir verlangt wird. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

8) Ich lese lieber Bücher auf Englisch als auf anderen Sprachen. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

9) Ich glaube, dass sich meine Englischkenntnisse verbessern, wenn ich viel auf Englisch lese. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

10) Ich freue mich auf das „Class-Library Project“ in Englisch. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

11) Welche Übung machst du im Englischunterricht am liebsten? *

☐ Hören (Listening)

☐ Lesen (Reading)

☐ Schreiben (Writing)

☐ Sprechen (Speaking)

VIELEN DANK FÜR DEINE HILFE! 😊

Post-Project Questionnaire

Liebe Schüler:innen,
dieser Fragebogen soll mir helfen, unser Class-Library Project zu evaluieren. Ich möchte verstehen, wie gut das Projekt funktioniert hat und ob es eure Einstellungen zum Lesen verändert hat. Bitte beantwortet die folgenden Fragen **ehrlich**. Es gibt keine richtigen oder falschen Antworten und der Fragebogen ist **anonym**. Das bedeutet, ich weiß nicht, wer welche Antworten gegeben hat.

Gib bitte den selben persönlichen Code ein, den du bereits Anfang des Schuljahres verwendet hast: *

Ich gehe in die: *

☐ 4a

☐ 4b

1) Ich lese in meiner Freizeit Bücher, weil es mir Spaß macht (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

2) Ich freue mich grundsätzlich, wenn wir in der Schule Bücher lesen (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

3) Ich freue mich, wenn wir im Englischunterricht Bücher lesen. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

4) Ich gehe gerne in die Schulbibliothek und leihe mir dort Bücher aus (egal in welcher Sprache). *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

5) Ich lese nur Bücher, wenn es von mir verlangt wird. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

6) Ich lese lieber Bücher auf Englisch als auf anderen Sprachen. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

7) Ich glaube, dass sich meine Englischkenntnisse verbessern, wenn ich viel auf Englisch lese. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

8) Mir hat das Class-Library Project gefallen. *

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐

Nein, überhaupt nicht. _____ Ja, sehr.

9) Welche Übung machst du im Englischunterricht am liebsten? *

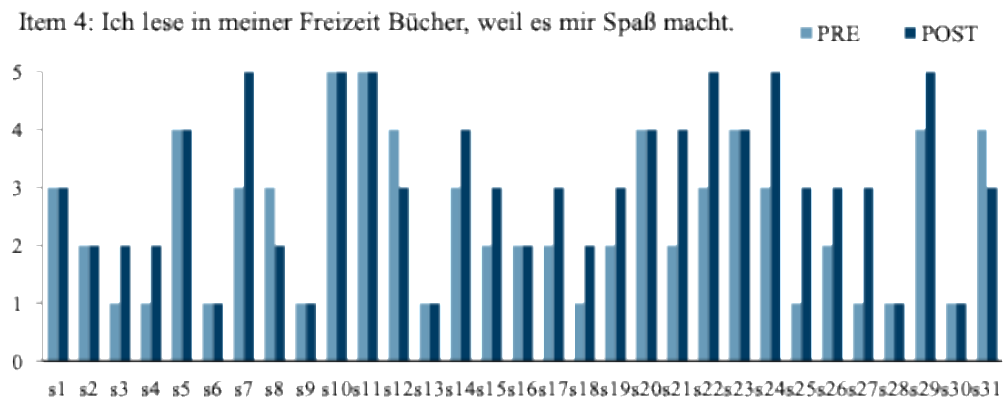
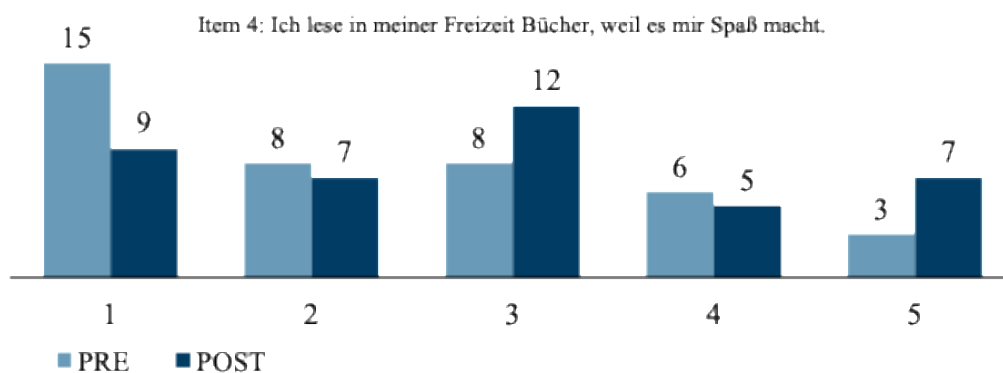
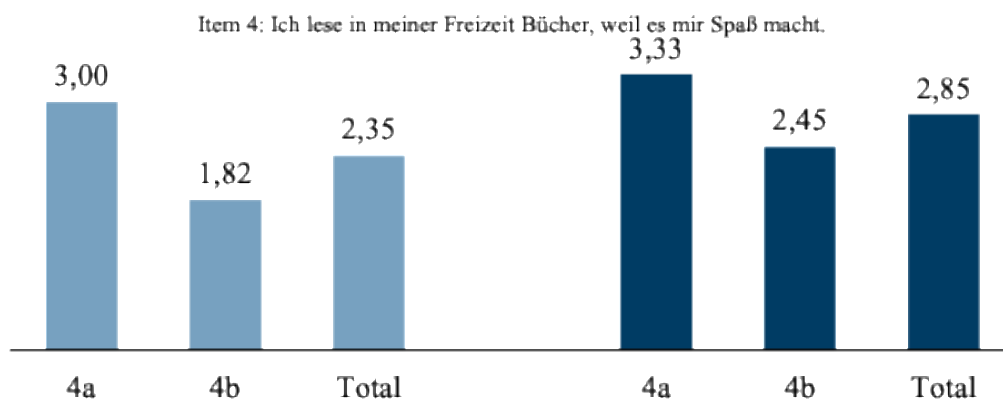
☐ Hören (Listening)

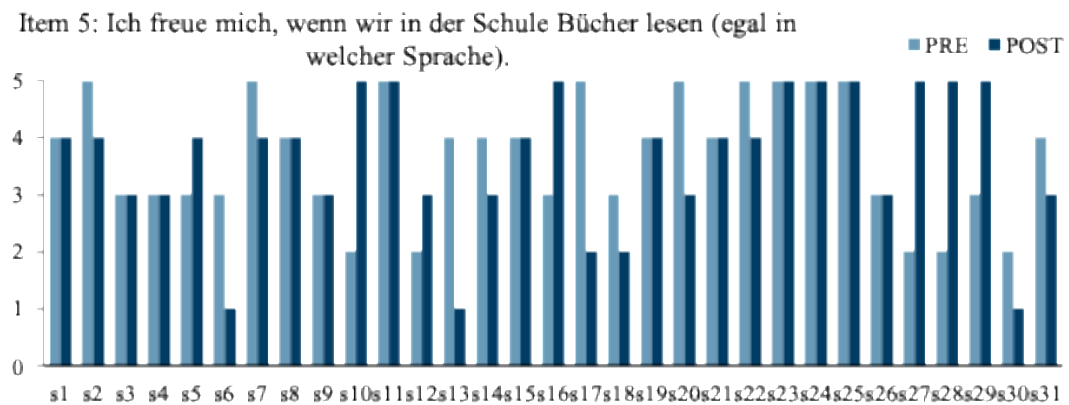
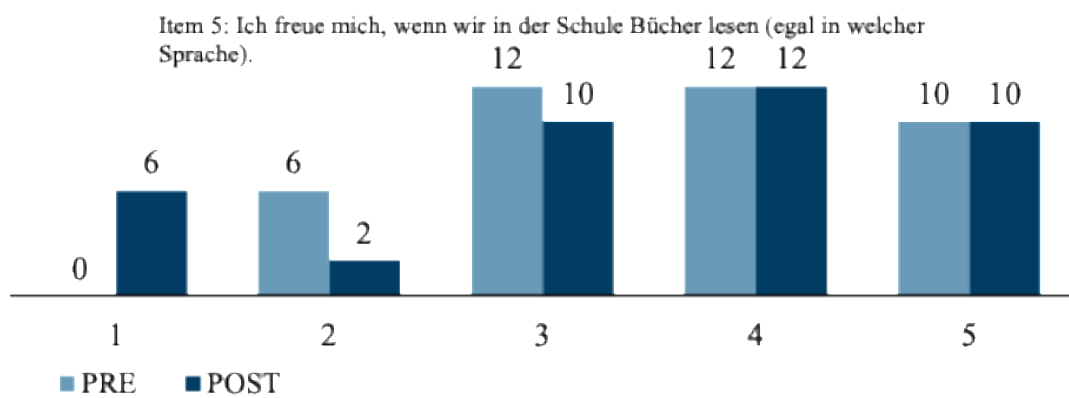
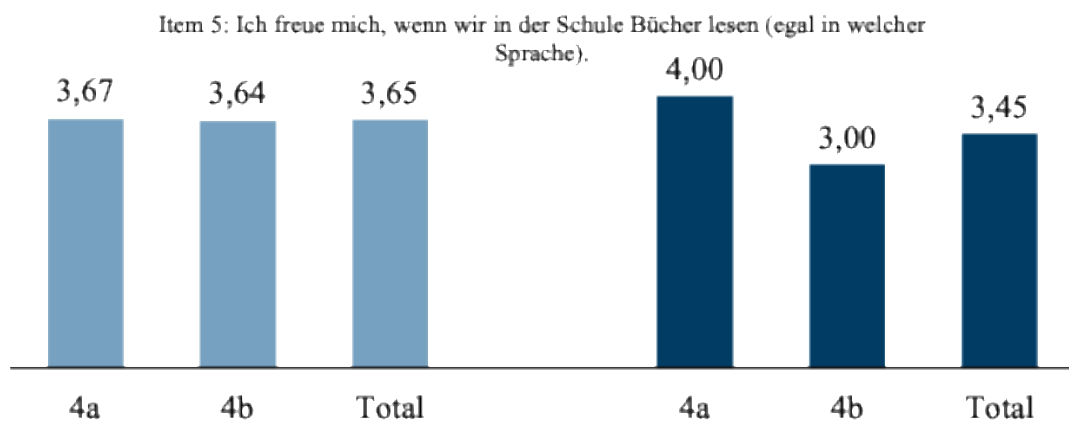
☐ Lesen (Reading)

☐ Schreiben (Writing)

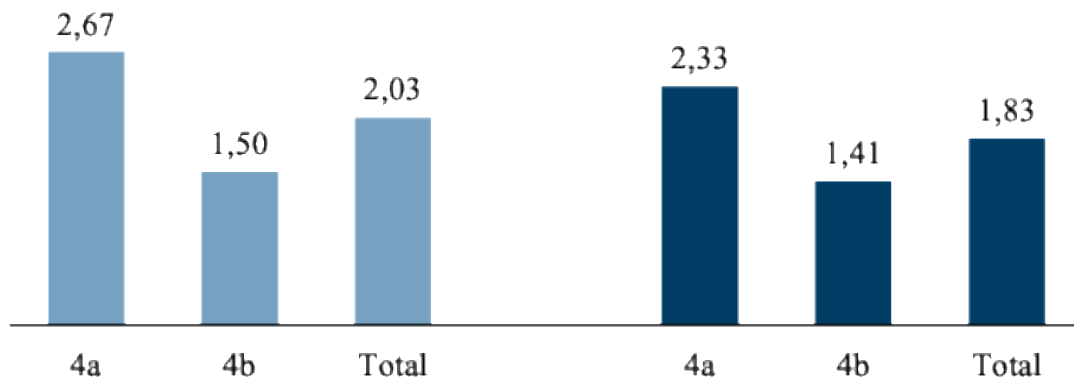
☐ Sprechen (Speaking)

VIELEN DANK FÜR DEINE HILFE! 😊

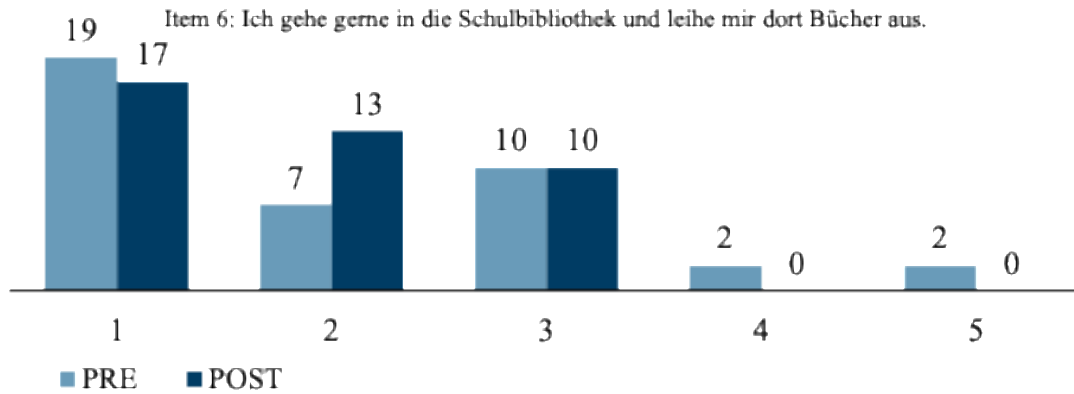




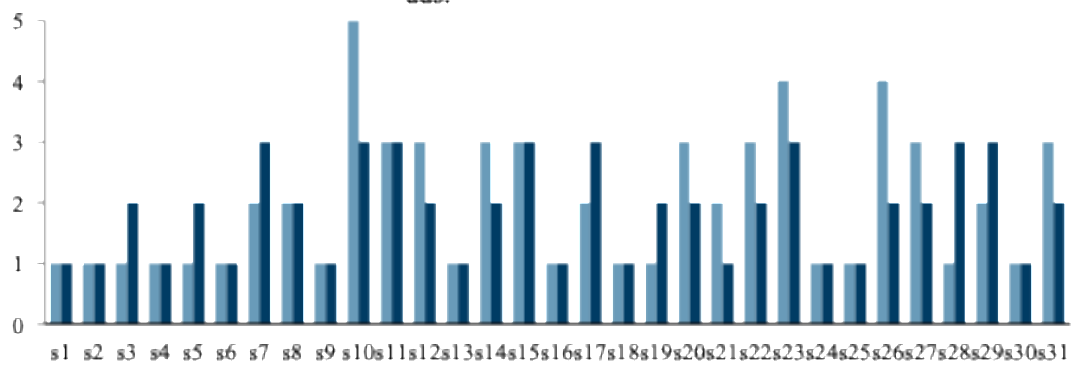
Item 6: Ich gehe gerne in die Schulbibliothek und leihe mir dort Bücher aus.



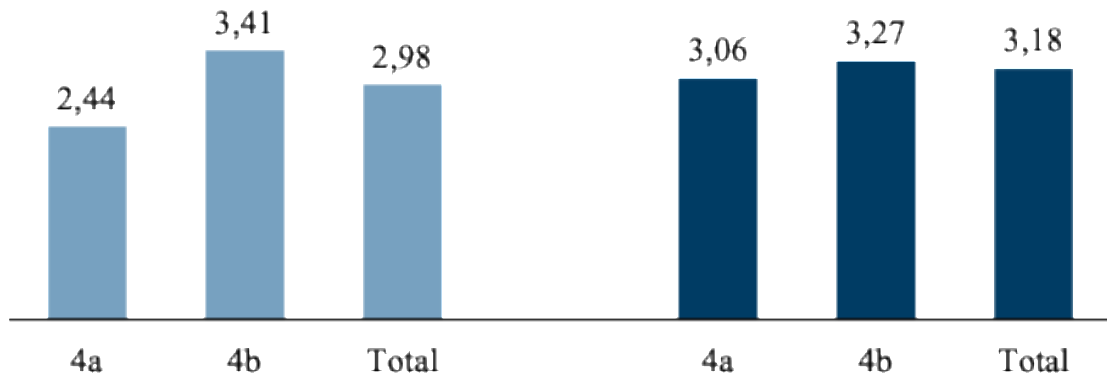
Item 6: Ich gehe gerne in die Schulbibliothek und leihe mir dort Bücher aus.



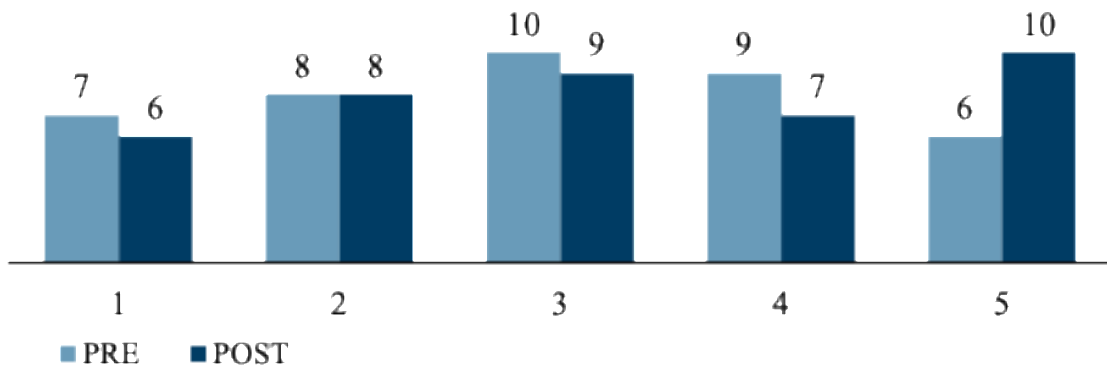
Item 6: Ich gehe gerne in die Schulbibliothek und leihe mir dort Bücher aus. PRE POST



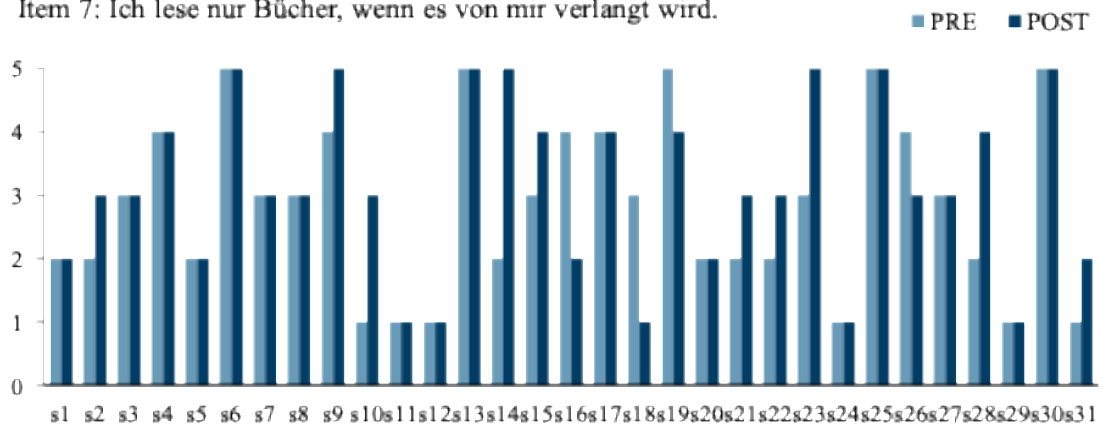
Item 7: Ich lese nur Bücher, wenn es von mir verlangt wird.

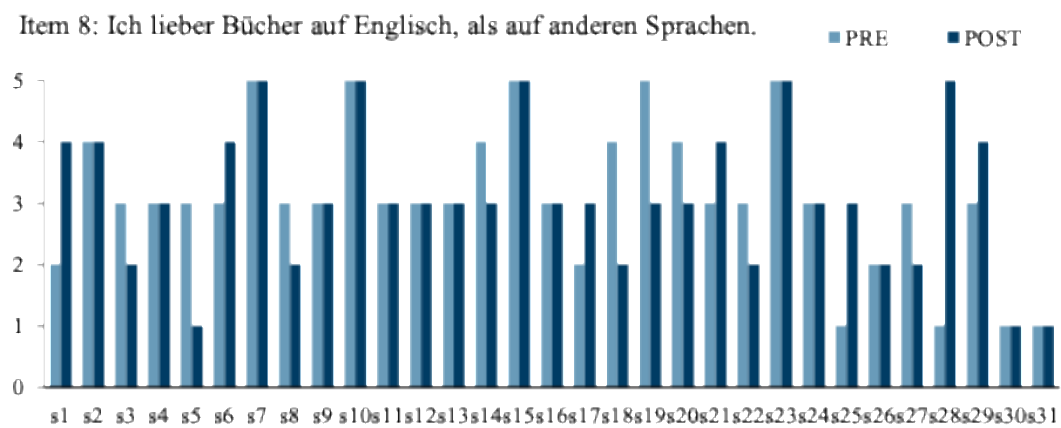
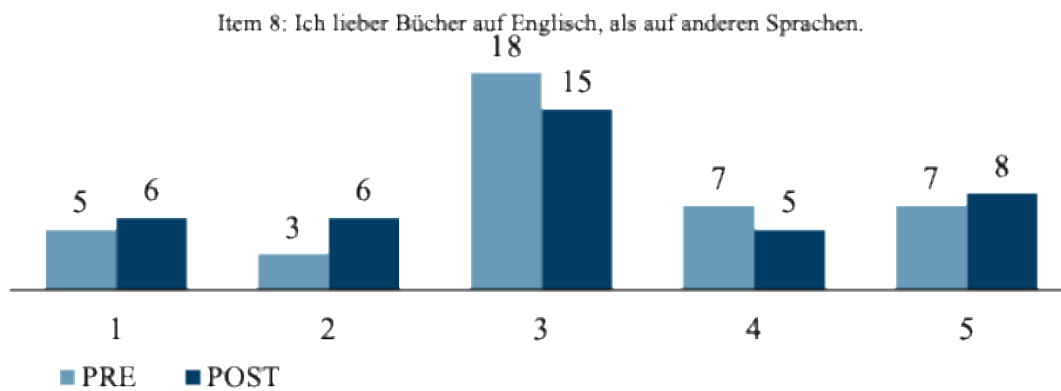
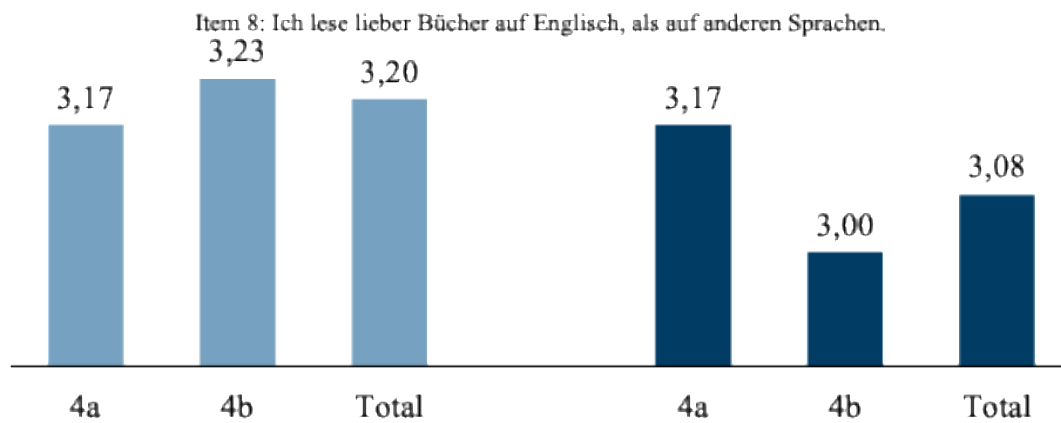


Item 7: Ich lese nur Bücher, wenn es von mir verlangt wird.

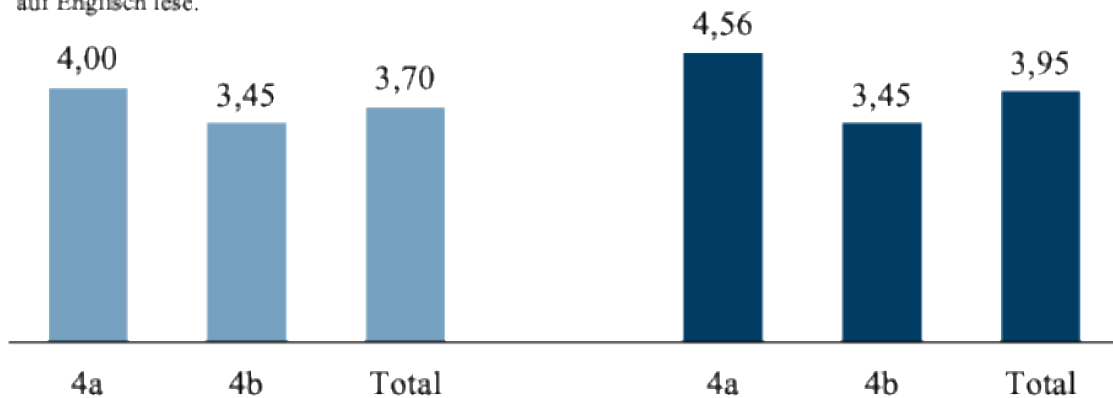


Item 7: Ich lese nur Bücher, wenn es von mir verlangt wird.

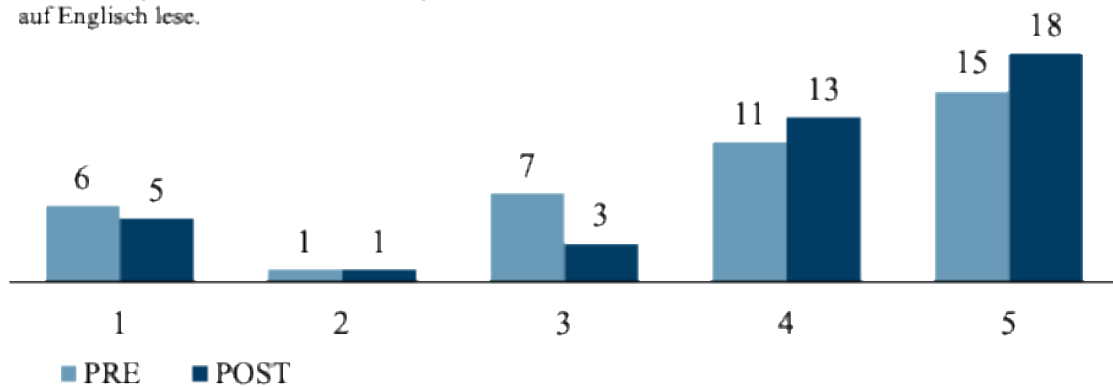




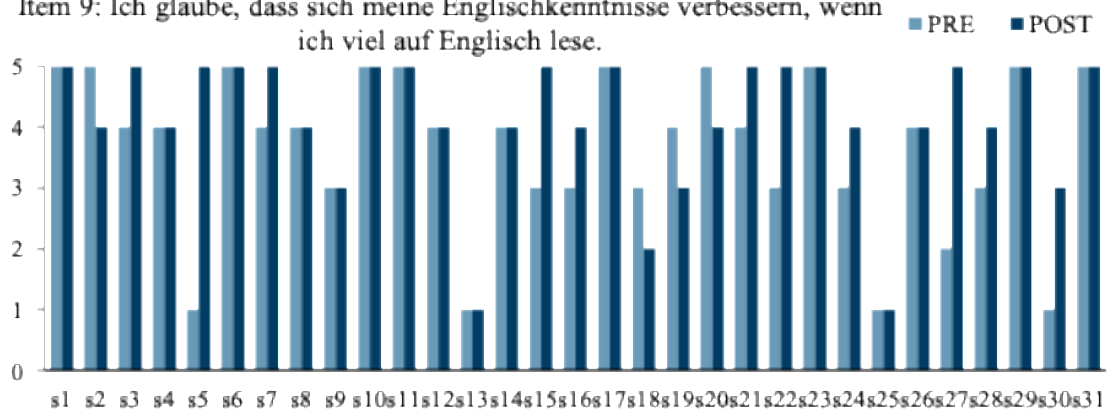
Item 9: Ich glaube, dass sich meine Englischkenntnisse verbessern, wenn ich viel auf Englisch lese.



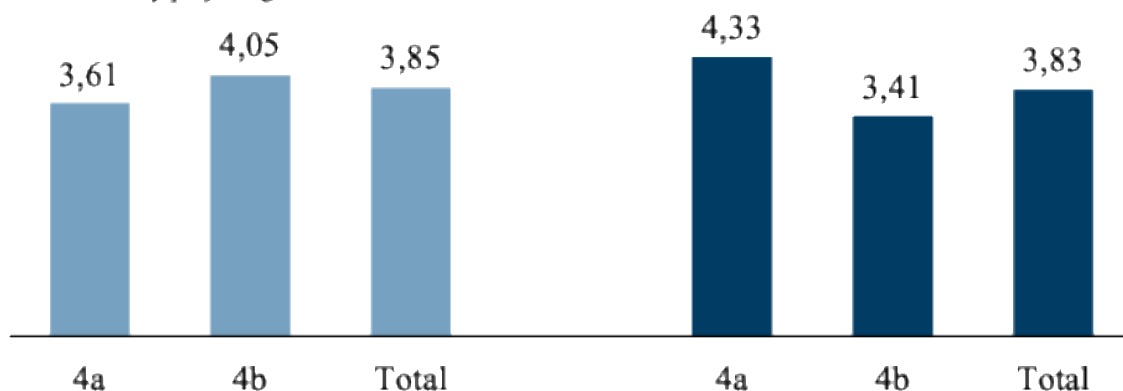
Item 9: Ich glaube, dass sich meine Englischkenntnisse verbessern, wenn ich viel auf Englisch lese.



Item 9: Ich glaube, dass sich meine Englischkenntnisse verbessern, wenn ich viel auf Englisch lese.



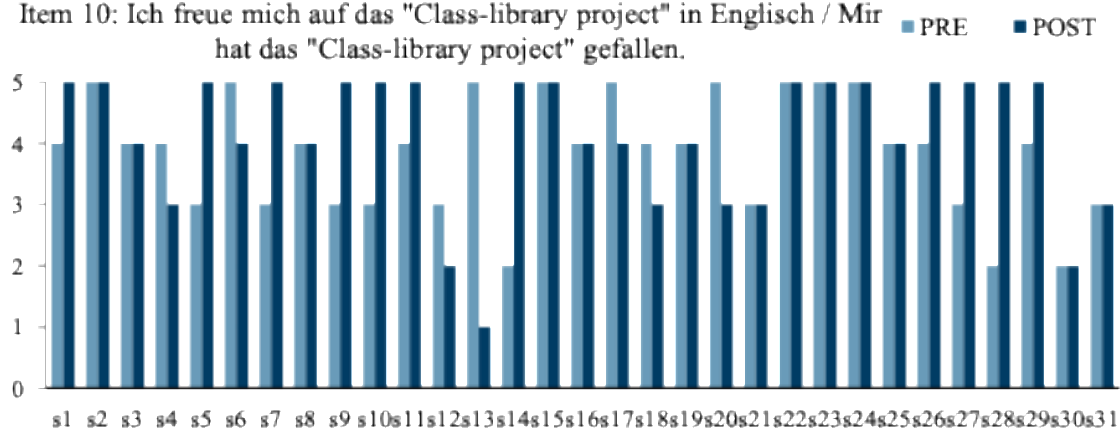
Item 10: Ich freue mich auf das "Class-library project" in Englisch / Mir hat das "Class-library project" gefallen.



Item 10: Ich freue mich auf das "Class-library project" in Englisch / Mir hat das "Class-library project" gefallen.



Item 10: Ich freue mich auf das "Class-library project" in Englisch / Mir hat das "Class-library project" gefallen.



11.3 Documents for the first project cycle

11.3.1 Detailed project plan for Cycle 1

Timeframe	Nr. of Lessons	Procedure	Materials	Notes
Week 1 Sept. 9 th – Sept. 13 th	1	Identifying broad reader interests Handing out “Elternbrief”	Reader interest questionnaire Elternbrief	... without saying too much about the project.
Week 2 Sept. 16 th – Sept. 20 th	2	Students complete pre-project questionnaire Introducing the project Introducing Penguin Reader website Selecting books Completing book selection lists Ordering & waiting for books	Pre-project questionnaire Why do we read? PowerPoint slide Book selection list	Slide(s): WHY DO WE READ S get time to go through books on website Based on selection list and interest questionnaires → discuss “interesting” choices with individual students.
Week 3 Sept. 23 rd – Sept. 27 th	2	Portfolio instructions Task presentation Book distribution Getting to know the readers Registering on Penguin Readers to access online version + audio recordings	Binders Portfolio tasks Instructions Assessment criteria	Introducing glossary, new words at beginning etc.
Sept. 30 th – Oct. 4 th	0	BERUFSPRAKTISCHE TAGE		
Week 4 Oct. 7 th – Oct. 11 th	2	Official start of the project Reading and working on portfolio tasks		Focus on comfortable, quiet reading atmosphere. Recommend students to read a few pages/chapters before

				starting to work on first portfolio tasks.
Weeks 5, 6 Oct. 14 th – Oct. 25 th	4	Reading and working on portfolio tasks Oct. 25th: Deadline 1: Collect portfolios to provide initial feedback.		Give feedback / correct portfolios (using a pencil) and comment on progress. S have the possibility to revise tasks before final deadline.
		FALL BREAK		
Weeks 7, 8, 9 Nov. 4 th – Nov. 22 nd	6	Reading and working on portfolio tasks Nov. 22nd: Final deadline Book 1		
Nov. 25 th – Nov. 29 th	0	Portfolios are being graded		
Week 10 Dec. 2 nd – Dec. 6 th	2	Book fair presentation preparations	Poster presentation guide	
Week 11 Dec. 9 th – Dec. 13 th	2	Book fair presentations	Book fair schedule	Students of both classes participate.
Week 12 Dec. 16 th – Dec. 20 th	1	Book fair feedback + discussions Students decide on next book to read after the Christmas Break	Book selection list for 2 nd cycle	
Dec. 21 st – Jan. 6 th	0	CHRISTMAS BREAK		Analysis of 1 st cycle and modifications for 2 nd cycle.
After Christmas		2 nd project cycle		

Why do we read?



-
- 1) Reading a lot in English helps you cope with challenging, long reading exercises.
 - 2) Reading helps you learn new words more quickly.
 - 3) Reading helps you learn grammar rules naturally because it gives you a better idea of how to use them.

... reading is fun and relaxing

Do you agree?



11.3.3 Reader interest questionnaire

READER **INTEREST** QUESTIONNAIRE

1) I **like** movies and television programmes about:

- ☐ **science fiction and fantasy** (like "E.T." or "Interstellar" = stories about space, aliens, robots ...)
- ☐ **romance** (relationships and love)
- ☐ **mysteries** (= stories where detectives need to solve a crime, and/or someone or something gets missing)
- ☐ **animals**
- ☐ **comedy** (funny movies with a lot of jokes)
- ☐ other: _____

2) One of my favourite films / TV series is:

3) One of my favourite books is:

11.3.4 Reading portfolio instructions and assessment Cycle 1

Reading Portfolio Instructions

This is your reading portfolio. You choose the tasks you want to include.

Things you <u>must</u> do:	Things you <u>can</u> do:
You must read the <u>entire</u> book.	You can take your time . Quality over quantity.
You must be able to tell your classmates/teachers about your book.	You can always ask your teacher for help, but don't interrupt your classmates.
You must complete <u>at least</u> 4 tasks.	You can add additional tasks to your portfolio.

Important:

- Do not draw/write into your book. Take good care of it.
- This is individual work. You need to work on your own. Don't disturb your classmates.
- Put all the tasks you completed into your binder.



Tips:

Quality over quantity.

Feel free to use your laptop when you need it.



Most importantly: Enjoy your book! ☺



name : _____ class : _____

CLASS LIBRARY PROJECT PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT



		Points
Task fulfilment	5 points: All tasks are finished and done carefully. 4 points: Most tasks are finished, some small things are missing. 3 points: Some tasks are not finished or rushed. 2 points: Many tasks are missing or not complete. 1 point: Most tasks are missing or not complete.	
Creativity	5 points: Very creative and interesting. 4 points: Some creative ideas, good effort. 3 points: A little creative, but not exciting. 2 points: Not very creative, very simple ideas. 1 point: No creative, boring.	
Language Use (Grammar, Vocabulary)	5 points: Great vocabulary. Almost no mistakes. 4 points: Good use of words, only a few mistakes. 3 points: Many mistakes but understandable. 2 points: Poor vocabulary, many mistakes. 1 point: Many mistakes, hard to understand.	
Organization and Layout	5 points: Nice portfolio. Well-organized. 4 points: Mostly well organized. 3 points: Some parts are messy or not clear. 2 points: Hard to follow and/or messy. 1 point: Very messy, hard to understand.	
Bonus point(s)	2 points: More than one extra task completed 1 point: One extra task completed 0 points: No extra tasks completed	

_____ / 22 points

18-22	+
14-17	✓
10-13	~
0 or below	-

11.3.5 Reading portfolio tasks “Standard Mittelschule” Cycle 1

Designing a cover page



Design a nice cover page. You can either draw it or design it on the computer (using WORD).

Your cover page should represent your book. It should give an idea what your book is about.

Include:

- The book title
- The author
- Your name
- An image / A picture
- The date



If you decide to design your coversheet on your laptop, **upload it to Teams** and ask your teacher to print it out for you.

The "Who is Who" of the book

Choose 2 characters from your book.

- describe **or** draw their appearance (Aussehen)
- **write** about their personality (Persönlichkeit / Charaktereigenschaften).

Use the adjectives listed below.

- give **your opinion**: say what you think about the character.
(Do you like him/her? Why? Why not?)

Adjectives to describe a person's appearance:

Positive 😊	Neutral	Negative ☹
beautiful	short	ugly
Pretty (for girls/women)	tall	fat
handsome (for boys/men)	old/young	

Adjectives to describe a person's personality:

Positive 😊	Neutral	Negative ☹
kind	calm / quiet	mean
friendly	shy	rude
honest	old/young	stupid
brave	curious	lazy
smart	talkative	jealous

1st character: _____

Appearance (text or drawing)	Personality	Your opinion

2nd character: _____

Appearance (text or drawing)	Personality	Your opinion

Vocabulary Collection



Collect **at least 12** important new words or phrases.

The following online dictionaries might help you:

- www.leo.org
- <https://de.pons.com>

Sentence from the book where the new word/phrase is used. Use a colour to highlight the new word.	Page number from book	German translation	Optional: Translation to another language



Drawing a scene

Choose a scene from your book that you found especially interesting/exciting/fascinating and draw a picture of it. **Do not copy** the drawings from the book!

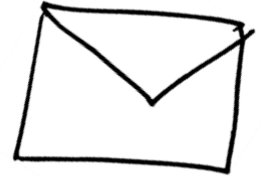
"You can find my scene on page": _____



Tips: How does your story end? What do you want to change about the ending?

[illegible]

LETTER TO THE AUTHOR



Dear _____,

Thank you for writing the book _____.

I have just finished reading it and my favourite part was

One question I would like to ask you is

In your next book you should

QUIZ TIME

Create a quiz for your book. Think of 6 different questions. Come up with possible answers (3 wrong answers and one correct answer). Highlight the correct option.

QUESTION 01

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 02

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 03

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 04

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 05

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 06

A

B

C

D

A book review



1. Explain what your book is about in 3-5 sentences.

2. Choose one or more answers:

What did you like about the book? 😊

- ☐ The characters
- ☐ The story
- ☐ The place where the story happens
- ☐ The way the book is written
- ☐ The action or excitement
- ☐ The message or lesson

Explain your answer(s). Write 1-3 sentences.

Was there anything you didn't like about the book? ☹️

- ☐ The characters
- ☐ The story
- ☐ The place where it happens
- ☐ The way it was written
- ☐ The exciting parts
- ☐ The message or lesson

Explain your answer(s). Write 1-3 sentences.

3. Who do you think would enjoy reading this book?

- ☐ People who like adventure
- ☐ People who like fantasy
- ☐ People who like mysteries
- ☐ People who like learning about history
- ☐ People who like books about friendship or relationships
- ☐ Other:

4. Which grade would you give your book?

- ☐ 5: Didn't like it at all
- ☐ 4: It was okay
- ☐ 3: Liked it
- ☐ 2: Really liked it
- ☐ 1: Loved it!

A cartoon-style illustration of a red diary with a yellow cover. The word "Diary" is written on a white label in the center. A yellow key is shown at the bottom, and a yellow padlock is attached to the right side of the diary.

Write 100 - 150 words.

Dear diary,

[illegible]

Designing a cover page



Design a nice cover page for your portfolio. You can either draw it or design it on the computer (using WORD).

Your cover page should represent your book.
It should give an idea what your book is about.

Include:

- The book title
- The author
- Your name
- An image / A picture
- The date
- A short book summary (2-5 sentences)



If you decide to design your coversheet on your laptop, **upload it to Teams** and ask your teacher to print it out for you.

The "Who is Who" of the book

Put together a list of the main characters of your book and explain who they are. Choose **3** characters from your book.

- describe **or** draw their appearance (Aussehen)
- **write** about their personality and use the adjectives listed below.
- give **your opinion**: say what you think about the character.
(Do you like him/her? Why? Why not?)

Adjectives to describe a person's appearance:

Positive 😊	Neutral	Negative ☹️
beautiful	short	ugly
Pretty (for girls/women)	tall	fat
handsome (for boys/men)	old/young	

Adjectives to describe a person's personality:

Positive 😊	Neutral	Negative ☹️
kind	calm / quiet	mean
friendly	shy	rude
honest	old/young	stupid
brave	curious	lazy
smart	talkative	jealous

1st character: _____

Appearance (text or drawing)	Personality	Your opinion

2nd character: _____

Appearance (text or drawing)	Personality	Your opinion

3rd character: _____

Appearance (text or drawing)	Personality	Your opinion

Vocabulary Collection

Collect **at least 12** important new words or phrases.

The following online dictionaries might help you:

- www.leo.org
- <https://de.pons.com>



Sentence from the book where the new word/phrase is used. Use a colour to highlight the new word.	Page number from book	German translation	Optional: Translation to another language



Drawing a scene

Choose a scene from your book that you found especially interesting/exciting/fascinating and draw a picture of it. **Do not copy the drawings from the book!** Then **write a few sentences** to explain what is happening in the scene.

"You can find my scene on page": _____



A NEW ENDING

Write a new ending for your story.

[illegible]



AUDIO MESSAGE TO THE AUTHOR

You tried to call the author of your book to share your feedback and ask some questions, but unfortunately, she/he didn't answer the phone. So, you decided to record an audio message and send it to her/him instead.

→ Record your audio message and upload it to **Teams**.

Of course, you can add information, but your audio message should not be longer than **2 minutes**.

Make notes for your audio message:

Hello _____,

Thank you for writing the book

_____.

I have just finished reading it and my favourite part was

One question I would like to ask you is

_____?

I think in your next book you should

QUIZ TIME

Create a quiz for your book. Think of 6 different questions. Come up with possible answers (3 wrong answers and one correct answer). Highlight the correct option.

QUESTION 01

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 02

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 03

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 04

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 05

A

B

C

D

QUESTION 06

A

B

C

D

My book review



Choose one or more answers:

1. What did you like about the book? 😊

- ☐ The characters
- ☐ The story
- ☐ The place where the story happens
- ☐ The way the book is written
- ☐ The action or excitement
- ☐ The message or lesson

2. Was there anything you didn't like about the book? ☹️

- ☐ The characters
- ☐ The story
- ☐ The place where it happens
- ☐ The way it was written
- ☐ The exciting parts
- ☐ The message or lesson

3. Who do you think would enjoy reading this book?

- ☐ People who like adventure
 - ☐ People who like fantasy
 - ☐ People who like mysteries
 - ☐ People who like learning about history
 - ☐ People who like books about friendship or relationships
 - ☐ Other:
-

4. Which grade would you give your book?

- ☐ 5: Didn't like it at all
- ☐ 4: It was okay
- ☐ 3: Liked it
- ☐ 2: Really liked it
- ☐ 1: Loved it!

5. Have a look at the answers you gave. Now, **write a short book review** for your classmates that might be interested in reading your book next.
- Describe what your book is about.
 - Explain what you liked / what you didn't like about the book.
 - Say who could be interested in reading the book.

Write 120 - 170 words.

[illegible]

Diary entry



Choose a main character from your book. Pretend you are that character and **write a diary entry**. Talk about something **specific** that happened in the book. Don't forget to include the character's thoughts and feelings.

Write 150 - 200 words.

Date: _____

Dear diary,

Creating a book presentation: PowerPoint Instructions

ATTENTION:

Create a nice PowerPoint Presentation. Use pictures. Use colors.
WRITE IN BULLET POINTS. NO TEXT!

1st slide: Cover page

Create a cover slide.

- Add a picture
- Add your name

2nd slide: General information

- Book title
- Author(s)
- Other interesting facts about the book

3rd slide: Main characters

- Choose 1 or 2 characters
- Describe the characters: Who are they?
 - Personality
 - Appearance
 - Why are they important for the story?

4th slide: Content

- Describe the main content of your book: = **What is the story about?**

IMPORTANT: **Don't spoiler your audience**, maybe they also want to read your book. ☺

5th slide: Recommendation

- Who would you recommend this book to?
- Why?



name: _____

Giving a book presentation:

Useful phrases

1st slide: Cover page

„Hello everyone, “

“Welcome to my presentation about... “

2nd slide: General information

“I read a book called ...”

“The book was written by...”

3rd slide: Main characters

“The main character is called..”

“...is the hero because...

“... has a problem because...”

“... helps ... to ...”

“... is important because ...”

4th slide: Content

“The story happened in [where?] / a long time ago.”

“The story is about...”

“In the beginning then, “

“One important part of the story is when ...”

“Another important part is when... “



5th slide: Recommendation

"The book teaches us about ..."

„I liked/didn't like the book because ..."

"I would recommend this book to someone who likes ..."

Ending:

"Thank you for listening!"

"Thank you for your
attention!" "Do you have
any questions?"

"I am happy to answer your questions now."



11.3.8 Book Fair schedule

Timeframe	Book
8:10-8:40 (30 mins)	The extraordinary life of Nelson Mandela
	Revolting Rhymes
	The extraordinary life of Steve Jobs
	Alice through the looking glass
	Sherlock Holmes
	The summer I turned pretty
	BBC Dynasties: Chimpanzee
	A room with a view
	Artemis Fowl
	Killing floor
	Extremely loud and incredibly close
	The darkest hour
	Mulan and other tales of heroes
08:45- 9:10 (25 mins)	A Christmas Carol
	Zoo
	Dracula
	Jaz Santos vs the world
	Amazing muslims who changed the world
	Me before you
	Pride and prejudice

	The boy in the striped pyjamas
	The age of innocence
	Frankenstein
	The Spy Who Came in From The Cold
9:15- 9:35 (20 mins)	Private
	Alice's adventures in Wonderland
	Elon Musk
	Ghost stories
	Love Frankie
	The invisible man
	The kissing booth

	The witches
	The night manager
	Slumdog Millionaire

NAME : _____



Presentations I attended:

	Presenter (name)	Book (title)
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		

Books I would like to read:

Plan A: _____

Plan B: _____

Plan C: _____

11.3.9 Analysis tables for Cycle 1

Cycle 1: Field notes analysis, 4a

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Task Understanding and Clarity	Three students didn't understand the tasks or failed to remember they only needed to complete 4 out of 9 tasks.	Sat down with them, explained all tasks again, emphasised the importance of reading instructions carefully.	Students were able to start tasks independently afterward.	Improve/Clearify task instructions
	Some students seemed unable to enjoy reading while also working on tasks.		Students focused more on tasks than reading enjoyment.	Separate reading from working on tasks in Cycle 2.
	Many S asked questions before reading instructions carefully.	Encouraged students to re-read instructions before asking questions.	Some improvement but reluctance to read instructions mostly persisted.	
	Some students struggled to understand the "Who is Who" task, particularly the "your opinion" section.	Explained the task in simpler terms; offered examples.	Partial improvement, but some students still found it challenging.	Modify/Delete "Who is Who" task
Task Support Teacher role	One student required constant guidance after every task to decide what to do next.	Provided step-by-step instructions and ongoing support.	Limited improvement in autonomy; S still frequently relied on guidance/help from teacher	
	For one student, the level 2 book was too difficult, so they switched to a starter reader.	Provided a simpler book that was still (more or less) age appropriate.	S engaged better with the new book, but further support was needed.	It is difficult to find simple readers that are still age-appropriate and interesting, but the collection has to be expanded.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
	A weak student required additional help with writing tasks; her sentences were incomprehensible.	Offered ideas and examples for revising her sentences.	Some improvement.	Sometimes students need individual support: While students read I, as the teacher, can act as facilitator and offer that support.
Technology	Some students listened to the audiobook while reading along.	Encouraged this practice; facilitated access to audiobooks.	Increased focus and engagement among students with attention issues.	Recommend audio recording to “weaker” students in Cycle 2
Time Management	Two students finished books and all tasks earlier than their peers.	Allowed them to start reading a new book without completing tasks.	Students stayed motivated and engaged despite finishing early.	A: Plan additional creative activities for fast finishers. B: Let fast finishers read the next book (without tasks?)
	A deadline was set to ensure project completion: some students found that stressful	Explained the necessity of deadlines while providing support to finish tasks.	Students worked faster but expressed stress about time constraints.	Additional catch-up sessions → working at home?
	It was hard to find the perfect timing to finish the project: some students felt rushed while others were still engaged.	Reminded students of what to focus on while trying not to build too much pressure.		It is difficult to balance ER principles with school timelines. → Build in more flexibility. For example, add compensation sessions.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Classroom environment	Separating students helped to avoid distractions	Used available space to enhance focus.	Students were more engaged, and distractions were minimised.	Continue using flexible seating to optimise the reading environment.
	Creating a calm reading environment got easier the more familiar the students became with the project.			
	Some students needed to feel observed in order to work properly.	Circulating around the calssroom. Askeed my colleague to do the same.	Calm reading space.	Additional teacher is very helpful in establishing a calm environment.
	Atmosphere generally improved by the minute in each reading session.	Give students time to settle in each lesson. Provide a time for students to find their space and get into reading.		
Student Autonomy	One student consistently sought confirmation for every step of his work.	Guided him to make decisions independently.	One student improved slightly but remained dependent on teacher feedback.	Strengthen students' confidence in their own abilities.
	Some students ignored task instructions and needed reminders to read them.	Repeatedly emphasised reading instructions carefully.	Moderate improvement but frequent reminders were still necessary.	Improve instructions. Add visuals and examples.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
	Students uploaded the Cover Sheet task to Microsoft Teams but forgot information that was required.	Provided feedback via Teams, reminded them of missing details.	Students revised their submissions, but mistakes sometimes persisted. → This highlights issues to read instructions.	Reinforce / Highlight careful reading of instructions.
Student Engagement	Many students were enthusiastic about continuing to read their books.	Allowed flexibility to focus on reading before tasks.	Positive engagement and increased interest in books.	Maintain balance between reading and tasks to sustain engagement. → Post-reading tasks only
	S started a spontaneous competition about who completed the most tasks.	Observed without intervening.	Students were motivated to complete more tasks but also focused less on reading which defies the main objective of the project.	Emphasise reading enjoyment rather than task completion.
	Two students discovered film adaptations and watched them after finishing their books.	Encouraged them to finish books before watching the films.	This showed high engagement with the stories.	
Other	Having a second teacher in the classroom improved students' working speed and concentration → 4a worked/read way faster than 4b, where I teach alone.		Improved reading atmosphere. Enhanced engagement. Less distractions.	

Cycle 1: Field notes analysis, 4b

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Task Understanding and Clarity	One student repeatedly asked how to design the cover sheet for the portfolio, despite receiving multiple explanations.	Encouraged the student to continue reading or choose another task; emphasised the importance of reading instructions independently.	Student still struggled to grasp the concept of the task.	Provide clearer, step-by-step examples for tasks that might confuse weaker students.
	A student asked how many characters needed to be described in the "Who is Who of the book" task, indicating unclear instructions.	Referred the student back to the task instructions.	Instructions were not followed.	Simplify and highlight critical details in the task instructions.
	Some students were unsure if full sentences were required for the "Who is Who" task.	Provided clarification during the session.	Misunderstandings persisted for some students.	Add explicit examples to the task sheet.
Task Support	A weaker student struggled with understanding her book and required additional translation support.	Assisted her with translating key parts of the book.	The student engaged better but still needed extra support.	Offer simpler books or more structured scaffolding for weaker students.
	Weaker students tended to lose focus during reading.	Introduced audiobooks for these students to help them stay engaged.	Increased focus and reading progress for weaker students.	Consider expanding use of audiobooks for students who struggle to stay concentrated.
Technology	Audiobooks were introduced for weaker students to support their reading.	Installed and facilitated the use of audio recordings.	Improved focus and engagement for weaker students.	Extend audiobook options and promote their use among students who prefer listening.
Time Management	It took 10-15 minutes for students to settle into the reading session, leaving limited effective reading time.	Provided more time for students to settle into reading.	Students worked more effectively after the initial transition.	Dedicate entire lessons to reading rather than splitting time across multiple activities.
	In 30-minute sessions, students were only effective for 15 minutes due to distractions and lack of time	Aimed to dedicate full lessons to reading instead of shorter time slots.	Reading sessions were more effective when the entire lesson was dedicated to	Aim for longer, reading sessions (at least 1 hour) separate from other,

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
	to settle.		reading.	unrelated activities.
	A deadline was necessary to ensure progress and completion, but some students were deeply engaged in creative tasks and felt interrupted.	Set a clear deadline while trying to balance engagement and task completion.	Students felt pressured but worked toward completing their projects.	Introduce flexible deadlines or additional time for creative tasks outside of class.
Classroom environment	Some students require constant supervision. Certain students are not yet mature or engaged enough to complete tasks independently without the presence of a teacher to monitor and guide them.	Circulated around the reading area. Did not read myself. Demonstrated presence. Applied non-verbal strategies to discipline students.	Increased student focus, but some still required verbal discipling.	Teacher must show presence as much as possible to ensure engagement.
	External distractions from nearby classes disrupted the reading atmosphere.	Tried to restore focus through verbal and non-verbal reminders.	Partial success in improving the atmosphere.	
	Students take time to settle into reading and finding a comfortable place.	Allowed them to move to different spots initially.	Students eventually settled and worked quietly.	Provide clear expectations and time limits for settling in to save time.
Student autonomy	Students do not like to read instruction and are reluctant to properly read them before asking peers or their teacher.	Oral clarifications and reminders to read instructions. Sending back students to re-read instructions before re-explaining them.		
	Many students procrastinate portfolio tasks and seem to prefer reading.			Separate reading from task completion.
	Many students seem overwhelmed with the freedom to decide when to read and when to work on the portfolio tasks.			Separate reading from task completion. Provide a clearer structure.
	Students struggle to determine which tasks makes sense to complete at what time.	At some point we went over the tasks again and discussed which task is best to do when. For example: do the vocabulary collection task	Most students followed my advice.	The goal is for students to be able to work independently without much additional

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
		while reading but write a different ending or a letter to the author after finishing the book.		help. Provide clearer structure for task completion timing.
Student Engagement	Some students seemed eager to read and work on their portfolios, while others were disengaged and frequently switched seats.	Tried to restore focus and create a better atmosphere by emphasizing reading's importance.	Mixed results: some students remained disengaged.	Explore strategies to create a more stable and focused environment for reluctant readers.
	Girls were more focused and preferred staying in the classroom to read, which led to better engagement.	Allowed students to choose their reading environment.	Girls were more engaged and productive in class.	Provide a quiet, structured reading environment for those who benefit from it.
	Students were more productive when reading at their classroom desks instead of moving to other locations.	Encouraged students to stay in class and read quietly.	Created a calm and focused atmosphere for most students.	Promote in-class reading to maintain engagement and minimize distractions.
	One student worked for hours on a detailed map related to his book, showing deep engagement.	Allowed him to continue but emphasised the need to also finish reading the book.	High engagement and participation but S lost focus on reading and time management troubles arose	Encourage creativity but ensure students don't forget the primary goal of the project = reading
	It took about 5 minutes at the beginning of each session to create a quiet, focused atmosphere.	Allowed students to settle into their places and reading routines.	Once settled, students worked quietly and focused.	Build routines to minimise transition time and maximise productivity.
	More proficient students generally seemed more engaged and interested in their books than weaker students.			More interesting, age-appropriate books are required on basic levels.
Other	Managing the students in 4b was more challenging due to the absence of a team-teacher and a larger, less disciplined group.		Less time for note taking or individual student support.	Aim to create tasks and portfolio structure that requires less support.

11.4 Documents for the second project cycle

11.4.1 Detailed project plan for Cycle 2

Timeframe	Nr. of Lessons	Procedure	Materials	Notes
Week 1 Jan. 6 th – Jan 10 th	2	Distribution of new graded readers S start reading → S are encouraged to change readers if they regret their choice (for any reason)	Revised book selection list for 2 nd cycle	
Weeks 2, 3 Jan 13 th – Jan 24 th	4	S read		No while-reading tasks. No laptops / dictionaries allowed.
Weeks 4, 5, 6 Jan 27 th – Feb. 28 th	4	S read or start working on independent work plans	Independent work plans “Standard Mittelschule” Independent work plan “Standard AHS” A3 paper Lined sheets of paper	S receive independent work plans as soon as they have finished reading their books.
Week 7 March 3 rd – March 7 th	2	S work on independent work plans T corrects finished tasks		
Week 8 March 12 th	1	Book club meetings	Book club meeting guideline	
Week 9 March 17 th		Post-reading questionnaire on reading attitudes		

11.4.2 Reading portfolios for Cycle 2

CLASS LIBRARY: INDEPENDENT WORK PLAN MS

	What to do!	material	✓	
O	Complete Worksheet 1.	Worksheet 1: "My book - summary"		
O	Create a poster! Prepare a poster for your book. If a classmate has read the same book, you can do this task together. You only need to create one poster Your poster should include information about: • the main characters. • the main events that happened in the story. • your opinion about the book. • to whom (=wem) and why you would recommend your book. Be creative! Use different colours, drawings, pictures, etc. If you need anything printed out, you can send it to me via email: alina.kemper@edu.magwien.gv.at When you are done: hand in your poster to your teacher.	Large sheet of paper (A3!)		
O	Complete Worksheet 2.	Worksheet 2: "Vocabulary collection" Laptop (online dictionary)		

O	Interview a classmate! Find a partner. Decide who is the interviewer and who is getting interviewed. Record an interview about your book using the interview guideline in your binder. Upload your interview to teams: Kursarbeit → Class-library → Interview My interview partner was: _____	Worksheet 3: Interview guideline Extra sheet of paper Laptop		
V	Visualisation! Be creative and create something visual for your book: e.g.: a drawing of your favourite character, a new book cover, a drawing of an exciting scene in the book ...	Extra sheet of paper.		
V	Complete Worksheet 4	Worksheet 4: "Social media update."		
V	Read out aloud! Choose a passage ($\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 page) from your book and read it out aloud. Record yourself and upload your recording/video to Teams.	Laptop		

All tasks, obligatory <u>and</u> voluntary, completed	++
All obligatory tasks completed	+
3/4 obligatory tasks completed	✓
Less than 3 obligatory tasks completed	-





Worksheet 1

My Book: Summary Sheet

by: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

This book was:

☐ quite difficult to read ☐ just about right ☐ really easy to read

Fill out the book summary.

The book _____ (*book title*) is about _____

The story takes **place** in _____ (*where?*).

At the beginning of the story _____

_____ then _____

In the end _____.

How many stars would you give to this book? (Colour the stars!)



Recommendation: Who do you think would enjoy reading this book?

- ☐ People who like adventure
- ☐ People who like fantasy
- ☐ People who like mysteries
- ☐ People who like learning about history
- ☐ People who like books about friendship or relationships
- ☐ Other: _____



Worksheet 2

VOCABULARY COLLECTION



Choose **8 words or phrases** from your book's **glossary**.

Select words that you think are important to know. Complete the table below.

	Word / Phrase	Definition from glossary	German translation	Example sentence (from book OR your own)
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				

Worksheet 3:

Interview guideline

Your task is to record an interview. To do that, you need to think of the questions you would like to ask. Write down at least eight questions for your interview. You could ask your interview partner about:

- The book's author
- The genre
- Why they chose this book
- What the story is about
- Their favorite character
- Their favorite scene from the book
- What they liked / disliked about the book and why
- Who they would recommend this book to and why



Important: Always ask your interview partner to give reasons for their opinion.
(e.g. **Why** is this your favorite character?)

If you are the interviewer: **write down your interview questions on a separate sheet of paper and put it into your binder.**



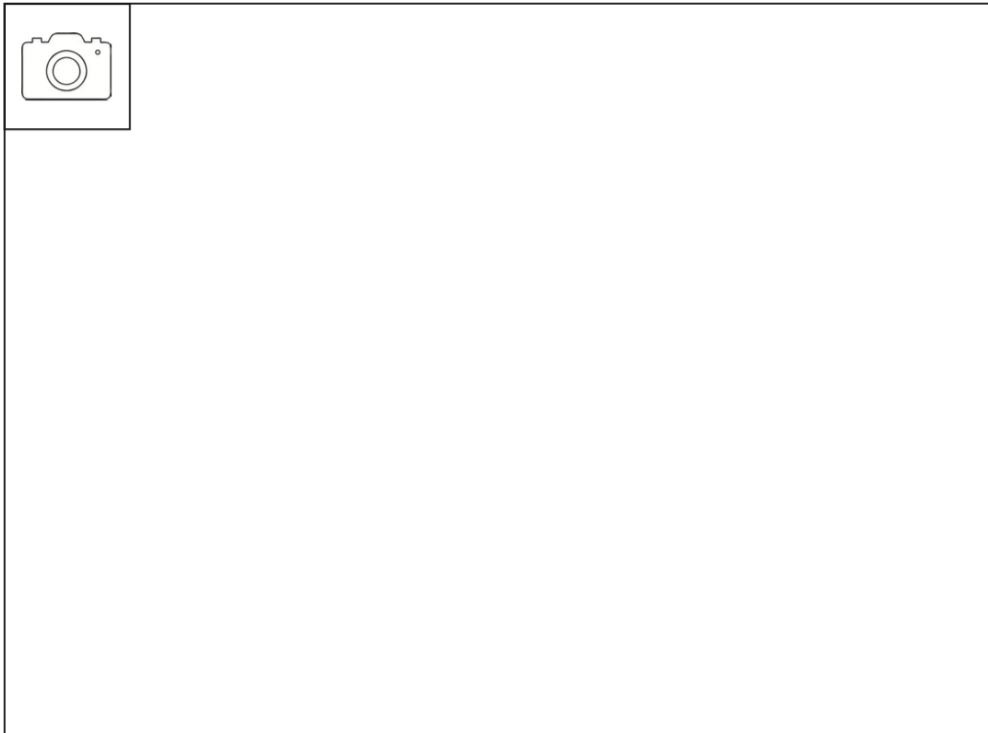
Worksheet 4: Social media updates

Imagine one of the main characters of your book has a page on Instagram or another social media site and writes posts throughout the course of the story. What would they look like? Write **4 posts**!









CLASS LIBRARY: INDEPENDENT WORK PLAN AHS

	What to do!	material	✓	
○	Complete Worksheet 1.	Worksheet 1: "A book report" A lined sheet of paper (A4).		
○	Create a poster! Prepare a poster for your book. If a classmate has read the same book (Round 1 or Round 2), you can do this task together. You only need to create <u>one</u> poster. Your poster should include information about: • the main characters. • the main events that happened in the story. • your opinion about the book. • to whom and why you would recommend your book. Be creative! Use different colours, drawings, pictures, etc. If you need anything <u>printed out</u>, you can send it to me via email: alina.kemper@edu.magwien.gv.at When you are done: hand in your poster to your teacher.	Large sheet of paper (A3!)		
○	Complete Worksheet 2.	Worksheet 2: "Vocabulary collection"		

		Laptop (online dictionary)		
O	Interview a classmate! Find a partner. Decide who is the interviewer and who is getting interviewed. Record an interview using the interview guideline in your binder. Upload your interview to teams: Kursarbeit → Class library → Interview My interview partner was: _____	Worksheet 3: "Interview guideline" Extra sheet of paper Laptop		
V	Visualisation! Be creative and create something visual for your book: e.g.: a drawing of your favourite character, a new book cover, a drawing of an exciting scene in the book ...	Extra sheet of paper.		
V	Complete Worksheet 4.	Worksheet 4: "Social media update."		
V	Read out aloud! Choose a passage (1-2 pages) from your book and read it out aloud. Record yourself and upload your recording/video to Teams.	Laptop		

All tasks, obligatory <u>and</u> voluntary, completed	++
All obligatory tasks completed	+
3/4 obligatory tasks completed	✓
Less than 3 obligatory tasks completed	-





Worksheet 1

A Book Report

by: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

This book was:

☐ quite difficult to read ☐ just about right ☐ really easy to read

How many stars would you give to this book? (Colour the stars!)



Write a book report about the book you read. In your book report:

- give a short summary of the story (DO NOT COPY FROM THE BLURB = "Klappentext").
- say what you liked/disliked about the book.
- explain who you would recommend your book to.

Write 200 - 250 words. Don't forget to mention the title and the author of the book. Put your book report into your binder.



11.4.3 Materials for the Book Club Meetings

Book Club Meetings

▪ **Questions for Groups 1+2**

- Who is the author of your book?
- What is your book about? Can you give us a short summary?
- What genre is your book? Do you often read books in that genre?
- Where did the story in your book take place?
- When did the story in your book take place?
- Was your book difficult to read?
- Is there a movie for your book?
- Did you like the ending of your book? Why or why not?
- Which school grade would you give your book? (1-5)
- Was this book your first choice?
- Did you like the reading project?
- Was there anything you did not like about the reading project? If yes, what was it?
- Would you like to read another book in class?
- Do you think reading English books is a fun activity?

- o Do you feel that reading books helped you improve your English?

- o Who was your favourite character and why?

- **Questions for Groups 3+4**

- o Who is the author of your book?

- o What is your book about? Can you give us a short summary?

- o What genre is your book? Do you often read books in that genre?

- o Where did the story in your book take place?

- o When did the story in your book take place?

- o Was your book difficult to read?

- o Was there a movie for your book?

- o Did you like the ending of your book? Why or why not?

- o Which school grade would you give your book? (1-5)

- o Was this book your first choice?

- o Did you like the reading project?

- o Was there anything you did not like about the reading project? If yes, what was it?

- o Would you like to read another book in class?
- o Do you think reading English books is a fun activity?
- o Do you feel that reading books helped you improve your English?
- o Can you describe the main character of your book?
- o Would you recommend your book to someone else? If yes, to whom?
- o Did you prefer this book or the last book you read? Why?
- o Did you like the ending of your book? Why or why not?
- o Do you feel that reading books helped you improve your English?
- o Who was your favourite character and why?

▪ **Questions for Groups 5+6+7**

- o What did you like about the book?
- o Was there anything you did not like about the book?
- o Can you describe the main character of your book?
- o Who was your favourite character and why?
- o Would you recommend your book to someone else? If yes, to whom?
- o Why did you want to read this book?
- o How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any

emotions?

- o Could the events in your book happen in real life? Why? Why not?
- o Would you like to live in your book's world?
- o Did you prefer this book or the last book you read? Why?
- o If your book was turned into a movie, which actors would you cast as the main characters?
- o If your book was turned into a movie, who in your class could play the main character and why?
- o Would you read a part 2 of your book? How could your book continue?
- o How did you feel about the ending of your book?
- o Was there a villain in your book? If yes, can you describe him?
- o Do you feel that reading books helped you improve your English?

▪ **Questions for Groups 8+9**

- o If you could change something about your book, what would it be?
- o If you could change something about the story, what would it be?
- o What do you think happens to the main character after the book ended?
- o If you could ask a character in your book a question, what would it be?

- o Did anything unexpected happen in your book? If yes, what was it?

- o Was your book based on true events? If yes, what did you learn from your book?
- o What do you think the author wanted readers to learn?
- o What did you like about the book?
- o Was there anything you did not like about the book?
- o Can you describe the main character of your book?
- o Who was your favorite character and why?
- o Would you recommend your book to someone else? If yes, to whom?
- o Why did you want to read this book?
- o How did the book make you feel? Did it evoke any emotions?
- o Could the events in your book happen in real life? Why? Why not?
- o Would you like to live in your book's world?
- o Did you prefer this book or the last book you read? Why?
- o If your book was turned into a movie, which actors would you cast as the main characters?
- o If your book was turned into a movie, who in your class could play the main character and why?

- o Would you read a part 2 of your book? How could your book continue?
- o How did you feel about the ending of your book?
- o Was there a villain in your book? If yes, can you describe him?

11.5 Analysis tables for Cycle 2

Cycle 2: Field notes, 4a and 4b

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Task Understanding and Clarity	Students had difficulty working correctly on tasks that were similar to the ones from the first cycle but not exactly the same like, for instance, the vocabulary collection task.	I clarified instructions individually and, as I noticed this was a common issue, I pointed it out at the beginning of the following reading session to the entire classroom.	Most students understood the differences in tasks.	Colour coding or highlighting of changes could potentially help making students aware.
	“Standard AHS” students’ book reports exceeded my expectations.	I praised students for their good work.	Students felt encouraged.	
	Some students were reading graded readers that are not classic novels. There were, for example, compositions of tales and stories. For those students the scaffolding in the book summary task was confusing and did not work as it should have.	I told these students to choose one of the stories/tales they read.	Students understood and completed the tasks.	Create a more homogenous book selection.
	The vocabulary collection task significantly improved by avoiding dictionaries and asking students to understand meaning by reading definitions and new words and phrases in context.	I encouraged students to derive meaning from context rather than use online dictionaries.	Improved learning outcome	

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Task Support Teacher role	Immediate feedback to tasks seemed helpful.	Instead of writing long comments I explained potential room for improvement to students immediately.	Students felt encouraged, Improved learning outcome due to immediate feedback.	Oral feedback proved very beneficial.
	I allowed students to switch books.	Students felt a sense of agency and seemed encouraged.	Most students were more engaged in reading.	Flexibility is helpful. Trusting students and giving them responsibility for their own learning encourages them.
	I encouraged students to reflect on their book choices after two reading sessions and change books if necessary.		More students changed books than in the first project cycle. Students changed books early on and did not endanger the schedule of the project.	
	Students who obviously enjoyed reading and were really engaged with their stories did not cause any disruptions. However, there were some (about 5 students) in 4b who really need to be cautioned to be quiet, get started etc. at the beginning of each reading lesson.	I assigned students reading places. I cautioned students to work especially at the beginning of the lesson. I only started giving feedback to finished portfolio tasks and providing other help after everyone had settled into reading.	A calm, focused reading and working atmosphere was established in every reading lesson. In some lessons it took longer than in others.	Taking time to properly start a lesson pays off.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
	Vocabulary Collection Task: Some students needed to be reminded what and where the glossary is.	After showing individual students I pointed out the glossary to all students in both classes.	Students remembered the glossary.	
	Students repeatedly asked permission to listen to music with headphones on their laptops while reading.	I did not allow that. Searching for music would disrupt the reading flow, it would mean students would use their laptops and self-selected music might be distracting. I told students that I have to read up on the issue to make a decision. I did so and informed them of my educated choice.	Students did not ask to listen to music again. They accepted the rule after the reasoning was explained.	Students do not like arbitrariness. Students are more likely to accept clear, justified rules than arbitrary ones.
Technology	Students were surprised that they should not use laptops, especially for tasks where they were required to use laptops before.	I reminded students that in this project cycle laptops were not allowed to look up words or do any kind of research.	Some students still tried to use laptops or needed time to adapt to this change.	Breaking habits is hard and takes time.
	For the vocabulary collection task a laptop was not necessary because students should be able to translate the words with the help of the definitions in their readers' glossary.	Reinforced the use of the glossary and reminded students of its existence.	Students adjusted to using the glossary and familiarised themselves with it more so than in the first project cycle.	The vocabulary collection task was more successful and more beneficial to vocabulary acquisition than in the first project cycle.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
Time Management	Providing immediate feedback could get stressful.	At the beginning, when most students were still occupied reading their books, I had a lot of time to provide individual feedback. Later in the project that got a little bit challenging and stressful.	Immediate individual feedback proved very helpful.	Balancing workload is important.
	One student, wanted to change his book in the fourth reading session. 2 classmates were already done reading and started working on their portfolio.	As this student was one of the students that had great difficulty concentrating and tended to disturb his classmates with his behaviour, I let him change his book in the hope that he would finally find something that really interests him.	The student was still not engaged and after finishing the book he told me that he did not like his second choice either.	Not everyone can be satisfied but as the student chose both books himself he was responsible and did not blame the teacher for his unsatisfactory book choice.
Classroom environment	Students' familiarity with independent work plans contributed to a relaxed atmosphere.			Routine fosters autonomy and an improved learning space.
	At the beginning of Cycle 2 students genuinely seemed to look forward to starting their new books.	Encouraged enthusiasm.		

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
	On one occasion 7 students were missing. That made the reading atmosphere a lot quieter and more relaxed. It was completely silent after about 5 minutes.			Smaller groups can enhance concentration.
	As more students finished reading their books, I created designated reading and working areas.	In the working space I could allow quiet chatting. Students did not have to be completely quiet. A nice learning environment could be established while a silent reading zone was maintained.	This intervention proved to be very beneficial. A productive learning environment was created.	Separate spaces for different activities can enhance focus and engagement and create a productive learning environment.
	The shorter the time gap between reading sessions, the better everything worked.	I tried to stick to the two reading lessons a week and prioritise the project.	Lessons ran smoothly.	Consistency is crucial.
	On one occasion I asked students to finish writing a text not related to the class library project, show it to me and then continue reading their books. This lesson was rather chaotic, and a quiet reading environment could not be established.			Mixing reading sessions with unrelated tasks is not advisable.
Student Autonomy	Student autonomy improved as they already routines from Cycle 1 had already been established.	Students needed less guidance, and I had more time to give feedback, take observations notes and engage in	Students needed less teacher intervention.	Routine builds autonomy.

Category	Observation	Strategy/Intervention	Outcome	Conclusion(s)
		conversations about their books with individual students.		
Student Engagement	No laptop policy helped to significantly reduce distractions.	I enforced a strict no laptop policy, except for tasks that required video recording.	Students seemed more focused. There was no danger of AI generated content.	Technology is beneficial in many areas of teaching but must not be overused.
Other	In Cycle 2 students had to show their completed tasks before moving on to the next one.	Depending on the time I had, I gave them more or less detailed feedback.	Reduced teacher workload while also improving learning outcome. Students had the opportunity to correct errors and improve passages based on immediate feedback.	Accuracy focused, detailed written feedback for the reading portfolio does not necessarily lead to better learning outcomes.
Differences between 4a and 4b	No disruptions in 4a.	I repeatedly praised 4a for their good work.	4a felt encouraged and continued their efforts.	Positive reinforcement improves motivation.
	There was a group of students in 4a who were very enthusiastic about reading. Their enthusiasm motivated their classmates and contributed positively to the entire classroom atmosphere.		Productive and relaxed classroom atmosphere.	Role model student readers can also encourage their classmates and label reading as “cool”.